



**Testimony in Support of LD 1859: An Act to Improve Access to Child Care and Early Childhood Education by Establishing Regional Resource Hubs**

**Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Committee,**

My name is **Heather Marden**, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the **Maine Association for the Education of Young Children (MaineAEYC)** and the **Family Child Care Association of Maine (FCCAM)**. Together, our organizations represent hundreds of early childhood educators, providers, and advocates across the state who are committed to ensuring that all young children in Maine have access to high-quality early care and education.

We strongly support LD 1859, which would establish Regional Early Childhood Learning and Development Resource Hubs across Maine.

Maine's families and early childhood educators have long been navigating a fragmented system that makes it challenging to access and provide consistent, high-quality early care and education. LD 1859 addresses these systemic issues by creating localized infrastructure that is responsive to community needs while connected to statewide goals.

The regional resource hubs proposed in this legislation will serve as critical anchors for early childhood coordination, collaboration, and innovation. By embedding these hubs within existing regional nonprofit organizations, LD 1859 smartly avoids duplication and leverages the deep knowledge and relationships that these organizations already hold within their communities.

The duties assigned to the hubs—including regional needs assessments, parent outreach and assistance, support for educators and employers, and coordination of professional development—are comprehensive and urgently needed. The inclusion of a whole family approach ensures that Maine is not only addressing early childhood education in isolation but is acknowledging the interconnected needs of families striving for economic stability and well-being.

As organizations that support both family child care providers and center-based educators, we know firsthand the barriers providers face—navigating licensing requirements, accessing professional development, managing the business side of their work, and, most importantly, finding time to focus on the children and families they serve. These hubs will provide essential, localized supports that are long overdue.

Importantly, this proposal aligns with federal guidance under the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services strongly recommends that states establish regional or statewide resource and referral centers as part of their CCDF state plans. These centers are recognized as essential infrastructure to help families find care, support providers in improving quality, and coordinate early childhood services efficiently. LD 1859 is a proactive step that positions Maine to meet this federal recommendation and potentially draw down future federal resources to support implementation. Currently, Maine is one of only a few states that do not offer these more local hubs of resources. Maine's resource hubs were cut during the LePage Administration.

§3737-A	<b>Title 22: HEALTH AND WELFARE</b> <b>Subtitle 3: INCOME SUPPLEMENTATION</b> <b>Part 3: CHILDREN</b> <b>Chapter 1052-A: CHILD CARE SERVICES</b>	§3739
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**§3738. Resource development centers**  
**(REPEALED)**

SECTION HISTORY  
 PL 1993, c. 158, §2 (NEW). PL 1993, c. 490, §1 (AMD). MRSA T. 22 §3738 (RP).

*Child Care Resource Development Centers*

**Aroostook County:** Child Care Express 1-800-432-7881 or (207) 768-3045

**Cumberland County (except Brunswick/Harpswell):** Child Care Connections 1-888-917-1100 or (207) 871-7449

**Franklin, Oxford, and Androscoggin Counties:** Finders Seekers 1-800-543-7008 or (207) 777-1387

**Hancock County:** Child Care Opportunities 1-800-834-4378 or (207) 667-9580/667-2467

**Kennebec and Southern Somerset Counties:** Child Care Options 1-800-525-2229 or (207) 626-3410

**Knox County:** Coastal Child Care (207) 594-5342 and for referrals call 1-877-684-0466

**Lincoln and Sagadahoc Counties and Brunswick/Harpswell:** Family Focus 1-800-675-2413 or (207) 725-2413 and for referrals call 1-877-684-0466

**Piscataquis, Penobscot, and Northern Somerset Counties:** Penquis Child Care (207) 941-2840

**Waldo County:** Belfast Area Child Care (207) 342-5537 and for referrals call 1-877-684-0466

**Washington County:** Downeast Child Care 1-800-233-3632 or (207) 546-7544

**York County:** Carelink 1-888-917-1100 or (207) 324-0735

*RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT CENTERS*

The Maine Department of Human Services contracts with a network of 11 statewide Child Care Resource Development Centers (RDCs) to make referrals to parents seeking child care and provide information on financial assistance, administer the state childcare voucher program, offer training to child care providers, and provide resources and technical assistance to providers and parents. In 2001, the RDC's provided training to over 1,200 child care providers and technical assistance to 4,907 providers. The RDC's provided 7,383 child care referrals and provided child care consumer education and information to 10,659 families.

Moreover, LD 1859 ensures that resource hubs will be accountable—through annual reports, data collection, and guidance from regional partner boards that include educators, parents, employers, and community organizations. This inclusive, community-informed structure aligns with best practices for sustainable systems-building and equity.

We are especially encouraged by the hubs' role in supporting culturally responsive practices, fostering shared services, and collaboration to build a future early childhood workforce. These

are key strategies to addressing both current gaps and the future sustainability of Maine's early childhood system.

In short, LD 1859 is a visionary and well-structured step toward a more connected, equitable, and high-quality early childhood system in Maine. We urge you to vote **Ought to Pass** on this legislation.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Maine's children, families, and early childhood educators.