

April 18, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.  
Secretary U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
200 Independence Ave SW Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

On behalf of the undersigned child care advocates, child care providers, parents, faith leaders, health organizations, and labor leaders, we write to express serious concerns about your Administration's recent actions that will undermine the federal government's critical support for families and children and will especially impact essential child care and early learning services.

Recent reporting indicates that between 35 and 40 percent of staff were pushed out of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families (ACF). These reductions will have a direct impact on critical family support programs ranging from energy assistance to child welfare to TANF. We are particularly concerned that the staff terminations include about 50 percent of staff at the Office of Child Care and nearly that many at the Office of Head Start. This includes all staff in five regional offices (Region 1 located in Boston, Region 2 located in New York, Region 5 located in Chicago, Region 9 located in San Francisco, and Region 10 located in Seattle) which served 22 states, 6 territories and 467 Tribal governments—and have now been completely eliminated. No plan on how impacted state child care agencies and local Head Start programs in those areas would receive support was communicated to ACF grantees, and given the overall firings mean that all 50 states and D.C. will see significantly reduced support for these important federal early childhood programs. These firings and regional office closures will have a serious and harmful impact on our children, families, and providers, and we urge you to reverse course, reinstate fired employees, and clearly communicate with state and local providers and grantees about how you plan to ensure that services and supports do not continue to be impacted.

Federal staff in the ACF Office of Child Care (OCC), Office of Early Childhood, and Office of Head Start (OHS) play a vital role in ensuring the health and safety of child care and early education settings across the country, lowering the costs of care for families, supporting higher program quality for young children, and ensuring more families have access to the care and early education they need. They are also essential for the strong and accountable stewardship of \$25 billion dollars. The recent mass firings will harm millions of children, families, and communities across the country. Closing the offices that administer federal early childhood programs will make child care and early education less safe, less affordable, and less accessible for families and communities across the country—especially those who need it most. These actions deeply concern us as they will lead to higher costs for families and taxpayers, and they will undermine the wellbeing of children and our economy.

### **Firing Federal Workers Impacts our Families, Children, and Providers**

Millions of children and families and tens of thousands of child care and early education providers benefit from strong federal implementation and oversight of the Child Care and Development Fund

program. The ACF Office of Child Care sets, supports, and enforces minimum health and safety thresholds for child care in accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act. It also works to help states reduce families' child care costs, build the supply of child care so more families can find the care they need, and helps support child care providers sustain their vital small businesses. Firing federal staff for this office will undermine the wellbeing and economic security of families across the country.

Likewise, hundreds of thousands of children and families that participate in the Head Start program, across every state and nearly every community across the country, benefit from strong federal implementation and oversight of the Head Start program. The ACF Office of Head Start sets, supports, and enforces program standards in accordance with the Head Start Act. In rural parts of the country, Head Start may offer the only early childhood programs for families. Head Start programs rely on this support to deliver the high-quality early education and comprehensive services that ensures more children arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed and thrive. The health and development of these children and the well-being of their families will suffer as a result of aggressive federal staff reductions to the Office of Head Start. Weakening the federal administration and oversight of the Head Start program will cripple the effective administration of the program, potentially delaying grants and leading to gaps in services, undermining the federal efforts that ensure high quality classrooms and support services to families, and reducing federal monitoring essential for program integrity and strong stewardship of tax dollars.

### **Now is the Time to Act on Child Care**

As parents, teachers, caregivers and advocates, we call on your Administration and Congress to reinstate fired employees and reopen these regional offices. We urge you to recognize the essential role the ACF early childhood offices play in the health, safety, and development of millions of young children and the well-being and stability of millions of families.

Sincerely,

#### *National Organizations*

Child Care for Every Family Network

NWLC Action

Caring Across Generations

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Council for Professional Development

Small Business Majority

Home Grown

ZERO TO THREE

Children's Environmental Health Network

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

Caring Across Generations

AFT

YWCA USA

AFL-CIO

Family Values @ Work

National Organization for Women

Institute for Child Success  
All Our Kin  
First Children's Finance  
Region 9 Head Start Association  
Coalition on Human Needs  
MomsRising  
Children's HealthWatch  
National Indian Child Care Association  
InGlobal Learning Design  
Chamber of Mothers  
Children's Funding Project  
Montessori Public Policy Initiative/ILAEYC  
National Association for Family Child Care  
Child Welfare League of America  
Early Care & Education Pathways to Success (ECEPTS)  
First Focus on Children  
Futures Without Violence  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)  
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)  
Generations United  
Children's Defense Fund  
African American Health Alliance  
Child Welfare League of America  
Early Opportunities Initiative  
SECOM Resource Center

*State and Local Organizations*

Alliance for Quality Education  
Volunteers of America-Greater New York  
Parent Voices, California  
Family Forward Oregon  
Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks!  
Montessori Partnerships for Georgia  
Children's Action Alliance  
DC Action  
Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children  
Child Care Law Center  
Family Forward Oregon  
Alliance for Quality Education  
Empire State Campaign for Child Care  
Washington State Parent Ambassadors  
Pennsylvania Child Care Association  
VOICES for Alabama's Children  
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network  
Michigan League for Public Policy

Washington State Assn of Head Start and ECEAP  
Doctors for Early Childhood  
Illinois Head Start Association  
Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!  
Michigan Head Start Association  
Gretchen's House Child Care Centers  
NYS Network for Youth Success  
Children's Alliance  
Michigan AEYC  
South Carolina Program for Infant/Toddler Care  
Black Californians United for Early Care and Education  
Center for Inclusive Child Care  
Elders for Infants  
Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP  
Maine People's Alliance  
Make the Road Nevada  
Early Care & Learning Council  
Common Good Iowa  
NJ Communities United  
Children's Action Alliance  
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association  
CA Child Care Resource & Referral Network  
Children's Alliance  
Let's Grow Kids  
Clayton Early Learning  
Illinois Developmental Therapy Association  
Michigan's Children  
New Hampshire Chapter, Chamber of Mothers  
InterAgency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies  
Wisconsin Head Start Association  
Early Edge California  
First Up  
Oregon Child Care Providers Together Local 132 AFSCME  
Children's Aid Society  
Richmond Early Learning Center  
Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children  
Prevent Child Abuse Illinois  
We, the Village Coalition  
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children  
Advocates for Children of New Jersey  
Great Start Collaborative of Traverse Bay  
Groundwork Ohio  
Children's Institute (Oregon)  
Maine People's Alliance  
Illuminate Colorado  
Detroit Parent Network

Virginia Alliance of Family Child Care Association  
The Children's Partnership  
Chamber of Mothers Boston Chapter  
Women Employed  
Maine Children's Alliance  
Early Education Leaders Institute  
Connecticut Voices for Children  
PA Head Start Association  
Illinois Action for Children  
One Hope United  
South Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children  
Advance Illinois  
Chamber of Mothers - Minnesota Chapter  
Illinois Association of the Education of Young Children  
Everbloom Montessori  
Ohio Organizing Collaborative  
POWER-PAC IL  
Friends Center for Children  
Urban Sprouts  
Child Development Council  
Chamber of Mothers Philadelphia  
Detroit Champions for Hope  
Montessori American Indian Childcare Center  
Chamber of Mothers Chicago  
Vibrant Futures  
Pathways of Promise  
Gretchen's House Child Care Centers  
Children First  
Little Ones Learning  
Trying Together  
Seedlings to Sunflowers Non Profit Child Care and Family Center  
Child Development Council of Central New York, Inc.  
Southern Adirondack Child Care Network  
Advocates for Children of New York  
Child Care Council of Dutchess and Putnam, Inc.  
Cincinnati Chamber of Mothers  
Child Development Support Corporation  
Little Blessings Learning Center  
Family Enrichment Network, Inc.  
Hooked on Books Childcare, Inc.  
Counseling In Schools  
Adirondack Foundation  
Bushwick United Head Start  
Chamber of Mothers - Los Angeles Chapter  
Therapy and Learning Center  
Chamber of Mothers Seattle Chapter

Morning Star Child Care  
New York Center For Interpersonal Development Inc.  
Clayton Early Learning  
Child Care Network  
Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.  
Little Meadows Early Childhood  
Family of Woodstock, Inc.  
Children's Aid Bronx Early Childhood Center  
Richmond Early Learning Center  
Community Coordinated Child Care Association of the Upper Peninsula  
Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency  
YMCA of Greater NY  
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York  
Kennedy Children's Center  
First Things First Porter County  
NMIC  
New Yorkers United for Child Care  
YWCA of the Greater Capital Region  
YWCA McLean County  
YWCA Duluth  
Western New York Child Care Action Team  
YWCA Princeton  
Regional Preschool Partnership  
East Harlem Council for Human Services, Inc.  
Grand Traverse Baby Pantry  
WNY Women's Foundation  
The Coalition for Spiritual and Public Leadership  
ExpandedED Schools  
Unity House of Troy  
Milestones Early Learning  
Chamber of Mothers Virginia Beach Chapter  
YW Boston  
Enlace Chicago  
San Francisco Early Care & Education Advocacy Coalition  
Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY)  
Education Council Consortium  
Day Care Council of New York, Inc.

CC: The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Honorable Patty Murray, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee  
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee