

Chair Wobbema and Members of the Workforce Development Committee:

My name is Michelle Roeszler and I have been a childcare professional in the state of North Dakota since 2005. I have operated a home-based childcare, a group childcare in a facility, worked in center-based programs and currently offer story time programming in childcare programs.

I write today to comment on the proposed childcare stabilization funding in SB2301. While I am in favor of this proposal I have a few points for the committee to consider.

- **Funding Model:** rather than the per child in each category to the full capacity of a licensed childcare program I propose the committee uses the 2021 stabilization funding model as a guide. That funding model was based on enrollment, not capacity, and weighted factors like infants/toddlers, location in a childcare desert, and offering non-traditional hours of care in addition to QRIS participation.
- **Vague for Mixed Age Programs:** As written the proposal doesn't apply well to mixed age programs, such as home-based, who don't have specific age groups for enrollment. I urge the committee to consider amending to a flat, per enrolled child payment with additional payments for the weighted categories I wrote about above.
- **Capacity based vs. Enrollment based:** Payments based on capacity vs. enrollment may not offer enough incentive to fill to available capacity.
- **Age Categories:** The proposed age categories, if kept in the final version of the bill, need to be clarified. The way I read the proposal there is no payment for preschool aged children. Toddlers end at age 36 months. The proposal leaves no payment for ages 3 and 4.
- **Correction order section:** The proposal states that funding is discontinued if the program is under a correction order for longer than 3 months. Is this one continuous correction order? What about multiple correction orders? I'm not sure what correction orders would be longer than a short amount of time to make right. I would suggest amending to language about critical violations like over ratio or health and safety violations. This would be similar to the correction orders that prevent participation in the QRIS system.
- **QRIS Incentive:** I would like the committee to consider amending this to a lower quality level, perhaps level 3. The process to complete each level in the system is lengthy and it could be after the next biennium before a program achieves the level in the proposal, especially if they have not previously participated in the QRIS system.

As you consider this proposed funding I urge you to consult with DHHS staff for more information on the previous monthly funding that has been administered through their offices. They are likely the agency who would be administering these funds and they can provide valuable data to assist your decisions.

In closing, I am in favor of funding to support childcare programs in our state. For every childcare professional who has submitted written testimony on this bill there are many more who for one reason or another have not submitted testimony. I know they are all grateful for the support of policy makers in recognizing their role to support the workforce of North Dakota.

Although I am unable to testify orally today I am available for questions by phone or email at any time.

Michelle Roeszler
wildaboutplay@gmail.com
701-298-6538