



Missouri Valley Montessori Preschool
200 W Turnpike Ave
Bismarck ND 58501 (Located in District 35)
701.222.0929

SUPPORT HB 1540

Chair Nelson and members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Brita Cowan – I'm the Head of Operations at Missouri Valley Montessori Preschool in Bismarck, North Dakota. I, with our Head of Education, Kara Seeklander, and our Board of Directors Chair, Stanley Mack are submitting testimony in **support** of HB 1540. Missouri Valley Montessori began in 1977 by a group of parents. Our nonprofit currently serves over 90 children each year in 5 classrooms.

Childcare, whether it's formal preschool/kindergarten prep or serving younger children, is an essential service to our community and state. Our preschool has the obvious benefit of educating students, but it also provides a resource for our current workforce to provide excellent care and education of one of their most precious aspects of their lives. Our industry has not been supported by our state. For decades, our parents have been ensuring our doors are open – paying steep costs and fundraising. Our waitlist is 2 years deep and yet our margins run tight.

We stand in support of the solutions of HB 1540. We like that this bill would allow us to cultivate our workforce. As providers – attraction and retention are our biggest challenges. We want to find and keep quality people to hug the hurts, light the minds, and keep our children safe.

We would be available for any questions, and we also invite you all to come see our preschool. This is a standing invitation as our children are the greatest accomplishment and testament to what we do.

Brita Cowan, Head of Operations
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Kara Seeklander, Head of Education
Kara@mvmpreschool.org

Stanley Mack, Board of Directors Chair
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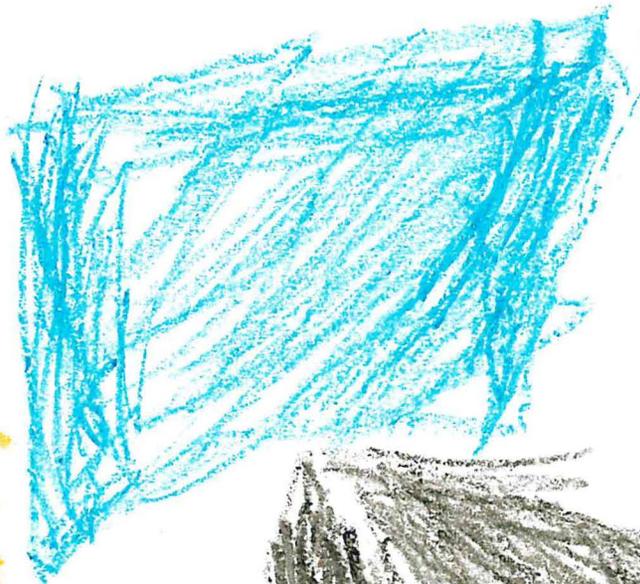
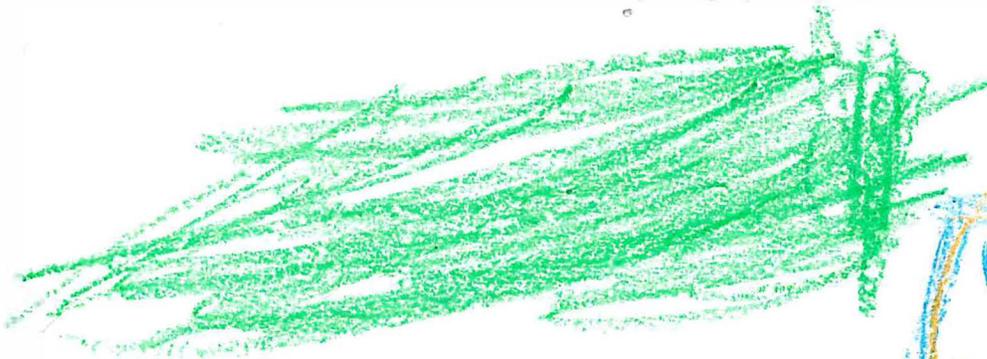
Ainsley Ruth, Student
no email available, mastering markers

PLEASE SEE OUR STUDENT SUBMISSION,

On the following page, this is a picture drawn of our center by Ainsley (picture below). Ainsley turned 4 on Feb 25. She is at her fourth childcare center. Her first, where she attended with her brother and sister, closed when she was 2 – they had already been closing every Friday before they formally closed due to workforce and ratio constraints. Her second daycare, also a 40-child center, closed after she turned 3 due to workforce challenges and a director leaving. At her third center – she went through 3 lead teachers in three months, devastated at each change.

Now she is finally attending the same preschool as her brother and has seemed to overcome her separation anxiety, which happened every morning at her previous 2 locations. Ainsley's parents are happy to see her thriving at preschool and want every parent to have their children in a stable, safe, and loving environment.





Ainsley's teachers
↓



R P A

← Her name/signature

Ainsley ↗