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Staff:

Neva Bandelow

ECE Quality Manager
LPC Program Coordinator
Phone: 510-208-9722
neva.bandelow@acgov.org

Ellen Dektar

Senior Management Analyst
Phone: 510-208-9578
ellen.dektar@acgov.org

Angie Garling

GSA Child Care Program
Administrator
Phone: 510-208-9675
Angie.garling@acgov.org

Kim Hazard

Special Projects Coordinator
Phone: 510-208-9645
Kim.hazard@acgov.org

Kat Troyer

ECE Program Specialist
501-208-9601
Kat.troyer@acgov.org

LaWanda Wesley

Quality Improvement
Navigator
Phone: 510-208-9651
lawanda.wesley@acgov.org



1401 Lakeside Drive, #1116
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone: 510-208-9620
Fax: 510-208-9579
www.acgov.org/childcare

September 21, 2015

(Alameda County Representatives: Eric Swalwell, Barbara Lee, Mike Honda)

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Dear Congressperson _____:

We are writing to request your support for a substantial increase in the Fiscal year (FY) 2016 appropriation for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program. Unfortunately, the FY 2016 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill freezes funding for the program which will greatly undermine recently secured provisions to strengthen CCDBG. Without additional funding, states will struggle to meet the new goals of CCDBG legislation.

As you know, Congress passed the CCDBG Act of 2014 last year with bipartisan support. This reauthorized the CCDBG for the first time in 18 years. The law contains important improvements to the program, including increased access to child care assistance for more families; the establishment of new health and safety requirements for child care providers; and expanded requirements to improve the quality of care. These reforms will require additional funding to implement or they will have to do more with less, potentially scaling back our already drastically reduced programs or their financing mechanisms. The President's budget request of an increase of \$370 million was a good down payment to assist states in moving toward compliance.

California cut 110,000 child care slots between 2007 and 2013, and the improving economy has allowed for some restoration of child care and preschool slots. Locally, in Alameda County we were able to gain about 347 slots back from the state and yet we still have an estimated 10,066 children on the waiting list across our County.

We appreciate your ongoing support for rebuilding, sustaining and improving quality early care and education programs and corresponding funding in the CCDBG appropriation. Please contact our staff with any questions.

Sincerely,

Veronica Ufoegbune
Planning Council Chair