#SaveChildCare Continued Advocacy Toolkit

HASHTAGS: #SaveChildCare

While the House passed the bipartisan Child Care Is Essential Act (S. 3874/ H.R. 7027) proposing $50 billion for the child care industry, Congress and the White House did not reach an agreement on overall relief spending, leaving millions of families and thousands of providers without any source of relief.

The uncertainty of whether or not we'll see a coronavirus relief package any time soon is frustrating. It remains crucial that constituents continue to sustain pressure on Congress. Reaching out to your Members of Congress reinforces that families, providers and the economy are depending on them to ensure at least $50 billion in stabilization funding for child care is included in this next package.

THIS TOOLKIT INCLUDES:

- CONTINUING THE FIGHT
- #ChildCareIsEssential Act TALKING POINTS
- CALL AND EMAIL CONGRESS
- SAMPLE EMAIL LANGUAGE
- SAMPLE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
    - SAMPLE PARENT LETTER
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    - SAMPLE EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCATE LETTER
- TAKE IT TO SOCIAL MEDIA
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- SHAREABLE GRAPHICS
- HOST A DISCUSSION

CONTINUING THE FIGHT

There are many ways to continue the fight to save child care. Below are some ideas. Determine what combination works best for you.

Throughout this toolkit you'll find examples for each action item.

- **Call or write** your Representative or Senator and ask them to support a stabilization fund for child care
- **Write an op-ed or a letter to the editor** of your local paper highlighting some of the talking points in this toolkit, and expressing your passion for supporting children, families and providers.
- **Make a video** and post it to social media. State how you've been impacted by the child care crisis and ask Congress to ensure $50B in stabilization funds for the child care sector is included in the next relief package.
- **Tweet your Members of Congress. Share how you've been impacted by the child care crisis and ask them to** ensure $50B in stabilization funds for the child care sector is included in this next relief package.
- **Host a discussion** with parents, child care providers and other people you know you know to discuss the issues facing your community and brainstorm ideas on how to tackle this issue together.

TALKING POINTS

Investing in child care will support a healthy economic recovery for families.

- As more and more parents look to return to the workforce, having reliable and safe child care is critical to their ability to keep their jobs.
- Women have taken on increased caregiving responsibilities during the coronavirus pandemic and during recovery may be forced to leave their job entirely if they can't find child care, exacerbating their family's economic security and gender equity.

The child care industry needs significant federal funding to be there for families to be able to return to the workforce.

- Unless Congress provides significant funding for the child care sector, data from the Center for American Progress finds that the coronavirus pandemic could lead to a permanent loss of nearly 4.5 million child care slots.
- Since the start of the pandemic, more than 1 out of 5 of the nearly 1 million people employed as child care workers has lost their jobs
- Most child care providers are open, but reduced enrollment levels means less revenue and they will not be able to operate long-term without federal resources.
- Rural areas had less child care before the pandemic and are likely to be hard-hit as child care providers have to shut their doors.

CALL AND EMAIL CONGRESS

- **Make it personal:** Why do you want your Senator or Representative to support significant child care funding now?
- **Allow response time:** The person you are calling will likely be receiving many calls throughout the day. Speak from experience to make your call memorable, have a conversation.
- **Include a call to action:** Make sure they know why you're calling. We've listed asks below.

Call your Member of Congress: (202) 224-3121

SAMPLE CALL IN SCRIPT

Hi, my name is **[NAME],** I'm a constituent of **[REP/SENATOR]** and I first want to thank you for your efforts to pass emergency child care measures. I'm calling to request that **[REP/SENATOR]** reach out to leadership and let them know that the child care industry is on the verge of collapse without immediate congressional funding.

The House passed a bipartisan bill proposing $50 billion to stabilize the industry in July, and Senate Republicans proposed $15 billion for the child care industry. None of that matters if House and Senate leadership don't prioritize child care in any further recovery negotiations. As the school year begins without resources for school or child care due to Congress failing to reach an agreement on relief funding, the U.S. cannot afford to lose half of our child care industry..

Efforts initially signaled that Congress was willing to prevent the child care industry from collapsing entirely, but adjourning for recess without agreement on a relief package has many child care providers and parents worried about whether the industry will survive. Families deserve Congress' support just like airlines and other industries.

- **[If you'd like to ask for a significant investment with a number attached, you can say:]** Thank you for listening. I hope you'll ask **[REP/SENATOR]** to get leadership to help prioritize at least $50 billion for child care in the next recovery package.

- **[If you got a negative response after introducing the topic, you can say:]** I hope you reconsider. Your constituents need secure child care options. Parents can't afford to not have any child care once they are able to return to the workplace.
- **[If you received a neutral reaction or if you want to focus on asking for an investment without a number attached, you can say:]** Thank you for listening. I hope to see **[REP/SENATOR]** helps pass significant funding soon.

SAMPLE EMAIL LANGUAGE

Find your Senators' and Representatives' contact information here and here

Subject: Ensure Stabilization Funding for Child Care

Dear **[REP/SENATOR],**

I'm writing to ask that you ensure there is significant funding prioritized in the next COVID-19 recovery package to stabilize the child care industry. Because Congress and the White House did not reach an agreement on overall spending, millions of families and thousands of child care providers are in flux regarding the state of child care.

Families need your support to help pull the country's child care industry back from the brink of collapse. For an industry that already operates on razor-thin margins, the situation is grim. Across the country, 40% of child care providers say they will close permanently without financial relief, and the U.S. could lose roughly half of the nation's child care supply.

While I want to thank you for the emergency coronavirus child care measures you've helped pass thus far, spikes in COVID-19 mean that child care providers are still facing months of closing, reopening, and continued uncertainty— operating costs are up and enrollment is down. Dedicated relief through a financial stabilization fund is needed to ensure providers can afford to stay in business and continue caring for children in their communities through what promises to be an unpredictable few months.

The House passed a bipartisan bill in July proposing $50 billion for a child care stabilization fund and Senate Republicans proposed $15 billion for the child care

industry. None of that matters if House and Senate leadership don't prioritize child care in any further recovery negotiations.

The Chamber of Commerce recently stated, "Without this industry's survival and ability to safely care for the children of working parents, every other American industry will struggle to return to work." America's economic recovery cannot succeed if Congress allows the child care industry to fail.

I urge you to insist on stabilization funding levels that will keep America's child care providers in business. [FOR FRIENDLY OFFICES/EDIT DEPENDING ON YOUR ORG'S ASK: Analysis of the child care sector shows that it will take at least $50 billion to sustain the child care sector for just six months].

The time is now for Congress to build on the broad bipartisan support for the child care industry and it must prioritize significant emergency relief funding – well above the $15 billion included in the HEALS Act. The success of our country's economic recovery depends on whether or not child care providers receive the emergency funding they need to stay afloat.

Child care providers support our families, businesses, and the economy. You can support them by urging leadership to prioritize significant funding for child care in the next relief package.

Thank you,

[NAME]

SAMPLE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

This is the time to keep the child care crisis in the news. Most local and regional newspapers will accept letters to the editor on timely and relevant topics. You should decide who the right audience is for your story and reach out to that outlet for their submission guidelines. Many now provide relevant information on their website. Be sure to insert your personal story to make these letters unique and resonate with readers.

SAMPLE PARENT LETTER

I live in **[STATE/COUNTY/TOWN]** and am the parent of **[NUMBER OF CHILDREN]** children. For my family, having access to child care is not a luxury—it is an economic

necessity that allows us to work and has become even more important during this pandemic. To work, I need to know that my [**CHILD/CHILDREN]** will be in a safe and enriching environment, but nationally, the coronavirus pandemic has pushed the child care industry— previously operating on a shoestring budget— to the brink of collapse. Daily, parents across the U.S. continue to see child care centers close permanently. I still face challenges with affording the quality care those who are able to remain open provide. Before the pandemic this was a constant struggle, and now it's even worse. [insert personal experience with child care and early education]

I know that my family is not alone. In **[STATE]**, before the pandemic the average cost of child care was **[COST]**, which was more than hardworking families like mine can afford. For some families, child care was so expensive that it was cheaper to leave the workforce than to pay for child care. Pre-pandemic, 2 million parents were forced to make career sacrifices because of problems with child care. The pandemic has made all of this worse, with many parents naming child care closures as the main reason they are unable to work. It's time for our policies to reflect the reality of **[STATE]'s** working families. We need to stabilize the child care sector so it can weather this storm, and fund it long-term so parents can continue to work and provide for their families.

That's why I was heartened to learn about the Child Care Is Essential Act, the needed emergency investment in child care that I've been waiting for. It would provide a $50 billion child care stabilization fund to ensure that families like mine don't have to worry about whether or not safe child care options will be there when we need them. Though it was passed in the House, this action means nothing without both the House and the Senate passing it or agreeing to significant stabilization funding in the next coronavirus relief package.

Congress went on recess without providing this absolutely necessary funding to save the child care industry. How can I and many parents like me, get back to work if Congress won't do its job? As a parent, there is nothing more important to me than setting my children and my family on the path to success, and this can be supported by the federal government significantly investing in child care.

I urge **[REPRESENTATIVE]** to support this bill, so that parents can work, children can thrive, and our economy can reopen and recover.

SAMPLE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR LETTER

[insert anecdote about why being an early educator is special/important to you]. Throughout my career, I've had the pleasure of nurturing and educating **[STATE/COUNTY/TOWN]'s** youngest learners. As an early childhood educator, I know how important the work I do is for promoting healthy child development, and for supporting families so that they can work with the peace of mind that their child is in safe and loving hands. As an essential worker throughout this pandemic, I've seen the nation begin to recognize the deep impact of the work I do.

Children, families, and employers depend on me every day, but the pandemic has left me filled with uncertainty, having to make decisions between my and my staff's physical and economic well being while staying open with little monetary support. Caring for other people's family has left my own family struggling to make ends meet. The average pay for child care workers is just over $10 per hour, lower than most other industries, and very few early educators receive benefits. The added stress of the pandemic has compounded the stress of operating on a shoestring budget while being underpaid and overworked with little access to safety provisions. The uncertainty of whether or not my center can afford to safely stay open makes it hard for me to give the children in my care the energy and attention I know they need to thrive.

The time is overdue to start valuing early educators for the critical work that we do. We need a $50 billion Child Care Stabilization Fund to cover expenses like payroll and rent and provide tuition and copayment relief to families. I urge **[insert senator/representative]** to support stabilization funding (well above the $15 billion in the HEALS Act) and ensure it's included in the next coronavirus relief package so that I can safely stay in business, provide high-quality care to our youngest learners, and raise my own family with dignity.

SAMPLE EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCATE LETTER

Child care is expensive. Pre-pandemic in [STATE], the average fee for a full-time child care center was **[COST]** a year. Unfortunately, the pandemic has brought the child care sector to the brink of collapse, making the current reality parents face much worse. Without significant federal support, the child care sector is at risk of losing half of its capacity—4.5 million slots. Before the pandemic, providers were operating on shoestring budgets and parents were navigating inaccessible costs and limited options. If centers continue to close permanently due to increased costs to meet CDC

recommendations, many more parents will join the approximately 50 percent of people living in the U.S. who experience their nearest child care center being an hour away on the bus, the price for a month of child care eating up their entire paycheck, or not being able to afford the quality child care they want for their child. As many parents face the threat of job insecurity due to having issues with child care during a global pandemic, the hustle and desperation to find child care is even greater.

Saving the child care industry and promoting access to high-quality child care is about ensuring that every child can grow and thrive in a safe environment while their parents are at work. Research shows that the first five years of a child's life are critical to their ability to learn social and emotional skills.. Without access to enriching early learning environments, many children enter kindergarten already behind.

It's time for policy to catch up with the real needs of today's working families. The House passed the Child Care is Essential Act, which would create a $50 billion stabilization fund for the child care industry. Unfortunately, this means next to nothing if stabilization funding is not included in the next coronavirus relief package, as Child Care Is Essential is unlikely to pass the Senate. Congress has left for recess without providing stabilization funding for child care, the workforce which supports all others. This backbone industry may not survive the pandemic if Congress doesn't do its job. At a time when children, families, and our economy depend on affordable, quality child care for economic stabilization and recovery, this investment is a no-brainer.

TAKE IT TO SOCIAL MEDIA

RECORD A VIDEO

Short videos are often a good way to state how you feel and prompt others to act. Create a short video (30 seconds or less) about how you've been impacted by the child care crisis and how you feel about the uncertainty surrounding relief. Be sure to ask Congress to ensure $50B in stabilization funds for the child care sector in this next relief package.

Tips on recording a video to share on social media with your Congress are linked here

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA COPY

Tweeting Members of Congress can be an effective way for them to hear your message. Below are sample tweets.

- ***List of official Twitter handles for all Members of Congress*** *linked* ***here***
- ***Tweet Congress Tool*** *that allows you to search for handles by zip code linked* ***here***

Join Us Tweets

- Families and providers are depending on Congress to do everything possible to ensure the next relief package includes significantly more than the proposed $15B to #SaveChildCare. Keep calling Congress. Families and providers deserve #ChildCareRelief now.
- Join providers, parents, advocates and allies as we continue to call on Congress to #SaveChildCare. Congress MUST ensure at least $50B for child care is included in this next relief package. Providers and families deserve #ChildCareRelief now!
- Child care providers and families getting the relief they need depends on Congress prioritizing #ChildCareRelief in the next COVID recovery bill. Join us to ensure Congress includes more than the proposed $15B to #SaveChildCare.
- There's bipartisan support for child care stabilization funds, but none of that matters if House and Senate leadership don't prioritize child care funding in the next COVID-19 recovery package. Keep calling your member of Congress to make sure at least $50B is included.

General Tweets

- Providers, families and advocates continue to demonstrate that the child care industry is critical for families and our economy. **[@REP/SENATOR]** will you prioritize including AT LEAST $50B to #SaveChildCare in the next COVID relief package?
- Most voters want Congress to include up to $50B in child care stabilization funding in the next COVID-19 recovery package. **[@REP/SENATOR],** it's dire that you #SaveChildCare by prioritizing significant funding in the final version of the bill. https://www.ffyf.org/voters-overwhelmingly-see-child-care-relief-as-indispensable-to-americas-economic-recovery/
- Data shows we'll need significantly more than the proposed $15B to #SaveChildCare for parents to return to work and for the economy to reopen and recover when it's safe. **[@REP/SENATOR]** we need you to prioritize including significantly more funding in the next relief package NOW.

- **.[@REP/SENATOR],** A vast majority of voters support funding to save the child care industry. Data shows we need at least $50B in federal funds to get the job done. Prioritize including this in the final version of the next relief package. #SaveChildCare https://info.childcareaware.org/media/survey-vast-majority-of-voters-support-financial-assistance-for-americas-child-care-industry-to-address-covid-19-impact
- **.[@REP/SENATOR],** CHILD CARE IS A PUBLIC GOOD! It supports every workforce. Congress has the power to #SaveChildCare and prioritize ensuring at least $50B is included for the industry in the final version of the next relief package. Will you support children, families and providers?
- **.[@REP/SENATOR],** 87% of voters support federal assistance for providers to ensure they can make payroll and pay other expenses like rent and utilities. Please ensure at least $50B to #SaveChildCare makes it into the final version of the next relief package. **https://info.childcareaware.org/media/survey-vast-majority-of-voters-support-financial-assistance-for-americas-child-care-industry-to-address-covid-19-impact**

Tweets For Child Care Providers

- **.[@REP/SENATOR]**, we are counting on you to prioritize ensuring Congress includes increased funding for child care in the final version of the relief package. We need at least $50B to #SaveChildCare. My livelihood depends on it.
- The pandemic continues to demonstrate how critical child care is for the U.S. **[@REP/@SENATOR]**, we need your immediate action to #SaveChildCare and ensure substantially more funding is included in the final version of the relief package so many providers don't close permanently.
- It's been months since the last COVID relief package and the child care industry still needs significantly more funding. **[@REP/@SENATOR]** please show your support and call on Congress to ensure at least $50B for child care is included in the final relief package NOW.
- If the child care industry doesn't get substantially more funding soon, we may not be there to support parents and the economy during reopening and recovery. **[@REP/SENATOR]** #SaveChildCare. Ensure at least $50B is included in the final version of the next relief package.

Tweets For Parents

- .**[@REP/SENATOR]**, my family is depending on you to do everything possible in to ensure this relief package includes significantly more funding than $15

billion to #SaveChildCare— before it's too late and half of the U.S.'s child care capacity disappears. https://www.americanprogress.org/?p=483817

- **.[@REP/SENATOR]**, my family is counting on you to make sure at least $50B is included to #SaveChildCare in this next relief package. My family cannot afford to lose our child care. Congress must ensure the industry is still standing for parents to return to work.
- Parents are rightly worried about getting fired for not having child care. **[@REP/SENATOR]** please help ensure at least $50B in funding to #SaveChildCare is included in the final version of the relief package. Congress can prevent these fears from coming true. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/us/drisana-rios-lawsuit-hub-international.html
- **.[@REP/SENATOR],** see how COVID-19 is impacting child care in [INSERT YOUR STATE]. Congress can #SaveChildCare NOW by ensuring significant funding is included in the next relief package. Parents need child care as we're asked to return to work. https://childcarerelief.org/by-the-numbers-state-by-state-look-at-covid-19-and-child-care/

Tweets for Advocates

- We're calling on Congress to do their job and listen to their constituents. They need to ensure substantially more funding is included to #SaveChildCare in the next COVID relief package. Providers and families are depending on it.
- America's economic recovery cannot succeed if Congress allows the #childcare industry to fail. I'm calling on **[@REP/SENATOR]]** to ensure the final COVID-19 package includes significantly more than the proposed $15 billion for child care. https://www.ffyf.org/voters-overwhelmingly-see-child-care-relief-as-indispensable-to-americas-economic-recovery/
- **.[@REP/SENATOR],** Fighting to #SaveChildCare is the right thing to do. It's a pathway to equity and parents to return to work as the economy reopens and recovers. We need you to ensure Congress prioritizes substantially more funding in the final version of the relief package NOW.
- **.[@REP/SENATOR],** Child Care MUST be significantly funded in the final version of the next relief package for fruitful economic recovery. We need you to act NOW to #SaveChildCare so the crisis doesn't intensify for Black families and families of color. https://www.americanprogress.org/?p=486977
- Ensuring that the final version of the next relief package includes at least $50B to #SaveChildCare means families and providers would see just over five

months of emergency relief to stay afloat. **[@REP/SENATOR]**, see how much **[INSERT YOUR STATE]** would receive. https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2020/05/2020_50billionpandemicchildcare_0.pdf

Tweets for Paid Leave Advocates

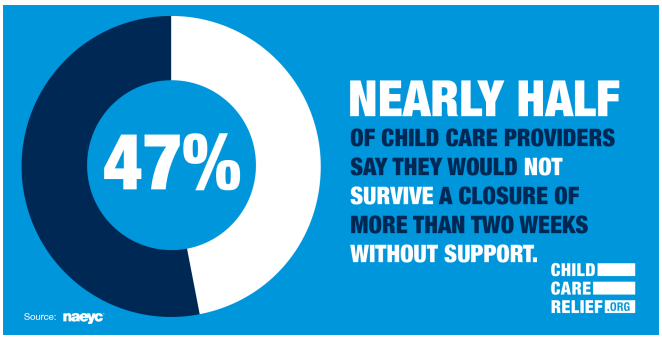
- The final version of the next relief package must expand paid leave to cover every worker and provide AT LEAST $50B in child care stabilization funds. Congress has the power to do both. **[@REP/SENATOR],** we need you to pass #PaidLeaveForAll and #SaveChildCare ASAP.
- Paid leave & child care are economic justice issues.
  A lack of both forces workers – especially low-income workers – to make an impossible choice between caring for a child & earning a paycheck. Congress must pass #PaidLeaveForAll & #SaveChildCare with a $50 billion investment.
- **[@REP/SENATOR],** child care and paid leave protect working families. I'm calling on you to reinforce these protections by passing #PaidLeaveForAll and ensuring a $50B child care stabilization fund to #SaveChildCare is included in the final version of the next relief package TODAY.

SHAREABLE GRAPHICS

Link to folder with more shareables



Shareable 1 Link



Shareable 2 Link





Shareable 3 Link



Shareable 4 Link



Shareable 5 Link

Shareable 6 Link

HOST A DISCUSSION

Now's the time to continue spreading the word about why child care is essential. Speaking with parents, child care providers, your family, friends, and even coworkers can be a great way to build solidarity. General child care talking points can be found here

Getting Started

- **Brainstorm the goal of your event and who to invite**
    - First, determine your goal. Below are some helpful questions:
        - Is the goal to build solidarity among parents to call elected officials?
        - Is the goal storytelling to spark more people to care about this crisis and take action?
        - Do you want to start small by hosting a discussion with loved ones or community members to share their stories?
        - Do you want to go big and host local or national experts to inform your community?
    - Remember, hosting a discussion or event helps to encourage individuals to see child care as a collective responsibility. It also builds knowledge and the needed will to advocate for passing child care policies at the local and national level to support working families.
    - If you already know people in your community doing work around this, partnering with them can also be a great way to build solidarity and share ideas.
- **Pick a digital venue**
    - Think about what kind of digital platform best suits your needs. For example, a webinar may be best suited for an expert panel but a Zoom call

or Google Hangout may be better for a roundtable discussion or informal talk.
    - You can also host your digital events on Instagram or Facebook Live to open up who is able to access the event and let your audience engage with you in real time.
    - Consider whether or not you'd like to record your event for those who can't make it. Remember to ask attendees for consent.
- **Think About Ways to Engage your audience**
    - Questions to consider:
        - Do you want this to be more open ended and organic?
            - Depending on the event goals, you can ask your guests to share stories in a roundtable discussion.
            - You might still want to come up with some prompts to keep the conversation flowing.
        - Do you want this to be more structured?
            - Feel free to build off of our sample agenda below.
            - If it's an event with individuals who are knowledgeable on the state of child care, consider a structured panel with community experts discussing working family policies
            - If your event is larger and does it include elected officials? Consider preparing questions to ask them to determine where they stand on work family issues.
        - Will there be a call to action? Will you have a follow-up Member of Congress call party? Let participants know.
- **Promotion and Follow up**
    - Always be sure to let participants know about the event ahead of time.
        - If it's a small event, a phone call, email, or text might do.
        - If it's a large event, make sure to promote it on social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Linkedin.
            - Feel free to use the graphics below to help promote your event or create your own.
        - For mid to large events, create an RSVP event invite, provide call-in information, and send reminder emails 1 week, and 1 day out from the event.
    - Make sure you collect emails and names so you can follow up with more resources after the event and activate your audience to take action.
    - After the event, send a thank you to your guests and let them know you can be a resource if they'd like to follow-up

Sample Agenda (1 hour)

(Be sure to have a sign-in sheet and collect participant emails/contact information to follow-up with participants and audience members)

[Name & Congressional Information]

DATE

TIME

LINK/LOCATION

A Conversation on the Child Care Crisis During the Coronavirus Pandemic

1. **Introductions**
    a. Invite all participants to introduce themselves to the group
        i. This can include a simple ice breaker, like stating one word for how everyone is feeling. This allows participants to learn more about each other and gauge one another's energy.
2. **Setting the Stage**
    a. Talk about why you've convend the group
3. **Moderated conversation** (Below are suggested questions, but remember to consider your goals for the event and adapt the questions as needed.)
    a. **To parents:**
        i. What is your current child care arrangement?
            - How is this different from before the pandemic and how has this changed throughout the pandemic?
        ii. How much can the parents here afford to pay for child care? Weekly, monthly, annually?
            - How do you do that? What hard decisions do you have to make?
        iii. What do you like about your current child care situation?
        iv. What do you wish you could change about your current child care situation?
        v. What would you like to see your elected officials do to help?
    b. **To provider:**
        i. How have you navigated the realities of this pandemic?
        ii. How many of you make enough to make ends meet? Anyone have a second job? How has this changed during the pandemic?
        iii. If you are still working, how do you feel going to work every day?
        iv. What do you wish more people knew about your job?
        v. What would you like to see your elected officials do to help?
    c. Next Steps/Closing Remarks

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Virtual Congressional Meeting Toolkit (NAEYC)
- Voters Overwhelmingly See Child Care Relief as Indispensable to America's Economic Recovery (FFYF/CAP)
- Without Child Care, the COVID-19 Pandemic is Forcing Millennial Moms Out of the Workforce (CAP)
- Costly and Unavailable: America Lacks Sufficient Child Care Supply for Infants and Toddlers (CAP)
- From the Front Lines-- The Ongoing Effects of the Pandemic on Child Care (NAEYC)
- Coronavirus Pandemic Could Lead to Permanent Loss of Nearly 4.5 Million Child Care Slots (CAP)
- Why We Need $50 billion in Pandemic Child Care Relief: A State-by-State Estimate (CLASP/NWLC)
- The Coronavirus Will Make Child Care Deserts Worse and Exacerbate Inequality (CAP)
- Survey: Vast Majority of Voters Support Financial Assistance for America's Child Care Industry to Address COVID-19 Impact (CCAoA)
- Child Care Relief state fact sheets (Child Care Relief)