



Child Care Is Essential Act

Stabilizing the Child Care Sector and Supporting Providers to Safely Reopen and Operate

Child care providers are at the forefront of the nation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic yet have been among the hardest hit sectors. The *Child Care Is Essential Act* would provide grant funding to child care providers to stabilize the child care sector and support providers to safely reopen and operate.

Support for Struggling Child Care Providers

Creates a new Child Care Stabilization Fund: The bill creates a \$50 billion Child Care Stabilization Fund within the existing Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program.

Grant awards would be determined by providers' pre-COVID-19 operating costs and adjusted to reflect the additional cost of providing care due to the pandemic. Grants would be equitably distributed to eligible child care centers, home based child care providers, and family child care homes.

Providers could use stabilization grants for:

- Personnel costs, including premium pay, employee benefits, and employee salaries.
- Sanitization and cleaning, personal protective equipment, and other necessary equipment.
- Training and professional development related to health and safety practices.
- Fixed costs, including mortgage obligations, rent, utilities, and insurance.
- Mental health supports for children and employees.
- Modifications to child care services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Other goods and services necessary to maintain or resume operation of the child care program, or to maintain the viability of the child care provider.

Support for Child Care Workers

Requires employers to keep child care workers on payroll: Under the legislation, all providers would be required to continue to employ and pay their staff at the same compensation level as pre-COVID-19 as a condition of receiving stabilization grant funds. Moreover, employers can use stabilization grant funds to provide their employees premium pay.

Support for Working Families

Facilitates relief from copayments and tuition: Under the legislation, all providers would be required to provide families with relief from copayments and tuition as a condition of receiving stabilization grant funds.

Improved Safety of Child Care Facilities

Promotes health and safety through compliance with public health guidance: Under the legislation, open providers would be required to meet health and safety guidance from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and state and local authorities, and closed providers would have to provide an assurance that they will reopen their program when they are able to implement such guidance. Providers can use stabilization grant funds to purchase equipment and make modifications necessary to meet such guidance.