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My name is Laurie Brown, I live in Fryeburg. I am a member of MSEA and I work for Child Development Services.

I am speaking today however as a private citizen.

We are meeting again to discuss what to do with CDS. The last time I met with this body I recommended that if you were gathering stakeholders to come up with solutions it would be best to include workers, those folks whose job it is to advocate in the best interest of our state's infants, toddlers and their families. That did not happen, to my knowledge and here we are.

In my opinion the way to solve the concerns with the CDS organizational structure is not to act in a linear fashion, simply shifting responsibility from one pay source to another but to look for ways to allow infants and toddlers with developmental challenges to move smoothly to their next educational opportunity. First we should acknowledge three year olds are toddlers, which is very different than preschooler.

That being said, as a less linear thinker, there are relationships to be built between CDS and local school departments.

For instance, the issue of transportation. It might well be mostly resolved if local school districts and their well trained bus staff were able to use the smaller vans to transport 3 year old toddlers and 4 year old preschoolers to programming, rather than relying on volunteer drivers.

Additionally, were preschool programs exist (pre K) we should look for ways to transition more 4 year olds as appropriate (least restrictive setting). Can we create some half day pre Ks? Does it have to be all or nothing?

Finally, until the public pre K issue is settled state wide, there is little to be done transitioning CDS to public schools. We are essentially back to the haves and have nots.

I believe you, as a committee have the power to create a national model worthy of Maine, to address the challenges with infants and toddlers. I would love to help.

Thank you.