

Hello,

Please share this with all JFC members. My name is Corrine Hendrickson, I have owned and operated Corrine's Little Explorers Family Child Care for 15 years, and I am requesting that you continue the successful Child Care Counts program in the state budget by fully funding the \$340 million request. This will fully restore the Round 3 to the previous rounds funding and allow me to suspend my temporary rate increase of 12.5% to offset the revenue loss to my program (about \$20 a week per child). Any lower funding amount will cause increases in tuition to offset that loss, which may price me out of affordability and cause me to close my business within the year because parents will be forced to quit their jobs or pay me more than they earn.

The Child Care Counts program has allowed me to hire a substitute so I can pursue my Master's Degree and not close my program to attend monthly Thursday and Friday classes. It also allows me to use the sub so I can go to appointments for myself and children along with attend my children's activities without having to close my family child care to do so, thus allowing parents to work without interruption.

It also allowed me to go to Washington DC in February and testify as a witness at a House Small Business Committee hearing: From Nothing To Something the Story of the American Dream, where I spoke about child care as both a workforce development issue and an educational issue. I also spoke about how, we, as the child care business owners were a part of the creation of Child Care Strong (the previous dcf biennium request), which turned into Child Care Counts. We know what our businesses need. We know what the market can stand for rates before completely out-pricing parents from the workforce. The monthly payments allowed us to increase wages. I went from \$6 an hour to \$12 an hour for the 50 plus hours I work directly with children (not accounting for the 20 plus on the business end) per week. I raised my sub wage from \$9 an hour to \$12 an hour plus a 5 star Youngstar \$250 part time monthly bonus WITHOUT raising my rates. Statewide we went from \$10.66 an hour in 2021 to \$12.66 in 2022. That will already drop this month unless we raise tuition due to the remaining arpa funds left to allocate.

If Child Care Counts isn't fully funded closures will accelerate as the educators leave the sector for far better paying, less stressful jobs. Closures will accelerate as tuition outpaces parent's wages, remember parents of young children tend to be in the beginning of their careers, and far lower salaries. Other Employers will have an even harder time recruiting and retaining. I am not exaggerating any of this, it will likely cause a mini-recession due to households becoming one earner households or the 1000s of dollars lost on discretionary income due to increases of tuition (surveys show around \$50 a week per child. Over \$5000 annually for a family with 2 children).

Think carefully as your vote today will be monumentally consequential. Vote for our economy. Vote for our children. Vote for at least \$340 million for child care counts to continue to stabilize child care.

Then meet with us in your district areas. Have brain storming sessions of how to actually fix the system. I know there is a group of 9 that have been working on legislation, due to a couple of quotes by Rep. Armstrong in articles, but do your due diligence and talk to the actual people in the field about your ideas and if they are realistic and will be impactful as intended. Just like you do with all other legislation that impacts an industry. There are over 4400 child care businesses, over 10s of 1000s of employees. Talk to us before finalizing and introducing any legislation.

Thank you,

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