

# CHILD CARE NOW!



February 10, 2004

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of families waiting for safe, affordable child care, we are writing to urge you to support the Snowe-Dodd amendment to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families reauthorization bill. This amendment adds \$6 billion in mandatory child care over five years, for a total of \$7 billion in much-needed funds in the final Senate bill. This \$7 billion is on top of baseline funding.

As the enclosed news stories and opinion pieces indicate, low-income families across the country who are working hard, yet still struggling to support their families, are not able to access child care assistance or are losing the help they currently receive that allows them to move toward self-sufficiency. From coast to coast, states facing grim budget pictures and no growth in federal support, already have cut corners to make up for the inadequate funding. Many states saw a significant jump in the number of low-income working families on their waiting lists for assistance in 2003, producing staggering waiting list totals. Only one in seven children eligible for child care assistance through the CCDBG currently receives it, and in some states low-income working families cannot even apply for assistance. According to the General Accounting Office, 23 states have changed their child care policies since 2001 such that fewer families are able to access help.

Here is a small sample of the stories that follow to illustrate this crisis:

Jacksonville, FL—"Kelli Gunter, a single mom who works full time, has been looking for help with day care for her son, Keilan. Gunter told Channel 4's Jim Piggot that she's doing all she can to keep off welfare, but she keeps getting turned down for child-care assistance... Funding for day care has not increased for the city since 2001... 'More people are living here, more people are needing support with child care, but the dollars have remained the same,' said Linda Lanier, the [Jacksonville Children's] commission's executive director."—*News4Jax.com*, January 5, 2004

Arizona—"Parents of nearly 8,000 children on a waiting list for help with child-care costs are making tough choices about what to do with their kids while they're at work. One in 11 families is leaving children home alone,... other parents are putting 9- and 11-year olds in charge of younger siblings,... A third of families had to change their work hours, and nearly one out of eight had to quit jobs because of the high costs of child care."—*The Arizona Republic*, January 14, 2004

Guaranteeing that families who receive welfare cash assistance, or those who are transitioning off of welfare, get the child care help they need to find and keep a job is critical to these families' independence. However, low-income working families who are not receiving TANF, yet who are still struggling to provide for their families and remain self-reliant, cannot be overlooked in this debate. Welfare reform will not be *truly* successful until these families get the child care help they need to go to work knowing that their children are safe and well cared for.

Without the additional child care funds in the Snowe-Dodd amendment, the bill reported out by the Senate Finance Committee would lead to 430,000 children losing child care assistance by 2008, given the rising costs of providing care and increased demand from higher work requirements on TANF recipients. American parents working to support their families should not be asked to sacrifice their children's welfare. Please strongly support and cast your vote in favor of the Snowe-Dodd amendment when the TANF bill is debated by the full Senate.

Sincerely,

American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences  
American Association of University Women  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Psychological Association  
Americans for Democratic Action  
Associated Early Care and Education, Inc.  
Business and Professional Women/USA  
Camp Fire USA  
Center for the Child Care Workforce  
Center for Women Policy Studies  
Central Conference of American Rabbis  
Child Care Law Center  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children's Defense Fund  
Church Women United  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Commission for Women's Equality, The American Jewish Congress  
Community Coordinated Child Care, Inc.  
Council for Exceptional Children  
Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children  
Early Childhood Policy Research  
Easter Seals  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Food Research and Action Center  
General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church  
Generations United  
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America  
I Am Your Child Foundation  
IDEA Infant and Toddler Coordinating Association  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Lutheran Services in America  
NA'AMAT  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Association for Family Child Care  
National Association for Regulatory Administration  
National Association for the Education of Young Children  
National Association of Commissions for Women  
National Association of School Psychologists  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Black Child Development Institute  
National Black Police Association  
National Child Care Association, Inc.  
National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers  
National Community Education Association

National Council of Jewish Women  
National Education Association  
National Head Start Association  
National Indian Child Care Association  
National Institute on Out-of-School Time  
National League of Cities  
National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association  
National Organization for Women - Legal Defense and Education Fund  
National Puerto Rican Coalition  
National Recreation and Park Association  
National School-Age Care Coalition  
National Women's Law Center  
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
Presbyterian Church (USA) Washington Office  
Quality Care for Children  
RESULTS  
Service Employees International Union  
Teaching Strategies, Inc.  
The Arc of the United States  
The Children's Foundation  
The Episcopal Church, USA  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Unitarian Universal Association of Congregations  
United Cerebral Palsy Association  
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Food and Commercial Workers International Union  
United States Conference of Mayors  
United Way of America  
United Auto Workers International Union  
USA Child Care  
Voices for America's Children  
Wider Opportunities for Women  
Women Employed  
Women of Reform Judaism  
YWCA of the USA