THE HISTORY OF CCDBG

Established in 1991, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is the primary federal grant program that provides child care assistance for families in need. CCDBG is administered to states in block grants. States use the program to subsidize child care for working families with low incomes. Most of this assistance is administered through vouchers or certificates, which can be used by parents to select the quality provider or program that works best for their family.

Congress reauthorized CCDBG in 2014 with overwhelming bipartisan support. The CCDBG Act of 2014 improved child care health and safety standards and provided funding to help make quality child care available to more families with low incomes. The 2014 law also mandated that states meet new requirements on comprehensive criminal background checks and disaster preparedness and response planning, among other critical improvements.

A JOB NOT FINISHED

Despite the reauthorization, Congress failed to provide sufficient funding to help states make quality child care available to millions of families that need it. Today, states use resources from other federal funding streams, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), to ensure families don’t lose critical access to child care.

The lack of adequate funding has hampered states’ ability to provide quality child care to working families. Currently, only 1 in 6 families who qualify for child care assistance receive it.

States continue to request and receive waivers from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to delay implementation of the new requirements, particularly background checks. Additionally, FY2017 saw the lowest number of children served by the grant in nearly 20 years.
WHY CCDBG MATTERS IN CONNECTICUT

In FY2018, Connecticut received a $14.2 million increase in CCDBG funding. This increase in funding will help low-income families working or participating in education and training programs with paying for child care. The state will also use the funds to fully implement the provisions of the CCDBG reauthorization law.

However, with the average cost of care currently rivaling or greatly exceeding the cost of college tuition in Connecticut, and over 157,000 children under age 6 with all parents in the workforce, more funding could greatly expand access to Connecticut’s subsidy program, Care 4 Kids. Since infant care can be as high as 12.6 percent of income for an average married couple and a staggering 48.7 percent of income for average single parents, most families cannot access child care without this subsidy. Each month, 2-1-1 Child Care, Connecticut’s resource and referral agency for child care services, makes numerous referrals to state and federally funded programs and to the child care subsidy program. Parents are provided information on program eligibility requirements and receive assistance on completing application forms.

Child care is essential to working families and CCDBG funding supports families’ ability to maintain employment and work toward economic stability. Connecticut child care providers are also supported through this funding with a living wage and access to professional development opportunities to build their knowledge and skills. Thus, increasing CCDBG funding will expand child care access and maintain the supply of child care providers in Connecticut.

HOW CONGRESS CAN HELP IN 2019

CCDBG remains underfunded, despite the funding increase in FY 2018 of $2.4 billion. While this funding allowed states to begin the intense work of revising their child care systems to help thousands of children and families gain access to high-quality care, it did not fully meet the critical need for high-quality child care.

In fact, even with CCDBG’s historic increase, federal funding for child care is still $1 billion less than FY2001 levels, when adjusted for inflation.

Given the population growth since 2001, it is clear that states still do not have enough funding to meet the needs of families.

For this reason, we ask that Congress increase CCDBG funding by an additional $5 billion in FY2020. This will help states meet the 2014 requirements and increase the number of children served.