

Submitter: Deanna Cohen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood
Measure: HB4005

Chair Power, Vice Chairs Reynolds and Zika, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 4005. My name is Deanna Cohen, I live in Portland, OR and I have been a child care provider for 13 years in Multnomah Co., and Washington Co. for a couple of months.

3 centers in the PDX area serving over 200 families. I've managed to stay open during Covid the whole time. This would help my program by helping me to be more inclusive of different economic backgrounds. I give scholarships for ERDC students but can only afford to offer a few to families who don't meet the ERDC requirements. Raising the subsidy rate to 90% of market rate would make quality care affordable to more families and not harm independent providers. Right now, large chain providers threaten to push out local independent providers because they have the ability to absorb these costs, whereas independent providers can't make up the difference to provide accessible care.

I make \$1952/mo. for a full time infant. and I charge about the same as most centers of my size. My materials fees are \$200/ year and a \$150 registration fee and a deposit equivalent to one month's care. I must absorb these costs if I take on ERDC clients. Fully funding ERDC will help bridge this gap between students who qualify for head start and students who may otherwise qualify for ERDC. This will ultimately help serve more students. This is one of the reasons why I support this bill.

I believe that having a strong IT department and having everything paperless will provide an ease of using the program for parents and providers. Sometimes we can't track down parents to get them to sign the paperwork, so having it be DocuSign would streamline the process and help parents use the program. Providers don't have this extra time to chase down parents. Having an IT department with chat representatives to help parents and providers will also help streamline the process so that our payments arrive on time. Many providers don't use the ERDC program because of late payments. Passing this bill will enable more providers to use the program.

Though it doesn't directly affect my center now, I started out as an in-home provider. So, I know how important the provision of suspending the sprinkler requirement is to the success of new business start-ups. Also, centers like mine need neighborhood in-home providers to refer clients to. This will help enable centers like mine to make referrals to quality local providers we trust.

Sincerely,

Deanna Cohen