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Without Immediate Relief, More than Half of Licensed Child Care will Close in the Next Week

National Industry Organizations Call on Congress for \$50 Billion in Urgent Stimulus

WASHINGTON (March 22, 2020)--Today, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Early Care and Education Consortium (ECEC) joined advocacy organizations from around the United States in making a request for up to \$50 billion in emergency stimulus funding to keep the child care industry from collapsing.

To support American families, sustain industries that are necessary in this public health crisis, and buttress the herculean efforts of medical professionals, lawmakers must recognize child care as the backbone. Yet, NAEYC and ECEC data show that within the past week, child care has lost upwards of 70 percent of daily attendance and that most providers have just a week until they will close their doors, in many instances, permanently.

The immediate and sustained hit from the COVID-19 crisis is devastating.

“We are calling on Congress to take swift and immediate action to stabilize an essential yet economically fragile industry,” said NAEYC CEO Rhian Allvin. “In order to stabilize this field, continue to provide essential services for families who need it, and be prepared to support the workforce after this crisis, we are requesting up to \$50 billion in emergency stimulus funding.”

“We estimate that without immediate financial support thousands of child care centers and family child care homes will be unable to cover their fixed costs within the next month,” said ECEC Executive Director Radha Mohan. “Providers need a quick and simple way to access emergency assistance in order

to do things like pay occupancy costs, maintain payroll and benefits, and pay incentive pay to those educators and support staff willing to continue to work to care for the children of essential personnel for the duration of this crisis.”

Two million early childhood educators comprise the child care workforce. At this swift rate of closures, immediate unemployment of more than half the workforce is inevitable. Little Learners Child Care Center is the only center based child care in Norman County, MN. Little Learners is housed on the same campus as a nursing home, residential assisted living apartments, hospital, and clinic and provides daily intergenerational activities to those living on site. Center director Karen DeVos said, “this is the most devastating experience of my career. We are currently losing tuition but our costs are increasing to meet the small group size recommendations that allow us to serve children safely. Without help soon, we will be forced to close, leaving 14 staff members without jobs and many families in the emergency and health care fields without care.”

“We are in a no-win situation” said Chad Dunkley, President and CEO of New Horizon Academy, a Minnesota-based chain of child care centers. “We are working hard to support our employees who have been classified as essential, but have been forced already to begin substantial furloughing due to this crisis. We are a family-owned business, and without immediate emergency support, our 88 centers serving 11,000 children across the country will close in a month.”

Both NAEYC and ECEC are partnering with governors across the country to systematically support ongoing child care for an essential workforce. As crucial decisions are being made to protect the health and safety of children, health workers, and educators, “it is imperative that Governors not stand up provisional, unlicensed, and barely regulated child care that could endanger children,” said Jo Kirchner, CEO of Primrose School Franchising Company. Tom Wyatt, CEO of KinderCare added, “We urge Governors to coordinate with existing licensed and regulated providers to ensure the continuity of care and the health and safety for children of essential workers.”

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NAEYC’s vision is that all young children thrive and learn in a society dedicated to ensuring they reach their full potential. NAEYC promotes high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age 8, by connecting practice, policy and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children.

The Early Care and Education Consortium (ECEC) is a non-profit alliance for the leading high-quality multi-state/multi-site childcare and education providers, state associations, and premier educational services providers, representing over 6,000 programs, that collectively serve one million children across the U.S. Our Members serve as the unified voice for providers of high-quality programs and services that support families and children from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. We are advocates for strong federal and state policies that bring quality to scale.