

National Children's Facilities Network

September 10, 2021

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member
House Committee on Ways and Means
1139 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Katherine Clark
United States House of Representatives
2448 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Neal, Ranking Member Brady, and Assistant Speaker Clark:

Thank you for all of your efforts to support the child care sector in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The resources provided to date have been essential to stabilizing providers and ensuring parents and children have access to safe, high-quality, and developmentally appropriate care. Still, our country faces serious child care health, safety, and supply challenges. States and localities do not have the resources they need to offer enough quality, affordable child care options to families, and hazardous conditions in many existing facilities pose serious health and safety obstacles to both children and the early care and education (ECE) workforce. **The [National Children's Facilities Network](#) enthusiastically supports the House Ways & Means Committee Build Back Better Act reconciliation language which recognizes the enormous need in every state to address the availability of child care facilities that promote access to care, health and safety.**

The allocation of \$15 billion for the acquisition, construction and renovation of child care facilities will improve the health and safety of indoor and outdoor spaces, enhance the quality of programs, and help expand the supply of our nation's early learning facilities. NCFN has been an ardent supporter of The Child Care Infrastructure Act (H.R. 1911), and applauds your efforts to build upon its approach. Despite the integral role that they play in supporting the quality and availability of child care for working parents, facilities are often omitted from the discussions about early care and education. Our nation's child care sector desperately needs dedicated federal funding for (1) the acquisition, construction, renovation and improvement of child care facilities, and for (2) technical assistance and capacity building resources to support providers through complex real estate and financial processes.

Prior to the pandemic, many families – particularly those in low-income and/or rural areas – already lacked access to stable, high-quality early care and education that parents need to maintain gainful employment, and children need to grow and thrive. In 35 states and congressional districts, including D.C., as many as [one in three children](#) with working parents lack access to child care in their community. Additionally, child care and early learning providers are consistently faced with making very difficult decisions about how to best allocate their limited resources to address facilities issues because they operate on razor-thin

profit margins that leave very little room to support debt on a property. The [Federal Reserve Bank of Minnesota](#) contends that prior to COVID, child care balance sheets weren't "pandemic-ready" despite strong demand for early care and education services. To accomplish the consensus goal of growing America's child care sector, we must have more child care facilities; we cannot just add more children to existing buildings.

Facilities-related health and safety challenges have long confronted the child care sector. Pandemic recovery has offered an incredible opportunity to adopt approaches that are specifically designed to strengthen the nation's physical child care infrastructure needs. A robust federal investment will go a long way toward promoting equitable pandemic recovery and stabilizing vulnerable urban and rural communities.

We are eager to be a resource to you during the legislative process. Please contact Nicole Barcliff, NCFN Co-Chair, LISC Policy Director at nbarcliff@lisc.org or (202) 739-9296 or Angie Garling, NCFN-Co-chair, LIIF Vice President, Early Care and Education Programs, at: agarling@liifund.org or 415-489-6116 Ext 316 with any questions about NCFN or our work in this space.

Sincerely,

The National Children's Facilities Network

About NCFN

NCFN is a coalition of nonprofit financial and technical assistance intermediaries and other interested stakeholders involved in planning, developing, and financing for high-quality ECE facilities and business models particularly in areas that have the least access to high-quality ECE and the highest concentrations of poverty. The members of the Network increase supply and help improve the quality of ECE by providing technical assistance and financing to address capital needs. NCFN also works to generate public, private, and philanthropic resources that support the development and improvement of early childhood facilities in underserved communities nationwide and collaborates with other children's advocacy leaders concerned with addressing the supply and quality of early childhood facilities across the country.