



**Family Child Care
Association of Maine**

**Testimony of Heather Marden and Chrissie Davis
Maine Association for the Education of Young Children
Family Child Care Association of Maine**

In Support of LD 258, "An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025"

(Governor's Bill) Sponsored by Representative Melanie Sachs

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, and the Joint Standing Committee on on Health and Human Services

Tuesday, February 21, 2023, State House Room 228

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, and Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, members of the Health and Human Services, my name is Heather Marden and I am the Co-Executive Director of the Maine Association for the Education of Young Children (MaineAEYC). MaineAEYC promotes high-quality early learning for each and every child, birth through age 8, by connecting practice, policy, and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children. I'm also speaking on behalf of Chrissie Davis, Policy Chair of the Family Child Care Association of Maine (FCCAM). FCCAM's mission is to unify, promote and strengthen quality, professional family child care in Maine.

Child Care Services (pg 307)

Initiative: Provides funding to annualize funds received in Public Law 2021, chapter 635 for salary supplements awarded to individuals who provide childcare or are early childhood educators.

We appreciate and support the initiative to fund the child care salary supplements in the proposed budget. When these salary supplements were passed in the supplemental last year, it marked the most significant investment that Maine has allocated for the child care system from state funds. This was a first step forward in recognizing that Maine's child care workforce is worth investing in.

While the child care workforce declined over the pandemic and has yet to recover, turnover and recruitment in the field have been a decades long problem.

There are 220 fewer programs in Maine than in 2020 and while efforts have been made to build back child care capacity, enrollment in child care programs is restricted due to the inability to hire employees. In fact, the Maine Department of Labor statistics indicate that the child care workforce will continue to see an annual decline in employment of 4.4% over the next 7 years. The largest declining workforce employment in the occupation group of Personal Care and Service.

Employment and Job Openings in Maine in 2020 and Projected 2030										
Occupation Group: Personal Care and Service										
Education/Training Required: All										
Job Title	2020 Employment	2030 Employment	Net Growth	Percent Change	Annual Growth Openings	Annual Exits & Transfers	Annual Total Openings	Annual Openings Rate	Average Wage (Hourly)	Median Wage (Hourly)
Childcare Workers	4,310	4,119	-191	-4.4%	-19	578	559	13.0%	\$14.90	\$14.16
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists										
Recreation Workers										
Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors										
Nonfarm Animal Caretakers										
Amusement and Recreation Attendants										
Crematory Operators and Personal Care and Service Workers, All										
Ushers, Lobby Attendants, and Ticket Takers										
Funeral Attendants										
Locker Room, Coatroom, and Dressing Room Attendants										
Residential Advisors										
Manicurists and Pedicurists										
Skincare Specialists										
Animal Trainers										
Morticians, Undertakers, and Funeral Directors										
Tour and Travel Guides										
Motion Picture Projectionists										

The average hourly wage of child care employees is \$14.90 just slightly more than amusement and recreation attendants and animal caretakers. Child care educators commit to standards of health and safety and training in quality practices for child development. They often do not have access to benefits such as health care, paid time off, retirement, etc.

Child Care Workforce

Compensation	Benefits	Employment	Qualifications	Training
<p>\$14.90 Average Hourly Wage</p> <p>\$31,000 Yearly Average</p>	<p>41% of programs offer health insurance</p> <p>62.7% of centers offer paid sick leave while only 15.2% of family child care providers factor in sick leave.</p>	<p>Over 6300 People working in child care are receiving \$200/month wage stipends</p> <p>76% Share of child care jobs lost during the pandemic have since been recovered</p>	<p>Facilities licensed for 3 – 12 children must have 8 hours in prelicensure training</p> <p>The lead teacher of programs with 13 or more children: *Current CDA or *12 months of direct Child care experience or *One year (30 credit hours) college work including 1 course in a Child related subject and 6 months experience</p>	<p>orientation trainings</p> <p>12 hours of training is required annually for family child care and small facilities</p> <p>30 hours of training annually for center educators working over 20 hours</p> <p>18 hours training annually for center educators working under 20 hours</p>

With a declining child care workforce, programs are met with challenges such as reducing hours of operation, closing classrooms, lack of subs for staff sick days leading to closures for illness, and even closing all together. 30% of centers in a survey conducted by MaineAEYC indicated that they are not at full capacity of children due to staffing shortages.

Here are some comments that program owners have said about staffing challenges:

"As staffing shortages continue to increase our center will have to make the difficult decision to unenroll families to stay in ratios or to close our doors."

"I had to unenroll three two-year olds in the fall because of staffing. It's been difficult building enrollment back up and now it is difficult to pay the staff that I have."

Of the programs lost during the pandemic, family child care has seen a significant decline which has continued a decades long loss of family child care providers. These programs are a lifeline for many communities, and are often more flexible to offer non-traditional hours to meet the working needs of their families. While family child care educators retire or close businesses, not enough new family child care programs are opening. In a survey conducted in 2019, wages were among the top 3 challenges for family child care providers to sustain their business.

Table 3: Barriers / challenges to starting and sustaining an FCC program in Maine

Answer Choices	Responses	Percentages
A.) Long Hours	33	61%
B.) Space usage in my private home	21	43%
C.) Low wages	25	46%
D.) Balancing work and family commitments	29	54%
E.) Constructively dealing with families	19	35%
F.) Challenging behaviors	20	37%

In order to build child care back in Maine, we have to address the foundational issues that have plagued the industry for decades. Until the workforce is provided with professional compensation for the very skilled and crucial work they do, child care will continue to face constant staff shortages and turnover. We must recognize, as stated by the U.S. Treasury, that child care is a failed market. In order for Maine's economy to thrive and grow, then we need to further invest in the workforce behind the workforce.

We ask you to increase the investments in the child care salary supplement program. You will be hearing a bill this session that aims to continue growing these investments and we ask for your full support and recognition of the child care workforce.

We also want to extend support for the initiative in the Governor's budget to move all parts of child care licensing under the Office of Child and Family Services.

And finally, we want to commend the statewide expansion of the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership and applaud the Administration for funding this statewide expansion while the Department works hard to get these services out to child care programs, schools, and children and families. This research based model has been well received by the child care field and is making a difference in programs across the state to support children's emotional and social needs so they can be lifelong, healthy learners.

Thank you and we are happy to answer any questions from members of the committees.

Heather Marden

heather@maineaevc.org

Chrissie Davis

fccam.publicpolicy@gmail.com