



## Deborah VanderGaast | Iowa



### Deborah's story

As a champion for child care, Deborah VanderGaast has worked on child care issues on the state level for several years. Deborah is a child care provider and has seen the need for high-quality and affordable child care for all families. In the past, she worked on legislative initiatives with her state representative, worked with legislative committee members, was recently a member of the community engagement committee of Early Childhood Iowa, and became a member on the state child care advisory panel. She helped create a new legislative proposal called "The Epinephrine in Schools Act" that was signed into law in 2015, and she is currently working on a bill to advance the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) regulations in Iowa.

In 2000, Deborah went to pursue nursing but struggled to find adequate child care for her daughter. While in center-based care, her daughter suffered from respiratory distress and was sent to the hospital. She was later diagnosed with severe asthma and the doctors told Deborah her daughter would have died if she had not been brought in. Since that traumatic experience, Deborah has dedicated her time to providing child care for children with special needs. Deborah strives to integrate her nursing skills with the needs of her child care center. She advocates for high-quality care for families with children who have special needs.

### Child Care Stats in IA

**The cost of center-based care for 2 children is more than 2 times 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.**

**Child care workers in Iowa make an annual average of \$18,930 (that's nearly than \$3,400 below the national average!).**

### 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.