

Gina LeDuc-Kuntz  
Freeport

Dear Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Gina LeDuc-Kuntz. I am a resident of Freeport, Maine.

I am writing to you today to testify against LD 98: "An Act To Clarify Maine's Statutes Related to the Licensing of Child Care Providers."

As a mother of 6 children, three over the age of 18 and three under the age of 18, I have a lifelong career witnessing children, families and institutions grapple with the concept of "quality early childhood day care and education."

I also had the opportunity to serve in the late 1990s and early 2000s as the AmericaCorpVista for Success By 6 of United Way of Mid Coast Maine with a focus on early affordable and quality child care and education.

Having had these opportunities, as both a mother and community member, I have been afforded a closer look at how our children and society have been impacted by the well intentioned efforts to deliver "early affordable, quality child care" from the top down to children and families.

The effort has been destructive to our children, our families and our society as a whole.

I will say something shocking to you: children need to be at home with their families. No amount of reading, "positive interaction," or tricky psychology can prepare a child for adulthood more than their family doing the mundane activities families do everyday.

There is no fancy instruction that outperforms a mother, father, sibling, grandparent or a child's day to day interactions with a beloved neighbor in establishing the neural pathways the proponents of government sponsored "early quality child care" always point to as the reason for pushing ever more money at, and children towards, earlier and earlier child care.

Unfortunately, in our current world, most parents cannot make the financial sacrifice to stay home with their children. Erecting additional barriers for parents by passing laws knocking the trusted neighbor or family friend out the child care pool is counter productive to our children's well being.

In the ideal world, young children would spend their childhood within their families, interacting with trusted neighbors on a daily basis as they develop the needed social-emotional skills to expand their world. The movement starting in the 1990s aimed at convincing parents that their newborn children must have structured educational programs very early in order to succeed in life has produced poor results. Our government is throwing good money after bad into these "quality" early childhood programs all while undermining the existing social structures that have always prompted the optimal in neuro-psycho child development, child welfare and child well being: the family.

Thank You,  
Gina LeDuc-Kuntz  
Freeport, Maine