

It's Time For Congress To Invest In Babies

STROLLING THUNDER 10 YEARS

Hi, we're babies

Yusuf and Bilan

This is our story.

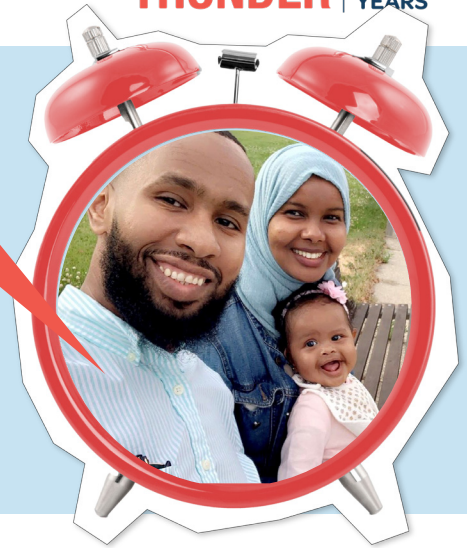
Location:

Blaine, Minnesota

Our Grown Up's Name:

Suad Maow

“ We want to have a fourth child. I want that to be a decision made out of love, not something we have to calculate based on a spreadsheet.



Quality child care and early learning opportunities support the healthy development necessary for parents to reliably go to work or school, and for babies to do well in school and, ultimately, in life. Federal policies are foundational to ensuring child care and early learning access, including through programs like the Child Care and Development Fund and Head Start, including Early Head Start.

Our story begins...

My husband, Sakaria, and I work full-time. We have three children: Ladan, 5; Bilan, 3; and Yusuf, 1. We are a two-income family with stable jobs, but almost every conversation in our house comes back to the same question: what can we afford?

Right now, Yusuf is home with me while I work remotely. That means I am doing two jobs at once—managing meetings, emails, and projects while also caring for a toddler. It works, but barely. We can't afford to put Yusuf in child care while Bilan is still enrolled.

Minnesota offers free preschool starting at age 4. But it runs two and a half hours a day, four days a week. That means two round trips a day for just a few hours of care. For a family where both parents are working, that schedule doesn't work. It assumes someone is available in the middle of the day to handle drop-off and pickup. Most families don't have that flexibility.

Other resources are designed for very low-income families. We don't qualify. But we're also not comfortable. We both work in government and public service, and we sit down with a spreadsheet before every child care decision.

We plan carefully. We make tradeoffs. And it still doesn't quite work.

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IT'S TIME To Make Policy Change

All families want their babies to have a safe, nurturing place to learn and grow, but finding child care we can afford feels impossible. Without it, I'm forced to make difficult decisions about work, school, and how to provide for my family. I'm asking Congress to invest in affordable, high-quality child care and early learning programs so parents like me can fulfill their responsibilities and our babies can get a strong start.

We Want Congress to Support Positive Early Learning Experiences by:

- Increasing funding for child care access via the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Head Start, including Early Head Start, while preserving quality standards and workforce investments and rejecting policies that would reduce access.
- Opposing cuts to the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), Child Care Entitlement to States (CCES), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and other programs that keep child care providers open.
- Investing in early intervention through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C, ensuring services are available in the home and integrated into early learning and care settings.

About Think Babies™ and Strolling Thunder™

ZERO TO THREE created Think Babies™ as a call to action for policymakers to prioritize good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences, particularly during the crucial early years of brain development. Strolling Thunder™ is an annual event for families to share their stories with their elected officials in person. [Learn more at www.ThinkBabies.org/StrollingThunder](http://www.ThinkBabies.org/StrollingThunder).