



Bipartisan Legislation in the 118th: Multiple Pieces to Tackling the Child Care Puzzle

Access to high-quality early learning and child care remains the backbone of our nation's economy. For working families, ensuring that their children are safe and well cared for is a necessity, and employers rely on a workforce that can access child care. Crucial federal investments that support early learning and care programs have made meaningful differences in the lives of children and families for generations. Yet, too many families still struggle to access quality, affordable care, impacting parents' ability to go to work and in turn, impacting the broader economy.

Recognizing the tremendous needs of American children, working families, employers, and child care providers, Congress in recent years has taken an unprecedented interest in finding bipartisan solutions to challenges in early learning and care. Increasing access to quality, affordable child care remains a unifying issue with strong bipartisan support, which is important in crafting sound, long-lasting solutions. While Congress has put forward numerous early learning and care proposals, below are a selection of bills that have been proposed by both Democrats and Republicans, who identified solutions to support working families, improve the early learning and care workforce, elevate quality, increase access and affordability, and strengthen existing programs. These proposals range from broad to targeted and highlight the complex needs facing families, children, and providers, specific to early education and care.

The Problem: Parents Can't Find or Afford Quality Child Care

Solutions:

- ***Child Care Investment Act (H.R. 4571 - Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-CA), Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R-OR))***
This bill helps parents locate and offset the high cost of child care by expanding the employer-provided child care credit, doubling the amount of money that can be saved by a family in a Dependent Care Assistance Plan to cover child care expenses up to \$10,000 annually, and improving the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC) by increasing the current rates so that a family with two children would be eligible to get up to \$3,000 in credits for child care expenses as well as make the credit fully refundable and indexed to inflation, among other changes.
- ***Child Care Workforce and Facilities Act (S. 268 - Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK))***
This bill provides competitive grants to states to support the education, training, or retention of the child care workforce in addition to building, renovating, and expanding child care facilities in areas experiencing shortages. This would help to increase child care supply.
- ***After Hours Child Care Act (S. 976 - Sen. Todd Young (R-IN), Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-NH), H.R. 3639 - Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-IA), Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR))***
This bill helps more working families to access care by amending CCDBG to establish and expand child care programs for parents who work nontraditional hours through a competitive grant pilot program. This would include supporting on-site child care programs at workplaces.



- ***Improving Child Care for Working Families Act (H.R. 1421 - Rep. Kim Schrier (D-WA) and Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA))***
This bill increases the amount of pre-tax income families can set aside for the Dependent Care Assistance Plan (DCAP) from \$5,000 to \$10,500 to help offset the high cost of child care.
- ***Child Care Assistance for Maternal Health (H.R. 5581 - Rep. Jennifer McClellan (D-VA) & Rep. Nancy Mace (R-SC))***
This bill establishes a federal grant program to support mothers and families during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period by increasing access to short-term child care.
- ***Expanding Child Care in Rural America Act (S. 1867 - Sen. Brown (D-OH), Sen. Braun (R-IN), Sen. Smith (D-MN), H.R. 3922 - Rep. Gluesenkamp-Perez (D-WA), Rep. Tracey Mann (R-KS))***
This bill establishes the "Expanding Childcare in Rural America Initiative," which directs the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development (RD) to authorize and prioritize projects that address the availability, quality, and cost of child care in agricultural and rural communities through several grants and loans programs.

The Problem: Workforce Shortages and Slim Margins Leave Child Care Providers Struggling to Stay Open

Solutions:

- ***Early Educators Apprenticeship Act (H.R. 1834 - Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY), Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA), S. 236 - Sen. Todd Young (R-IN), Sen. Bob Casey (D-PA), Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV))***
This bill works to build the early educator pipeline and expand the workforce by establishing a three-year grant program through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for states to develop, administer, and evaluate a registered apprenticeships (RA) program that provides early educators with the knowledge and skills required to deliver high-quality early learning and care.
- ***Small Business Child Care Investment Act (S. 673 - Sen. Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA), H.R. 2602 - Rep. Susie Lee (D-NV), Rep. Pete Stauber (R-MN), Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA), Rep. Maria Salazar (R-FL))***
This bill supports child care providers, many of whom operate on razor thin margins, by amending the Small Business Investment Act to specify "nonprofit child care providers" are deemed to be a small business concern, allowing them to receive SBA loans.
- ***Head Start for Our Future Act (S. 2938 - Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), H.R. 656 - Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-TX), Rep. John Moolenaar (R-MI), Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA), Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK))***
This bill amends the Higher Education Act of 1965 to make jobs in early childhood education eligible as community service under the Federal Work-Study Program. This bill is intended to help to grow the early learning and care workforce.



- ***PREP Act (S. 2369 - Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA))***
This bill amends the Higher Education Act to address teacher and principal shortages, including early childhood educators, particularly in rural communities, and increase teacher diversity. Eligible partnerships focusing on early childhood educator preparation must include efforts to increase compensation for those who attain associate or baccalaureate degrees in early childhood education.
- ***HEADWAY Act (S. 2832 - Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA), Sen. Mike Braun (R-IN))***
This bill seeks to ease workforce shortages by permitting some Early Head Start classroom teachers to be in the process of earning their CDA credential while retaining the requirement that at least one teacher in every classroom is fully credentialed with at least a CDA. The bill also requires mentorship within the program to facilitate and ensure continued progress toward earning the CDA.
- ***SEED Act (S. 3424 - Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO), Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME))***
This bill expands the tax deduction for the expenses of elementary/secondary teachers to include early childhood teachers, so that early educators do not have to shoulder additional costs to provide children with the supplies they need.

The Problem: A Lack of Access to Child Care is Impeding Economic Growth

Solutions:

- ***Care is Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Act (H.R. 5825 - Rep. Nikema Williams (D-GA), Rep. Nancy Mace (R-SC))***
This bill aims to foster the connection between economic development and child care by requiring Economic Development Districts to show in their Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies how they will increase access to care-based services, including child care.