

3.2 million children may lose care if Congress lets pandemic-era funds expire ^[1]

To have the child care system we deserve, child care needs funding to make it accessible and affordable.

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AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Excerpts

It is grueling to be forced to choose between work and caring for one's child. Yet this is the position of countless families in communities across the country – and things are about to get worse.

On September 30, pandemic-era investments under the American Rescue Plan Act for child care will cease. When this happens, more than 3.2 million children will lose access to child care nationwide. Many early childhood education and care programs will close their doors or decrease availability when they run out of federal funds. The Century Foundation estimates 70,000 child care programs could end nationwide. This will impact countless parents and caregivers who will be unable to work without the federal subsidies for child care.

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It doesn't have to be this way. Congress and the administration can extend pandemic-era funding for early childhood education and care. We've seen what can happen when states adequately use these resources.

Here in Minnesota during this year's legislative session, our Kids Count on Us team won historic funding for child care. The legislature promised to invest \$300 million in early childhood education and care. Through advocacy, we also saved the pandemic-era grant program Great Start Compensation Supports, and it will now be a permanent ongoing fund for hiring and retaining early childhood educators.

This funding is meaningful because providers within our network have been able to encourage people to enter the early childhood field and retain them because they can pay them closer to the wages they deserve. This allows providers to honor the people who care for the most vulnerable among us.

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We know that all parents deserve quality, affordable and reliable child care, and all children deserve a safe place to be nurtured, educated and stimulated. We know what is possible with adequate investment.

Minnesota doesn't have to be an anomaly in the United States, but funding is required. Without an extension of pandemic funding for child care, many families will be left out in the cold.

Region: United States ^[3]

Tags: child care crisis ^[4]

funding ^[5]

investment ^[6]

early childhood education and care ^[7]

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