

Invest in Child Care through Reconciliation: A Joint Letter from Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children and Southern Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children

July 27, 2022

Dear Senator Mark Kelly and Senator Kyrsten Sinema,

On behalf of our 782 combined members and the tens of thousands of early childhood professionals across Arizona, we urge you to **pass a reconciliation package that includes funding for affordable, quality child care and early learning** – to lower costs for Arizona families, keep programs open, and raise wages for Arizona’s early childhood providers.

Our members represent the diversity and strengths of the early learning workforce, including educators of children birth to age 8, those who support early childhood educators who do the important work of educating our children, and parents who rely on quality child care to get to work or school and contribute to their community.

The federal relief investments during the pandemic **provided a lifeline** to child care providers, helping them continue to support children and families in their communities. However, those funds are set to run out by 2024. If Congress fails to provide additional federal investments now in child care and early learning, the dire situation Arizona child care providers are facing will worsen as we reach a fiscal cliff of more than \$1 billion in 2024. More early childhood programs are likely to close, and more early childhood educators are likely to leave the field, exacerbating the challenges of already long waitlists, workforce shortages, and inequitable access and unaffordability for families.

Congress can and must act, with solutions that are available and on the table as part of the **streamlined early learning proposal** from Senators Kaine and Murray. **Congress must make the choice to invest in families, women, children, care, and education**, and to value the early learning workforce that provides this essential work.

Arizona’s children, families, and child care providers are counting on you and Congress to ensure the reconciliation package includes significant, sustained investments in child care and early learning to help our communities not only survive during the pandemic but to thrive beyond.

Thank you,



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