

# Time for R.E.C.E.S.S.? Time for Action!



## Tools for Talking to Your Members of Congress About Child Care During August Recess



### Early childhood educators know all about the importance of recess!

But we're not talking about the kind where kids play outside. Instead, we're talking about the kind where Members of Congress come home on break—which can be just as important to ensuring children's healthy growth and development!

That's because this kind of recess offers crucial opportunities to connect with elected officials outside of Washington, D.C. and in your shared communities. This year, we're focused on letting Congress know why funding child care is so important, so we hope you'll take advantage of recess opportunities to share with them all the ways children, parents, educators and businesses benefit when families have access to high-quality child care!

Keep reading to find out more about how you can prepare to make this year's August **R.E.C.E.S.S.** the best it can be for children, families, and educators!



## R

### Reach Out

Find the home district address and phone number for your member of Congress. Call or set up a time to [visit](#) to make sure they know their constituents want them to build on the bipartisan commitment to early childhood education by growing investments in child care, Head Start and early learning.

## E

### Extend Invitations

Invite members of Congress and/or their staff to visit a high-quality early childhood education program so they can understand first-hand the benefits these programs provide to children, families and communities.

- See Summer 2019 Sample Invitations to a Member of Congress to Conduct a Site Visit (below and [linked here for downloading](#))
- [How to Organize an Early Learning Site Visit for a Policy Maker](#)

Bonus: Are you organizing a community event? [Invite your elected officials!](#) (And while it's not yet 2020, people are running for President already, so don't forget about [how to honor legislators in an election year](#)).

## C

### Call Attention to Child Care

Write an op-ed or letter to the editor in your local paper about the importance of child care assistance and the need to invest in early learning. Check out these great recent examples for inspiration:

- [Congress Must Invest in Early Education](#)
- [Funding Child Care Strengthens Alaska](#)
- [Child Care Block Grant Remains Vital](#)

Interested in writing your own but don't know where to start? Email [advocacy@naeyc.org](mailto:advocacy@naeyc.org) with a quick note about who you are and where you're from, and we'll help you get going!

## E

### Elevate Your Voice

Members of Congress need to hear from parents and educators in their districts and states about why funding child care is so important. [Share your child care story here so we can share it with them!](#) In particular, if you are or know one of these people below, please fill out the form—or simply reach out or send folks our way by emailing [advocacy@naeyc.org](mailto:advocacy@naeyc.org) with your name and contact information!

- A parent who got off the waitlist for child care assistance this year
- An educator who received a pay increase because reimbursement rates went up
- A director who accepted more families utilizing subsidies because rates increased
- Other stories about the importance and impact of child care assistance programs in your state

## S

### Say it on Social Media

Tell #Congress to #FundChildCare so that families can access #ChildCare4All because having #ChildCareNow helps make sure #ECEWins!

It's always the right time to talk about #childcare on Twitter and Facebook. Using these videos and sample social media posts (while tagging your member of Congress!) will help them understand that increased funding for CCDBG has made quality, affordable child care a reality for more families in their states, and that it is critical for them to continue to grow funding for CCDBG to build on this progress!

- [VIDEO: Parents and Educators Agree: More Funding for Child Care](#) + [Sample Social Media](#)
- [More Videos \(State-Specific\)](#): If you're in Florida, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, Oregon, Pennsylvania or Tennessee, these are for you to use and share!

## S

### Share Resources

One of the best ways to build a relationship with your legislators and their staff is to serve as a resource they can turn to. Here are tools and resources you can share...

- To provide key facts and context: [NAEYC America for Early Ed state fact sheets](#)
- To help them learn more about CCDBG and what it means in your state: [stateofchildcare.org](http://stateofchildcare.org) (plus [CCDBG explainer video!](#))
- To provide district-level data: Center for American Progress' [child care supply by Congressional district fact sheets](#)

## Template 1

Dear Senator/Representative [insert member of Congress's name],

On behalf of [insert center name], I'd like to extend an invitation for you to visit our early learning program in [insert district/city] during the upcoming Congressional recess.

As providers of early learning and child care, our ability to benefit the lives of the children and families we serve depends on critical federal investments made possible by lawmakers in Congress. Indeed, the bipartisan agreement struck by Congress last year included a tremendous two-year increase in funding to the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program. This program allows states to help low-income families, who otherwise might not be able to afford it, access high-quality child care. It also helps programs like ours implement the important and required quality improvement standards Congress previously enacted, ensuring children can grow and learn in high-quality child care settings that are safe and supportive of their healthy development.

Numerous studies have proven that high-quality early childhood education [generates](#) long-term benefits for children's cognitive, behavioral, and emotional growth. In fact, [recent research](#) provides concrete evidence that high-quality early learning opportunities can extend to subsequent generations to help break the cycle of poverty. Thanks to investments in critical programs like CCDBG, Congress is giving us the tools to achieve these important outcomes. Moving forward, we hope members of Congress will expand these investments in early childhood education.

We hope you will be able to visit our program and see firsthand how the investments you help make possible benefit the children and families in [insert district/city/state]. We would welcome your visit during the following days and times: \_\_\_\_\_.

Please contact [insert name and information here] for more information and to discuss this invitation further.

Sincerely,

[Insert name & contact info here]

## Template 2

Dear Senator/Representative [insert member of Congress's name],

On behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ Association for the Education of Young Children, I am extending an invitation for you to visit [insert child care facility] in [insert district/city/state] during the upcoming Congressional recess in August.

There is a strong body of research supporting the numerous benefits of high-quality early childhood education. High-quality early childhood education [provides a foundation for learning](#) for young children, provides crucial support to help working parents stay [employed](#) and [increase](#) their lifetime earnings, and has [long-term benefits](#) on children's cognitive, behavioral, and emotional growth. New [research](#) by Nobel laureate Dr. James Heckman also finds that high-quality early learning results in positive life-long and intergenerational benefits.

Lawmakers [like yourself] recognize the importance of investing in early learning. That's why, over the past decade, federal investments in early childhood education have increased significantly thanks to robust bipartisan support. This commitment to enhancing the quality of, and access to, high-quality early childhood education was on full display just last year when a bipartisan majority in Congress passed a historic funding increase in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program. That funding increase has helped low-income families throughout states, including here in [insert state], access high-quality early learning programs.

Now, we want to make sure you have the chance to see these CCDBG investments in action by visiting [insert child care facility]. We would welcome your visit during the following dates and times: \_\_\_\_\_.

Setting up a time to visit [insert child care facility] during the upcoming recess means getting to see firsthand how the decisions made on Capitol Hill benefit constituents in [states/districts] back home. Thanks to Congress' investments last year in CCDBG, we've made important gains recently in providing early learning and care opportunities to the families that need it most. But, there's still more to be done. Too many families lack access to high-quality child care opportunities. Moving forward, we hope members of Congress will expand these investments in early childhood education. I hope you'll take us up on this offer to visit [insert child care facility] so we can build on last year's investments to achieve even greater progress moving forward.

Please contact [insert name and information here] for more information and to discuss this invitation further.

Sincerely,

[Insert name & contact info here]