



April 8, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC  
20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer,

The Early Care Educators of San Francisco agree with national child care and education leaders' request for "significant attention to and investment in the child care and early learning sector" as Congress works on additional COVID-19 economic relief packages.

The COVID-19 health care crisis has revealed child care as part of the essential work needed to be able to provide health care, food, and the basics required to sustain are community during the crisis. Child care and education is equally instrumental to our return to a strong economy and vital community—for business to regain capacity, and the one-third of workforce members who have children to be able to return to their jobs, the child care and education system must remain intact.

As we learned in the economic downturn of 2008, child care and education centers and family child care homes operate on a thin margin. In the San Francisco Bay Area we only recently returned to pre-recession funding levels—and educator shortage due to long term underfunding is still critical. Child care and education centers and family child care sites can not sustain a prolonged closure without significant economic supports, including ongoing funding to retain educators currently working.

While Congress has taken some action to provide immediate, short-term relief to the child care and education system, more will be needed in the coming weeks and months to provide the needed supports to our essential workforce, and to ensure a child care and education system is in place as we rebuild after the crisis. To this end, Congress must act by:

- Investing at least \$50 billion in the child care system
  - To fund child care centers and family child care so they can continue to cover educator wages and health care, retain staffing, and sustain programs for the duration shelter in place and physical distancing is necessary.
  - To fund the current need of providing services to the *essential workforce* with the safety measures needed, including very low ratios, hazard pay, personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies to ensure the safest possible environment for the children, their families, and child care educators. *Re-opening group child care & education must be considered*

*with the same thoughtfulness as TK-12 schools and colleges. Any group care and education comes with risks, and physical distancing is most difficult with infants, toddlers, and young children.*

- *We support NAEYC's statement on Child Care in Crisis, and reaffirm their caution, "This is not a time to suspend or eliminate licensing rules or stand up new programs that will put our children, families, and communities at risk."*
- To prepare to reopen with the higher remuneration and respect deserved, along with the adequate sick leave, testing, safety protocols and protections that will be needed to safely provide child care and education as coronavirus continues to runs its course, and in preparation for any future outbreaks.
- Funding local and state governments to enable them to subsidize the programming needed to sustain their communities, including addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, black, brown, and undocumented individuals.
- Supporting families, that is, those supporting dependents, including boosted family and sick leave.
- Enhancing workforce supports, including supplementing small business loans that forgive continued wage payments and health care coverage; disseminating small business loans through community banks to extend accessibility; and continuing wage loss programs such as unemployment and direct payments to individuals.
- Suspending rent payments, and covering the cost to small property owners.

Early childhood education programs are essential for the millions of children and families they serve, and are particularly crucial during this emergency public health and economic crises. Low- and moderate-income families will be hardest hit from long-term closures. Our success is contingent upon receiving the robust investment communities need, as well as taking necessary steps and precautions needed to abate COVID-19. We urge lawmakers to act swiftly to allocate substantial emergency flexible funding directly to the child care and early learning systems, and those caring for dependents in this country.

Sincerely,



On behalf of  
Early Care Educators of San Francisco