



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development
Community Development Division

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Eloise Anderson, Secretary
Department of Children and Families
201 E Washington Ave G200
Madison WI 53703

Dear Secretary Anderson,

In March, 2013, The City of Madison's Early Childhood Care and Education Committee (ECCEC) hosted a forum that offered community members- child care providers and early childhood and school age professionals in the Madison area an opportunity to voice the challenges and concerns they have that impact a provider's ability to provide quality care to children. 20 individuals, representing accredited and non-accredited child care programs and community organizations, attended. The ECCEC writes to inform you of the issues raised in the forum so that the Department of Children and Families may consider them when examining changes to state child care policies.

Licensing

Some providers find licensing visits and reports to be inconsistent. For example, one regulator required that a provider meet a facility improvement standard in order to be licensed, but did not require that another provider meet similar facility standards. A few providers remarked that these licensing inconsistencies are unfair and punitive.

Quality

Some providers are concerned with maintaining quality staff and programs. The providers at the forum indicated that YoungStar's rating system can hold them at a disadvantage. For example, some providers said they have more experienced staff than college-educated staff and thus, they receive a lower YoungStar rating. In their view, this difference in staff educational levels prevents them from achieving a higher YoungStar rating. In addition, some of the providers want to see a re-examination of the system for professional development to address the educational issues related to recruiting and retaining a quality staff.

Wisconsin Shares

The most serious issue brought up at the form was that of the state's funding for low-income working families. These providers find Wisconsin Shares challenging. The biggest challenge they face is the attendance-based authorization policy. Without pay for days when children are sick or on vacation, providers cite financial loss.

Providers want to return to enrollment-based authorizations and an extension to notices, which gives providers time to make financial arrangements. Another challenge is educating parents about their cost and how the reimbursement process works. A third big challenge is covering the gap between Wisconsin Shares reimbursement and the actual costs to provide care. Some providers raised their rates to cover costs.

Given the license, quality, and Wisconsin shares issues, the ECCEC felt the Department of Children and Families could benefit from the information providers shared with us at the forum. The committee members hope that you will find it useful in making future policy decisions. If you have questions, please contact Scott Peters, Chair of the Early Childhood Care and Education Committee at peters.scott.j@gmail.com or (847)530-8437.

Sincerely,
ECCEC Members

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Scott Peters
Pat Lasky
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Jennifer Dittrich-Templin