

Child Care: \$500M proposed to establish child care centers

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A new effort at the U.S. Congress is designed to help working families access affordable housing and child care.

The Build Housing with Care Act would invest \$500 million to construct child care centers in affordable housing buildings and cover the costs of retrofitting to help family child care providers operate in housing developments.

Priority will be given to projects that are located in child care deserts or rural communities, including qualified Head Start providers and providers primarily serving low-income children.

The legislation has been announced by Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) and Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR).

“Investing in children is one of the best investments we can make,” Bonamici said. “Families in Oregon and across the country are struggling to afford child care and put a roof over their heads. We can help address

both of these critical needs by investing in child care centers and home-based providers located in affordable housing to make it easier for families to find care where they live. I've seen how this model can work in Oregon, and I am pleased to be working with Senator Wyden to make it available to more communities across the country."

"Right now families in Oregon and across the country are juggling impossible situations," Wyden said. "They want and need to work to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table, but child care just isn't affordable – and some communities don't even have child care options nearby. Taking care of your family shouldn't be this hard. I am all in with Congresswoman Bonamici to help close the child care gap and help more families access the care they need."

It is estimated that funding from the Build Housing with Care Act could build more than 120 new co-located child care centers, supporting the development of critical care supply in connection with affordable housing.

A report from the Low Income Investment Fund, Including Family Child Care in Affordable Housing, highlights the many policy opportunities and benefits of co-location as "an opportunity to respond to severe housing and child care shortages simultaneously."

"The Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) is proud to support Congresswoman Bonamici's bill Building Housing with Care Act of 2023," Low Income Investment Fund President Kim Latimer-Nelligan said. "This unique grant program addresses two challenges families and communities face every day – accessing affordable housing and accessing affordable child care. Building housing with care is something LIIF champions every day. By constructing housing and child care together, we can harness the assets of each sector – housing developers, child care providers and community development financial institutions – to build strong communities of opportunity for all."

"The high cost and limited supply of child care is being felt in every aspect of our community and our economy," First Five Years Fund Executive Director Sarah Rittling said. "We know that the cost of child care for two children exceeds annual housing costs in a majority of states -- and too many parents are trying to figure out how they'll afford to pay for both. We are so grateful to Congresswoman Bonamici for her leadership on the Build Housing With Care Act, and her work to expand access to high-quality child care, especially for families in low-income communities."

"Every county in Oregon is a child care desert for at least one age group," Family Forward Oregon Sr. Political Director Courtney Veronneau said. "Without investing in new facilities and helping existing providers and programs expand, we will be unable to meet the demands for early learning and child care. The Building Housing with Care Act makes a critical investment in suitable child care infrastructure to meet the growing need for affordable, reliable, and quality child care that Oregon families deserve."

A fact sheet on the Build Housing with Care Act can be found [here](#), and the full text can be found [here](#).

The legislation was introduced in the House May 11 and is cosponsored by Representatives Troy Carter, Kathy Castor, Madeline Dean, Dwight Evans, Sara Jacobs, Pramila Jayapal, Derek Kilmer, Annie Kuster,

Barbara Lee, Stephen Lynch, Jerrold Nadler, Wiley Nickel, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Dina Titus, and Rashida Tlaib. Senator Wyden will introduce a Senate version of the bill next week.

The legislation is endorsed by: Low Income Investment Fund, National Low Income Housing Coalition, First Five Years Fund, National Housing Law Project, National Women's Law Center, Council of Large Public Housing Authorities, National Children's Facilities Network, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, American Federation of Teachers, Save the Children, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), National Association of Counties, Oxfam America, National Partnership for Women & Families, Prosperity Now, Early Care & Education Consortium, Family Values @ Work, ZERO TO THREE, UnidosUS, National Association for the Education of Young Children, First Focus on Children, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders, National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations (NACEDA), National Association for County Community and Economic Development, KinderCare Learning Companies, Family Forward Oregon, Generation Housing, Purpose Built Communities Foundation, Inc., IFF, and Capital Impact Partners.