**Parent LTE**

To the editor,

Like all parents, I want what’s best for my children. I want to give them a strong start to life by providing them with the tools and resources to help them learn and grow. That’s why I’m encouraging [our state leaders, Rep Name, Senator Name] to invest in high-quality early childhood programs, such as child care, which help children thrive.

[Personal anecdote about their child’s learning.]

Research shows that quality child care is critical because most of a child’s brain develops during the first five years of life. When children spend their days in a stimulating educational environment, they are better prepared for kindergarten. By investing in learning from the start, we are setting our children up for success in the future. This is especially true for children living in poverty.

The average cost for licensed center-based care in [enter state] is [enter dollar amount] per year for a toddler-age child — more than the average monthly cost of in-state college tuition. This means child care is simply out of reach for many families.

That is why I’m encouraging [our leaders, Rep, Senator] to increase funding for the Congress Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), which helps low- and middle-income families afford high-quality care. And as a parent, I believe all children deserve a strong start to life.

Word count: 210

Note to volunteers: You can find state-specific data about the cost of child care in your state at <http://usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/research/costofcare/>.