

May 21, 2026

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chair Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Capito,
Ranking Member Baldwin, and Chair Aderholt,

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 and 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 2027 (FY 2027). The end of these targeted interventions would reduce, or even eliminate, access to

desperately needed 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 248 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 and training and technical assistance for these essential mental health initiatives in the FY 2027 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 of Maternal Depression and Related Behavioral Disorders Program – we are concerned about the impact that discontinuing the following Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (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) Grant Program

Last year, in recognition of the importance of these programs, Congress funded these essential programs in the FY 2026 budget. This included \$19,605,000 for Project LAUNCH and \$15,000,000 for the IECMH Grant Program. We urge Congress to preserve and expand this investment in the coming fiscal year.

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 even after the cessation of federal funds.

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. Amid 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.

In addition, the success of Project LAUNCH and IECMH grants is partly due to the training and technical assistance (TTA) that SAMHSA previously provided, which offered specialized support to grantees in meeting the unique needs of infants, toddlers, and parents. Most providers are not trained to specifically address the mental health needs of this population, and many grantees, particularly those launching new mental health services, benefitted from this targeted TTA.

In September of last year, SAMHSA discontinued the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Training and Technical Assistance Center (IECMH TTAC) that provided this support to Project LAUNCH and IECMH grantees, stating that these services would instead be provided through the Children's Mental Health National Training and Technical Assistance Center (NTTAC). However, we have not seen a Notice of Funding Opportunity that specifies infant and early childhood mental health expertise, or that allows these grantees to access this TTA. Therefore, we also urge Congress to include report language directing SAMHSA to provide training and technical assistance specifically for infant and early childhood mental health.

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

American Academy of Pediatrics

AP-OD

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Autistic People of Color Fund

Brazelton Touchpoints Project, Inc.

Cedar Tree Empowerment Center LLC

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Changent (Nurse-Family Partnership & Child First)

Child Welfare League of America

Children's Defense Fund

Children's Funding Project

Coalition on Human Needs

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

Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children

Family Voices National

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids
First Focus Campaign for Children
Futures Without Violence
HealthConnect One
Indigo Cultural Center
Integrated Community Solutions, Inc
itotheN | Intergenerational Impact
Just Solutions
March of Dimes
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance (MMHLA)
Mental Health Transformation Alliance (MHTA)
Mission: Readiness
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Center for Youth Law
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Council for Mental Wellbeing
National Council of Jewish Women
National Diaper Bank Network
National Healthy Start Association
National Network for Arab American Communities
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
National PLACE
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies
Oppenheim Consulting
Parents as Teachers National Center
Perigee Fund
Raising Resilience Consulting, PLLC
Smart from the Start, Inc
Tend Collective
The Forum for Youth Investment
TOOTRiS
Youth Law Center
ZERO TO THREE
Zero to Thrive at the University of Michigan

Alabama

VOICES for Alabama's Children

Alaska

Alaska Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Alaska Children's Trust

Arizona

Arizona Association for Infant Mental Health

Arizona Early Childhood Alliance

Children's Action Alliance

Easterseals Blake Foundation

Southwest Human Development

Arkansas

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

California

Allies for Every Child

California Perinatal Wellness Alliance (CPWA)

Center for Early Childhood Connections

Children Now

El Centro de Amistad, Inc.

End Child Poverty CA

Felton Institute

First 5 Monterey County

Healing and Justice Center

Long Beach Gray Panthers

Parable of the Sower Intentional Community Cooperative

San Diego for Every Child

Start Well ~ Family/Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

The Children's Partnership

TLM Educational Services for Early Childhood Educators Inc.

University of California San Francisco Child Trauma Research Program

YMCA of San Diego County

Colorado

Bekman Psychology

Clayton Early Learning

Family Visitor Program of Garfield County, Inc dba Great Expectations

Connecticut

Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance

Delaware

Delaware AEYC

Delaware Head Start Association

Jewish Family Services of Delaware, Inc

Wilmington Early Childhood Education Council

Florida

Citrus Health Network

Florida Association for Infant Mental Health

Tykes & Teens

Georgia

9to5 GA

GEEARS

Georgia Family Connection Partnership

Voices for Georgia's Children

Hawaii

Association for Infant Mental Health in Hawai'i

Department of Health - Child & Adolescent Mental Health Division

Early Childhood Action Strategy

Family Hui Hawaii

Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!

Hawai'i Community Foundation

Hawaii Families As Allies

Hilopaa Family to Family, Inc.

Kalamapi'i PLAY School and Root2Rise Counseling Center

Keiki O Ka'Aina Family Learning Centers

Maui Family Support Services, Inc.

Mental Health America of Hawai'i

Idaho

Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children

Idaho Head Start Association

Illinois

Brightpoint

Children's Advocates for Change

Civic Leaders for Illinois Children
ILAEYC
Illinois Association for Infant Mental Health
Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children
Illinois Head Start Association
Metropolitan Family Services
Midwest Asian Health Association (MAHA)
Prevent Child Abuse Illinois
Raising Illinois PN3 Coalition
Tot Learning Center-Skokie Park District

Indiana

First Things First Porter County (IN)
Gifted Purpose Infant and Child Development Consulting, LLC

Iowa

Ames Community Preschool Center
Common Good Iowa
Iowa ACEs 360

Kansas

Kansas Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
Kansas Division for Early Childhood

Kentucky

Kentucky Voices for Health

Louisiana

Geaux Far Louisiana
Louisiana Policy Institute for Children
ResourceFull Consulting

Maine

Maine Children's Alliance

Maryland

Infant Mental Health Association of Maryland and DC
Montgomery County Maryland Child Care Support Services
The Arabelle Pizzigati Initiative in Advocacy for Children, Youth, Families
The Lourie Center for Children's Social and Emotional Wellness
The Parents' Place of MD

Massachusetts

East Boston Social Centers
ECCHO-Latino Inc.
Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Roundtable
Italian Home for Children
Justice Resource Institute
Legal Key Partnership for Health and Justice
LUK, Inc.
Massachusetts Head Start Association
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC)
Paula's Barn Inc. - Child Care
UMass Chan Medical School

Michigan

Centers for Family Development, Inc.
Child Care Back Office
Community Healing Centers
Devine Child Christian Learning Center
Early Childhood Investment Corporation
Gold Coast Doulas
Hypothesis Counseling, LLC
John Evans Montessori Academy
LifeWays
Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health
Michigan Association of United Ways
Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health
Michigan Division for Early Childhood
Michigan League for Public Policy
Michigan Social Emotional Learning Alliance (MiSELA)
Michigan's Children
Nurture Family Center
Shiawassee Health & Wellness
Sunrise Daycare & Learning Center, Inc
The Guidance Center
The Heart Next Door
Think Babies Michigan

Minnesota

Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota
Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH)
Minnesota Coalition for Family Home Visiting

Mississippi

Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities

Nebraska

First Five Nebraska
Nebraska Association for Infant Mental Health

Nevada

Children's Advocacy Alliance
Nevada Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

New Hampshire

Center for Trauma-Responsive Practice Change
National Association of Social Workers NH Chapter

New Jersey

Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Center for Family Resources
Child Focus
CoxPHIT, LLC
Healthy Families
Montclair State University Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health
New Jersey Association for Infant Mental Health
The Center for Great Expectations
Youth Consultation Services
Zadie's OTO

New Mexico

Santa Fe Recovery Center

New York

123 Baby Talks Developmental Services
Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance
Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY)
Children's Defense Fund-New York
Early Care & Learning Council
New York State Association for Infant Mental Health

North Carolina

Anchor Perinatal Wellness
Center for Child & Family Health
Child Care Resources Inc
North Carolina Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Association (NCIMHA)
WZA Consultant

North Dakota

USpireND

Ohio

Groundwork Ohio
Nationwide Children's Hospital

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Association for Infant Mental Health
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy
Potts Family Foundation

Oregon

For All Families Oregon
Our Children Oregon

Pennsylvania

Allies for Children
Children First (PA)
Joseph J. Peters Institute
National Council of Jewish Women - PA
Pennsylvania Association for Infant Mental Health
Pennsylvania Head Start Association

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Association for Infant Mental Health

South Carolina

South Carolina Infant Mental Health Association
South Carolina Program for Infant/Toddler Care
TriCounty Play Collaborative

Tennessee

Tennessee Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
The Urban Child Institute
United Ways of Tennessee

Texas

Children at Risk
TexProtects

Utah

The Children's Center Utah

Vermont

Building Bright Futures, Vermont's Early Childhood State Advisory Council
Vermont Care Partners
Voices for Vermont's Children

Washington

Akin
Barnard Center for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health at the University of Washington
Peninsulas Early Childhood Coalition

Washington, DC

Children's National Hospital
MGDC Partners

West Virginia

Partners in Community Outreach
Prevent Child Abuse West Virginia
TEAM for West Virginia Children

Wisconsin

Children's Wisconsin
Corrine's Cornerstone Consulting
Creating Space, LLC
Howe Community Resource Center

Joyful Noise Children's Center
Natural Wisdom Counseling LLC
Thriving Wisconsin
Tree Top Child Development Center
UW Child Development Lab
WI Alliance for Infant Mental Health
Wisconsin Association for Marriage and Family Therapists

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