



Minnesota Child Care Provider
Information Network
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March 23, 2023

RE: SF2966 – Governor Walz Budget Workforce Retention

Madam Chair and Committee Members:

My name is Cyndi Cunningham. I have been a Licensed Family Child Care Provider in St. Paul for 26 years and am the current Public Policy Chairperson for Minnesota Child Care Provider Information Network (MCCPIN), a 501c3 statewide association for Licensed Child Care Providers.

I will be specifically addressing Sec.21 line 16.12 Child Care Retention Program.

We appreciate this effort to continue to support all child care settings to ensure that programs are able to continue to provide care for families and their children.

We appreciate that all licensed settings are included (withholding exclusions listed) and that the whole industry will be supported, not just specific categories.

In particular, MCCPIN recognizes the change in the FTE's from only 1 (32 hours) to a potential maximum of 2 FTE's. This change from the 1 FTE in the Stabilization Grants recognizes and supports Licensed Family Child Care (LFCC) in a more equitable manner. FCCs frequently work a minimum of 50 hours per work directly with children so the change meets the standards in our industry and provides better support for LFCCs.

We would ask that there be a change in line 18.29-19.2. The *child care access equity areas* are areas critical in need of the development of additional slots and while we understand the need to support these areas a bonus given to existing programs fails to actually support those serving these families. Families cross 'lines' to go to where there is care. Many of these children are being served slightly outside of the lines and hence need supported. This approach was seen as inequitable by providers during the very first round of funding (\$4,500 grants).

We suggest that removing the equity areas and replacing them with an increased payment be aimed at those FCCs serving infants/toddlers. These are the slots most in demand and least available for families. In particular, an LFCC loses income by filling these slots as our ratios then limit our overall capacity. i.e. the more younger children a provider cares for, the fewer overall children they can care for, hence a loss of income.

The only method an FCC can recoup the lost income is to charge significantly higher fees for infants and toddlers. This then is counter-productive for families who may not pay even more at this point in time in their young families' lives. By giving FCCs financial support in infants/toddlers they are less likely to raise these rates.

Thank you for your time and efforts in hearing these comments and supporting families, children & those providing care.

Sincerely,

Cyndi Cunningham