

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 20, 2011

Shannon L. Rudisill
Director of the Office of Child Care
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
370 L'Enfant Promenade, SW
5th Floor East
Washington, D.C. 20047

Dear Acting Director Rudisill,

We write to ask for your assistance in clarifying the position of the Office of Child Care regarding the use of Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) monies for diapers as a means of increasing access to child care for families in need. The Diaper Bank, an organization in Connecticut, has brought this issue to our attention and we ask for your help in providing clarification on this question.

The Diaper Bank distributes diapers through local service agencies in Connecticut, a number of which provide child care services to parents receiving CCDF vouchers for child care. Distribution programs such as this exist in many states. Service agencies have informed The Diaper Bank that the diapers have significantly helped families and in some cases have noticeably increased participation in their child care programs. As you are no doubt aware, most families must provide to their child care centers a sufficient number of diapers for their children as a prerequisite to receiving service from the facility. Without diapers, they cannot leave their children at the child care center.

The Office of Head Start has published a program instruction requiring that all Head Start programs provide diapers. ACF-PI-HS-09-03 provides "All center-based programs, consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR § 1304.53(b), are expected to provide whatever diapers are needed by the child during the part of the day that the child is at the Early Head Start/Head Start center. Parents may not be required to provide diapers for their enrolled child nor may parents be charged a fee for the costs incurred by the program in providing diapers to children that need them."

As the Head Start program instruction recognizes, diapers can be a hidden cost to parents and a barrier to their participation in an early childhood program. Thus, a parent who receives a CCDF voucher to participate in a child care program may be unable use that voucher if he or she cannot afford diapers.

Although there appears to be no prohibition against using CCDF funding for diapers, we have not found any guidance to the states explicitly noting that diapers are an allowable use of CCDF funds. Based on the information we have received from our constituents, allowing states to provide diapers as part of a CCDF program could have a substantial benefit in making child care more affordable. Guidance from your office on this question, clarifying that states may use the four percent quality set-aside for diapers and diapering supplies, would help states advance further the goal of making child care available and affordable to working parents in need.

The Child Care and Development Fund is a very worthy program that has helped improve the lives of millions of children and their families as they struggle to attain economic self-sufficiency. We thank you for your leadership and request your guidance as to whether this program's reach can be clarified.

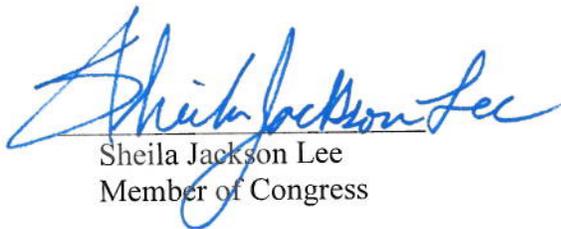
Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate



Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



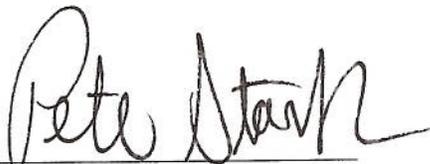
Jesse Jackson, Jr.
Member of Congress



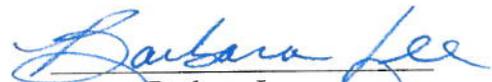
Charles Rangel
Member of Congress



Laura Richardson
Member of Congress



F. Pete Stark
Member of Congress



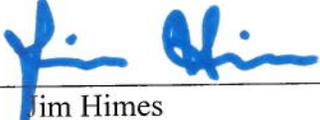
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Chris Murphy
Member of Congress



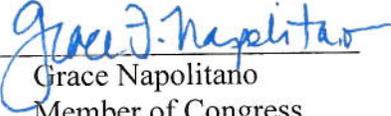
Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Dale Kildee
Member of Congress



Grace Napolitano
Member of Congress



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress