

Testimony of Erica Skelton  
In support of  
***LD 1726: An Act to Build Maine's Economy by Supporting Child Care for Working Families  
sponsored by Senate President Troy Jackson***

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Erica Skelton. I am an Owner/Director/Head Preschool Teacher, and I live in Lisbon. I'm testifying in support of LD 1726 An Act to Build Maine's Economy by Supporting Child Care and Working Families.

I support raising child care educator wages because average salary of an Early childhood educator is about \$30k/year. A disproportionate number in comparison to today's cost of living. Yet we're supposed to hire and maintain a staff of professionals for the care of the future at that rate. It's impossible.

I support Maine developing a cost model tool that better supports our understanding of what it costs to provide quality care and education because with understanding comes change, positive change for our field is beyond needed. We are the workforce supporting the workforce! Understand our cost!

I support raising subsidy eligibility for Maine's lower income families because the cost of childcare should not be the burden of the parent alone, we are a community and if we operate as such we will be able to not only survive but thrive. Support more children and families.

I support ensuring that subsidy reimbursement covers days when children are absent from their program because the current model requires the provider to eat the cost of holding a slot for a child on the subsidy program. Maintaining that open position prevents the program from receiving money for it. Filling it prevents a subsidy family from having it.

I support Maine developing a long term plan to increase investments in child care programs while also increasing subsidy eligibility because Early childhood education is literally our future. We are talking about investing in the future.

I support increasing Head Start eligibility and funding because Head start is a wonderful program that needs the support and makes giant strides in the field of education

I support providing funding to pay for child care for child care employees because it should not be the responsibility of the program to eat the cost in order to be staffed.

I support shortened time periods for determining subsidy eligibility because providers are stuck with eating the cost if they enroll the student while waiting to find out if a family was approved or not. The subsidy does not backdate.

I support shortened time periods for child care programs receiving subsidy reimbursement wouldn't you like to get your paycheck faster if it was taking forever?

Please vote in support of LD 1726,  
Erica Skelton