



Minnesota Child Care Provider
Information Network
PO Box 1136
Prior Lake, MN 55372
651-636-1989

www.mccpin.org

The mission of the Minnesota Child Care Provider Information Network (MCCPIN) is to support, promote and strengthen the profession of licensed family child care, thereby enriching the lives of providers, children, families, and communities.

March 29, 2023

RE: HF2497, Article 7 & HF2497 DE1 (or whatever is being presented!)

Dear Committee Chair and Committee members:

My name is Cyndi Cunningham. I have been a Licensed Family Child Care Provider in St. Paul for 26 years and am the current Public Policy Chairperson for Minnesota Child Care Provider Information Network (MCCPIN), a 501c3 statewide association for Licensed Child Care Providers. I also served as the MCCPIN representative on the Family Child Care Task Force, Great Start Task Force and have been involved in many working groups in Minnesota regarding the child care crisis, workforce, and governmental system.

I'm testifying to share MCCPIN's **concerns** and opposition to the proposed Pre-K plan as presented in HF2497 Article 7 and now the DE1. MCCPIN has had a consistent position that early childhood education is critical for children's success in life and school, however, placing children in a school setting is not required for them to be successful.

It is exhausting to keep up with these changes and have a voice to address what is being presented.

We are seeing this bill in the historic process of moving preschool to school, not a benign small step. The approach of school based, and degree focus will lead towards a system which will limit parent choice, contribute towards the demise of Family Childcare and other early childhood settings.

Changes must be made to: 1) Ensure mixed delivery, 2) ensure that a B.A. requirement is not added, and 3) increase funding directly given to families through Early Learning Scholarships & CCAP.

1) Ensure Mixed Delivery: The DE1 does not include mixed delivery, it must for stability for familie, children and providers.

- **MDE has consistently presented that percentages of 40% school, 30% Head Start and 30% child care (center & FCC combined) are intended.** It's not in the bill, however it has consistently been stated direction.
 - This is a full shift away from the current percentages and moves children away from licensed child care into the school setting.
 - "Childcare" is a mix of center and Licensed Family Child Care, which even further shifts the numbers away from licensed childcare.
- **School districts should not be the overseer of the programs due to the bias of schools not supporting mixed delivery.**
 - There is no incentive for the overseeing school district to ensure that mixed delivery is followed.



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- School districts, like most entities, will proceed with what is normal and known; for them it will be schools.
- School districts frequently do not currently recognize child care as a quality setting and will continue to marginalize our value.
- **Mixed delivery will not be in existence in the future as programs will not be available.**
 - Children will be removed from child care settings leading to an even larger child care crisis.
 - Programs such as centers and licensed family child care will not be able to sustain their businesses and therefore less choice.
 - There will need to be 'wrap around care' that will not be available due to closures. Parents need more than a few hours a day for their ability for work & school. Summers are not recognized in this plan. (350-850 hours provided leaves many hours for care)
 - Ultimate impact will lead to long term limits of choice for families.
 - Families need a variety of choices, including pre-school settings in the broad definition, not just schools.

2) Do not include B.A. Degree requirement. Even years down the road, this requirement will eliminate and exclude many Early Childhood Educators in child care settings.

- **There are no studies which evaluate where children are coming from who are 'not prepared' for school! To make a leap and assumption that only BA degrees can prepare is not supported.**
- Minorities will be marginalized as this is an inequitable standard. We currently have a crisis in ECE with minority representation in care providers, this will exasperate the situation.
- Current care providers working full-time do not have the flexibility to obtain a 4-year degree. Paid time off from work, financial support for education is limited, many are parents of young children complicating time away from work and family to obtain this degree.
- New providers will be restricted as they can't apply for exception to the BA as they will not have been in the field long enough.
- There are many quality classifications for providers to ensure providers/educators have the tools to best prepare children: Parent Aware (which this state has invested heavily), ECE certificates/diplomas, AA degrees, Accreditation, Montessori certificates, etc. have all been proven to prepare children and will be excluded.

Please support children and families by funding Pathways I scholarships and CCAP.

- These fundings have proven to meet children and families where they are. It does not build programs which then distribute the wealth to who can make it to the program.



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- Funding towards the child would have a great impact on giving parents shopping dollars to go to the setting which meets their needs.
- Children thrive in non-school settings and need to have access to ALL settings.
- Child care, whether center or Licensed Child Care along with many other non-school programs can meet family and children's needs.

Lean on the experts in the field of Early Childhood Education, those who have been providing positive settings for decades. Schools have not been meeting these needs of these littles for as long as other settings have been.

We ask legislators to stop or modify this plan. Ultimately, the presented structure will lead to families having limited choice and children will not have full support to grow and flourish.

Structure for a required mixed delivery approach. Detail to show effort and recruitment, not the intended MDE %'s.

Exclude BA degree requirement: utilize comparable competencies and Parent Aware ratings. In 2022, there was a pre-k summer program which included Parent Aware 3 & 4 star rated programs which was deemed successful.

Increase funding for CCAP & ELS for all wrap around care

Frequently the statement is made that children are not ready for school. **There is not a statewide measure across all schools which determines whether a child is 'ready for school'. There also is no study to show what setting these children are coming from. Solutions are constantly being made without truly knowing the problem.**

We need to stop building programs with Pathways II scholarships (schools and centers) and expecting families & children to come to them. The state needs to financially support families and children where they are and create support for all settings, not set up funding streams and directions which will lead to the demise of categories of programs such as Family Child Care. Intended and unintended consequences of bills such as this need to be looked at critically first, then plans implemented.

Please support families, children, and ALL Early Childhood Educators, not this bill as it is presented.

Sincerely,

Cyndi Cunningham
MCCPIN Public Policy Chairperson