March 12, 2019

Dear Early Childhood Finance Committee

My name is Mary Jo Bjornson. I am a licensed family  childcare provider. You can read more about me and my program on my website@ [Alwaysbusygrowing.com](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__Alwaysbusygrowing.com&d=DwQFAg&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=4eYjdYuyhDOuibgCVUnuZ4h9W90l0OItNgee1LqQHbk&m=GgybfGX7c7nux4J60SFYiY2SpUlg-J5b2PYnqjAO6GE&s=TFCi89xFdaik81IhT-b2ZLGEMjaPLTnqPnRUvEL0JME&e=)

I would briefly like to address the issue of the importance or the TEACH and REETAIN grant programs.

It is my belief that the single best thing we can do as a county  and the state is to give childcare providers the opportunity to achieve a college degree in Early Childhood Development and related education.

I was fortunate enough to be encouraged to go to college and received TEACH funding as I went along.

I attained my BAS degree in Child Development in 2006.Once enrolled in the program I kept taking classes until I [finished. It](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__finished.It&d=DwQFAg&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=4eYjdYuyhDOuibgCVUnuZ4h9W90l0OItNgee1LqQHbk&m=GgybfGX7c7nux4J60SFYiY2SpUlg-J5b2PYnqjAO6GE&s=-jF1LBpEtgWRXCxmqryY9XnoH1KQ2rwotqB2LDFkbTg&e=) was the greatest gift I ever [received. My](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__received.My&d=DwQFAg&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=4eYjdYuyhDOuibgCVUnuZ4h9W90l0OItNgee1LqQHbk&m=GgybfGX7c7nux4J60SFYiY2SpUlg-J5b2PYnqjAO6GE&s=xmkbRJRsZkrXgbIz1KZHLQItF7GYv3eVU9au0br0rSo&e=) motivation to learn more was inside me but the TEACH $  help give me the financial support I needed to continue.

The REETAIN Program was invented to retain the educated providers in the working childcare [field. t](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__field.It&d=DwQFAg&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=4eYjdYuyhDOuibgCVUnuZ4h9W90l0OItNgee1LqQHbk&m=GgybfGX7c7nux4J60SFYiY2SpUlg-J5b2PYnqjAO6GE&s=zK3IkgGN_1C9qcnDjfmYlryLUGOC9i6EK6ATcTVtdNM&e=) was simply a reward letting providers know their education was valued. This reward has allowed me to purchase equipment  for the children in care and so much more. I know that both programs are very necessary in creating quality in care for the families we serve and the education of very young children.

I also think these two programs could up the bar. That is If childcare providers were to be granted a license they need to have to be enrolled in the TEACH program or have at least a two year degree in related child education, then this would automatically increase the quality in our profession. Every career or profession has a list of qualifications.

It is my belief that rewarding providers with a REETAIN bonus allows providers further motivation to

educate themselves then receive a bonus because they did so. There are a shortage of childcare educators, enhancing these programs could be a large part of the answer. I am grateful for your time and welcome your response. My email is Mjbjornson@Q.com

Sincerely

Mary Jo Bjornson