

## APPROPRIATIONS: FY2024 Dear Colleague Letters

As House and Senate appropriations requests come to a close, an unprecedented number of House members from both sides of the aisle have signed onto Dear Colleague letters calling for increased funding for America's federal child care and early learning programs. Notably, both the House Democratic and Republican letters calling for increased funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) received more signatures than the previous year - a clear demonstration of the consistent, bipartisan support the program has enjoyed for decades.

"It's no surprise that Democrat and Republican lawmakers have come together to call for the clear prioritization to America's core early learning and care programs," said FFYF Executive Director Sarah Rittling. "To have such clear, cross-aisle agreement on any major issue is almost unheard of in today's ever-polarizing climate, but Members have long been steadfast in their support for investing in early learning to meet the needs of families, young children, and our economy. We look forward to working with Congressional appropriators to deliver much needed support to America's families."

Earlier this month, the First Five Years Fund (FFYF) led a coalition of 44 national early education advocacy organizations in calling for increased funding for federal early learning and care programs, to build upon the increases the programs saw last year. FFYF also hosted a widely attended bipartisan congressional briefing featuring a panel of experts and leaders in the early learning field, which offered Congressional staff insights about the importance of the core programs – and the need for robust funding to ensure their success. Across the country child care remains a significant challenge for working families and our economy - and Congress continues to hear it loud and clear. Late last year, the final FY2023 omnibus spending package prioritized more than \$2.8 billion in funding increases for core federal early learning and care programs. The most notable being a 30% increase in CCDBG funding, the primary federal child care assistance program, at a time when parents desperately need support.

Increasing funding for early learning and child care programs helps set more children on a path to achieve their full potential while also strengthening local economies, supporting working families, and responding to the real-world concerns of our nation's voters. This year, 6 separate "Dear Colleague" letters were circulated in support of increased funding for the core federal early learning and care programs:

### House of Representatives

- **FY24 Bipartisan Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Letter**
  - Led by Representatives Joaquin Castro (D-TX) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)
  - Letter to Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro urging the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to fund the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program at a level of at least \$500 million
  - Signed by 94 Representatives
  
- **FY24 Democrat Led Child Care & Development Block Grant Program (CCDBG) Letter**
  - Led by Representative Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)
  - Letter to Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro urging the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee to provide at least \$12.4 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).
  - Signed by 145 Democrats

- **FY24 Republican Led Child Care & Development Block Grant Program (CCDBG) Letter**
  - Led by Representative Burgess Owens (R-UT)
  - Letter to Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro urging the Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations Subcommittee to provide robust funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).
  - Signed by 36 Representatives
  
- **FY24 Democrat Led Head Start and Early Head Start Letter**
  - Led by Representative Jahana Hayes (D-CT)
  - Letter to Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro urging the Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations Subcommittee to provide \$17.47 billion for Head Start in FY 2024.
  - Signed by 166 Representatives
  
- **FY24 Republican Led Head Start and Early Head Start Letter**
  - Led by Representative Pete Stauber (R-MN)
  - Letter to Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro urging the Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations Subcommittee to continue funding Head Start at the strongest level the Subcommittee deems possible.
  - Signed by 24 Republicans
  
- **FY24 Senate Democrat Led Child Care & Development Block Grant**
  - Led by Senators Bob Casey (D-PA), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), and Tina Smith (D-MN)
  - Letter to Chairwoman Baldwin and Ranking Member Capito urging the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee to provide at least \$12.4 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), and to provide \$17.47 billion for Head Start in FY 2024.
  - Signed by 44 Democrats

## 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. Join us at [www.ffyf.org](http://www.ffyf.org).