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Ms. Megan Campbell
Office of Child Care
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, DC 20201

Re: Comments Regarding Increase Flexibility for Tribes in Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Eligibility (RIN 0970-AD11), in the *Federal Register*

Please accept the comments from [name of tribe or organization here] regarding the notice of proposed rulemaking published on September 28, 2023 in the *Federal Register* (RIN 0970-AD11).

[Provide a brief overview of the work your tribe or organization is doing to support American Indian and Alaska Native children, their parents, and their relative caregivers in accessing legal services and why this is important to the well-being of Native children and families in your community.]

We appreciate the opportunities that this NPRM allows for tribes to provide child care services for families in their communities.

- As tribes are able to determine their own eligibility requirements for who can receive child care services under CCDF funding, 109 Tribal Lead Agencies would no longer be limited by an income eligibility requirement in who they are able to grant access to these services.
- Allowing tribes to determine who can receive child care services in their community without an externally imposed income limit reaffirms and strengthens tribal sovereignty. Tribal governments know how to support and uplift their children and community, it's important that they are able to make the decisions to allocate funding according to their communities' unique needs.
- Tribal decision-making and involvement in child care services has overwhelming positive results on children and families who are able to access cultural and community-based early childhood programming.

Child care is intricately linked to overall child welfare and well-being. Early childhood programs, including child care, are crucial components in the identification of child abuse and neglect in young children. Child care services help parents and caregivers in many ways, not only by providing care to children so their parents may work or go to school, but also by creating a large support network of many adults in a community who are looking out for a child's best interests and to support their caregivers in fulfilling them. There is significant unmet need for child care services in many American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities. It is important that tribes are allowed flexibility in determining who can have access to these services so they can best reach everyone in the community who needs them.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on these proposed changes and look forward to ongoing collaborative efforts to support tribal sovereignty, ICWA implementation, and the safety and well-being of AI/AN children and families.

Sincerely,

[sign here]