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Rollback of several federal child care regulations raise serious concerns

Lemoyne, PA -- May 12, 2026. The recent announcement by the U.S. Administration for Children and Families (ACF) rolling back several federal child care regulations raises serious concerns about the future availability, affordability, and stability of regulated child care for working families.

While ACF has described these changes as efforts to increase flexibility and reduce administrative burden, many of the policies being rescinded were put in place to stabilize a child care sector already facing severe workforce shortages, rising operating costs, and ongoing program closures.

Among the most concerning proposed rollbacks are requirements encouraging:

- payment to providers based on enrollment rather than daily attendance,
- prospective payments instead of reimbursement after care is delivered,
- limits on family co-payments, and
- strategies to sustain child care supply in underserved communities.

These policies helped create more predictable funding for child care programs operating on extremely thin margins. Child care providers must still pay staff, rent, insurance, utilities, and food costs even when children are absent. Without stable payment practices, many programs may face increased financial uncertainty.

The impact could be especially significant for infant and toddler programs, family child care homes, rural providers, and programs serving children with disabilities or complex needs.

At a time when families are already struggling to find and afford regulated child care, increased instability could force providers to reduce enrollment, limit participation in subsidy programs, raise tuition, or close classrooms entirely — reducing access for working families.

We support accountability and responsible stewardship of public funding. However, efforts to streamline regulations should not unintentionally weaken the child care infrastructure that supports children, families, employers, and local economies every day.

About Pennsylvania Child Care Association (PACCA)

The Pennsylvania Child Care Association (PACCA) is a statewide nonprofit, membership organization. For nearly 50 years, PACCA has served as a resource and helped to inform, update and represent child care providers on existing and changing laws, regulations, policies, and developmental research relating to early education and child care.