



## YaSena Caldwell | Missouri



### YaSena's story

YaSena "Sheena" Caldwell has a 2 year old daughter named Amajah. Sheena works full-time and is a single-mother. Having served as a legal guardian for 5 years to her nieces and nephews before Amajah was born, Sheena knows that high-quality early care is important. However since Amajah was born, Sheena has struggled to obtain it. Amajah has been cared for by 5 different child care providers ranging from licensed to unlicensed care. Uncertain of where to turn for help, Sheena has made difficult decisions on her own. Discovering that her urban neighborhood lacked high quality care options, Sheena uprooted her family to a suburban area in pursuit of improved care and educational opportunities. However, Sheena continues to struggle to obtain high-quality care due to its high cost, which represents a significant portion of her sole-earner income.

Sheena is an advocate for increased child care funding for single parents who cannot obtain high-quality care. Sheena also advocates for improved outreach to vulnerable families of young children, since all too often new parents don't know where to turn. She believes that outreach should be offered to mothers at the hospital as soon as a child is born. Sheena is inspired to lend her voice to children in her community who are not able to speak for themselves.

**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.