

My name is Tami Dodge. I have been in the field of Early Childhood education for 25 years. I have been a registered child care provider in St. Albans for almost 21 years. I have been a provider leader in St. Albans for almost 20 years.

(1) Academic research says that advanced degrees are very important in childcare. What is your practical experience?

I do not feel an advanced degree is necessary to provide quality care to children. As a provider leader, I have worked with the providers in Franklin/GI counties by teaching professional development opportunities and mentoring these providers so they can implement the knowledge they have gathered into their programs. In 2020, I was part of a committee that was formed to offer a class of Focused Based Portfolio or Assessment of Prior Learning to all providers in the early childhood field. I completed documentation for 4 registered child care providers that earned between 9 and 15 college credits for their experienced based knowledge. Due to funding from Let's Grow Kids, the providers only had to pay \$35 for this class. The program was such a success we are currently working on offering a second opportunity.

(2) Do you accept families who utilize the state's child care assistance? Do you cap or have a limit on the number of children from those families that your program is able to take? Would changes in H.171 that expand the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) to lower income and middle income families improve access to your childcare program?

I do accept families who utilize the CCFAP. I do not limit the number of children from those families. I don't think the expansion would change access but it would help families keep money in their homes to spend on other needs. I don't want to see families have to go without basic needs because they have to work so they have to pay for childcare.

(3) What would the impact of being paid based on enrollment versus attendance have on your program?

This would alleviate a lot of stress, especially in current times. I recently had a child out because the mother was sick so he was staying with another family member. I did not use sick days so I did not get paid for that week. Right now, when a child shows symptoms, they have to be out for an extended period of time so they are using up their sick days.

(4) When you submit your program's information to the State for the market rate survey, what do you submit and how do you come up with the figure?

I usually look at the base rate the State pays and I do take into consideration the income levels of the families in Franklin County. I also look at the income I get as an Act 166 provider. Since I am the qualified teacher in my program, I do not have the expense of paying an additional staff member. After looking at all of these factors I determine what I will charge families.

(5) If your program takes children ages 0-3, what does the typical day look like?

As a registered home provider, I have a group of multi-aged children which includes children between the ages of 0-3.

Upon arrival, children make their own choices for free play. We have a morning snack followed by diaper changes. We then read a story and follow up with activities based on the book we read. I always make sure I have activities that are developmentally appropriate for the age of the child. While doing these activities I often have to take the younger children back to the bathroom for another diaper change because they seem to prefer having their BM in a clean diaper. Weather permitting we go outside where we either play in my yard or take a walk

around the neighborhood. If the weather does not allow us to go out, we do some kind of gross motor movement inside. Then comes lunch, naps and afternoon snack. When we are finished afternoon snack the children get more free play while waiting for their families to pick them up.

(6) What do you think about the concept of the State setting the lowest amount you would be allowed to pay an employee of your program?

Most registered home providers do not have employees, except for the summer. Unless the State was going to pay for an assistant I do not feel the State should set a lowest amount allowed. If an assistant is willing to work with the provider on payment I think that should be allowed.

(7) As a provider, someone who is doing the work:

a) please identify one thing that the state could do to improve your interaction with them and support your business and the children.

I think the State could try to make more personal connections with providers. Relationships help to build better communication and understanding on both sides.

b) what is one thing the state should stop doing?

Making so many changes at one time.

c) what is one thing the state should keep doing?

Looking for ways to help families pay for child care and helping providers with funding for classes whether they do traditional college classes or the Focused Based Portfolio/Assessment of Prior Learning class.