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## An Open Letter to Presidential Candidates Kamala Harris and Donald Trump: Addressing the Childcare Crisis

October 14th, 2024

Dear Vice President Kamala Harris and Former President Donald Trump,

As our country looks toward the future, families in Miami-Dade and across the nation are facing a crisis that demands your urgent attention: the growing cost of early learning and childcare. In a community known for its vibrant culture and diversity, many families struggle to meet basic needs. The Miami-Dade Self-Sufficiency Standard Dashboard, developed by The Women's Fund Miami-Dade, reveals the true cost of living here. It shows that a family of four requires an annual income of \$108,574 just to cover basic expenses such as housing, childcare, and healthcare.

Childcare, especially at quality early learning centers, is often the second-largest expense for families, particularly for the 26% of Miami-Dade families led by women. In fact, childcare costs can consume 32% of a single parent's income nationally. For many families, these costs force parents, especially women, to make tough decisions: reduce working hours, decline job opportunities, or leave the workforce altogether.

Vice President Harris, you have proposed capping childcare costs at 7% of working families' income. This would offer significant relief, but we need more clarity on how this plan will be funded and implemented, particularly for middle-income families. Your previous work to champion early learning is promising, but the time for detailed, actionable plans is now. Without robust public investment and clear policy direction, many families will continue to struggle to afford quality care.

Former President Trump, your proposal to hike tariffs in order to generate revenue does not adequately address the core issues faced by American families when it comes to affording early child education and care. Simply raising revenue through tariffs does not guarantee that those funds will directly alleviate the childcare burden. Families need immediate, tangible solutions. Your running mate, Senator Vance, suggested that families rely more on relatives for childcare, but this option is neither practical nor possible for many working parents. The focus should instead be on removing barriers to entry for childcare workers and ensuring that the industry is adequately funded and supported to meet demand.

Both of your campaigns have highlighted the early learning and childcare issue, and it's clear that this is a bipartisan concern. But addressing the childcare crisis will require more than rhetoric. In Miami-Dade, the need for affordable, quality early learning is urgent, and the impact goes beyond families—it affects our economy, labor force participation, and the long-term health and development of our children.

As we move forward, we urge both of you to propose meaningful reforms that address the systemic issues within the childcare sector. Expanding subsidies, increasing wages for childcare workers, and incentivizing private-sector partnerships are steps that can make a real difference. It's time to move beyond temporary solutions and create a future where all families have access to affordable, high-quality early learning, allowing them to thrive.

Sincerely,

The Women's Fund Miami-Dade

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