Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, America’s child care providers have been there to support essential workers, children, and families. Family child care providers and other paid, home-based providers already care for one-fourth of the nation’s 12 million children age five or younger. According to the National Association for Family Child Care, two-thirds of all licensed family child care businesses remained open to care for the children of frontline workers. But the pandemic and the resulting recession could undermine the provider community’s critical role in restarting our economy and continuing to offer much needed support for young children and their families. This supplement to the All Our Kin Think Babies Toolkit for Family Child Care recommends messages and resources to help family child care providers and allies advocate for the resources and support needed to build a stronger, more sustainable child care system for the future.

COVID-19 Messages

These messages are intended to supplement the messages in the main toolkit. The messages in the main toolkit are most useful when introducing new audiences to family child care and underscoring its value in a comprehensive child care system that meets the diverse needs of all families. The messages in this supplement focus specifically on the critical role family child care providers, alongside other child care providers, have played during the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to play in states’ economic recovery. The messages in this supplement should be used to frame a call for action that is responsive to the pandemic and that lays the foundation for a stronger future for all children, families, family child care providers, and child care as a whole.

Family child care has always been essential.

- More than 3 million children, over a quarter of the 12 million children birth to age 5 in the United States, are served in paid, home-based child care settings—including family child care.
- Family child care is a critical part of a comprehensive child care system that meets the diverse needs of all families.
- High-quality family child care providers, like all high-quality child care providers, offer the building blocks that are so critical to infants and toddlers, supporting their healthy growth and development, fostering strong, caring relationships, and providing key early learning experiences.

- Family child care providers answered the call:
  - The National Association for Family Child Care reports that two-thirds of family child care providers remained open during the pandemic.

Family child care providers have played a critical role in keeping essential workers on the job, because they typically:

- Are close-by, with neighborhood locations that minimize the COVID-19 transmission risks associated with transit.
- Have smaller groups of children and allow siblings of different ages to remain together in the same child care setting, further reducing transmission risks.
- Offer flexible hours, especially critical for essential jobs that aren’t 9-5.
- Offer home-like settings, culturally- and linguistically-appropriate care, trusting relationships with parents, and deep connections with children, all of which help ease anxieties for parents and minimize disruption for children.

Parents may be more likely to choose family child care as America gets back to work.

- Based on interviews with state child care administrators, the Bipartisan Policy Center reports that “parents are showing a strong preference for family child care programs,” including both essential workers and parents returning to work as economies reopen.
- The BPC cites “small group sizes, recognizable residential settings, and neighborhood locations” as especially important to parents returning to work.

But the pandemic has also compounded decades of underfunding, putting thousands of child care programs, including family child care programs, at risk of closing and threatening our economic recovery.

- Child care has suffered from an acute lack of public investment for decades, often leaving providers to absorb the difference between...
what the market pays and the actual cost of quality care.

As a result, many family child care providers earn low salaries (often below minimum wage), operate on razor-thin margins, and have minimal, if any, financial reserves.

Pandemic-driven revenue losses have made a bad situation worse, threatening to decimate thousands of child care programs, including family child care programs.

Family child care providers were twice as likely as center-based providers to be denied Paycheck Protection Program loans, according to the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Home Grown reports that most family child care providers have less than a month of reserves, so if they’re forced to close for a month, they may not reopen.

Beyond economic concerns family child care providers face a range of other challenges, including:

- Concerns about their own health and their family’s health during the pandemic, as in-home child care makes social distancing efforts difficult.
- Lack of access to needed medical and cleaning supplies due to supply shortages.
- Rapidly-changing regulatory environments coupled with a lack of resources and support to respond to new health and safety regulations.

These threats undermine the ability of child care providers, including family child care providers, to support children and families and contribute to the economic recovery.

Quick and decisive policymaker action now to ensure health and safety, guarantee economic security, and promote the wellbeing of children, families, and child care providers means a faster, stronger economic recovery and better outcomes for children and families.

Congress must act swiftly, appropriating at least $50 billion in child care funding.

Without this significant, urgent public investment, we risk losing 4.5 million child care slots nationwide as a result of the pandemic.

State policymakers must recognize the role of family child care in their state’s overall child care and economic recovery plan.

Recommendations for state policymakers on how they can support family child care can be found here.

Child care providers across all settings will always be essential, and America needs a long-term commitment to family child care providers.

Child care providers don’t just need resources and support now—they’ve needed them for decades, and they’ll need them when COVID-19 is over.

Let’s use this moment to create a better future for children and families by building a stronger, more sustainable child care system that values family child care as a critical component.

COVID-19 Resources

Organizations advocating for family child care have compiled COVID-19 resources and recommendations to support your advocacy work:

**State Policy Recommendations**

- **All Our Kin Principles and Policy Recommendations** – Context on the challenges facing family child care providers and specific policy recommendations related to health and safety, economic stability, and child, family, and provider wellbeing.

- **Home Grown Guide State for Leaders and Administrators** – Funder collaborative roundup aimed at educating policymakers and encouraging concrete actions to support family child care providers with a focus on CCDF funding.

- **Webinar: A Strong Economy Needs Strong Family Child Care** – National experts and providers discuss the critical role family child care providers have played in pandemic response, and the support they need to contribute to America’s recovery.

- **ZERO TO THREE’s Policy Response to COVID-19** – Timely updates on opportunities to urge policymakers to take action for families with babies and toddlers during the pandemic.

- **ZERO TO THREE’s Considerations for Developmental Needs of Infants and Toddlers in Child Care Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic** – Complements CDC guidelines with recommendations to ensure that the developmental needs of babies and families are a part of state re-opening plans.

**Family Child Care Networks**

- **All Our Kin Brief on Staffed Family Child Care Networks** – The most up-to-date research in the field combined with All Our Kin’s two decades of experience to help policymakers understand what staffed family child care networks are and what makes them effective.

- **Home Grown’s Home-Based Child Care Networks Report** – The case for investing in home-based child care networks and examples from around the country.
Surveys and Stories

- **ZERO TO THREE COVID-19 Story Bank** – Answer just three straightforward questions to share your experiences and those of the families you serve, and help ZERO TO THREE make the case for increased investments in America’s child care providers.

- **NAEYC Survey** – Results from the National Association for the Education’s latest national survey to determine how child care providers—including family child care providers—are faring during the pandemic.

- **ZERO TO THREE’S COVID-19 Provider Impact Quotes** – Providers, including family child care providers, in their own words on issues like declining revenue and health and safety concerns.

- **ZERO TO THREE’s Family Impact Quotes** – Parents in their own words on issues ranging from job losses and basic needs to the critical role of child care during the pandemic.

COVID-19 News Articles

Journalists are eager to learn about the critical role family child care has played during the pandemic. You can help to spread the word by reaching out to local news outlets. These examples may be helpful:

- **As Day Care Centers Reopen, Will Parents Send Their Children?**, New York Times, May 30, 2020

- **Essential—and Invisible**, New America, May 21, 2020

- **Will the Pandemic Reshape Child Care for Good?**, The Intelligencer, June 18, 2020

- **The Case for Home-Based Child Care**, National Review, June 16, 2020

- **Coronavirus’ forgotten heroes: Don’t let down the people looking after essential workers’ kids and other family childcare professionals**, New York Daily News, April 27, 2020

- **The residential child care’s dilemma: lose income or potentially expose families to coronavirus?**, WHYY Radio, April 13, 2020

- **More Than Half Of LA Child Care Centers Closed. Who Is Watching The Kids Of Essential Workers?**, LAist, April 29, 2020

About Us

This toolkit was developed by All Our Kin with the support of ZERO TO THREE and *Think Babies*.

**All Our Kin** trains, supports, and sustains family child care providers to ensure that children and families have the foundation they need to succeed in school and in life. Through All Our Kin’s programs, child care professionals succeed as early childhood educators and as business owners; working parents find stable, high-quality care for their children; and children gain an educational foundation that lays the groundwork for achievement in school and beyond. The organization has a track record of success increasing the supply, quality, and sustainability of family child care. Learn more at [www.allourkin.org](http://www.allourkin.org).

Today, All Our Kin partners with more than 1,100 family child care educators across Connecticut and in the Bronx; these educators are caring for more than 6,000 of our youngest children. In addition, All Our Kin offers technical assistance to agencies and communities across the country on educational coaching, business training, network development, and family child care policy. To learn more about technical assistance opportunities available from All Our Kin, please email technicalassistance@allourkin.org.

**ZERO TO THREE** works to ensure that babies and toddlers benefit from the early connections that are critical to their well-being and development. ZERO TO THREE created *Think Babies* to make the potential of every baby our national priority. Early experiences shape how a baby’s brain develops, laying the foundation for future learning, behavior and health. *Think Babies* brings nationwide attention to what babies and families need to thrive. Learn more at [www.thinkbabies.org](http://www.thinkbabies.org).