June 4, 2020

The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair  
Assembly Budget Committee  
State Capitol, Room 6062  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Holly Mitchell, Chair  
Senate Budget Committee  
State Capitol, Room 5050  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Joaquin Arambula, Chair  
Assembly Budget Subcommittee 1  
State Capitol, Room 5155  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Richard Pan, Chair  
Senate Budget Subcommittee 3  
State Capitol, Room 5114  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Access to Child Care for Essential Workers

Dear Chairs Ting, Mitchell, Arambula, and Pan:

Thank you for your leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and work to address the critical needs of California’s essential frontline workers who are risking their own lives and that of their families to save ours.

I am writing to respectfully request that you expand access to safe and reliable child care services to ensure that essential workers can go to work and that our most vulnerable families continue to receive services. An estimated 63 percent of licensed child care facilities in the state have been impacted by this crisis. Many family child care providers are struggling to stay open and might not remain open in the near future.

In April, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Executive Order N-45-20 to provide expanded access to child care for essential workers. Specifically, the Executive Order allows the California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services to waive certain programmatic and administrative requirements for child care and afterschool programs to serve children of essential infrastructure workers. Subsequently, the Governor released $100 million to further support child care services and child care providers. Of the $100 million investment, $50 million is dedicated for 20,000 limited-term additional state-subsidized child care slots and the
other $50 million is allocated to ensure that child care centers, facilities and family provider homes are safe and clean by reimbursing them for cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment.

While the aforementioned Executive Order and funding are both important actions to address the issues surrounding child care for essential workers during this difficult time, more needs to be done. That is why I am joining the Legislative Women’s Caucus in requesting that the $350 million federal Child Care Development Block Grant funds be combined with the appropriated but unspent 2019-2020 fiscal year one-time funds estimated at $800 million and administered by the California Department of Education to provide more vouchers for essential workers and pay providers 30% above current rates in order to account for hazard pay and increased costs. Additionally, I am urging for the removal of the sunset date of June 30, 2020 to allow for flexibility during the ongoing crisis for childcare providers.

The need for child care is substantial. The Center for American Progress estimates that 484,855 health care workers in California need child care. This number does not even take into account the needs of grocery and other essential workers. With many schools and child care centers closed, we are relying on family child care providers to support our workforce more than ever before. In order to do so, it is important to acknowledge the risk this low-wage workforce is taking on, along with the increased costs of sanitation and health care costs while operating with fewer resources than they typically do. I am urging the State to follow in the steps of states like Illinois and Connecticut and use available child care funding to increase compensation for providers and help keep their doors open to meet increased demands.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

KANSEN CHU
Assemblymember, 25th District

CC: Jason Sisney, Assembly Budget Director
    Chris Woods, Senate Budget Director
    Christian Griffith, Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee
    Nicole Vazquez, Consultant, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #1
    Dr. Renita Polk, Consultant, Senate Budget Subcommittee #3