

## **Child Care Matters: Keep Mississippi Working**

### **Urgent Call to Action: Protect Child Care Access in Mississippi**

**Partners:** MLICCI, MELA, Child Care Directors Network Alliance, Mississippi Delta Licensed Child Care Providers, MS Black Women's Roundtable

**Value Statement:** Every Mississippi child deserves access to safe, affordable child care—and every parent deserves the opportunity to work without choosing between income and their child's well-being. Child care is not a luxury; it's a lifeline for families, communities, and our economy.

**Problem:** As of April 1, 2025, the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) has placed a sudden hold on the Child Care Payment Program (CCPP), limiting access to only six narrow eligibility categories. This change—with almost no notice—is putting thousands of families at risk of losing child care and threatening the survival of child care centers across the state.

**Additional Context:** The temporary hold on child care certificates is a result of COVID-19 relief funding ending. There is no estimation on how long the temporary hold will last. Notice has not been provided to parents. This pause on CCPP will adversely affect child care providers, parents and families, employers, Mississippi's workforce participation and economy.

**Solution:** This crisis is preventable. Mississippi has federal TANF funds available now that can be legally and effectively used to maintain child care support for working families at current levels. Other states are already doing it—Mississippi can too. DHS must act immediately to allocate these funds and reverse course. Our children, our families, and our workforce cannot wait.

**Action Statement:** We call on MDHS to:

1. Lift the hold on CCPP new and renewal applications
2. Use available TANF funds to sustain the program
3. Communicate transparently with families and providers

## Key Messages:

- Over 9,000 children may lose child care assistance.
  - Working parents—especially single mothers—are at risk of losing their jobs.
  - Child care centers face enrollment drops, staff layoffs, and possible closures.
  - Mississippi has available TANF funds that can be used now to stop the crisis.
  - DHS holds the solution to use available TANF funds to protect access to the CCPP program and avoid devastating service cuts.
  - [Other states have done this](#)—Mississippi can, too.
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## Talking Points:

### 1. MDHS Put a Hold on Child Care Help—Without Warning

- As of April 1, 2025, the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) has paused new and renewed applications for the Child Care Payment Program (CCPP).
- This major change was announced with little to no notice to child care providers or families.

### 2. Only a Small Group of Families Still Qualify

- Going forward, only families in six narrow categories can access the program:
  1. TANF recipients
  2. Families recently off TANF
  3. Foster parents
  4. Teen parents
  5. Children with disabilities
  6. Military or homeless families
- Working families, especially those who don't fall into the six restricted categories, will be hit hardest.
- Most working families are now being turned away—even if they've been receiving help for years.

### 3. Thousands of Children Could Lose Access

- MDHS estimates that about 9,000 children may be dropped from the program due to these restrictions.

- That means thousands of parents may be forced to leave their jobs if they can't afford child care. Families, particularly working single-moms, depend on child care to go to work or school.
- Providers anticipate immediate drops in enrollment, putting their businesses and staff at risk.
- Without financial stability, many centers could be forced to close, creating child care deserts.
- Providers face potential closures, staff layoffs, and reduced enrollment.
- The Mississippi Economic Council and Accelerate Mississippi agree that the lack of affordable child care is a huge barrier to workforce participation. CCPP makes affordable child care possible.
- MDHS' temporary pause on child care assistance will devastate families, providers, and our economy.

#### **4. Poor Communication Is Making It Worse**

- Parents are confused and scared. Many have not received direct notice from MDHS and have only found out about changes through providers.
- Providers are left to deliver bad news, often without clear information themselves.

#### **5. This Is an Administrative Choice—Not a Budget Reality**

- The money exists. The tools exist. The crisis is the result of state decisions, not necessity.
- We must call on MDHS and state leadership to reverse this harmful decision immediately.

#### **6. There's a Solution: Use the TANF Funds**

- Mississippi has unused federal TANF funds that could prevent these cuts.
- Other states have used these funds to support child care access. Mississippi can too.

#### **7. Call to Action**

- We urge MDHS to use available TANF reserves directly for child care.
  - The public must demand transparency, compassion, and action for Mississippi's working families.
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## Sample Social Media Messaging

### Awareness

📢 Families are losing child care support, and providers are in crisis. MDHS is pausing new certificates for thousands of kids—without a clear plan to restore them. Mississippi, we must act! #SaveChildCareMS #KeepMSWorking

### Pressure

Mississippi has TANF funds that could stop this child care crisis in its tracks. Why won't MDHS use them to keep families working and children learning? We need answers. We need action. #SaveChildCareMS #KeepMSWorking

### Call to Action

Thousands of MS families are about to lose access to affordable child care. Tell @MS\_DHS: use the TANF funds and protect our kids' futures. 💪👶📚 #SaveChildCareMS #KeepMSWorking

TANF funds for childcare are not cash assistance. TANF funds for childcare are designed to keep our children safe, providers open, and parents working. #SaveChildCareMS #KeepMSWorking

### Community Power

Mississippi providers are standing up for families—and we're not backing down. Letters going. Voices rising. Join us to fight for child care justice. 🦊💜 #SaveChildCareMS #KeepMSWorking

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For More Information, visit [www.mschildcare.org](http://www.mschildcare.org)  
and click on the Child Care Matters: Keep MS Working tab