Overview

The early learning professionals that make up Idaho’s childcare system are the backbone of our workforce and economy. If Idahoans don’t have access to child care, they can’t work. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced families, educators, and childcare programs into a series of impossible choices between health, safety, quality, and financial solvency.

Childcare providers are doing everything they can to hold their programs together: scrimping, spending down savings, and sacrificing their own income, but the financial cliff is looming putting programs on a revenue rollercoaster. If we don’t take swift action, Idaho’s childcare system will face imminent collapse.

Our policy makers need to understand the gravity and urgency of the situation so they can take action to support our childcare systems. As providers, you are the strongest and most effective advocate for your industry. This tool kit provides the “how-to” on effectively communicating with decision makers to spur them into taking real action in preserving the childcare industry by supporting you and your business.

Send an Email

Those with the power to help need to understand the urgency of the current childcare crisis from your perspective. Tell YOUR story – how this crisis is affecting you, your staff, the families you serve, and your business. Make sure to stress that they to take immediate action to help.

Tips for Drafting an Impactful Email

- **Personalize: Tell your story** – don’t rely too heavily on facts or figures; talk about the tangible effects of your closure – the families you serve that will be without childcare, the staff you lay off that will be out of a job, the lack of direction from officials on operating safely.

- **Make It Memorable** - Lawmakers and their staff receive hundreds of emails every day. Do what you can to make your email memorable.

- **Mention the crucial roll childcare providers play in our economy** - Highlight the essential role childcare plays in the larger economy. Policy makers often overlook how essential childcare providers are to the larger economy and how much of the workforce relies on access to the services you provide. Feel free to use the talking points below

  - **Call to Action** - Make sure the member or staffer knows that they need to support childcare.

  - **Follow Up** - Feel free to follow up on your email if you don’t receive a response.

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Here are a few simple steps you can take to engage your state and federal elected officials.

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Call your Elected Officials

Members of Congress and Idaho Governor’s office take tallies of callers advocating for specific issues. The more calls made, the more likely they are to respond with action. State legislators are not always available by phone when they are not in session, but some do. If you are unable to get a hold of them by phone, send an email.

**How to Make an Impactful Phone Call**

- **Personalize** - Is there a quick story you can tell that explains why you want your member of Congress to support childcare? Feel free to personalize the script below.

  - **Make It Memorable** - Lawmakers and their staff receive many calls each day. Do what you can to make your call more conversational and memorable.

  - **Call to Action** - Make sure the member or staffer knows that they need to support childcare.

  - **Create a script** - Before making the call, write down exactly what you want to say so you are able to stay get your message across in the most effective way.
• Idaho’s childcare system is a network of small, privately owned and operated businesses and the hard truth is that many will not survive this crisis without help.

• Childcare businesses rely on revenue coming from enrollment to pay for their overhead – staff, rent, insurance, and many other costs. These expenses don’t simply go away when providers close out of necessity or caution or when enrollment drops.

• The vast majority were operating on razor-thin margins before COVID and this crisis has pushed many to the brink of collapse.

• There is no magic wand to wave that will help businesses bounce back into full operations once this crisis has ended.

• Childcare providers are the essential backbone to Idaho’s economy. They have been there through this crisis playing their part, providing care and putting themselves at risk.

• There will be no return to work if the portion of our workforce that requires child care to participate has no options left. Childcare is essential infrastructure and if they don’t recover, neither will the rest of our economy.

• More closures are coming. Providers that are still open are serving fewer children now than they were prior to the pandemic and they will not be able to sustain being on this revenue roller coaster.

• Stabilize childcare to save childcare. Idaho’s goal must not simply be to return to the way things were before, but rather to finally resolve the fundamental challenges that have confronted this system for decades.

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Contact information for elected officials

**Senator Jim Risch**
Office Phone Numbers: (202) 224-2752 / (208) 342-7985
Email Contact Form: https://www.risch.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email

**Senator Mike Crapo**
Office Phone Numbers: (202) 224-6142 / (208) 334-1776
Email Contact Form: https://www.crapo.senate.gov/contact/email-me

To determine which Idaho Congressman represents you (which congressional district you live in) visit the Idaho Secretary of State’s polling place finder. It will indicate which congressional district you reside in.

**Congressman Russ Fulcher (Congressional District 1)**
Office Number: (202) 225-6611 / (208) 888-3188
Email Contact Form: https://fulcher.house.gov/email-me

**Congressman Mike Simpson (Congressional District 2)**
Office Phone Numbers: (202)225-5531 / (208) 334-1953
Email: https://simpson.house.gov/contact/

**Governor Brad Little**
Office Phone Numbers: (208) 334-2100
Email Contact Form: https://gov.idaho.gov/contact-us/

Contacting your State Legislators: To find your state legislators and their contact information, visit the following site and enter your street address and zip code: https://legislature.idaho.gov/legislators/whosmylegislator/