

Testimony of Chrissie Davis
In support of
**LD 1799 An Act to Expand Maine's High-quality Early Learning and Care for Children by
Increasing Public Preschool Opportunities in Communities**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Chrissie Davis and I am a family childcare provider in Skowhegan. Currently I serve 6 children under the age of 5 and 2 school-age children. My hours of operation are 6:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Children often enter my program as infants and continue through 8 or 9 years old. I also have had many siblings in my program, as is one of the many benefits of family childcare. The group includes mixed ages which is another benefit. All children explore, create, discover, learn and develop together, each at different levels. Often younger children learn from their older peers which not only benefits the youngest in the group, but also reinforces skills for the older children. The dynamics of family childcare are amazing and the reason I have been in this profession for 22 years.

My program is an Early Head Start partner and nationally accredited. I work hard to make sure the services I provide for children and families are high quality. Bouncing Bubbles is a Gold Site with 5210 Let's Go!, has a Star 5 rating with Maine's Quality Rating System and is a Nature Explore Certified Outdoor Classroom. I am an appointed member of the Children's Cabinet Early Childhood Advisory Council and a Go NAPSACC consultant with Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network. In addition, over the past 22 years, I have earned an AS in Early Childhood Education, Maine's Inclusion Credential, Maine's Youth Development Credential and Maine's Infant Toddler Credential. My extensive training has earned a Level 6 on the Career Lattice with Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network. All of these increase my knowledge and expertise in the field of early childhood education.

Other testimony will provide you with the benefits of PreK. I have been providing a PreK education for 22 years and quite effectively. I utilize Creative Curriculum which is an evidence-based curriculum, create weekly lesson plans and conduct observations and assessments for all children in my care. Unfortunately, although you can see my list of qualifications is extensive, I don't have a Bachelor Degree and, therefore, cannot obtain the required certification to be considered by the State of Maine as a provider of PreK services.

The families in my care now must make a choice when their child turns 4 years old: they can enroll them in Public PreK and likely lose their childcare services with me or keep them enrolled at Bouncing Bubbles so they can maintain a continuity of care. Because licensing ratios include 4 year old children in the younger age group rather than considering them in the school-age group, if a child in my care were to attend Public PreK and then use my services for before and after care, I would need to charge the family a full time rate, which seems unfair, but, from a financial perspective, I have no choice. Our school district doesn't offer bussing for PreK students, so families often must disrupt their workday to transport children to and from PreK which adds another level of stress for them. As an example, I currently have had a family in care for over 11 years with 3 different siblings. The middle child attended Public PreK in our district

and, quite honestly, didn't do well as he wasn't emotionally ready for that step. Mom had to go to work late to be able to take the child to school and then had a grandparent transport the child after school to my home. When his younger sister was able to attend PreK, the mom informed me that her daughter would remain in my care and not attend Public PreK because "she will learn more with you and I don't have to worry about lining up transportation".

I ask you to support LD 1799 and recognize childcare providers as a viable option for delivering PreK services. Thank you.