



## Cherise Billington | Washington



### Cherise's story

In 2014, Cherise Billington became a Parent Ambassador for the Washington State Association for Head Start and ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program). As a single mom of five, Cherise knows the value of quality child care and how difficult it can be to find, especially for her son with special needs. After fleeing a domestic violence situation, Cherise found herself in an extremely difficult point in her life: she needed to support her family, deal with the aftermath of domestic violence and her present circumstances, and find child care for her son that could accommodate his disabilities. Cherise advocates for mothers like herself, who find themselves in need of high-quality child care but without the resources to afford it. Through her training with the Washington State Association for Head Start and ECEAP, she learned how to share her story with her representatives.

Cherise is most passionate about advocating for child care for special needs children and families. Through her experience with her own son, she knows just how difficult it is to find child care that both meets the needs of children and is affordable to a single mother like herself.

**Child Care Stats in WA**  
**The cost of center care for 2 children in Washington is more than twice the annual cost of tuition at a four year college.**

**U.S. businesses lose approximately \$4.4 billion annually due to employee absenteeism as the result of child care breakdowns.**

**There are 306,651 children under the age of 6 in Washington who could be in need of child care.**

### Congressional Request: 2017

CCAoA is requesting a \$1.4 billion increase (over the FY 2016 level) for next year 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.

We ask that you 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

We also ask that you 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.