

AFSCME Child Care Providers Together Local 132 for Child Care Task Force 6/30/20
Written Testimonies from Providers written mid-May

Sarah Crozier is the owner of Mi Escuelita Bilingual Preschool and Childcare in Newberg. Sarah started her teaching career as a public school teacher, teaching for 10 years in dual immersion programs in both Woodburn and North Clackamas. She began their family business 13 years ago, after the birth of their first son, when she realized there was as a lack of quality affordable childcare in her community. She lives and raises their six kids in Newberg with her husband Logan. They currently own 2 certified family childcare home. Sarah is a Master Trainer, where she enjoys helping other childcare providers learn to build strong businesses that support their families and their communities.

“I want to take a moment to share the journey that we have been on the last months. We chose to stay open under emergency provisions. We have many families that provide essential services to our community (such as psychologists, dental workers, prison guards, medical professionals, manufacturing and food service). We felt that our families needed us at this time. We and our employees were willing to serve. Our days are long and involve a level of uncertainty that is uncomfortable at times. About 3 weeks into this situation it became apparent that communication was going to be an issue. We would receive no guidance or little information. Families were needing help, reaching out to us, and we did not know what to tell them. One afternoon I spent several hours calling every one of my senators and representatives at both the state and local levels. I want to thank Senator Wyden’s office for calling me back and spending time hearing my concerns and taking notes of the immediate issues we were having. At this point in the situation what our business needs is the ability to plan our future revenue streams. I sat in a meeting with Miriam Calderon about a year ago, and she praised the way that we strategically used part-time and spot sharing kids to increase our enrollment and lower the cost for individual families. Our families need to know if we will be allowed to offer part-time care, we need to begin to make enrollment and program decisions for Summer and Fall. So that you understand families who often seek part-time care in our program are healthy care providers, lawyers, realtors and business owners. These families are often balancing the mothers staying in the workforce and the cost of childcare. Families cannot work and our economy will not gain momentum if childcare providers do not have the ability to make decisions that meet the needs of the families they serve. As a family childcare provider with over 20 years of experience in early education I know that our industry is amazing. We are hard-working, service oriented and an industrious group. If given the resources we will play a key roll in helping our state help families get back to work in our communities.”

Lisa Duffield is a certified family preschool/childcare provider located in Beaverton. She has always loved working with children, and after graduating High School started working in a nonprofit preschool and child care center. Through work experience and community based training she became a lead preschool teacher. In 2006 she opened her own in-home Preschool/Childcare business, which has run successfully for 14 years. She participates in the QRIS/Spark program (3 star rated) and runs her business with her husband, as their only source of income.

“Because of the pandemic, we have gone from 18 enrolled children down to 6. We have been fortunate to stay afloat the last couple months with the few children we have and with a little in savings. I did not apply for the PPP loan as I don’t have employees, or unemployment due to unknown tax implications. Unfortunately we don’t have enough left in savings to continue to cover all of our expenses, and with our dramatic loss of income will not continue to survive without assistance or increased enrollments. I feel fortunate to be able to say that I still have children left in my care, because unfortunately that is not the case for so many others. I have heard endless heartbreaking stories of fellow providers that have lost all of their children and income and are still waiting and praying for some relief. We need funding for ERDC to continue, and co pays waived until at least 60 days after this emergency order is lifted. We need our private pay slots to be fully funded so we will be able continue to operate our business and be around for ALL families when this crisis is over. The reality is without additional funding, child care in Oregon and across the nation will become extinct.”

Nichole Gruszie has run Nic Nacs Quality licensed Certified childcare in Klamath Falls since 2008. Nic Nacs Quality Childcare specializes in serving rural families and children from single parent homes, grand parents with custody, as well as over 3/4 of our program directed towards children with physical, emotional and social delays and barriers (special needs).

"I have made myself well versed and educated through many different platforms in all areas regarding early childhood development (college credit classes and over 300 community based training hours on top of the 12 years in operation). At this time my program had to drop a portion of its slots due to the ECC. Though I am able to start to implement and accommodate the rule changes that are allowing for increased capacity (re-open with 2 classrooms) I worry the damage has already taken effect. With all children there is stability that is required, to maintain a healthy emotional balance that is what my program provides to families and children here in our rural community which for some families that option was removed. The children that have left my program most likely will not be returning due to job loss or other struggles in our small town, I am concerned that the effects of this have created an extreme hardship on families and providers in our rural community, safe quality childcare is the NUMBER ONE PRIORITY so by taking care of and investing in these programs is assuring an investment in each child's future."

Rachael Lamet is a business owner of a small Registered Family daycare; here in Salem, Oregon my license allows me to care for a maximum of 10 children. I am a member of the Marion County Focused Childcare group, and Oregon Childcare Providers together. I also have 25 years in Operations Management. I provide quality care in my home with one assistant. I believe and try to provide a small child to adult ratio, to ensure success in my children. We focus on play by learning and being prepared for kindergarten. We provide a safe environment with lots of focus on individual learning. Healthy food for a healthy mind, as well as play based age appropriate learning.

"I went from having 6 children to having none, in a matter of 2 days. Prior to this I was receiving calls daily asking if I was full. Please help me and other small in home daycares survive, please think of us survive. We don't have pay checks, paying our bills are our pay checks. We live off very small profits, and our monthly fees go right back in to the children we care for. Please help us survive. When we lose our business we lose our homes as well. "

Ali Sanz and Brenda Fino Sanz Friendship Daycare LLC. Gresham, OR

My wife and I own and operate Friendship Daycare LLC. We have been serving our community for the past 3 years. We call our program, not a daycare, not a business but our labor of love. Love is the main reason why we do what we do. Our goal is not only to be the childcare providers but to be like a second family to our children. We get to know their strengths, their areas for opportunities and together with their family we form this wonderful team that is dedicated to providing the right tools to our kiddos so they can be ready for their next level.

Prior to COVID-19 our facility was open 24 hours, 7 days a week, supporting nurses, therapists, retail workers, Amazon workers, all working challenging schedules and we were open and ready to support them by offering, daycare, after school care, overnight care and weekend care as well. We had a total of 5 assistants working in our program, but since the new regulations our program now runs with a temporary Emergency Child Care Facility license only allowing us to care for 10 children in a single shift. The impact is that we went from running 3 shifts to only 1 shift a reduction of 70% in income. Due to this we had to cut cost in order to be able to continue operating and serving our community. We laid off 3 of our assistants and frankly we are just navigating in this uncertain ocean of unknown, because we can't get the answers we need. For how long are we going to continue like this? Promises that were made by our

governates leaders are not being follow? Are they going to honor what they said and pay us for all of our spots for April, May? What will happen in June or July? Unemployment, grants and loans that don't seem to apply to our industry are not helping us. Pop ups emergency school are being selected as a priority impacting significantly all family childcare.

It feels that our leaders are all taken decisions full of good intentions but their lack of understanding of our family child care industry is hurting over 2000 child care providers in the state. We need our leaders to hear us, understand our industry our challenges and difficulties that we experience with DHS, DPU, ELD. Hopefully we can soon sit down and being offer the opportunity to develop processes and procedures within DHS, DPU and ELD that instead of hurting our industry will help us flourish and strive, at the end we are the first line of defense when it comes to crisis like the one we are experiencing over 2000 child care providers have said YES to staying open to support all the essential workers, support our state so it can continue functioning.

Amy Shaw is a licensed family RF child care Roseburg, OR. She has been a provider in Roseburg since January 2011. For the 3 years prior to March 2020 her program was full with a waitlist of at least 3 waiting for position to enroll in her program.

“Currently my program is serving 5 of my prior enrolled families with 5 other enrolled families I am unable to allow to return due to the 10 stable ECC rule. I have lost approximately \$2000 a month in income each month. In June, I will lose an additional \$2700 due to DHS cutting funding for families at home and additional summer clients. Normally summertime is when I am able to save because I have more fulltime school kids who need care but I won't be able to do that this year due to the 10 stable rules the state put in place. The Paycheck Protection Loan I was approved for may not be forgiven and will likely be a loan that I will have to repay. I am already paycheck to paycheck and another debt added will undoubtedly be a huge impact with large financial burdens I may be unable to repay. With normal operating costs already a significant amount that have only increased due to cleaning supply usage and rising costs of limited supplies despite fewer children in care, I am struggling now to pay my bills (business and household). I have yet to hear any response to my PUA application I applied for 3 weeks ago. The damage being done to my business isn't from Covid19. It is OCC AND the States Emergency Child Care restrictions that were established with little input from providers statewide or our Union. If we would have been able to maintain our full client base I would have been able to maintain my business with little to no assistance from outside sources. It is the missing income from April and May that is most problematic currently along with not knowing what the summer months will bring. It is scary to think that the childcare industry was vastly limited prior to Covid19 it will undoubtedly be even worse going forward. These families need quality, well trained and time tested providers who can not only maintain health and safety during this pandemic but have continuously done so every year against multiple viruses and illnesses! “

Anneliese Sheahan is a licensed family CF child care in Gladstone, OR. Specializing in infant and toddler care for children under 2. In the early childhood field since 1994. Graduate of UWSP. Opened first licensed family child care in 2002. Advocate at the state and federal level since 2004.

“Currently my program (opened in November of 2019) is serving at less than half capacity and I have lost approximately half my income. The Paycheck Protection Loan will not work for my circumstances -- it would be a loan that I would have to repay. With start- up costs already a significant debt that I am trying to repay along with serious student loan debts, I am struggling now to pay my bills (business and household). The EIDL hasn't come through for me yet. I am unwilling to take unemployment because of

the federal and state tax consequences -- consequences many of my fellow providers may not fully realize yet. For me, the damage being done to my business isn't related to Covid-19 -- it is the manner in which Emergency Child Care was established and the loss of business I have sustained due to the local schools doing ECC. I am anticipating that when the schools close in June, my business will bounce back. It is the missing income from April and May that is most problematic. It is also the glaring and stark reality of the last 20 years of (poor) child care funding here in Oregon and federally -- the disparities between K-12 and early childhood funding -- that I am most concerned with along with the industry as a whole here in Oregon (and the 2/3 of family child care programs that have been closed for 2 months)."

Shari Williams has been a certified family child care provider in Gresham for thirty years.

"My neighborhood friend and I always planned that we would grow up and take care of children in a house. How funny what was our vision for our life?! I grew up in a small town in Washington State where I was able to play in trees, ride my bike and just be a kid. During my time as a provider for the last thirty three years, my vision for all children is to feel like their childcare is a second home with connections that last a life time. Many of my childcare families have lasting relationships with each other. Currently I have too many parents that have had their child care assistance benefits taken away at a time when they should be supported most. One example is a Mom who works for a credit union, her ERDC (child care assistance subsidy case) was up for renewal in April and the caseworker was not responding to calls so she was not able to bring her children to care as her ERDC was closed. Another example is a Mom who worked in construction, when the company found out she was pregnant they laid her off, so she returned to a previous job providing in-home care to an elderly lady who passed away this was December. In December she applied and was receiving unemployment while she started the process to work for us which took over 60 days to complete the required trainings and get enrolled in the states CBR. She started working in our child care on March 1, but we had to close March 22. She then lost all of her benefits and she was denied unemployment when she applied. It just breaks my heart how too many are falling through the cracks."