

Adrian Morneau
Lewiston
LD 210

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Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable committee members, my name is Adrian Morneau and I live with my family in Lewiston.

I submit this testimony neither for nor against LD 210, and very much in support of Maine's early childhood education system.

I write as both a parent and an educator. Before my son was even born, my husband and I began looking for early education for him. We wanted him to have a place to learn, to thrive, and to grow—socially and academically. It's important that children have developmentally appropriate education at this stage. We chose the center he attends because they follow a sound curriculum for preschool aged children. The focus is on creative learning and developing social-emotional skills through creative play.

I love that at my son's school there's a very clear interest and concern for the well-being of every single child. The staff uses a team approach—the infant teacher takes just as big of an interest in my son as his own teacher does. He's very clearly encouraged and supported by every single staff member. I very much hope he can remain at this school till he begins kindergarten.

For these reasons and more, I am concerned by proposed cuts to the Child Care Wage Supplement Program. As an elementary school educator, I know that not investing in early childhood has ramifications down the road. Public educators in the K-12 sector are required to have continual professional development; we ought to ensure that the teachers of our youngest children are offered clear incentives to grow in their field.

I'm also all too aware that cuts to the available supplements for teacher compensation will directly impact my ability to afford to pay for daycare. The center my son attends has been continually increasing fees and tuition—at least 3 times just in the last year. Half of my income goes toward childcare, and even in a two-income household, these increases are not sustainable. If the state isn't supporting teacher wages, the money used to educate and care for our children will have to come from tuition.

Skimping on early education is the definition of penny-wise and pound-foolish. I urge you as legislators to invest in Maine's children and families.