

more and more of the nation's children in out-of-home care, the Senators and Members of Congress believe that the Administration for Children and Families crucial focus on improving early education and care must be maintained.

Below is the letter from the lawmakers, as well as a letter of opposition from a large consortium of advocates across the country. (PDF versions of the letters are available upon request.)

March 15, 2006

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

We are writing in response to your letter of February 22, 2006 to the Senate and House Appropriations Committees regarding the planned reorganization of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). We thank you for your commitment to the important programs administered by ACF and appreciate your efforts to improve the efficacy and efficiency of federal programs serving children and families.

The organizational structure and operations of ACF significantly affect the direction, quality, and efficiency of federal programs serving children and families. We agree that a thoughtful and comprehensive analysis of the agency's organization may improve program quality and the use of administrative funding. We commend you for your plan to elevate the Head Start Bureau to report directly to the Assistant Secretary of ACF. We believe this change could lead to strengthened program oversight and quality. We also commend you for seeking ways to improve accountability and program consistency across ACF's Regional Offices, and we request that you ensure that any effort to streamline management processes maintains the valuable role and perspective provided by the Regional Offices.

We appreciate your interest in improving coordination between the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), and other important programs that support healthy families by proposing a consolidation of the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) and the Child Care Bureau. However, before you proceed with this part of the Department's reorganization plan, we respectfully encourage you to consider carefully its consequences—intended and unintended—on the future direction of activities to improve access to child care and the quality of early care and education programs available to families. Of greatest importance, we ask you to assure us that any reorganization not narrow the population of children and families who benefit from CCDBG or lose the Child Care Bureau's focus on promoting quality early education and child care.

Currently, the Child Care Bureau administers the CCDBG to serve low-income families, including but not limited to families receiving TANF public assistance. As you know, this program subsidizes child care as a key work support for low-income families and supports state efforts to improve the quality of early care and education programs available to all children. In addition to administering CCDBG, the

Child Care Bureau serves as a central point for information and research about child care in the nation. The Bureau's history of disseminating best practices and serving as a resource for technical assistance has helped states focus on early learning, quality in early childhood settings, and school readiness.

Moreover, the Child Care Bureau has taken the lead in promoting coordination across Head Start, child care and state pre-kindergarten, and implementing other key elements of the President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative. It is essential that the Child Care Bureau's current efforts to support the dual role of child care as a children's service that influences school readiness and a work support for families continue to be fully supported by ACF's organizational structure. We could not support any reorganization that would compromise ACF's current role of supporting states' efforts to coordinate early education and school readiness opportunities and to help provide for the child care needs of low-income families. With a large percentage of the nation's children in out-of-home care, we believe ACF's crucial focus on improving early education and care must be maintained.

We appreciate your consideration of and careful attention to these critical issues as you move forward with efforts to reorganize ACF. We believe that major decisions regarding the operation and organization of ACF should be carefully considered and discussed with the states and the child care field. We encourage such consultation to ensure that any final decision complements and supports states' efforts to improve access to high-quality child care and school readiness programs. Thank you for your efforts to inform our respective Committees of your plans, and for your commitment to continue to work with our staff on this matter. We look forward to learning more in the coming weeks about the progress of your deliberations.

Sincerely,

Michael B. Enzi
Chairman
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

Edward M. Kennedy
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
House Committee on Education and the Workforce

George Miller
Senior Democrat
House Committee on Education and the Workforce

Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Senate Subcommittee on Education and Early Childhood Development

Christopher J. Dodd
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on Education and Early Childhood Development

Ric Keller
Chairman
House Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness

Ralph Regula
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Michael N. Castle
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Education Reform

Lynn C. Woolsey
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Education Reform

Dale E. Kildee
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness

March 9, 2006

The Honorable Mike Leavitt
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Washington DC

Dear Secretary Leavitt,

As organizations and individuals concerned about the availability and quality of child care for millions of children in this country, we write to oppose the proposed consolidation of the Child Care Bureau into the Office of Family Assistance. This move fails to recognize the importance of child care to the education and well-being of children, minimizes the importance of child care assistance in supporting working families, particularly low-income parents; and has the potential to disrupt the coordination efforts currently underway in the states to provide more integrated early education and after-school services.

Since its establishment in 1995, the Child Care Bureau has played a leadership role in promoting the quality of care as an essential component to child and youth development. Over the past few decades more and more children have been spending time in non-parental care on a regular basis. These hours spent in care can be an integral part of a child's education in the early years and after school. In recent years, the Child Care Bureau has also played a critical role in supporting the President's Good Start Grow Smart initiative for young children. Minimizing this key role undermines these efforts and threatens the quality of care so important for all children.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant has a clear goal of improving the affordability of child care for low-income working families, including but not limited to families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. As you know, the law was originally enacted in 1990 to provide child care assistance to low-income working families who were not receiving welfare. While it is crucial to provide child care help to welfare families transitioning to work, when CCDBG was merged with the child care programs targeted to welfare families in 1996, Congress made it clear that continuing to serve low-income working families was a major purpose of CCDBG. This goal remains in place today. Any effort that would signal a shift in this purpose should be avoided.

Finally, many states across the country are moving to align child care policies with state prekindergarten programs and Head Start Collaboration offices. Child care is central to the integration of early education services for families. The Child Care Bureau has been working in partnership with the Head Start Bureau. Moving the Child Care Bureau to the Office of Family Assistance jeopardizes the progress that has been made in better coordinating early education services.

For these reasons we urge you to reconsider this decision. We stand ready to work with you to ensure a child care system that is a key support to families and provides educational opportunities to America's children.

Sincerely,

4C, Southwest Ohio and Northern Kentucky Child Care Resource & Referral
4C Council of Santa Clara County (San Jose, CA)
Addison County Child Care Services (Middlebury, VT)
Agenda for Children (LA)
Alameda County Child Care Planning Council (Oakland, CA)
Alliance for Early Childhood Finance
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees

American Federation of Teachers
Amy Freshwater, Assistant Professor, Child Development, Southeast Missouri State University (Cape Girardeau, MO)
Amy Smith, NationalCoalitionForChildrensRights (IL)
April Malaney, New Mexico Kids Child Care Resource & Referral
Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children
Arizona Child Care Association
Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families
Arthur C. Emlen, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Portland State University (Portland, OR)
Associated Early Care and Education, Inc. (Boston, MA)
BANANAS, Inc. (Oakland, CA)
Beth Larson-Steckler, KidsCARE, Chambers & Blohm Psychological Services, P.C. (Bismarck, ND)
Bobbie Weber, Faculty Research Associate, Oregon State University (Corvallis, OR)
Boston Association for the Education of Young Children
Bradley Stevenson, Executive Director, Child Care Council of Kentucky, Inc. (Lexington, KY)
Brooke Comer (Raleigh, NC)
Cabarrus, Rowan, Stanly, Association for the Education of Young Children (NC)
California Alternative Payment Program Association
California Child Care Resource and Referral Network
Cape Fear Association for the Education of Young Children (Wilmington, NC)
Capt. Joseph P. Sonderleiter, M.D., Ret., Diplomat, American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and Child And Adolescent Psychiatry (Portland, OR)
Carole Stein, President, The Stein Group, Ltd. (Indianapolis, IN)
Catawba County Partnership for Children (Hickory, NC)
Center on Law and Social Policy
Centro de la Comunidad Unida/United Community Center (Milwaukee, WI)
Cherokee Nation Washington Office
Child Care Action Council (Olympia, WA)
Child Care Associates (Fort Worth, TX)
Child Care Connection (Worcester, MA)
Child Care Coordinating Council of San Mateo County (San Mateo, CA)
Child Care Law Center (San Francisco, CA)
Child Care Link (Roanoke, VA)
Child Care Links (Pleasanton, CA)
Child Care Resource & Referral of Central Georgia (Macon, GA)
Child Care Resource & Referral of Central Wisconsin, Inc. (Wisconsin Rapids, WI)
Child Care Resource Center (Lorain, OH)
Child Care Services Association
Child Care WORKS (MN)
Child Care, Inc. (New York, NY)
Child Day Care Association of St. Louis (St. Louis, MO)
Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut
Child Start, Inc. (Napa/Solano, CA)
Child Welfare League of America
ChildCare Connection Resource & Referral (Columbia, MO)
Children's Campaign, Inc. (FL)
Children's Council of San Francisco (San Francisco, CA)
Children's Courtyard (TX)
Children's Defense Fund
Cindy O'Dell, Education Department Chair, Salish Kootenai College (Pablo, MT)
Claudia Vazquez, Resource and Training Specialist, Child Care Resource and Referral, Association for Supportive Child Care (Tempe, AZ)
Cloverdale Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California

Collaborative for Children (Houston, TX)
Colorado Association for the Education of Young Children
Community Action Project (Tulsa, OK)
Community Child Care Coordinating Council of Alameda County (Hayward, CA)
Community Child Care Council of Sonoma County (Santa Rosa, CA)
Community Child Care Connection, Inc. (Springfield, IL)
Community Childcare Connections, Inc. (Green Bay, WI)
Community Day Nursery (Bayonne, NJ)
Connecticut Association for Human Services, Inc.
Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Chief State School Officers
Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children (Philadelphia, PA)
Delora Jespersen Hade, Des Moines Area Community College Early Childhood Program (Ames, IA)
Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
Early Care and Education Consortium (Conyers, GA)
Early Childhood Excellence Network (Waukesha, WI)
Early Childhood Initiative (ME)
Early Childhood Policy Research
Easter Seals
Easter Seals Child Care Resource and Referral (Manchester, NH)
Eastern Kentucky Child Care Coalition
Elizabeth Armistead, Director, Early Childhood Programs, Settlement Music School (Philadelphia, PA)
Elizabeth E. Davis, Associate Professor, Dept. of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota (St. Paul, MN)
Ella Fabel-Ryder, Executive Director, Child Care Resources-Kalamazoo Regional 4Cs (Kalamazoo, MI)
Elizabeth Shack, The Playful Parent, LLC (Hamden, CT)
Ellen Ratner, Teacher (Sunnyvale, CA)
Erika Wheeler, Resource Developer, Resource and Referral, Family Central, Inc. (North Lauderdale, FL)
Eva Carter, Consultant, Early Childhood (Lago Vista, TX)
FamilyConnections (Austin, TX)
Family Child Care Association of Frederick County (MD)
Family Forum, Inc. (Superior, WI)
Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (New York, NY)
Florence Crittenton Services (San Francisco, CA)
Frances P. Deviney, PhD, Director, Texas KIDS COUNT, Center for Public Priorities (Austin, TX)
Gail H. Brightwell, M.A., New York State Certified School Psychologist (NY)
Gloria V. Thomas (Denton, TX)
Georgia Salazar, Policy Council (Wilkes-Barre, PA)
Harte-Hanks Child Care (San Antonio, TX)
Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children
Helene R. Alisberg, Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children (Avon, CT)
High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
Hoopa Valley Tribe (Hoopa, CA)
Houston Area Association for the Education of Young Children (Houston, TX)
IDEA Infant Toddler Coordinators Association
Indiana Association for Child Care Resource and Referral
Illinois Action for Children
Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children

Indianapolis Section, National Council of Jewish Women
Institute for Child Care Excellence (Austin, TX)
International Child Resource Institute (Berkeley, CA)
Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children
Iowa Child Care & Early Education Network
Iowa Head Start Association
Jackie Benton Ching, Family Childcare Recruiter (Keaau, HI)
Jan Barbieri, Executive Director, Child Care Council of Nassau, Inc. (Franklin Square, NY)
Jane Brown, Child Care Resources of Rockland, Inc. (Spring Valley, NY)
Jane Tigan, Public Policy Intern, Project for Pride in Living (Minneapolis, MN)
Jeanne Wagner, Executive Director, Child Care Council of Dutchess, Inc. (Poughkeepsie, NY)
Jeanne Weiler, Teacher, Administrator, Anne Sullivan Nursery School (Wildomar, CA)
Jeffery A. Faulkerson, MSSW, Independent Consultant (Wake Forest, NC)
Jennifer Bump, Consumer Education and Referral Specialist, Child Care Aware (Arlington, VA)
Jennifer Freitas, Parent Voices Organizer, 4C's of Alameda County (Hayward, CA)
Jenny Salyer, Assistant Child Care Director, Southeastern IN YMCA Child Care Center (Batesville, IN)
Jerry Wibert, Pastor, Lincoln Hills United Methodist Church (English, IN)
Joe Michael Poynter, Early Head Start Coordinator, Southern Ute Montessori Head Start/Early Head Start (Ignacio, CO)
Joene Grissom, Grissom & Associates, Inc. (Austin, TX)
John Nimmo, Ed.D., Executive Director, Child Study and Development Center, Rand Stearns Associate Professor, Family Studies, University of New Hampshire (Durham, NH)
John Reynolds, Chairperson, Children's Coalition of the Lehigh Valley (Bethlehem, PA)
Joyce L. Skroko (Elk Grove Village, IL)
Judy Hulstein, Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Program, Mid-Sioux Opp, Inc. (Sioux Center, IA)
Judy Watkinson, Professor, Early Childhood Education (Yuma, AZ)
Julie McConnell, Director, Child Care Loan Program, New Hampshire Community Loan Fund (Concord, NH)
Karen Bowman Hickey, Foster Parent (Pendleton, OR)
Karen White, Early Childhood Specialist, Central Maine Community College (Auburn, ME)
Kari Martin, Director of Child Care Services, Kawerak, Inc. (Nome, AL)
Katie M. Foarde RN, MSN, CCNS, CEN, Trauma Education, Injury Prevention & Outreach Coordinator, Brackenridge Hospital (Austin, TX)
KidSCOpe Early Intervention and Family Support (Hillsborough, NC)
Kimberly Meunier (Raleigh, NC)
Kristen E. Darling, KED Consulting for Early Education (Washington, DC)
La Familia Resource Center (Silver City, NM)
Lakes & Prairies Child Care Resource and Referral (Moorhead, MN)
Latoya Bullard, Teacher (Vero Beach, FL)
League of United Latin American Citizens
Leah Warner, Student, Eastern Michigan University (Ypsilanti, MI)
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Legal Momentum, Family Initiative (formerly NOW Legal Defense)
Leslie Abrahamson, Community Outreach Coordinator, YWCA Child Care Resource and Referral (Glen Ellyn, IL)
Dr. Lillian M. Ramos, Executive Director, Passaic Family Head Start (Passaic, NJ)
Linda Asato, Executive Director, Wu Yee Children's Services (San Francisco, CA)
Linda Devin-Sheehan (Stony Brook, NY)
Linda J. Scheer, BS, MPA, Early Education Consultant
Linda M. Lopez, New Mexico State Senator, District 11 (Albuquerque, NM)
Lisa G. Klein, Principal, Hestia Advising (Leawood, KS)

Lisa McCoy, Early Childhood Alliance (Fort Wayne, IN)
Literacy Coalition of Central Texas (Austin, TX)
Little Egypt of Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children (Metropolis, IL)
Livingston County 4C Council (Community Coordinated Child Care) (Howell, MI)
Lorene Colbert-Brown, Owner, Colberts Community Resource (Tulsa, OK)
Lucy P. Jordan, MSW, PhD, School of Social Work, University of Washington (Seattle, WA)
Lynne Malone, Director, Branford Family Resource Center (Branford, CT)
Maine Children's Alliance (Augusta, ME)
Marcia Munn (Raleigh, NC)
Margaret S. Benson, Assistant Professor of Human Development & Family Studies/Psychology, Penn State Altoona (Altoona, PA)
Margaret Sewell, M.S.W., PhD, Betwix Consulting, (White Hall, VA)
Marietta Winfrey, Family Child Care Provider (Lawrence, KS)
Mario Del Castillo, Parent Voices Parent Leader (Santa Clara, CA)
Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children
Maryland Committee for Children
Maryland Community Association for the Education of Young Children
Massachusetts Association for Early Education and School Age Care
Maureen M. Peterson, Executive Director, Children's Day Nursery and Family Center (Passaic, NJ)
Melanie Bronfin (Metairie, LA)
Melissa Moloch, Program Director, Child Care Solutions (Kokomo, IN)
Mental Health Association of Frederick County (Frederick, MD)
Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children
Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children
Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network
Missouri Association for the Education of Young Children
Montana Association for the Education of Young Children
National AfterSchool Association
National Association for Family Child Care
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association for Regulatory Administration
National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education
National Association of Social Workers
National Center for Children in Poverty
National Child Care Association
National Council of Jewish Women
National Education Association
National Head Start Association
National Indian Child Care Association (White Earth, MN)
National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association
National PTA
National School Boards Association
National Women's Law Center
Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children
Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children
New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children
New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children
New Mexico Child Care and Education Association
New Mexico Voices for Children
New York State Association for the Education of Young Children
New York State Child Care Coordinating Council
Norris Square Civic Association (Philadelphia, PA)

Northeastern Child Care Services (Scranton, PA)
North Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children
North Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children
Northwest Colorado Association for the Education of Young Children
Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children
Ohio Child Care Resource & Referral Association
Oklahoma Child Care Resource & Referral Association
Open Door Preschools (Austin, TX)
Oregon Child Care Resource & Referral Network
Orange County United Way (Irvine, CA)
P. Clift Price, M.D., FAAP (Austin, TX)
Parent Voices (San Francisco, CA)
Parent Voices Statewide Organization (CA)
Parents' Action for Children
Parents as Teachers National Center
Patricia M. Hall, CEO, Pat Hall & Associates, Inc. (East Orange, NJ)
Pennsylvania Child Care Association
Pennsylvania Head Start Association
Philippa Campbell, Child and Family Studies, Thomas Jefferson University (Philadelphia, PA)
Phyllis Jack Moore, Work/Family Strategist (Round Rock, TX)
Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children
Pre-K Now
Professional Child Care Association of El Paso (El Paso, TX)
Project IRENE (IL)
Quality Care for Children (Atlanta, GA)
Randa Roen Nachbar, Early Care and Education Consultant (Amherst, MA)
Rebecca S. McNeeley (Knoxville, TN)
Region X Head Start Association (OR, WA, ID, AK)
Resources for Child Caring (St. Paul, MN)
Reverend Allen Ladage, United Methodist Pastor (St. Clair, MO)
Reverend Suanne Whorl, Bethany United Methodist Church (York, PA)
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
Rivers Bend Association for the Education of Young Children (St. Louis, MO)
Roberta Heine (Arlington, VA)
Rochester Association for the Education of Young Children
Rosa Barragan, ACCESS Resource and Referral Supervisor (Merced, CA)
Ruth Lusk, Coordinator, Child Care Resource & Referral, Columbia Gorge Community College (The Dalles, OR)
Sally L. Edwards, Director, Child Development Resources (Tuscaloosa, AL)
Salt Lake Interfaith Hospitality (Salt Lake City, UT)
School Social Work Association of America
Seattle Early Childhood and Education Assistance Program (Seattle, WA)
Service Employees International Union
Sherry Trebus, Child Care Program Specialist, WorkSource – Greater Austin Area Workforce Board (Austin, TX)
Solano Family & Children's Services (Fairfield, CA)
SOLUTIONS Consulting Group, LLC (Dover Foxcroft, ME)
South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children
South West New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children
Southern Early Childhood Association (Little Rock, AR)
Southern Maryland Child Care Resource Center (Charlotte Hall, MD)
Southwestern Wisconsin Child Care Resource & Referral (Fennimore, WI)
St. Benedict Center Child Development Programs, East Coast Head Start Program (Erie, PA)

Starting Point for Child Care and Early Education (OR)
Stephen Barnett, MD, FAAP, FASHA (Austin, TX)
Success By 6, United Way of Greater Rochester (Rochester, NY)
Sue Gartner, Coordinator, The Accreditation Project, Child Development Department, Austin
Community College (Austin, TX)
Sue Molstad, CCR&R Manager, Resources for Child Caring (St. Paul, MN)
Sue Reed, Director, Maine Roads to Quality (Portland, ME)
Suzie Whalen, Program Director, Caring Options, CCR&R of Community Action Team, Inc.
(Tillamook, OR)
TDC Learning Centers, Inc. (Topeka, KS)
Teaching Strategies, Inc.
Terra VanLaere, Referral Specialist, ConneXions Child Care Resource and Referral (Lafayette, IN)
Texans Care for Children
Texas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
Texas Association for the Education of Young Children
Texas Early Childhood Coalition
The Alliance for Children and Families
The Child Care Advisory Board for the State of Vermont
The Child Care Consortium, Inc. (Michigan City, IN)
The Children's Forum (Tallahassee, FL)
The Children's Project
The Latterhouse Ministry (Champaign, IL)
Theresa Towner, Director, YW Child Care Connections, YWCA of Greater Toledo (Toledo, OH)
Thuy T. Tran, PhD, Assistant Director, Austin Family Business Program, Oregon State University –
College of Business (Corvallis, OR)
United Way of Metropolitan Dallas (Dallas, TX)
United Ways of Texas
USA Child Care
Utica/Central New York Citizens in Action (Utica, NY)
Valley Oak Children's Services, Parent Voices (Chico, CA)
Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger
Virginia Association for the Education of Young Children
Virginia Child Care Resource & Referral Network
Voices for Virginia's Children
Washington Association for the Education of Young Children
Washington State Association of Head Start
Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network
Wendy Ficken (Freeport, NY)
White Earth Child Care Program (White Earth, MN)
White Earth Reservation Council (White Earth, MN)
Windham Child Care Association (Brattleboro, VT)
Winifred Feise (Pittsburgh, PA)
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
Wisconsin Head Start Association
Work Family Resource Center (Winston-Salem, NC)
Young Parents' Education Center (Great Falls, MT)
Youth Development, Inc. (Albuquerque, NM)
YWCA USA

Cc: Representative Ralph Regula
Representative David Obey
Senator Arlen Specter
Senator Tom Harkin

Senator Michael B. Enzi
Senator Edward M. Kennedy
Representative Howard McKeon
Representative George Miller

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