

# Maine Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MAINE

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



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30 Association Drive, Box 190

Manchester, ME 04351

office: 207-622-3374

[www.maineaap.org](http://www.maineaap.org)

## Testimony in SUPPORT of:

- **LD 1736, An Act to Increase the Supply of Child Care Services Through the Use of Contracts**
- **LD 1955, An Act to Increase Child Care Affordability and Early Childhood Educator Stability in Maine**
- **LD 1859, An Act to Improve Access to Child Care and Early Childhood Education**

**May 15, 2025**

## Health and Human Services Committee

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Madeleine DesFosses, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The Maine AAP is a professional organization of 300 pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists dedicated to protecting the health of Maine children and adolescents. We are in support of LD 1736, LD 1955, and LD 1859 which will take meaningful action to support and strengthen Maine's child care system for Maine children, families, and early childhood educators.

Pediatricians support patients and families, not just along their healthcare journey, but through the myriad of challenges they face in daily life. What has become very common, but is completely unacceptable in this day and age, is for families to not have the means to afford basic child care or for them not to have access to quality care. Sadly, many Maine families are struggling to survive, and cannot afford the high cost of child care, or afford to live on only one salary. It is well documented that high-quality early education and child care is essential to assuring positive physical and cognitive outcomes for children, and can set them up for success throughout their life.

These three bills take important steps to address the child care crisis and ensure that all Maine families have access to quality, affordable care.

LD 1736 requires the use of direct contracts between the Office of Child and Family Services and child care providers to create availability for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children in underserved areas – many of whom typically struggle to find child care. Families and children of all abilities, ages, and regions deserve access to affordable child care, and by providing contracts instead of stipends, child care for those families can become more consistent and predictable.

LD 1955 directly addresses the affordability of care for families and the instability and chronic undervaluing of the child care workforce. This legislation would create targeted investments in affordability, wage supplements for child care professionals, and other assistance and incentives for child care professionals. Child care is often the largest monthly expense for working families, costing an average of \$10,000 per

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infant each year. We must work to make child care more affordable for more families, and compensate educators fairly to create a more sustainable workforce that Maine families can depend on.

LD 1859 seeks to establish regional early childhood learning and development resource hubs through the Department of Health and Human Services. These hubs would partner with existing nonprofit organizations to promote early childhood education and support families with finding child care. In locations where child care is extremely limited, these hubs will help to meet the needs of families and children, and lead to better learning outcomes.

Please help to ensure our children, families, child care providers, and Maine's economy thrive, and vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 1736, LD 1955, and LD 1859.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Madeleine DesFosses,  
Advocacy and Public Health Manager, Maine AAP