

Tallahassee Democrat

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### **Economic Stimulus for Child Care =Jobs**

As congressional leaders wrangle over the nation's \$937 billion stimulus package, the Children's Forum has identified a part of it that must be included because it will immediately help working families with child-care expenses and quickly create more than 5,000 new jobs.

Under both the House and Senate proposals, \$105 million would come to Florida to pay for child care through the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). Child care expenses can consume up to 50 percent of take-home pay for low-wage earners. Without help in paying at least a portion of the costs, parents are unable to seek or even maintain their jobs.

The amount of child care subsidy decreases as the parent's income increases, and when families are working, they are hopefully contributing to the tax base and can eventually realize the goal of self-sufficiency.

But according to the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, Office of Early Learning, the waiting list for child care assistance averaged more than 57,000 children for the first half of the state's fiscal year.

Helping struggling families pay for child care will absolutely save jobs and create new jobs. Very importantly, it will result in children being safer and more ready to learn when they start school.

Another positive angle, according to the Cornell University Department of City and Regional Planning — <http://economicdevelopment.cce.cornell.edu> — every \$100 spent on child care in Florida yields \$196 in the regional economy through the purchase of food, toys, and supplies for the children.

By some estimates, if 20,880 more children are served in Florida, approximately 2,088 jobs for child-care practitioners will be created. Another 3,173 jobs would be created where goods and services are purchased by the child care industry.

We urge lawmakers to include the overall \$2 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, which would be good for business, good for children and a good strategy to keep Florida working.

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