

# Woodview Terrace Montessori

*A place to marvel, to learn, and to grow.*

October 3, 2021

Subject: Childcare Stabilization Grant

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to urge you to maintain the Childcare Stabilization Grant structure that was laid out by the legislature. Using staff FTEs as the grant calculation rubric ensures that the intended increased compensation is available to all early educators across the state in an equitable way. Every educator is potentially eligible for roughly \$300/month in increased wages or benefits (70% of \$430) no matter the type of childcare setting in which they work, or the size of that setting. Since the aim of this portion of the funding is to support frontline staff providing direct care to children, it is imperative to maintain that equity for educators in all types of settings. No educator deserves more or less because their setting is big or small, urban or rural. The FTE model equalizes the distribution of the funding.

I am a single location, second generation family-owned center currently serving 45 children. I employ just under 10 FTEs – although we currently have 2 open positions that my Director and I are covering in addition to our regular duties. Most of our staff work 40 – 50+ hours per week. Both the need for quality childcare and the hiring crisis in our field are critical. We receive calls and emails daily from parents looking for care, but we are unable to expand enrollment until we can fill our open positions.

The \$300/month per FTE would enable me to maintain as well as attract quality staff. With previous grants and now with the Childcare Stabilization grants, my staff has been able to reap some rewards for their hard work since this pandemic began. Most of my staff have been with us throughout the pandemic. They are so very worthy of the Hero Pay this grant provides them. It gives them the recognition and validation they deserve.

Please do not alter the current funding formula at this point - my staff is counting on receiving the funds intended to recognize and support early educators. Here are a few of the things previous and current grant money has been able to accomplish for my teachers:

- Paying down debt to raise credit score to buy a home
- Covering expenses to extend a maternity leave
- Contributing to legal expenses enabling an international adoption
- Hero pay boost allowed a BA in Psychology to leave a food industry job AND receive a raise joining our staff
- Stress reduction in ease of covering car repairs, increases in living expenses, etc.

The current model may not be perfect but it is equitable allowing the majority of the stabilization grant monies to reach front line early educators and allowing parents to return to work across the state. The remaining grant funds to reach my center based on the FTE model would be approximately \$1280/month - most of which will also be funneled back into recruitment and increasing employee compensation barring classroom closures. Although that leaves little to help cover any of my facility expenses such as rent, utilities, commercial kitchen and other regulatory equipment maintenance – I am prioritizing staff compensation at this time.



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Again – please don't change the distribution retroactively, instead let us all focus our collective attention on making sure that the program works as intended to support all early educators in an equitable and consistent manner. My staff is counting on the additional \$300/month. I believe the additional \$300/month will help entice quality candidates to join our staff and become early childhood educators.

Sincerely,  
Catherine McDonnell  
Executive Director/Owner  
Woodview Terrace Montessori



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