



## FCCI Advocacy Committee Solution Recommendations October 4, 2016

### ***Why is change needed?***

- Family Child Care is an integral part of our economy. Parents of our young children hold employment in our community and need childcare to be able to work.
- The declining number of licensed programs leaves families in the position of using a patchwork of unlicensed care options where health, safety and school readiness preparation may not be a priority.
- Family child care programs offer the most affordable licensed child care option.
- Family child care providers are key partners in providing quality early childhood learning experiences.
- Family child care programs are unique and support diverse communities meeting the various needs of families in children within their community.

### ***Solutions to address factors influencing the childcare shortage and cost of care:***

#### ***Governors Universal Preschool Agenda:***

Family child care programs cost of care will double or the program will cease to exist as 3 and 4 year old children enter “free” preschool. From the presentation by First Children’s Finance at the August Task Force meeting: “Every program in the sample served preschool-age children, and preschool tuition made up, on average, 54% of their tuition income. The importance of preschool tuition for the financial viability of family child care needs to be recognized, especially as the state considers universal Pre-K. If family child care providers are not able to care for preschool children, many may be unable to generate adequate revenue to continue operating. See Attachment

Family Child Care programs must be a part of the early learning landscape to continue to offer parents’ choice, access and affordability.

- The Parent Aware quality initiative is still relatively new and had a bumpy entry into family child care. The investment of millions/billions of dollars and should not be minimized by Universal Pre-K efforts. Continued adjustments and improvements to the

Parent Aware program that honor the uniqueness of family childcare will strengthen existing and new programs that participate in the PA, further supporting early learning experiences and school readiness.

- Recognize that the Parent Aware path is not the choice for every provider. Other programs that have inspired and supported family child care in the past, with proven results like the SEEDS of Early literacy, still exist! Curriculums for programs like this are sitting on a shelf—a little funding and they will flourish.
- Target money into programs that serve those most in need. There are programs that need funding now, not another early learning program to compete for existing tax payer or private funding dollars.

**Correction Orders:** Inconsistent interpretation and application of licensing rule is frustrating and providers are fearful of correction orders when they need a question answered. The majority of providers are looking for guidance so they can be in compliance.

- A safe way for providers to ask a question and receive guidance so the provider can be in compliance. Use the Ask DHS portal without copying the county licenser on the response for example.
- As the process for correction order moves online, the paper copy posting for 2years in a provider home should be eliminated.
- Two tier Correction Order system
  1. A fix ticket- where guidance is given on minor issues... refrigerator at 39 degrees instead of 40, the infant enrollment that should have written n/a or parent's dentist name in the blank etc.
    - a. The provider must document to the licenser that the fix it ticket item is fixed within 48 hours.
    - b. The fix it ticket is posted for 3 months or less, allowing provider to comment.
  2. When a potential exists for a correction order the provider is told at the time of the potential violation a correction order may be issued. Once issued the provider can add comments to be include with the on-line posting of the correction order. The posting is for no more than 1 year.

### ***Negative Action Data Gathering:***

Legislative request for the number of times and administrative law judge has heard a provider's appeal and how many times DHS has reversed the ruling of the administrative law judge for the past 10 years.

- DHS must abide by the ruling of the administrative law judge when a provider appeals to what is the providers' final level of appeal.
- Restitution to the provider for income lost and legal expense if the administrative law judge determines DHS incorrectly applied a negative action.

***Funding Mentor Solutions and Technical Service Grants:*** Support systems that were successful in years past have lost funding or been replaced by other funding priorities. Mentor programs, the business of family child care training, and technical service grant to local child care association or provider groups to support local needs are examples.

- Funding mentoring programs that are provider to provider based and designed to support the goal and need of the provider. Do not tie participation in the program to school readiness outcomes or specific targets to lead them into Parent Aware or Building Quality. The program needs to be focused on the providers needs and driven by what they need to build their business.
- Retaining providers in the family child care field will be served by mentors that address:

First Level: building the basics business knowledge, building positive parent relationships, managing a group of multi-age children, child development, basics of safety/structure/secure environment, guiding provider to local and state wide support systems, and

Second Level: addressing curriculum and assessment, philosophy of care and implementation, increased knowledge of child development,

Third Level: avenues to increased training to support program goals, professional development and specialization,

Fourth Level: tools to build future mentors, leaders, advocates

Technical Service Grants were once available and local child care associations were able to apply for them to bring trainers to their area, or support a technical aspect of their association.

- Re-examining the grant funding pie and how it is sliced or make available additional funds as technical support grants for associations or neighborhood groups to meet the needs of their local communities.

### ***Homeowners Insurance:***

Increasingly, family child care programs are being denied coverage from their homeowner insurance policy, even with a separate child care liability policy.

- Offer legislation to protect homeowners' companies from additional lawsuits after the child care business insurance liability policy has settled.
- Legislation that prohibits insurance companies from denying coverage to providers so long as they operate within their license capacity as defined in MN statute.
- Offer legislation to protect homeowners' insurance companies by requiring health insurance companies to cover their insured when accidents happen in child care just as they would have if the accident happened in a school.
- Limit amounts a parent or child can sue for.

### ***Mandatory Annual Training for Licensors:***

- Mandatory, annual training for licensors to create consistent enforcement of rules and statutes, information on a common sense perspective to guiding, educating and supervising children in a multiage group, training regarding child development, how to respond to providers questions regarding rules, and offering support/resources to providers to help them be successful.
- Required quarterly communications from licensing staff to address frequent questions in the field, any new interpretations providers should be aware of to be in compliance, and include a feedback loop for providers to send in a question for clarification without fear of a future correction order based on the question.