



Family Child Care
Association of Maine

Chrissie Davis, Public Policy Committee Chair
fccam.publicpolicy@gmail.com

**Testimony of Chrissie Davis, On Behalf of the Family Child Care
Association of Maine Before the Committee on Education and Cultural
Affairs, in regards to**
LD 135: An Act To Address Issues in Funding Prekindergarten Programs
LD 255: An Act to Ensure Student Success
LD 386: An Act To Improve Operations at the Department of Education

May 17, 2021

Senator Matthea Daughtry, Representative Michael Brennan, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Chrissie Davis and I am providing testimony today as the Public Policy Committee Chair of the Family Child Care Association of Maine (FCCAM). FCCAM's mission is to strengthen quality professional family child care in Maine. Our members work with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and Kindergarten through 3rd grade students in family child care programs. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

FCCAM believes that changes in our state are necessary to better serve children and their families. We also believe it is important that the providing of early intervention and continual special needs services before a child reaches age 5 needs to be efficient and done in as natural an environment for the child as possible. The Family Child Care Association of Maine asks that guidelines focus on serving children already in licensed child care programs at the program where they attend.

In Maine, the majority of three year olds, and many four year olds, spend their day in licensed early care and education programs. Research on the social emotional development of young children indicates that having as few primary caregivers as possible and daily consistency is most beneficial for their cognitive growth. It is also understood that stress caused by numerous transitions of caregivers in the first years of life can have detrimental effects on development. We must provide early childhood

special education services with the least number of hourly, daily, and weekly transitions for children and continuity in the adults providing their early care and education.

Family child care providers are professionals. We work to develop a strong relationship with each child's family to ensure the needs of the child are being met. Having children in care for 8 to 10 hours a day, 5 days a week and 50 weeks a year, often starting at 6 weeks of age, we understand the value of relationships, communication and the importance of continuity of care. Our work demands we understand the developmental stages of children birth to 5 and even through age 13. Our relationships with families provide unique opportunities to have open conversations around difficult topics, special needs being one of them. For many families, the provider is their most trusted professional for guidance around their child's development. Providers support families through the referral and assessment process when determining the need for early intervention. Services provided by specialists within the family child care setting allow the child to remain in a familiar environment with a trusted adult, the family child care provider. This supports the child while they build a relationship with the specialist. Direct communication between the specialist and the provider, in the child care environment, allows supports to be put in place that are consistent and reliable. It is our hope that the communication between the lead agency and the individual family child care provider will be part of the structure/system for all early intervention services.

The coordination and responsiveness of early childhood special education services in Maine can and should be improved. These services need to focus on what is best for supporting the development of young children. If we create state and local systems using our knowledge of child development, in coordination with the child care programs within their communities, we will be able to provide high quality early childhood education and services, parents will be partners, and children will be thriving as they learn and grow in Maine.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Chrissie Davis
Public Policy Committee Chair
fccam.publicpolicy@gmail.com