

February 11, 2026

19 Libby Street
Portland, Maine 04103



children's
odyssey

Dear Education and Cultural Affairs Committee Member,

I am the Director of a developmental preschool and childcare center in Portland, providing high-quality programming for children ages six weeks through five years. The majority of our preschool students demonstrate one or more educational, physical, and/or medical exceptionalities, including but not limited to Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Behavioral Challenges, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, and Global Developmental Delay. In September 2022, we proudly celebrated our 30th anniversary of service to Maine families.

I am writing to express serious concerns regarding **LD 2177** and its proposed changes to reimbursement (elimination of scheduled adjustments) and the current rate-setting framework.

For more than three decades, I have worked in early childhood special education and spent nearly all of those years advocating for the children and families we serve. Despite the critical nature of this work, early childhood programs like ours are too often overlooked, underfunded, and undervalued.

Just yesterday, we offered a teaching position to an applicant currently employed in the public school system. She is eager to join our team but must consider whether the reduced wages, relative to her current public school salary, would be financially feasible. We offered the highest salary that our constrained budget allows.

Of particular concern is the language in **Section 3**, especially the reduction or elimination of rate adjustments outlined in Subsection 4. These adjustments, including cost-of-living increases, are essential to our ability to retain qualified staff and maintain program stability. While a cost-of-living increase may seem modest on paper, it provides a vital yearly boost that allows us to offer at least *some* wage increases to our employees, directly affecting morale, retention, and program quality.

Additionally, backing away from the commitment to transparency and adequacy in the current rate-setting framework would be deeply harmful. Providers must be able to forecast revenue and build responsible budgets. Uncertainty around reimbursement rates, especially the possibility of reduced rates, makes sound financial planning almost impossible and threatens the sustainability of programs that serve Maine's most vulnerable children.

We know that investing in early childhood saves money in the long term through improved educational outcomes, reduced need for remedial services, and stronger families and communities. Undermining the stability of providers jeopardizes these long-term benefits for short-term savings.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to reject the proposed changes in LD 2177 and instead support policies that stabilize and strengthen reimbursement rates for early childhood programs like ours.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue and for your service to Maine's families.

Respectfully,

Laura Glover
Director, Children's Odyssey