

## Satellite Support Group Arco Iris Feedback

The Child Care Assistance Coordinator, Varinia del Moral, attended Arco Iris, the Spanish-Speaking accredited provider support group on **Friday February 26<sup>th</sup>**.

1. Providers emphasized that financial assistance would help the most to continue serving low-income families.

These funds could be used for:

- Helping families with co-pays
- Helping to cover lost income when families are absent
- Helping to cover the loss in income between the 35 hour county rate and the actual use of day care hours.
- Helping to cover the provider's vacation, sick and holiday time
- Helping to cover the termination notice
- Help to offer private financial assistance to families that do not qualify for City funding

2. New providers and providers that have WI Shares families again after a long hiatus also need training on how to use WI Shares online system and there are a lot of questions about the EBT system.

3. Providers need to be diligent getting their information on the Satellite list when they have openings so that City families are aware of their options.

Note: One provider stopped providing care because her financial losses serving low-income families were so great. She decided to re-enroll in school to get her teaching certification to become an MMSD school teacher. She is now in school and has re-opened her business for after-school care only while she continues her academic career.

Provider examples:

### **Ana Bertha Ramirez, accredited provider for 13 years**

Ana had not been serving WI Shares funded children for the past three years. She was losing too much income when the children were absent in care and the County does not cover the absence. I wasn't able to get the loss from the parents because they can't afford it. I had the same issue for vacation and holidays. Also when parents leave and don't give their termination notice. This all added up. When asked if she knew an estimate of her losses, she said she didn't remember, but that it was too much work and little pay.

Ana did stop serving WI Shares families. She said that she did continue to interview families, but that once families learned her rates they then would not enroll. Ana does offer a sliding fee to her families based on their income and whether they receive funding.

Ana's suggestion for the City is to offer a stipend or grant to cover a period of time when parents enroll (e.g. that can cover termination notices) and to lower family co-pays. Ana also suggested that funds be set aside to lower the co-pays of City funded families. Ana

serves a high number of City funded families and she says that when their co-pay gets too high, they no longer attend.

Ana is now serving a WI Shares family and she says she could use training on the new system (which was apparently offered in 2015 by WI Shares).

### **Gabriela Navarro**

Her issue has been that families leave care without giving their two-week termination notice. They report to the change center right away so they plan to attend care with another provider, but they lie to us about why they are leaving. The next week they are with another provider and we didn't have termination notice.

### **Vanessa Arvizu, accredited provider for 15 years.**

Had not served WI Shares families for the past five years and has only recently enrolled a family. She says she stopped serving WI Shares families because they didn't want to pay their co-pay nor the difference in cost in care. She'd often hear that other providers didn't charge the co-pay. Vanessa would insist on her policies. She said often families would enroll for about two-weeks until the authorization came in the mail and once they had to pay their co-pay they'd leave. She has only served private paying and city funded families since.

### **One provider (Anonymous)**

To prevent a family from leaving her care and causing disruption to the child, she offered a sliding fee to reduce the families out of pocket cost (they did not qualify for the City or the County). She has three other families that lost their County funding but they live in Fitchburg so they don't qualify for City funding. She will not be able to afford the lower fee for these families as well, so they will be leaving now at the end of February.

### **Several providers**

Providers agreed that the authorizations are for maximum 35 hours of care are problematic. The parents are telling the families they are approved for full time care (i.e. 40 hours of care), which makes communication with the families about the difference very difficult. Particularly because families trust the "official government employee" over the provider's explanation of the authorization and her policies and rates. (i.e. cultural gap)

**Several providers** reported losing families to centers because centers are being reimbursed at a higher rate which decreases the family's out of pocket cost.

EBT concern, the providers say that the State said providers will have to pay \$14.95 per month to be able to swipe the new card as a service fee.