



November 13, 2023

Representative Barbara Lee
Representative Eric Swalwell
Representative Mark DeSaulnier
Representative Ro Khanna
Senator Alex Padilla
Senator Laphonza Butler

RE: Support Child Care and Access to Basic Needs in President Biden’s Domestic Proposal

Dear Alameda County Congressional Delegation Members:

First 5 Alameda County (First 5) urges Congress to act swiftly and **support President Biden’s Domestic proposal which includes \$16 billion in critical funding for child care and additional economic supports for families with young children including utility assistance and internet connectivity.** Our [2021-22 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment](#) shows that structural inequities compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted children, families, and communities. Increased access to affordable, quality child care, culturally appropriate early learning opportunities, and access to basic needs are at the core of supporting children, families, and communities.

On September 30th, stabilization dollars that saved the child care field from collapse expired, leaving California with more than 84,000 children at risk of losing child care and more than 13,000 child care programs at risk of closing. The Administration [estimates](#) that the proposed \$16 billion one-time stabilization funds could support more than 50,000 child care programs and more than 720,000 children in California. Without additional dedicated funding, we’ll face a deeper child care crisis with significant implications that would disrupt both families and the economy –and would leave the child care field worse off than pre-pandemic years.

In Alameda County:

- An estimated 153 (7%) of licensed child care facilities permanently closed between March 2020 and January 2021.
- We estimate that the Alameda County early care and education field lost \$395 million in FY 2020-21 alone (\$220 million without taking the increased cost of providing care into consideration).
- There is a significant need for investment and expansion in early care and education licensed facilities. We [estimate](#) that the facilities cost to meet demand for licensed child care in Alameda County is likely in the range of \$2 billion to \$4 billion.
- According to parents/caregivers, in 2021-22, [33% of children were fully ready for kindergarten](#) compared to 44% in 2019.

FIRST 5



Through our research we also know that housing and basic needs as a top priority for families and [build on the evidence](#) highlighting that the cost of living in Alameda County has far outpaced families' abilities to make ends meet, and those structural inequities result in disparate outcomes for families of color and those with low incomes. In Alameda County, [50% of renters pay more than one-third](#) of their income for rent. For families of young children, the cost of child care creates an additional financial burden and contributes to financial instability. We support the Administration's inclusion of housing, utility, and internet connectivity supports in the domestic package proposal to help families cover their basic needs and stay connected to opportunities to fully participate in learning, work, access health care, and stay connected.

We are grateful for your continued leadership and support for children, families, and communities and ask that you consider supporting this request. Please reach out to me at kristin.spanos@first5alameda.org if you have any questions or if we can help with additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristin Spanos".

Kristin Spanos
Chief Executive Officer
First 5 Alameda County