



**Public Comment of Dr. Lynette Fraga, Executive Director of Child Care Aware® of America to the Census Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting March 2018**

March 30, 2018

My name is Lynette Fraga, Executive Director of Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA). CCAoA is the nation's most respected hub of child care information for parents and child care providers. Child Care Aware® of America works every day toward our vision for America - a vision where every family in the United States has access to a high quality, affordable child care system that supports children's growth, development and educational advancement, and creates positive economic impact for families and communities. One way we are able to accurately provide that data is because of the accurate data provided from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census.

To make our vision a reality, CCAoA does two key things: 1) help families and providers locate child care resources in their communities across the United States, and 2) conduct policy advocacy, education, and research in order to help create a high quality, affordable child care system for our nation's children. Nationwide, Child Care Aware® of America has a network of 400 state and local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, and diverse members and partners nationwide. CCAoA serves children of all ages, including children ages five and under.

Child Care Aware® of America's mission is to advance a child care system that effectively serves all children and families. To achieve this mission, the organization leads projects that increase the quality and availability of child care, undertakes research, and advocates for child care policies that positively impact the lives of children and families. To that end, CCAoA frequently uses statistical information from the Census Bureau to conduct research, guide decision-making, and undertake advocacy and communications work.

Because of our use of census data for the work we do on behalf of children, and because we know the its importance for informing federal funding decisions that impact the lives of children, their families, and their communities, CCAoA is very concerned that children, specifically young children, had the highest net undercount of any age group in the 2010 decennial census. In fact, research demonstrates that up to 2.2 million young children aged 0 to 4 were omitted.

The undercounting of young children has many consequences for them, their communities, and our nation, including jeopardizing our ability to collect factually accurate and objective data. In addition, research shows that census data are used for distributing more than \$675 billion in federal funding each year, including for many children's programs such as the Child Care Development Block Grant, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and SNAP/Food Stamps - programs which children, including children in child care, rely on daily to meet their basic needs. (See table 1 for additional information.)

Communities with a relatively high net undercount of young children are at risk of not getting their fair share of federal funding to meet the needs of children. To put this into perspective, if the Census Bureau does not conduct a full and accurate count and young children are missed disproportionately, funding for both the Children's Health Insurance Program and the Child Care Development Block Grant, funding that is allocated to states based on the number of children counted in a state's census count, will not be adequate to address the needs of children in each state - leaving children without essential resources.

The decennial census is a children's issue. And since it happens just once every ten years, its ramifications on statistical research and investments for our nation's children last a *decade*. Therefore, it is vital that the Census is accurate and complete.

CCAOA is very concerned about the historical undercounting of young children and the possibility of it reoccurring in 2020 - especially given the recent addition of a citizenship question to the 2020 census form. We look forward to working with the Census Bureau to reduce the high net undercount of young children in the 2020 decennial census, and urge the Advisory Committee to weigh in with the Census Bureau on the importance of ensuring all of our nation's children are properly counted in 2020.

Thank you.



Lynette M. Fraga, PhD.  
Executive Director

Table 1. Six Federal Assistance Programs Using Population Age 0 to 5 in the Distribution Formula

	FY2008 (in billions)
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC Program)	\$6.10
Head Start	\$5.70
Child Care and Development Block Grant	\$2.00
Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant to the States	\$0.50
Special Education - Grants for Infants and Families with Disabilities	\$0.40
Special Education - Preschool Grants	\$0.40
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$15.10</b>

Source: Surveying For Dollars, Andrew Reamer, The Brookings Institution

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2010/07/26-ac-s-reamer>