

July 11, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, Chair Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

The foundation of lifelong mental health is laid in the first years of life. At this time, a baby's brain forms over 1 million neural connections per second, creating the architecture for all future thinking, feeling, and development. The mental health of babies and their caregivers is also tied together – when parents do better, babies do better, and vice versa. During this period of rapid development, federal investment in perinatal, infant, and early childhood mental health is essential, both for maternal well-being and to prevent the need for more intensive, and often costlier, interventions later in a child's life.

That is why we are alarmed by the proposed termination of critical federal programs dedicated to promoting perinatal and early childhood mental health in the President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY 2026). The end of these targeted interventions would reduce, or even eliminate, access to badly needed mental health and substance use services, potentially saving money in the short term at the cost of more severe – and more expensive – health challenges in the long term. **We, the undersigned 274 national, state, and local organizations, including current and former grantees who have provided direct care to young children and their parents, urge Congress to maintain funding for these essential mental health initiatives in the FY 2026 appropriations bill.**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides funding that is essential to promoting mental health among parents and their young children, setting up a generation for lifelong success. While we are grateful for the Administration's continued investment in several key funding streams – including the Maternal Mental Health Hotline and the Screening and Treatment for Maternal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders Grants – we are concerned about the impact that discontinuing the following small but mighty Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency (SAMHSA) funding streams would have on mothers, fathers, and our youngest generation:

- Project Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children’s Health (LAUNCH)
- Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Grants
- Pregnant and Postpartum Women (PPW) Program

While positive early experiences and secure, stable attachments with caregivers can inform strong mental health, the opposite is also true – inconsistent early relationships or traumatic events can place young children at risk of developing mental health disorders. As the only federal funding streams dedicated to infant and early childhood mental health, Project LAUNCH and IECMH grants are essential to keeping young children on the best developmental track.

Developed to create a foundation for promoting early childhood mental health and preventing diagnosable conditions, Project LAUNCH enables states and communities to create systems of care that meet the mental health needs of children ages birth to age 8. Grantees work to integrate mental health into primary care settings (where children are most likely to be seen), ensure early screening, enhance consultation for the specialized needs of young children, and improve services and supports to keep young children on the best possible path to success. Critically, Project LAUNCH has a proven track record of living up to its name, launching systems of care for early childhood mental health that endure in the long-term.

IECMH grants build on that foundational work by directly investing in mental health services for young children ages birth to 12 years. These funds ensure young children at risk of mental health disorders are identified and receive interventions early, preventing more severe conditions down the line. In the midst of significant mental health provider shortages, particularly for specialized needs like infant and early childhood mental health, IECMH grants fill gaps in the full range of infant and early childhood mental health services, and spur local innovation that promotes the mental well-being of young children across the nation.

Maternal mental health is of critical importance not only for pregnant and postpartum mothers, but also for early childhood experience and development. Pregnant and postpartum women with substance use disorders face significant challenges receiving the services they need to care for themselves and their babies, a gap the PPW program was designed to address. Substance use during and after pregnancy is associated with serious, adverse complications for both mothers and their babies, including infant and maternal mortality. By providing access to effective residential treatment, serving mothers and their children, and supporting the transition back into the community, PPW keeps mothers in recovery at a particularly high-risk time, strengthening health outcomes for mothers, children, and families.

The mental health of young children and their parents lays the groundwork for the well-being of our nation. Now is the time to reaffirm the long-standing, bipartisan commitment to the mental health of our youngest generation by preserving federal funding for perinatal, infant, and early childhood mental health – our future depends on it.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

ABH

American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Child Welfare League of America

Children's Defense Fund

Children's HealthWatch

Children's Hospital Association

Children's Learning And Playhouse Inc.

Children's Trust Fund Alliance

Coalition on Human Needs

Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces

CounterPart Consulting, LLC

Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children (DEC)

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Educare Network

Family Consulting and coaching

Family Voices National

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

First Focus Campaign for Children

Futures Without Violence

Great Expectations

Groundwork Center For Resilient Communities

Institute for Child Success

March of Dimes

Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance

Mission: Readiness

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Association of Counsel for Children

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Center for Children in Poverty

National Coalition for the Homeless

National Council for Mental Wellbeing

National Council of Jewish Women

National Diaper Bank Network

National Home Visit network/HIPPY

National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)

National PLACE

Nemours Children's Health

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies

North Hudson Community Action Corporation Head Start

Once Upon Some Messy Fun LLC

Oppenheim Consulting
Parents as Teachers National Center
Perigee Fund
Primary Care Development Corporation
Randy Wise Automotive Team
ReadyNation
SeizingPsych
Smart from the Start, Inc.
Southern Colorado Family Medicine
Supermajority Education Fund
TEND Collective
The Institute for Human Services
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health/Got Transition
The National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
Trust for Learning
Vital Village Networks
ZERO TO THREE

Alabama

VOICES for Alabama's Children

Alaska

Alaska Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
Copper River Native Association

Arizona

Children's Action Alliance
Joy for Books, Inc

California

A Greater Hope
Allies for Every Child
Around-Birth Collective
California Association for Infant Mental Health
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network
California Perinatal Hub
Children Now
Chinatown Service Center
Desert Mountain Children's Center
El Centro de Amistad, INC
End Child Poverty California
Episcopal Community Services
Felton Institute
First 5 Lake

First 5 Monterey County
First 5 San Bernardino
LSSSC
TLM Educational Services Inc
Trinity Youth Services
West End Family Counseling Service
YMCA of San Diego

Colorado

A & I Avenues
Bekman Psychology
Clayton Early Learning
Fueled By Community LLC
Illuminate Colorado
ReThink ECE Consulting
The Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County

Connecticut

CT-AIMH
Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County
Community Health Center, Inc.
Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance

Delaware

Perinatal Prana LLC

District of Columbia

Children's National Hospital
MGDC Partners

Florida

Community Health of South Florida, Inc.
Early Childhood Department, Citrus Health Network, Inc.
Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County
Empowered Life
Empowerment Counseling and Psychotherapy Services, LLC
Florida Association for Infant Mental Health
Florida Resurrection House
Harting Psych LLC
Hope Valley Resource Center, INC.
Reflective Rivers Therapy & Consulting
The Journey Institute, Inc.
The LJD Jewish Family & Community Services
Tykes and Teens

Georgia

Cobb County School District
GEEARS: Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students
Voices for Georgia's Children

Hawai'i

Hawai'i Association for Infant Mental Health (AIMH HI)
Hawai'i Community Foundation

Idaho

AIM Early Idaho

Illinois

Anderen Counselling and Consulting, PLLC
Children's Advocates for Change
Civic Leaders for Illinois Children
COFI
Curious Little Minds, LLC
Family Focus
IL Head Start Association
Illinois Action for Children
Illinois Association for Infant Mental Health
Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children
Illinois Developmental Therapy Association
JCFS Chicago
Jewish United Fund
Metropolitan Family Services
Midwest Asian Health Association
New Moms
POWER - PAC IL
Prevent Child Abuse Illinois
Purposeful Play, Inc.
Raising Illinois PN3 Coalition

Iowa

ACPC
Iowa ACEs 360

Kansas

Kansas Association for Infant And Early Childhood Mental Health
United Methodist Health Ministry Fund

Kentucky

Kentucky Voices for Health

Louisiana

Geaux Far Louisiana
Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families
Louisiana Policy Institute for Children
Loyola Center for Counseling & Education

Maine

Maine Children's Alliance

Maryland

Center for Urban Families
Determine Your Destiny, Inc.
Infant Mental Health Association of Maryland and DC
Lourie Center for Children's Social and Emotional Wellness
The Parents' Place of MD
The Richman Foundation
TIME Organization
University of Maryland School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry
University of Maryland School of Social Work

Massachusetts

Childrens Learning And Playhouse Inc.
Cognitive Holistic Healing
East Boston Social Centers
Family Care Partnership
Family Consulting and Coaching
Family Enrichment Center
Galanopoulos Education & Training
Hello It's Me Project
Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Roundtable of Franklin, Hampshire and North Quabbin
Italian Home for Children
Justice Resource Institute
Know Other
Lifeline for Families Center and Lifeline for Moms Program at UMass Chan Medical School
LUK, Inc.
MAAEYC
Massachusetts Association for Infant Mental Health, Inc
MSPCC
Parent/Professional Advocacy League, Inc
PAULAS BARN INC. - Child Care
Strategies for Children
The Boston Foundation
UMass Chan Medical School

Michigan

Andrea Russell, LMSW, PLLC
Birchview Parent Group
Bright Beginnings Child Care
Clare Gladwin Great Start Collaborative
Community Healing Centers
Community Mental Health Association of Michigan
Detroit Champions for Hope
Doula C.A.R.E Alliance
Early Childhood Investment Corporation
Everbloom Montessori
Gold Coast Doulas
Great Start Collaborative of Traverse Bay
Great Start To Quality Central Resource Center
Kalamazoo RESA
Kimberly Crafton Consulting, LLC
Ledges Wellness
Living SLOW, LLC
MI Bright Reflections, LLC
MI-AIMH
Michigan Association of United Ways
Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health
Michigan League for Public Policy
Michigan SEL Alliance
Michigan's Children
Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency
Opening Spirit Infant Mental Health
Solutions Learning Group LLC
The Guidance Center
The Right Door for Hope Recovery and Wellness
Think Babies Michigan
Zero to Thrive

Minnesota

Minnesota Coalition for Family Home Visiting
Minnesota Prenatal to Three Coalition
St. David's Developmental & Therapeutic Services

Mississippi

MS-AIMH

Missouri

Dayspring Community Services: A Division of Preferred Family Healthcare
Preferred Family Health
SkiWise Health and Wellness Services
Vision for Children at Risk

Nebraska

Evidence Based Omaha Doulas
First Five Nebraska
Therapeutic Play, PC

Nevada

Children's Advocacy Alliance
Young Consulting Group

New Hampshire

Center for Trauma-Responsive Practice Change
New Futures

New Jersey

Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Child Focus NJ
Isinmi Village
The Center for Great Expectations

New York

Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York
Healthi Kids Coalition
New York State Association for Infant Mental Health
Playto

North Carolina

Anchor Perinatal Wellness
Center for Child & Family Health
Durham's Partnership for Children, a Smart Start Initiative
Kidscope
Little Listeners
North Carolina Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Association (NCIMHA)
North Carolina Partnership for Children
Smart Start

Ohio

025 services
Alloy Consulting LLC
Groundwork Ohio

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy

Oregon

Children's Institute
ORIMHA
Southern Oregon ESD
Yamhill Community Care

Pennsylvania

Allies for Children
Pennsylvania Association for Infant Mental Health
Sprout Center for Emotional Growth & Development, LLC
Joseph J. Peters Institute

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

South Carolina

South Carolina Infant Mental Health Association
South Carolina Program for Infant/Toddler Care

Tennessee

Aligned HOPE
Early Success Coalition

Texas

Children at Risk
Family Service
First3Years
Texans Care for Children
TexProtects

Utah

Voices for Utah Children

Vermont

Vermont Care Partners

Virginia

The Green Cab
Roots of Attachment

Washington

Corvidae Therapy & Consultation
LoveBuilt

Wisconsin

Children's Wisconsin
Elysian Therapeutic Services LLC
Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health

cc: Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies