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September 27, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to urge you to continue to follow the legislative formulate laid out for the stabilization grants. Because of these grants and the legally stipulated formula, we have been able to provide our staff with an increased \$3/hour on top of their regular wage. This is a game changer for many early childhood teachers who make on average less than \$12/hour.

As a center director, I can share first hand the struggles we face to compete with employers. Other industries that can offer more flexible hours, less qualification requirements and pay that is upwards of \$10 more an hour. In over 20 years of operation, this is the first time we have had to turn families who need care away because we don't have hire/retain enough qualified staff. This is happening even *with* the increased hourly wage afforded by the grant. I fear for the stability of my business, ability to provide care to families, and for other child cares across the state should the grant funds be redistributed.

Additionally, I urge you to maintain the 10% boost to providers who serve children on the Child Care Assistance Program. The true cost of quality care is not reflected in CCAP rates. We take a financial hit every year because we choose to accept CCAP. Not only do we accept CCAP, 85% of our clients participate with CCAP and we intentionally choose to operate in an underserved community where there is a high rate of poverty. To take away this funding boost because providers "can't help" who their clientele are would be fundamentally inequitable policy. Providers determine where and for whom they provide services. We are providing care at a lower rate in order to meet the need for high quality care for children living in poverty. The 10% boost doesn't bridge this funding gap but every bit helps to keep us afloat.

Thank you,

Maria Snider  
Director