

July 12, 2023

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chair, Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, &
Forestry
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chair, Committee on Education & The Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, FDA, & Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Andy Harris
Chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, FDA, & Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition, & Forestry
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
Ranking Member, Committee on Education & The
Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, & Related
Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Jr.
Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA , & Related
Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Expiring Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal reimbursement rates under Public Law: 117-158, the “Keep Kids Fed Act” (KKFA), ending June 30, 2023

Dear Chairs Stabenow, Foxx, Heinrich, Harris, Murray and Granger, and Ranking Members Boozman, Scott, Hoeven, Bishop, Collins and DeLauro:

In June of 2022, Congress took bold and quick action to pass the Keep Kids Fed Act (KKFA). Congress passed this bipartisan legislation to respond to the ongoing fallout of the COVID -19 pandemic on child nutrition programs in schools and child care. The Act:

- addressed the increased cost of food and labor,
- addressed supply chain issues, and
- extended USDA’s waiver authority to provide regulatory flexibilities to school food authorities and child care providers and sponsors so they could continue to provide meals to children.

These adversities have not been alleviated. The essential provisions in KKFA to address these issues are set to expire on June 30, 2023. Three months after KKFA resources end, Child Care Stabilization funds will also end. **We urge you to extend the KKFA’s child care *and* school meal reimbursement temporary increases for an additional year to help schools *and* child care providers feed children over the summer and during the 2023-2024 school year.**

Child care and Head Start providers will struggle to serve nutritious meals without the bolstered CACFP compensation through KKFA.

The early childhood workforce in Early Head Start, Head Start, child care centers, and family child care are working tirelessly to ensure children do not go hungry and continue to have opportunities to learn and grow, all while [one out of three child care providers is food insecure](#). CACFP reimbursements help providers absorb *some* of the costs of providing a meal. The Keep Kids Fed Act:

- Enabled child care centers, Early Head Start, Head Start and family child care programs participating in CACFP to receive an additional 10 cents for every creditable CACFP meal or snack served (two meals and one snack or two snacks and one meal).
- Eliminated, for one more year, area eligibility for family child care providers. All family child care providers were paid Tier I rates (the highest rate possible) regardless of where their homes were located or their own income or the income of the families for whom they care.
- Enabled USDA to extend nationwide waivers throughout school year 2022-2023.

One of the essential provisions of the KKFA was paying all family child care providers at a Tier I rate. Tier II providers will resume receiving the lower rate on July 1, 2023. [There has been a steep drop of family child care participation since tiering \(i.e. a means test\) was implemented in 1997](#). In the last 20 years, the number of child care centers has almost doubled, with an increase of 82 percent. However, since tiering was introduced, the total number of family child care homes has decreased by 46 percent due to ongoing financial pressures. We are deeply concerned about the return of the tiering policy. The expiration of KKFA means we risk programs dropping off of CACFP. Head Start and Early Head Start programs are required to participate in CACFP and will be forced to try and comply with inadequate funds. Families that are already experiencing hardships may be asked by their child care provider to pack enough food to ensure their children are not hungry while in child care. [Many of these families are food insecure](#) and their children rely on the meals and snacks provided in child care through the CACFP.

Making things worse, three months after KKFA resources end, Child Care Stabilization funds will also end during a time when Congress is facing extreme challenges to make needed increases in FY24 for programs like the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Head Start. The combined impact of all of these funding streams abruptly ending while family and early childhood workforce needs are acute will threaten access to child care for working parents.

Congress' and USDA's leadership in helping the community address these challenges has been critical to supporting child well-being. **We implore Congress to extend these provisions for another year and provide necessary support for the 2023-2024 school year.**

Without the extension of these provisions, we will undoubtedly see an increase in young children and even providers themselves going to bed hungry. We will also see more burdens placed on families and the closure of child care programs during a time when access to quality, affordable child care is already threatened. We can not stand by and allow this to happen.

We urge you to act quickly and we welcome the opportunity to continue to work together to accomplish our shared goal of keeping our kids fed.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Advocates for Better Childrens Diets
AFL-CIO
All Our Kin
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
Bipartisan Policy Center
CACFP Roundtable

Care in Action
Caring Across Generations
Center for Law and Social Policy
Child Care Aware of America
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Defense Fund
Coalition on Human Needs
Community Change Action
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Council for Professional Recognition
Early Care and Education Consortium
Early Learning Ventures
Family Values @ Work
First Children's Finance
First Five Years Fund
First Focus on Children
Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)
Home Grown
KidKare by Minute Menu
KinderCare Learning Companies
Learning Care Group, Inc.
Migrant Legal Action Program
Mommie Activist and Sons
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association for Family Child Care
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
National Association of Counties (NACo)
National Black Child Development Institute
National CACFP Forum
National CACFP Sponsors Association
National Child Care Association
National Domestic Workers Alliance
National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)
National Education Association
National Head Start Association
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National WIC Association
National Women's Law Center
Nurture
ParentChild+
Partnership for America's Children
Reinvestment Fund
RESULTS
Save the Children
School Nutrition Association
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Start Early
YMCA of the USA
ZERO TO THREE