

February 20, 2017

House and Senate Appropriations Committees
Vermont Legislature

We, the undersigned, are submitting this written testimony to show our support for the Governor's **proposed \$7.5 million additional funding for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP)** in his state budget proposal.

CCFAP is chronically under funded, despite its value in providing tuition assistance for families who meet certain financial, health, work or education criteria, allowing them to enroll their children in quality child care programs while parents work or attend school.

We believe that this strategic investment into early care and learning is vital to ensure access, quality and affordability, supporting Vermont's parents, providers and children.

Sincerely,

**Lisa Duncan, Home-based Child Care Provider
Derby, 802-673-6888**

Families are struggling to pay for child care. It [becomes] a choice of hardly-any take home pay: what doesn't get paid to pay for child care? Do I take my \$100 or less a week after paying for care and survive? Do I quit and cost the government more money living off Reach Up, heating assistance and 3Squares?

We are working for families (however paid by the CCFAP) and do it for less than minimum wage and no benefits (health care, family leave sick time, 401K, etc). We work 60-80 hours a week with no breaks, benefits or livable wages.

Children's brains develop 90% by age 5. We have these children [in our care] from birth to age 5 and longer. The children and providers need to be invested in to give the quality care needed.

**Jenn Bergeron, Home-based Child Care Provider
Morgan, 802-673-9014**

As child care providers, we are working for less than \$4.00 an hour and over 75 hours a week. The cost to provide quality education and health to each child in care leaves child care providers barely making ends meet for their own families.

Our parents who are working full time and trying to better themselves are told they do not qualify for child care assistance. This leaves one of my families with only \$50.00 out of her paycheck after paying for the care I provide for their child.

Ivy Crowe, Home-based Child Care Provider
Beebe Plain, 802-873-5028

In my program, I have a family with three children – all adopted – who qualify for roughly \$10.00 a week in child care [financial assistance]. The parents work in the school system – one as a teacher, the other as a paraprofessional. They can only afford child care for their youngest child. The oldest is in high school and the middle child must stay with neighbors to catch and get off the bus each day. The neighbors work and have had problems in the past when the daughter misses the bus, school is delayed or the bus is late. She is young enough to be in child care.

Michelle, Nick, Home-based Child Care Provider
Lowell, 802-744-2538

Current CCFAP rates need to be increased to continue quality care. [CCFAP] eligibility needs to be monitored to ensure funds are allocated to families truly in need.

Jessica Giroux, Home-based Child Care Provider
Derby, 802-393-3395

[CCFAP] rates are not high enough. Providers with degrees are doing a preschool curriculum and not getting paid higher [wages].