

Members of Congress Discuss Child Care Challenges in Committee Hearing

In June 2025, the House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education held a hearing to discuss how Congress can address child care availability and affordability to better support working families, employers, and the overall economy.

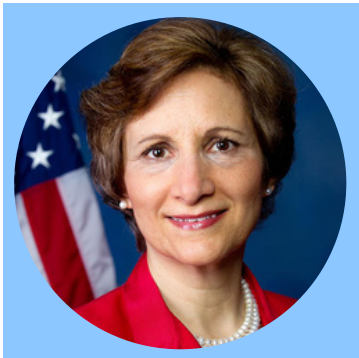
The hearing, entitled “Child Care and the American Workforce: Removing Barriers to Economic Growth,” featured child care experts, researchers, and community leaders who all spoke to the critical role of affordable, reliable, high-quality child care in unlocking the full potential of the U.S. economy by ensuring working parents who wish to re-enter the workforce have the child care they need to be able to do so. Members on both sides of the aisle demonstrated broad agreement that Congress must support working families and the economy by ensuring parents have options and access to affordable, available, quality child care through federal investments.

Learn more about what Members of Congress had to say during the hearing:



Rep. Kevin Kiley (R-CA)

“Child care can be very expensive to provide, plain and simple. The high standards in health, safety, and caregiver to child ratios are necessary to provide for the needs of our children and give parents peace of mind, but they come at a significant cost. There is also a threshold beyond which parents can no longer afford to pay for care, which explains why some parents—particularly moms—have to leave the workforce, to the detriment of businesses, local economies, and families.”



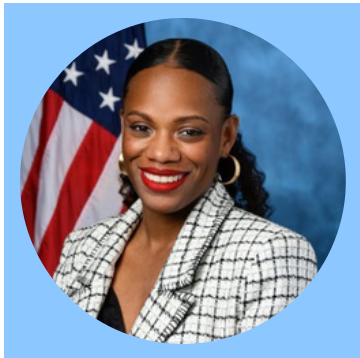
Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)

“We know that investing in child care helps address the needs of children, families, and providers—and we also know it’s a good investment... for every \$1 invested in early childhood programs, there’s up to a \$17 return in reduced need for public assistance, increased earnings, and better educational outcomes. We know these programs work, yet we still struggle to fund them. I’m grateful that solving the child care crisis is a bipartisan issue. Democrats and Republicans alike understand the importance of caring for our nation’s children.”



Rep. Burgess Owens (R-UT)

“Access to affordable childcare is giving parents the flexibility needed to participate in the workforce. over several years, I’ve been a champion of the Child Care and Development Block Grant and the flexibility that it provides.”



Rep. Summer Lee (D-PA)

"We need more federal investment in child care, because existing programs are quite frankly not cutting it. Less than a third of children in my district receives subsidies that they're eligible for. That leaves almost 7000 children in my district, whose families cannot afford childcare and who cannot access subsidies. Meanwhile, the average childcare worker in my district makes less than \$30,000 per year."



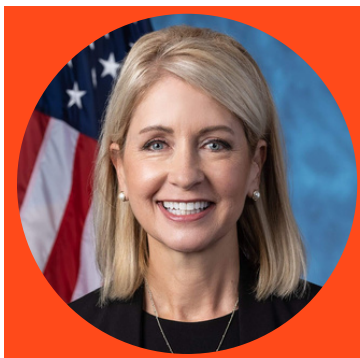
Rep. Ryan Mackenzie (R-PA)

"It's great to be talking about such an important issue for working families and also the way that it impacts our economic growth here in America. It's also great to see that there is broad bipartisan recognition of the problem. I think everybody is recognizing the problem for working families to access quality and affordable child care, the barrier that it creates for people going back into the workforce after they have their child, and also the challenges that we face with child care providers."



Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-CT)

"Child care is essential for parents to get an education or enter the workforce. As we all know, the child care industry was dramatically impacted by the pandemic. Between February 2020 and April 2020, the number of employees in child care centers abruptly dropped from just over 1 million workers to around 670,000."



Rep. Mary Miller (R-IL)

"In my district, the median household income is just over \$70,000 and child care costs between \$8,000 and \$10,000 per child. In many cases, the average income can't sustain two children and child care. It's just not feasible Ultimately, our goal should be to make child care so affordable that parents don't have to decide between caring for their children or working multiple jobs."



Rep. Glen "GT" Thompson (R-PA)

"As someone who represents a third of the landmass of Pennsylvania – very rural counties, 18 counties... there are kids that we need child care for, but are there enough kids for someone in order to be able to... successfully and financially put together a child care operation that works?"

About First Five Years Fund

The first five years last forever. At First Five Years Fund, we work to protect, prioritize, and build bipartisan support for quality child care and early learning programs at the federal level. Reliable, affordable, and high-quality early learning and child care can be transformative, not only enhancing a child's prospects for a brighter future but also bolstering working parents and fostering economic stability nationwide.