

July 30, 2020

Senator Mike Crapo
239 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Crapo,

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring the well-being of Idaho children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are grateful for the passage of the three previous coronavirus relief packages by Congress. However, the much-needed emergency funding and policy provisions do not fully address the emerging crisis facing Idaho's child care industry.

Parents need access to affordable, high-quality child care to return and remain at work. Yet without significant investment, Idaho's damaged child care infrastructure will continue to be an obstacle to recovery. To avoid a deepening economic recession, we urge you to allocate substantial relief earmarked for the child care and early education sector with the following two priorities in mind.

1. **Child care providers who closed their doors – or are on the verge of closing their doors – because of the pandemic must receive financial support to remain open.** Direct financial relief is urgently needed to support Idaho's child care providers in re-opening and remaining open, including employing qualified staff and covering fixed operational costs, until tuition from parents can cover these costs.
2. **Providers must receive the necessary supplies, training, and guidance to provide safe, high-quality child care.** Adequate training and guidelines must be focused on protecting the health and safety of employees and children in their care. Support is needed to ensure all Idaho child care providers have personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning supplies, personnel to perform deep cleaning, and employee hazard pay.

The pandemic and resulting recession underscore the importance of the child care industry to the financial well-being of families and communities across the state. All-time high unemployment, coronavirus shutdowns, and health concerns have resulted in an increasing number of parents removing their children from child care settings. Child care providers have been left with the choice of either shutting their doors or incurring unsustainable financial losses.

A national survey found that nearly half of child care programs anticipated they would not survive a closure of more than two weeks without support.¹ Of the 132 child care providers from Idaho who responded:

- **One in three** (33 percent) would not survive closing for more than two weeks without significant public support to retain staff, pay rent, and cover fixed costs;
- **One in five** (20 percent) would not survive a closure of any length without public support;

¹ NAEYC (March 2020). "[Child Care in Crisis: Understanding the Effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic.](#)"

- **Almost half** (45 percent) have parents who cannot pay fees or copays and **over half** (54 percent) have lost income based on families' own inability to pay.

A recent national survey found that enrollment in child care is significantly down (67 percent).² Without financial support, four in five (82 percent) child care providers expect not to survive longer than a year. This essentially represents a collapse of the child care system as we know it.

While the long-term impact of the pandemic on child care could be devastating, the immediate impact is already harming families and providers in Idaho. We must take steps now to reduce the loss of additional child care providers, get those that have shuttered back open, and ensure all have the resources and supplies to remain open.

As a member of our state's Congressional Delegation, you are in the unique position to help Idaho families and communities in this time of crisis. We are here to support and assist you with further information regarding the needs of Idaho's child care industry, families, and the safety of our communities.

Sincerely:

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² NAEYC (July 2020). "[Holding On Until Help Comes: A Survey Reveals Child Care's Fight to Survive.](#)"

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