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Date: May 29, 2024  
To: Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chair Scharf and  
and Members of the House Interim Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services  
From: LeadingAge Oregon  
Subject: Intergenerational Child Care Facilities

LeadingAge Oregon is an association of nonprofit and mission driven housing and care organizations, dedicated to advancing quality aging services.

Many of our members have expressed a strong desire to offer childcare services within their communities. LeadingAge Oregon applauds Rose Villa's endeavors, highlighting them as a commendable model for other communities to emulate. Rose Villa's successful launch of a childcare program is inspirational. Nevertheless, Rose Villa, like many others, grapples with the challenge of developing a program that is self-sustaining while being affordable and accessible for their employees.

When contemplating childcare facilities within the framework of long-term care, two pivotal aspects emerge: firstly, the pressing need for affordable and accessible childcare, underscoring the responsibility felt by providers to support their workforce; and secondly, the recognized mutual benefits of integrating an intergenerational component into such initiatives.

Here are some key considerations and obstacles in establishing childcare services within older adult settings:

1. **Physical Space Constraints:** Many communities lack adequate space suitable for a childcare facility. The alternative of purchasing or leasing buildings nearby comes with significant costs for acquisition in addition to the necessary retrofitting to meet the specific requirements for indoor and outdoor space and fixture requirements.
2. **High Operational Costs:** Delivering quality childcare services inherently incurs substantial expenses, posing challenges for organizations striving to maintain affordability for both program operation and employee utilization.
3. **Lack of Funding:** Numerous long-term care and housing providers struggle to sustain their core operations due to escalating costs, increased regulatory burdens without funding, and inadequate reimbursement systems. This financial strain facing many providers makes it exceptionally difficult to explore and implement new initiatives.

4. **Non-Standard Work Hours:** Traditional childcare centers often operate within standard business hours, misaligning with the schedules of care providers. Extending childcare hours entails significant logistical complexities and costs, further complicating implementation for long-term care providers.
5. **Regulatory and Licensing Complexity:** Navigating the requirements of different regulatory bodies and standards can be daunting, necessitating meticulous compliance efforts and effective risk management protocols.
6. **Staffing Difficulties:** Long-term care and housing providers are facing staffing shortages to operate their business. In addition to addressing those concerns, finding qualified educators is also challenging. It is paramount during the hiring process to select educational staff with both the expertise to meet children's needs and a genuine interest in and support for the intergenerational dynamic. Additionally, these educators may need specialized training to effectively engage older adults in the classroom environment.
7. **Health and Safety Factors:** Ensuring the safety of both mobile children and less mobile older adults sharing the same space requires meticulous planning. Additional precautions and spatial adjustments are necessary to mitigate risk. For example children's toys and small objects may pose tripping hazards for older adults; and extra space may be necessary between tables and chairs to accommodate walkers.
8. **Community Buy-In:** It takes considerable effort, resources and education to garner support from families, staff, and the wider community to launch intergenerational child care facilities.

LeadingAge Oregon is committed to supporting our members and working with legislators to advance integrated intergenerational childcare facilities. We sincerely thank the Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services for your interest in this topic and would look forward to exploring opportunities and solutions to introduce intergenerational child care facilities into more of our member communities.

Respectfully submitted,

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LeadingAge Oregon