

I would first like to thank you for your time and for the opportunity to comment on the proposed CCFAP budget. My name is Michelle Parson and I am here speaking on behalf of ABC & LOL child care and preschool. We are a 4 STAR program located on Route 5 in St. Johnsbury. We have over 20 full time and part time staff members, and serve 95 children at this location. Over 80% of our families participate in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program. I am asking for you to please support Governor Scott's proposal to increase funding, as he looks to invest 7.5 million dollars in this program.

I have first-hand seen the effects on families who are currently ineligible. I have worked with women who have had to stop working after having children because their income doesn't cover the cost of child care. At the same time, that income makes them ineligible to qualify for any level of support, taking away any chance of having an offset of the cost of quality care. While children are losing the chance to grow and develop into social beings, parents are also losing the chance to become contributing members of the job force.

There is the potential of a greater positive effect if Governor Scott's proposal is approved. If there are more children that are eligible to attend child care, this puts out a higher demand for child care workers. If child care centers receive more funding, they are better able to support their staff members' professional development, in turn allowing the center to gain a higher rating, making them eligible to offer a preschool program that is state qualified. This is an overall win for the social and the educational communities.

Also speaking as a mother, being able to give my children the chance to attend child care has done more than allow me to continue to work and allow them to be a part of preschool; it has allowed us to be a part of the community. I have made connections to other parents that has allowed me to have a support system and be one for others. My children have started to make friendships that will carry through their school years. They will start their educational journey with familiar faces. And as a family, we have been given a resource for community activities and events that we otherwise weren't aware of.

Again, I would like to thank you for your time and I please ask that you will support Governor Scott and his proposal to increase funding for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program for the benefit of children and the communities they live in.