



national  
collaborative  
for infants  
& toddlers

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July 2025

# August Recess

Congress: Protect and Prioritize Child  
Care and Early Learning!

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# Today's Speakers



Anne Hedgepeth  
Child Care Aware  
of America



Daniel Hains  
Nat'l Association for  
the Education of  
Young Children



Branden Reis  
Nat'l Collaborative for  
Infants & Toddlers



Joseph O'Hern  
First Five Years Fund

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# Time For Recess!

**2025**

- July 28-August 1 (House only)
- August 4-29
- September 22-26
- October 13-17 (Senate only)
- November 10-14
- November 24-28
- December 22-31



# Agenda

## **State Of Play**

Child Care and Early Learning: Where we are, what we need, and why August Recess is critical to our strategy.

## **Advocate Voices**

Advocate voices are essential: How to organize your message (and make the ask!)


## **Meeting Tips**

How to win your meeting: Getting a strong message across to staff and members before, during, and after a meeting.

## **Tactics That Work**

Highlight Early Learning and Child Care: Site visits, town halls, roundtables, and much, much more.

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# State Of Play



# Recess Goals

## Long Term

Build Relationships  
– Members, Staffers

## Now

Create support for  
child care/early  
learning funding.

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# What It All Means

## WHAT IT MEANS

Work on multiple fronts, on offense and on defense.

Follow a “Yes, and...” and “All Of The Above” strategy.

Seize all opportunities to provide more support for families with young children.

Protect programs and policies from elimination or cuts.

## WHAT IT DOESN'T

Wins in one area will not mean we've "solved" child care – we still need stronger funding, policies across the board.

Appropriations is a separate opportunity, distinct from the recent reconciliation (OBBA) bill.

We are keeping an eye on the Administration, HHS, and state activity, but this August is focused on Congress and what Members can do.

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# In A Nutshell

- It's a struggle for millions of hard-working American families to **find and afford** the quality child care they need.
- Robust **federal funding** for early learning and care programs is essential.
- Congress is currently making decisions on funding through the **Appropriations** process.
- They are also **at home through August** to connect with constituents, making this the prime time to get them focused on child care.
- It is important to build support for these programs by urging Members of Congress to **protect and prioritize funding** for child care and early learning programs.




# How Appropriations Works: 2025

**NOW-SEPT 30:** House and Senate write Appropriations bills, making decisions on how much funding programs will have.



**SEPT 30:** House and Senate vote and either a) pass the FY2026 budget OR b) pass a “Continuing Resolution” through the end of the year (December 2025).



**DECEMBER:** If still needed, the House and Senate vote and either a) pass a spending bill to fund programs through 2026 OR b) pass a “Continuing Resolution” through a later date.

# — The Programs



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**Child Care and Development Block Grants:** Provides funding for states to subsidize child care for lower income families.

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**Head Start:** Provides early learning, nutrition, medical care and family services for children in poverty.

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**PDG B-5:** Grants help states become more efficient and effective in coordinating programs and collecting data.

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**IDEA Parts B and C:** Early intervention, special education, and related services for children with disabilities.

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**CCAMPIS:** On-campus child care services for students.

# Support - General

[CCAoA Poll](#)  
[Full Data](#)

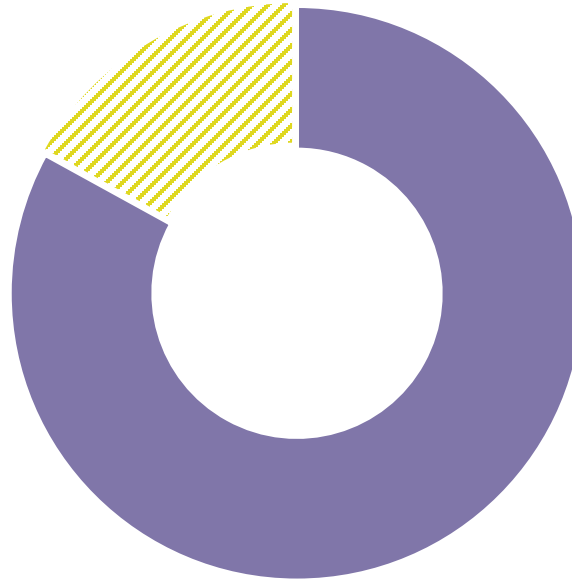


**Overall** support for increased funding for child care/early learning



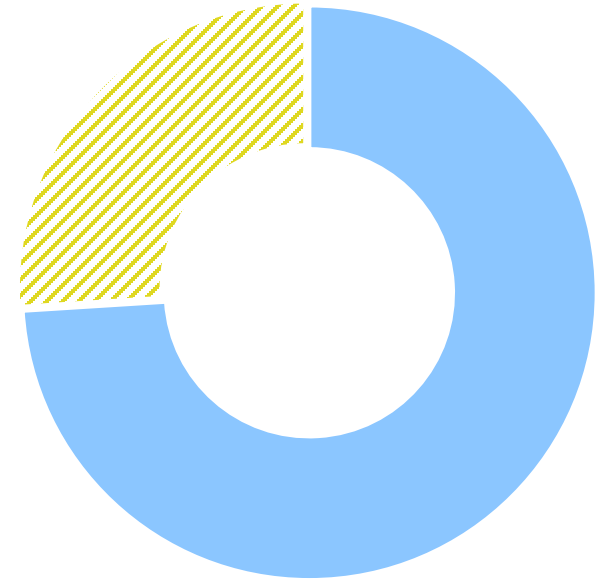
■ 74% Support

**Parents** in small town communities support increased funding.



■ 83% Support

**Parents in rural communities** support for increased funding



■ 74% Support

## Support – The Hill

Every year, members sign “Dear Colleague” letters showing support for funding.

For FY2026, **285 Members of Congress** called for increased funding for federal early childhood education and care programs including **238 Democrats** and **47 Republicans**.



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# Voices Matter



# The Power of Advocate Voices

- Build support during a key strategic time.
- Strengthen relationships with staff that will build support in the future.
- Highlight an important issue for media, stakeholders, influencers.



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# What Staffers Are Thinking

1

How does this specifically impact my state?

2

Do people in my state actually care about this?

3

Thanks for the info but...so what? What exactly do you want me/**my Boss** to do about this right now?

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# The Ask

Please **protect and prioritize** funding for **child care and early learning** in the FY2026 Appropriations package.

- Child Care and Development Block Grants
- Head Start
- Preschool Development Grants, Birth-5
- IDEA Part C, IDEA Part B
- CCAMPIS



# Invite Members To See Kids In Action!



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# Customize Your State/District Data



FFYF  
State Fact  
Sheets



NAEYC  
State Survey



FFYF  
Head Start  
Maps



CCAoA  
State Cost,  
Supply



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# Meeting Tips



# Set It Up – Find The Office

- Find your Member's website.
- Click on "Contact."
- Find the district office nearest you.
- Call the office and ask for a meeting or if there are any upcoming town halls.

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## Office Locations

### AUGUSTA

40 Western Ave, E.S. Muskie Federal Building, Room 412  
Augusta, Maine 04330  
Phone: (207) 622-8292

[Get Directions](#)

### BANGOR

202 Harlow St., Suite 20350  
Bangor, ME 04401  
Phone: (207) 945-8000

[Get Directions](#)

### BIDDEFORD

227 Main Street  
Biddeford, ME 04005  
Phone: (207) 352-5216

[Get Directions](#)

### PORTLAND

1 Pleasant Street Suite 4W *(Entrance on Center Street)*  
Portland, ME 04101  
P: (207) 245-1565

[Get Directions](#)

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# Set It Up – Reinforce The Ask

**WHO:** Hello! My name is **Christy** and I'm a constituent from **Bangor**.

**ASK – MEETING:** I'd love to come by with a few of my colleagues to meet with you during the August recess to talk about the importance of federal funding for child care and early learning programs here in **Maine**.

**TWO LINES OF INFO:** Working families in our state urgently need support so they can find and afford child care. **As an employer, this is incredibly important as I try to recruit and retain a reliable workforce.**

**ASK - TOPIC:** I am hoping the **Senator** will lend his support to protecting and prioritizing funding for child care and early learning in the FY2026 Appropriations package.

**CLOSE:** I'm happy to work with you on dates and times that could work. Thank you!

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# In The Meeting



**Keep it short!** Really short.

**Be patient and flexible.** You may meet with Members; you may also meet with staffers (who are key to getting things done!)

**Make it local. Make it personal.** You're the expert in what you know and how this issue has an impact in your state.

**Invite them to see a program in person.** The best way to engage Members and Staff is to make it interactive!

**And remember to make the ask!** Protect and prioritize funding for child care and early learning in the FY2026 spending package!

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# Follow Up Is Key

## Send a Thank You email



Reinforce “The Ask”!

Invite them to see child care in action!

## Leverage social media



Share the photo from your visit and tag your Member.

Say thank you and reinforce the ask.

## Tell us how it went!



Your intel is an important – please shoot us a note and let us know how it went!

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# Thank You!

Dear **Senator/Staff**:

**THANKS, WHEN, WHAT:** Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on May 17. I enjoyed talking with you about the impact child care and early learning programs have in our district

**THE ISSUE:** As we discussed, affordable child care is so important for our district. Parents need peace of mind that their children are safe and cared for while they are at work or school. Employers need it to build a stable, dependable workforce. And little ones benefit from the chance to build cognitive and social skills during their first five years.

**THE ASK:** I hope you will protect and prioritize funding for federal child care and early learning programs, such as the Child Care and Development Block Grants and Head Start, in next year's budget. If you have time, I'd love to show you around our program so you can see our work with **Alabama's** youngest generation in action!

**THANKS PART 2:** And thank you for your time and leadership on this issue.



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# Tactics That Work



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# Site Visits



Invite members to tour a local child care center or Head Start.

Set up time to talk to teachers, providers, parents.

Highlight all the great stuff your program is doing...and how more funding would help do more great stuff!

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# Roundtables



Invite Members and staffers to learn more about child care and early learning in your town by attending a roundtable.

Gather employers, parents, providers, educators and/or reporters to talk about child care in your community.

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# Media



Share your voice through Letters to the Editor or Op-Eds in your local paper.

Make sure to note Members by name, such “And I urge **Rep. XX** to protect and prioritize funding for child care programs in the FY26 budget.”

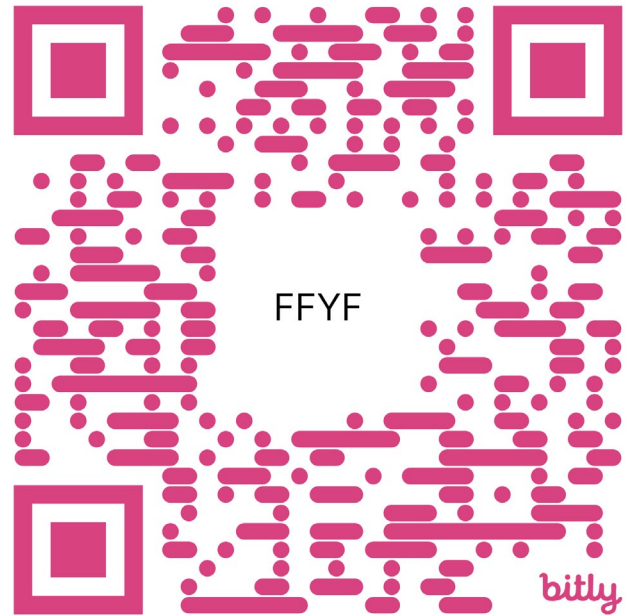
Check in with local bloggers, reporters, and podcasts on this topic.

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# Take Action. Spread The Word.



[Child Care Aware of America Recess Kit](#)



[First Five Years Fund Recess Kit](#)



[NAEYC Recess Kit](#)

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# Questions?

