

Testimony of Rita Furlow
Maine Children's Alliance
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation
LD 1389
An Act to Create the Building Opportunity Through Out-of-school Time Program
April 8, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen and Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Rita Furlow. I am the Senior Policy Analyst at the Maine Children's Alliance. I am providing testimony in support of LD 1389, *An Act to Create the Building Opportunity Through Out-of-school Time Program*. The Maine Children's Alliance is a statewide non-partisan, non-profit research and advocacy organization whose mission is to promote sound public policies to improve the lives of children, youth, and families in Maine.

At the Children's Alliance, we believe that Maine's future prosperity depends upon how our children are doing today. We know that 70 percent of children under the age of six have both parents in the workforce.¹ While the need for child care for our youngest children in Maine is often discussed, we know that the child care needs for parents do not end when children arrive at school – they simply change. Depending upon their work schedules, many working parents still require child care either before or after the school day.

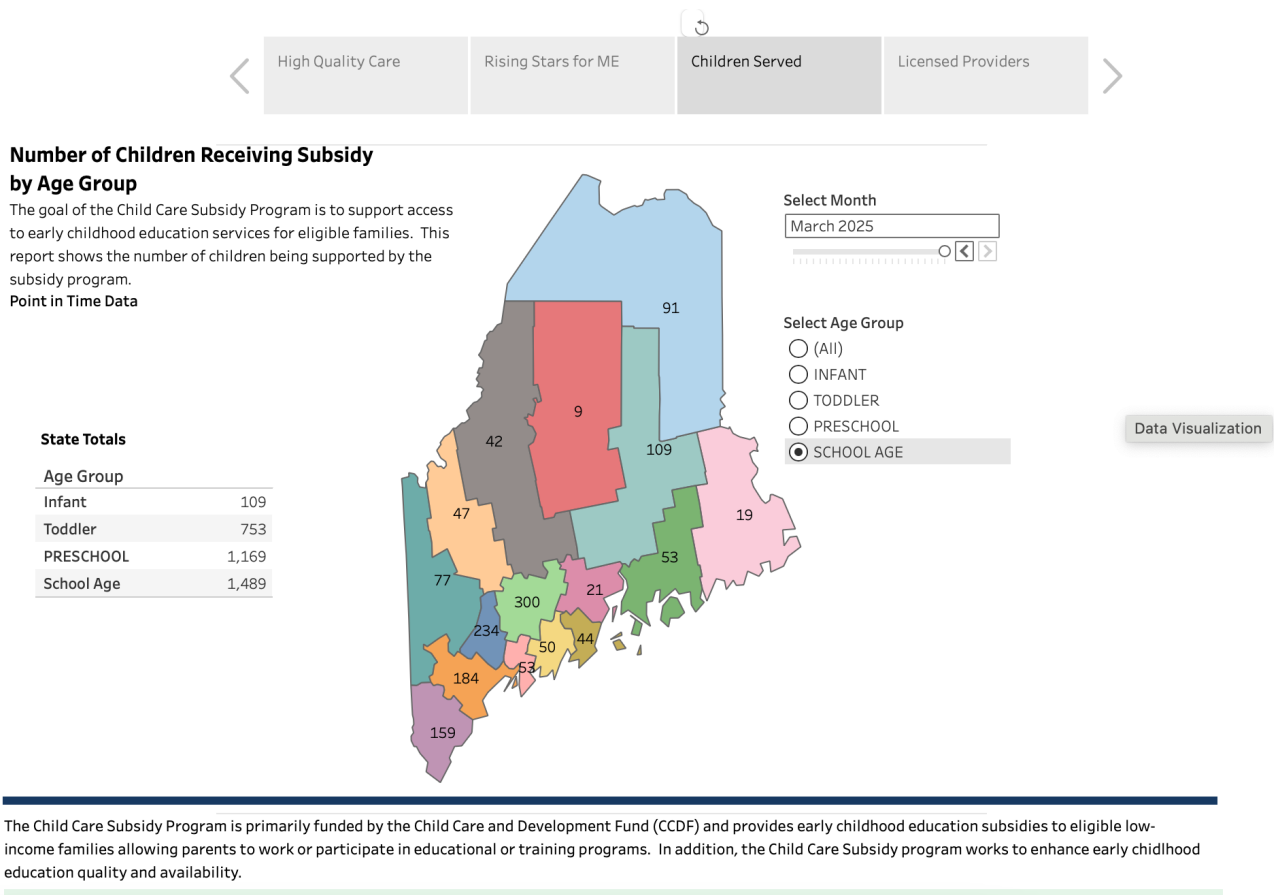
Over the past few years, you've likely heard about the shortage of child care, especially for our youngest children. However, finding care for children for just one or two hours a day can be even more challenging for families. Not surprisingly, most child care providers are filling any open slots with families that need care for the full day. While some schools may receive a federal grant from the 21st Century Community Learning Center ([\\$2.5 million in funding available for FY 25-26](#)) or private funding, these grants do not meet the need across the state for before and after school programs. According to the [National Afterschool Alliance](#), in Maine, for every one child enrolled in an afterschool program, there are five more children waiting for care.

LD 1359 would provide \$5 million in funding to support afterschool programming and would require the Office of Child and Family Services to create rules to implement the **Building Opportunity Through Out-of-school Time Program** to support the needs of children and families. Non-profit organizations could apply for grants through a competitive grant process to support programming for school-age children, with program grant awards issued by December 1, 2026.

¹ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, Children under age 6 with all available parents in work force (5-yr averages) in Maine, retrieved from: <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/7317-children-under-age-6-with-all-available-parents-in-work-force-detailed?loc=21&loct=2#detailed/2/any/false/2545,1095,2048,574,1729,37,871,870,573,869/any/14380,14381>

We urge the committee to support LD 1359 to provide essential afterschool care for the children and families.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.



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