



## Nicole Neal | New York



### Nicole's story

As a parent and child care worker, Nicole Neal knows the challenges of working in the child care field while trying to raise a family. She was first exposed to the high cost of child care while working as a child care assistant at age 18. In this position, she was paid very little for the responsibility of caring for young children. Years later, when she had her own child, she was shocked to learn the cost of a year in child care in her state is more expensive than the annual cost of college tuition. Nicole and her husband made the extremely difficult decision to put her career on hold in order to raise their child due to the high costs of care.

This decision has compelled Nicole to advocate for more affordable child care for families like hers, and families who choose to not work in order to care for their children. She also advocates for higher wages for child care workers because she is familiar with the difficulty of trying to raise a family on the low wages of an early education professional.

**Child Care Stats in NY**  
**The cost of infant care in New York is nearly twice as much as 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 880,791 children under the age of 6 in New York 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.