The First Five Things To Know

Child Care Modernization Act

Parents need child care options that meet their family's unique needs and support their child's healthy development. Yet today, far too many working families struggle to find the affordable care they need.

The bipartisan, bicameral **Child Care Modernization Act** would help working families by strengthening the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), the primary federal program that assists states in helping lower-income families afford child care.

The bill was introduced in the Senate on September 17, 2025 by **Senators Deb Fischer (R-NE), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), John Hickenlooper (D-CO), and Susan Collins (R-ME)**, with co-sponsors **Senators Katie Britt (R-AL) and Mark Kelly (D-AZ)**. It was introduced in the House on June 9, 2026 by **Representatives Ryan Mackenzie (R-PA), Susie Lee (D-NV), Ashley Hinson (R-IA)**, **and Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-MI).**

Here are the First Five Things to Know about the **Child Care Modernization Act**:

1 Working families with young children need help finding affordable, quality child care.

The average cost of child care today is more than $13,000 a year, by far the largest expense many families with young children face. Nine in ten Republicans (91%) think it's a problem or crisis that Americans can't find affordable child care, along with 91% of Independents, and 97% of Democrats.

2 The Child Care Modernization Act helps increase the supply of child care.

The bill would provide grants to help providers expand the supply, quality, and capacity of child care. These grants also would help to fund the renovation, repair, and construction of child care facilities.

3 The Child Care Modernization Act would support child care professionals.

The bill would strengthen child care by working with states to implement a more accurate way of determining provider reimbursement, using "cost estimation models" to calculate provider payment rates (States would have five years to make updates.)

4 The Child Care Modernization Act would support a wide range of providers.

The legislation provides additional technical assistance to in-home and rural child care providers so they have the support they need, as well as directing the Department of Agriculture to remove some regulatory burdens that can restrict home-based child care providers in rural areas.

5 And the legislation supports working families.

Under the Child Care Modernization Act, states could serve more working families by expanding eligibility to those who may be struggling with the cost of child care but aren't currently eligible for CCDBG. And the bill also continues to ensure parents can choose the type of child care setting that works best for them, including licensed child care centers, home-based providers, and faith-based programs.

Bottom Line

The Child Care Modernization Act enables states to better address the growing child care needs of working families, providers, and employers. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation strengthens and sustains the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), which helps states offer essential child care support to hundreds of thousands of working families with young children.

By increasing the availability of quality child care in local communities, the bill ensures that parents have more options to meet their needs. It reinforces the existing CCDBG framework while laying the groundwork for future investments through the appropriations process, ensuring the program can continue to evolve and respond to the changing needs of families, children, and communities now and into the future.

Our Take

*"Access to affordable, reliable child care is one of the biggest challenges facing working families. The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is a vital part of facing that challenge head on. We're grateful to Senators Deb Fischer (R-NE), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), John Hickenlooper (D-CO), and Susan Collins (R-ME) for their bipartisan leadership in introducing the **Child Care Modernization Act.** This legislation offers an important opportunity to strengthen and sustain CCDBG while also addressing child care needs in real time. This will help serve more families both now and in the future."*

– Executive Director Sarah Rittling, First Five Years Fund

Supporters Include

National Organizations

- First Five Years Fund
- Afterschool Alliance
- Bipartisan Policy Center Action
- Buffett Early Childhood Institute
- Chamber of Mothers
- Child Care Aware of America
- Early Care and Education Consortium (ECEC)
- Early Childhood Investment Corporation Foundation
- Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC)
- Fight Crime: Invest in Kids
- Home Grown
- Independent Restaurant Coalition
- KinderCare Learning Companies
- Learning Care Group
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
- Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF)
- Moms First
- Mission Readiness
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- National Association of Counties (NACo)
- National Head Start Association (NHSA)
- National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO)
- National Child Care Association
- National Children's Facilities Network
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- Ready Nation
- Save the Children
- Start Early
- Third Way
- Tootris
- United Way
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- YMCA of the USA

State Organizations

- Alliance of New York State YMCAs
- Children's First PA
- First Five Nebraska
- Groundwork Ohio
- Michigan's Children
- NC Early Childhood CoalitionSCAN Iowa
- Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
- Zero to Five Montana

Learn More

- FFYF's CCDBG overview provides an in-depth look at how CCDBG helps meet the needs of children, parents, and child care providers in all 50 states.
- The FFYF CCDBG state fact sheets show the reach, eligibility, and impact of CCDBG in all 50 states.
- These FY2026 Dear Colleague letters highlight Members of Congress from both parties who support prioritizing funding for CCDBG.
- And for a deeper dive into policy, FFYF has a side-by-side comparison of the Child Care Modernization Act and the current law.

Statements

- Official press statement from Senate Offices: Fischer, Colleagues Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Expand Working Families' Access to Child Care.
- FFYF's Statement from Executive Director Sarah Rittling.
- Statements of support from organizations can be found here.
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Contact FFYF

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About First Five Years Fund

The first five years last forever. At First Five Years Fund, we work to protect, prioritize, and build bipartisan support for quality child care and early learning programs at the federal level. Reliable, affordable, and high-quality early learning and child care can be transformative, not only enhancing a child's prospects for a brighter future but also bolstering working parents and fostering economic stability nationwide. Join us at www.ffyf.org.

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