

Testimony of Charlotte Jacobs

In support of

LD 1799 An Act to Expand Maine's High-quality Early Learning and Care for Children by Increasing Public Preschool Opportunities in Communities

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Charlotte Jacobs. I am the Program Director of a Child Care Center, and I live in Scarborough. I'm testifying in support of LD 1799 An Act to Expand Maine's High-quality Early Learning and Care for Children by Increasing Public Preschool Opportunities in Communities.

By expanding access to public pre-k we are supporting working families and the workforce. Carefully, and thoughtfully utilizing our FCC and headstarts in spearheading more public preK options. This will just make access easier for all families, even due to location, and socioeconomic statuses.

Supporting the alignment of professional development for educators working across ECE settings is highly important that we continue to stay up to date with relevant research and information around child development and early childhood years. As educators we flourish in continued education, and it is what helps us continue to love and stay committed to this field. Professional development can be a great outlet as well for any job burnout. Learning more about this field and diving deeper into the research and information is what helps us stay mired and committed to our field.

Without an establishment of a group of stakeholders to explore equitable pathways for child care programs it will be a scramble at the state and federal level to secure those funds. My worry is that funding needs to be allocated evenly to FCC, and child care centers. With established stakeholders were invested and committed to the needs of our communities and children in our care.

Strengthening the partnerships between public schools and child care programs will help to bridge the gap from pre-k to public school, we will be more immersed with the public school systems, thus streamlining transitions to public schools more easily, and formulating a true team of early educators and public educators. This will really help us to meet the needs of all families and meet the needs of those whose needs may be different from the typical family or individual.

Furthermore, I believe that our state needs an aligning governance to blend and braid funding for early care and ECE systems. This would be the best care scenario for our state as we start to invest in the children of our state again. Working to move ECE/Child Care away from being "governed" fully by the DHHS, and more governed by a system like DOE,

or Maine Children's Cabinet to develop a committee or reestablish ECE/Child Care under a more fitting governance for early childhood education.

Please support LD 1799,
Charlotte Jacobs