



**Family Child Care
Association of Maine**

Jennifer Wescott
Chair, Family Child Care Association of Maine
fccam.publiilcpolicy@gmail.com

207.650.5602

**Testimony of Jennifer Wescott, Owner of Feels Like Home Early Care & Education
On Behalf of the Family Child Care Association of Maine Before the Committee on
Health and Human Services Regarding LD 1726 “ An Act to Build Maine’s
Economy by Supporting Child Care for Working Families”**

5 May 2023,

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, My name is Jennifer Wescott, I am Chair of the Family Child Care Association of Maine. I am writing this today on behalf of our membership to ask that you support the passing of **LD 1726 An Act To Build Maine’s Economy by Supporting Child Care for Working Families.**

I am very appreciative of the creation of the wage supplement. The wage supplement is an important part of helping Family Child Care providers and has helped in easing an immense amount of stress that has been forced upon all of us in this current economic state. In the profession of Family based Child Care the business is based in and around our homes. We as Spouses, Parents, and members of our homes do not leave our work at the office but instead carry it with us even after all the children have left for the day. The climbing costs of food, electricity, and various other everyday expenses has become more of a burden for providers as the wages being made has not been rising alongside those costs. Child Care, especially Family based care, is not a business in which providers are making a vast amount of money. Educators are a part of this community because of their love for children, but many educators are being lost from this profession because of the instability of the wages that are needed to support themselves.

The Subsidy program is incredibly beneficial to families in this unstable time, due in part because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. These social programs are an integral part of keeping families afloat during these trying times. With that being said, it is important to model those programs after the needs of not only the families but the educators that are accepting these programs into their businesses. The Subsidy program is attendance based payments in which the money is only being paid towards the days that the child attends. Most, if not all of the private childcare programs such as Family based care have enrollment based tuition. That system of tuition is the payments are based on the spot that a child holds at the program and attendance does not play a factor. This is an important distinction because when a business decides to accept a child that is a part of the subsidy program they are typically already taking a lower amount of money than their normal tuition. Attendance based tuition can be costing these small businesses a lot of money. Family Child Care programs are only allowed to have spots for 12 children during the day. If a child on subsidy is absent, even for the span of one day, that is a large amount of money that is being lost because subsidy is not modeled after the programs that are accepting it.

Thank you for your time and attention to this bill.

Jennifer Wescott

Jennifer Wescott

FCCAM Chair

fccam.publicpolicy@gmail.com