

January 27, 2025

To whom it may concern,

My name is Michelle Klabo, I am a licensed group provider located in Jamestown. I currently care for 9 children full time. I have been a childcare provider for almost 11 ½ years. I have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and have been a Step 4 provider on the QRIS rating system with Bright and Early program for 7 years.

I am writing in favor of fully funding the bill with the original \$7 million budget and not cut funding by 2 million. Early childhood is vital for our state to continue to grow and build high quality childcare in North Dakota.

I appreciate our state's support over the last couple of years with additional grants we received. I believe early childhood education is essential to keep the workforce continuing in North Dakota and additional funds from these grants helps us achieve higher quality-based environments. Parents can go to work knowing they are leaving their child in a high-quality childcare focusing on safety, environments, development, connections, and relationships.

The quality improvement grants I received in the past 7 years have been around 10K. With this funding, I have been able to purchase materials for the children, a rainbow playset, outside toys, educational materials, and art supplies. Over the last 2 years, I have been able to keep my rates lower for my parents. My program rate is significantly less than other providers in my area. This additional funding from Bright and Early and other state programs helped me maintain a lower rate, but also to use the funds to purchase additional materials needed. Being a quality rated program children in my care can meet their academic, social-emotional, physical, and cognitive goals.

State programs like Bright and Early are necessary to keep children on the right path, 90% of a child's brain is developed in the first five years of life. These years count and by having high-quality step 4 programs help with this. This additional state funding is necessary to make a child's experience in the childcare industry a success for their future in life.

Sincerely,

Michelle Klabo, Owner

ABC Learn-N-Play