

From: patnoe@pshift.com
Sent: Friday, February 10, 2017 1:41 PM
To: Theresa Utton
Subject: Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee members

Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee members,

First of all, I want to thank you for the tough work you are doing for Vermonters. I want to mention that your work is much like the work of early educators. We are struggling to do the best we can; with an enormous shortage of money and resources. The population we both serve, are the vulnerable and essentially our future Vermonters!

I can't express enough, how important it is to support increases in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) as proposed by Governor Scott! I have provided early care and learning experiences for children over the last 18+ years. I am at a point where I wonder each day if I can do this any longer. Providers are tapped out, parents are struggling to pay their bills, and there seems to be no sustainable funding sources to keep us going. The income eligibility rates we currently use are not up to date. There is not enough support for families trying to work. Two parents, with one child, working full-time at minimum wage only qualify for a 10% benefit. That means they receive \$17.35 a week in assistance, still owing me \$218/wk.

Part of this proposal includes bringing up the Market Rates providers are paid through CCFAP. We are currently paid based on 2008/2009 Market Rates. This proposal will bring Market Rates up, but not up to date. It is a step forward.

As programs are closing on a weekly basis due to lack of funding, the inability to charge what it costs to provide quality care, and programs not able to meet the new licensing regulations, please consider what steps can be taken to support Vermont children, families and childcare providers. Supporting increases in CCFAP is crucial right now!

If you have any questions or would like to talk further, please don't hesitate to contact me at 888-1881.

Best,

Tracy Patnoe

Mud City Kids

Morrisville

*I would like to submit this as written testimony for the budget hearings as well.