



The Build Back Better Act and Child Care: *Setting the Record Straight*

The [Build Back Better Act](#) (BBBA) was passed by the House of Representatives and is pending further action in the Senate. The House-passed bill includes game-changing investments in child care for infants and toddlers and prekindergarten (Pre-K) that will benefit many child care providers and working parents. Child care providers have been underpaid and under-appreciated for too long. The BBBA will create a more stable workforce, enhance child development to set up young children for lifelong success, and will give families the freedom to make a good living and choose the early care and early education for their children that works best for them, including family child care. The Senate needs to act as soon as possible to pass this transformative aid package for workers and families.

BBBA provides resources to cover the cost of professional development and training, but it does NOT require college degrees for child care providers.

BBBA does not require any new degree for child care providers. The child care and Pre-K requirements for providers are different. While the Pre-K section does require college degrees for new, lead teachers, there is an exception for those existing child care providers without degrees who are currently providing Pre-K. They will continue to be eligible. Further, it provides six years for new providers not currently providing Pre-K to earn a college degree to fulfill the new requirement. And remember, AFSCME members are eligible to participate in our free online college degree program to help in this process.

The BBBA does require providers to be licensed but allows three and a half years for license-exempt providers to participate. Further, it requires states to develop new licensing requirements with stakeholder engagement, including labor unions and child care providers, appropriate for child care providers in a variety of settings. Child care provider unions and allies will need to work with their state agency and lawmakers to update licensing requirements, so that they are reasonable and create an accessible pathway to become licensed.

The BBBA instructs states to ensure that family, friend, and neighbor care (FFN) and other providers who offer care during non-traditional hours are included in the tiered quality ratings system to determine compensation levels. Non-degreed providers are a critical part of the system, essential to enable full capacity.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) will continue under its existing rules to be available for FFN providers and others.

BBBA will provide financial assistance to lower child care costs for nine out of ten families with young children and make it free for many others.

The BBBA would dramatically expand the universe of families receiving child care assistance. On average, it will save families [\\$5,000 a year](#) in child care costs and ensure that most families pay no more than 7 percent of their income for child care for all of their children. It does not simply increase eligibility but offers a guarantee of child care assistance to [93 percent](#) of working families. [Across all states](#), the law would provide child care funding for more than 13 million children. This is equivalent to a sixteen-fold increase in child care assistance, with some states reaching more than 25 times as many young children as under the CCDBG.

This child care program is designed to address challenges comprehensively to create a sustainable child care system. It's not a one-off plan.

It is not unusual for Congress to initially create a new federal program that will need to be renewed: it's how the Affordable Care Act (ACA) began. The great news is this program becomes an "entitlement" after three years, meaning that the funding is automatic and tied to needs. In other words – eligible families are guaranteed assistance. It does not require annual approval through funding bills. Entitlements, like Social Security and Medicare, are the most reliable federal programs.

Child care prices have been rising faster than inflation for a long time. This new program will keep out-of-pocket costs low for families and increase wages for providers by investing substantial government funds.

Ensuring that parents can work and child care providers can earn a living wage is crucial for economic recovery and growth in our communities. The BBBA will create and support millions of jobs, including for educators and parents, and ensure that working parents have reliable care options with providers they select. Importantly, it will raise the wages of early educators, 95 percent of whom are women and disproportionately women of color, to at least a living wage.

The BBBA addresses the child care staffing shortages that threaten to destroy the entire child care sector by investing in child care providers and businesses to increase supply and improve the quality of early childhood education through higher wages and training.

Faith-based programs are included in BBB.

Faith-based programs are an important part of our mixed delivery early childhood education system. As with FFN care, there is substantial intention to implement the child care and Pre-K programs in ways that provide equitable, accessible paths to licensure, quality measurements and overall participation, and that address fears, concerns and challenges.

Faith-based programs are explicitly included with language stating, "Nothing shall preclude the use of such certificates for sectarian child care services if freely chosen by the parent." Faith-based providers are already eligible providers through both CCDBG and Head Start.

December 13, 2021

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