

Early Childhood Policy and Budget Division
March 17, 2005
3:00 p.m. Room 123
Chair, Senator John C. Hottinger

Present:

Hottinger, Chair
Bob Kierlin
Gary Kubly
Sean Nienow
Sandy Pappas
Linda Scheid
Dan Sparks
Betsy Wergin

Absent:

Senator Hottinger called the meeting to order at 3:13 p.m.

A quorum was present.

AGENDA ITEM #1: Department of Human Services: Governor's supplemental budget for child care.

- Ann Sessoms, Director of Transitions to Economic Stability Division, gave an overview of the Governor's supplemental budget. This budget reduces spending by \$500,000.

AGENDA ITEM #2: S.F. 826-Larson: Child care centers licensing fee reductions.

- Senator Larson introduced his bills generally.
- Tammy Anderson, Director, Children's Corner Learning Center, Fergus Falls. Ms. Anderson spoke about how all fees are going up, but the quality is not.
- Dawn Block, Alexandria, spoke about how the past two years have been financially bad.

AGENDA ITEM #3: S.F. 873-Larson: Child care assistance provider reimbursement rate modification and reductions restoration.

- Tammy Anderson, Director, Children's Corner Learning Center, Fergus Falls. Ms. Anderson gave stories of people being dropped from health insurance because they could not afford both insurance and child care.
- Dawn Block, Alexandria, emphasized how all aspects of life are going up in cost, but not wages.

AGENDA ITEM #4: S.F. 1119-Larson: Child care assistance provider reimbursement rate additional category

- Tammy Anderson, Director, Children's Corner Learning Center, Fergus Falls, spoke about how many half-day families cannot make child care work in their budgets.

AGENDA ITEM #5: S.F. 447-Kierlin: Providing a child care assistance rate bonus for accredited Montessori child care providers.

- Ann Luce, Brightwater Montessori, spoke on how Montessori is a highly effective way of learning. However, they are quite expensive, with 20% receiving a subsidy, and nearly 40% are low-income.

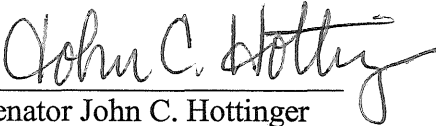
AGENDA ITEM #6: S.F. 1110-Scheid: Child care access bill.

- Ann Kaner-Roth, Child Care WORKS, referenced her handouts.
- Anne Halvorson, Parent, spoke about how she does not want to go back on welfare because she cannot afford her childcare. Ms. Halvorson said she cannot work if she cannot afford childcare, thus starting the cycle of welfare all over again.
- Tara Wisdorf, Parent Services Coordinator, Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association, spoke of less people being eligible for child care, along with some sad stories as a result.

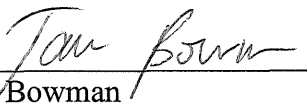
- Pat Gannon, Executive Director, Child Care Resource & Referral, Inc. (Rochester), spoke also to the eligibility of families. Mr. Gannon mentioned that 48% of families (previously on assistance) are within 25% of just being ineligible.
- Ruth Krueger, MN Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA), urged the committee to up the eligibility to 250% of poverty level.
- Byron Laher, United Way, said this bill would invest in the future.
- Sam Walseth, YMCA, spoke of the Y's solid support of this bill, as many of their families lost their eligibility.
- Michelle Thole, MN Licensed Family Child Care Association, gave the committee a hand-out about county-by-county licensing fees.
- Ray Frost, MN Child Care Association, spoke against drastic increases in licensing fees. Mr. Frost spoke to how there are no huge profits in child care, making the fee increases hard to handle.
- Kathryn Tout, Child Trends, spoke about her three Minnesota non-partisan research studies. She found three trends to make centers better:
 - Incentives: A 15% differential rate encourages centers to seek higher accreditation, thus better quality
 - Access: With better access, more centers were rated as more proficient.
 - Information: Families are always better off if they are better informed about the centers
- Karen Swenson, 22 years of experience with early childhood care and education spoke to the domino effect of financial concerns with successful and unsuccessful education.

Senator Hottinger adjourned the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



 Senator John C. Hottinger
 Division Chair



 Jane Bowman
 Division Secretary

Early Childhood Policy and Budget Division

Chair: Sen. John Hottinger

Thursday, March 17, 2005

3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Room 123 State Capitol

Department of Human Services: Governor's supplemental budget for child care.

- Ann Sessoms, Director of Transitions to Economic Stability Division

S.F. 826-Larson: Child care centers licensing fee reductions.

- Tammy Anderson, Director, Children's Corner Learning Center, Fergus Falls

S.F. 873-Larson: Child care assistance provider reimbursement rate modification and reductions restoration.

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S.F. 447-Kierlin: Providing a child care assistance rate bonus for accredited Montessori child care providers.

- Ann Luce, Brightwater Montessori

S.F. 1110-Scheid: Child care access bill.

- Ann Kaner-Roth, Child Care WORKS
- Anne Halvorson, Parent
- Tara Wisdorf, Parent Services Coordinator, Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association
- Pat Gannon, Executive Director, Child Care Resource & Referral, Inc. (Rochester)
- Ruth Krueger, MN Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA)
- Byron Laher, United Way
- Sam Walseth, YMCA
- Ray Frost, MN Child Care Association
- Michelle Thole, MN Licensed Family Child Care Association
- Kathryn Tout, Child Trends

****Removed from Agenda****

S.F. 1792-Hottinger: Consolidating the MFIP and basic sliding fee child care programs, re-establishing the accreditation bonus.