



## Nichole Arnold | Florida



### Nichole's story

Nichole Arnold has spent several years focusing on early childhood education, and is committed to helping all children and families find affordable, high-quality child care. Her advocacy efforts began when her family struggled to find quality child care for their son. After a loss in their family, they did not have the support of a family sitter and lacked the income to afford many of the child care facilities in their community. Nichole and her husband juggled between affording child care and paying their bills each month. After much searching, the couple were able to find a child care provider that would fit their financial situation. The provider that met her budget and safety concerns ended up being the same location she herself attended 30 years ago.

Nichole believes that no parent should have to choose between providing quality care for their child and paying the bills of the household. However, she knows so many parents in the country are put in this situation every day. Nichole advocates for parents like her who are unable to afford quality and safe child care. As someone who has also been a provider, Nichole wants to see child care educators receive training on child development and earn better wages.

**Child Care Stats in FL**  
**The cost of full-time care in centers and home-based programs for infants is higher than 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 Florida make an annual average of \$21,210 (that's more than \$1,000 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.