

Emily Marshia Testimony
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My name is Emily Marshia and I am the Co-Executive Director of the Orange County Parent Child Center in Tunbridge. We serve nearly all Orange County towns and several northern Windsor counties towns as well.

I am here tonight to offer you my strong and enthusiastic support of the Parent Child Center's request to increase our Master Grant funding by \$8 million. This will fully fund the work my co-workers and I do with and on behalf of children and families in our region.

Every day we see the impacts of geographic disparity and rural asymmetry on families, and the full spectrum of affluence and poverty and social isolation. We witness the strains of parenting amid substance abuse and wide-spread opioid addiction. We watch as parents who have lived through significant trauma themselves attempt to navigate parenting their own children. And we also get to cheer them on as they overcome barriers, accomplish goals, and protect their children and become their champions.

Our flexible approach delivers successful results time and again because it focuses on the strengths families already have in addressing the challenges they face. This approach is consistent, accessible, and multi-generational - by design. The parent child center approach helps parents mitigate their own adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and prevent them for their children, which lessens education, healthcare and social service costs for everyone. For all these reasons, the parent child center approach works...

Meanwhile, the average hourly rate for our direct service staff is \$16.50/hour. This includes licensed teachers, licensed social workers, a registered nurse, master's and bachelor level teachers, and the highly qualified early childhood educators in each our classrooms. We are also no longer able to offer our employees the benefit of health insurance.

Our turnover rate is at an all-time high. In the last year, 22% of our staff has moved on, most often to find similar work for public schools, hospitals, or state government. Vacancies are taking longer and longer to fill. This is beginning to impact our ability to maintain high quality, consistent services. It is affecting families. The staff at the Orange County Parent Child is subsidizing the cost of delivering high quality services to families.

I request that the Master Grant be sufficiently funded at \$10 million; this represents an \$8 million increase. In considering this request, I remind you that this is not a new approach. This is results-proven, family-centered work already taking place out in your communities. We know how to make great gains with families and I ask for your support in securing the parent child center approach.