



Tara Zahner | Missouri



Tara's story

Tara Zahner, a parent of a child with special needs, learned to speak up for her son's caregiving needs. After a normal pregnancy, Tara noticed her son was having feeding issues at just four weeks old. At 6 weeks her son was no longer thriving, and at four months he began to have seizures. In the first year, her son had gone through multiple hospital stays with no diagnosis. It wasn't until he was a year-and-a-half old that they were finally given a rare diagnosis, with only 60 other documented cases of the disease around the world.

Since the diagnosis, Tara's world has changed. Her son was denied a place in a child care center due to his medical condition so Tara became her child's number one advocate – in health *and* early learning. Tara has been fighting for stronger technical and financial support to provide early childhood educators with the training and resources to equip them to handle children with special medical needs.

Child Care Stats in MO
The cost of infant care in Missouri is more expensive 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.

There are 288,837 children under the age of 6 in Missouri 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.