

Advocates to rally for child care on Capitol Hill April 25 ^[1]

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Source: PRN Newswire

Format: Article

Publication Date: 25 Apr 2017

AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

On April 25, Child Care Aware of America (CCAoA) will host child care advocates and parents from across the country on Capitol Hill to urge lawmakers to increase federal funding for early child care and education programs. This year, CCAoA's Family Advocacy Summit welcomes 80 family advocates who have experienced challenges with the child care system. On Capitol Hill, the message they hope to leave with Congress is that child care works.

In the United States 11 million children under age five are in some type of child care setting every week. On average, children spend 35 hours every week in child care. Studies repeatedly have shown that quality child care helps children enter school ready to learn.

Since 2008, CCAoA has brought parent leaders from across the country to champion child care legislation and funding on Capitol Hill. Some advocates are parents who have experience advocating for legislation, such as the landmark Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Reauthorization Act of 2014, and parents who are eager to learn more about the process. Participating advocates' personal experiences range from health and safety issues, to affordability and accessibility to quality child care. During the summit, families will meet and learn from campaign experts, state lawmakers, and parents who have successfully worked to pass child care legislation into law at the state level.

"As we near the end of the first 100 days of the new Administration, we are raising our collective voices on behalf of the millions of families struggling with child care issues in America," said Lynette M. Fraga, PhD., Executive Director of Child Care Aware® of America. "CCAoA advocates come from all corners of the country to share their stories with lawmakers and urge action. We believe that child care should be a national priority, akin to public education, fair taxes and equitable health care -- because when kids are left behind when it comes to child care, it contributes to academic achievement gaps, among other unequal outcomes later in their lives. We must keep this issue front and center if we are going to see this bipartisan issue move forward."

Parents, researchers, and child care advocates are calling on Congress to co-sponsor the "Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act of 2017" (H.R. 947/S.337), which would:

Provide up to 12 weeks of leave for working families

Enable workers to earn up to 66% of their monthly income while on leave

Cover workers in all companies, no matter size

Be administered through the newly created Office of Paid Family and Medical Leave

CCAoA advocates will also ask their representatives to co-sponsor the "Promoting Affordable Childcare for Everyone (PACE) Act of 2017," which would expand and enhance the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC) to reflect the realities of modern-day child care costs. The PACE Act would make CDCTC refundable and increase the credit rate, which would greatly benefit millions of working families struggling to pay their monthly bills as child care is the greatest expense after housing.

CCAoA requests a \$1.4 billion increase (over the FY 2016 level) for FY 2017 to ensure that nearly 217,000 children and families don't lose access to care, and also to help states meet the requirements of the 2014 CCDBG law. The CCDBG made historic opportunities available for parents and families in order to provide federal funding for child care services, quality activities, coordination of resources, state and tribal child care plans, research and technical assistance. The reauthorization takes these provisions a step further and defines health and safety requirements for child care providers and ensures parents have transparent information about the child care resources they can access.

To learn more about the Child Care Aware of America's advocacy efforts visit usa.childcareaware.org/childcareworks. Follow the Day on The Hill advocacy on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook using the #ChildCareWorks.

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