

1/8/2023

To whom it may concern:

My name is Kathy Busche, I am the owner of two childcare programs in Hazen, North Dakota. One is a Group facility where we care for children from birth until they go to kindergarten. The second program is a Group Home program where we care for children from Kindergarten until their 12th birthday.

SB 2104 proposes a couple of changes that concern me. First it proposes changing the age of children in care from until their 12th birthday to through age 12 which would mean that children age 12 years 11 months could be considered in our ratios. This is a concern as it could add to our already tight ratios. Children age 12 in ND are considered old enough to babysit and should not need to be in child care. For me personally my own children were considered staff the day they turned 12 years old. At 12 they couldn't be left alone with the children, but they were great help in entertaining children so I could focus on individual children who may need more one on one attention, especially during the summer months. Also, as background checks currently stand children aged 12 or older are required to be background checked as household members for home programs. This would not directly affect my program as my children are grown, but I know it will be an issue for providers across the state who have their own children age 11, turning 12 who they are planning to have age out of childcare and become staff.

The second concern I have with SB 2104 is the removal of certified mail as a means of communication between the Department and the provider. The change to electronic mail as a means of communication is a great addition for some communications, but I believe it is important for correction orders and fiscal sanctions to be communicated through certified mail so there is proof that the communication was received.

Both these proposed changes occur numerous times throughout SB 2104, and I would like to see these amended to change the age back to through age 11 and re-add certified mail as a means of communication between the Department of Health and Human Services and child care providers.

Thank you for your time.

Kathy Busche

The Children's Playhouse

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