



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

May 4, 2020

Re: H437DE1 Early childhood program eligibility modification

Mister Chair & Committee members.

My name is Cyndi Cunningham. I have been a Licensed Family Child Care Provider in St. Paul for 24 years and am the current Public Policy Chairperson for Minnesota Child Care Provider Information Network (MCCPIN), a 501c3 sitewide association for Licensed Child Care Providers.

Personally, I am a 3 Star Rated program and have a teaching degree from UNI. I am testifying on behalf of MCCPIN in support of the amendment.

Specifically, we support the section of the amendment, lines 3.6-3.7, which establishes a participation threshold of 40% of all programs eligible to participate in Parent Aware to be reached before the shift to only 3&4 Star Rated programs.

Currently in law, parents who have Early Learner Scholarships can utilize these scholarships at all Parent Aware Star rated programs.

The law is set to change beginning July 2020 to limit scholarships to only be utilized at 3 & 4 Star rated programs.

Without this proposed change in law, parents will be needing to find a different care setting for their children or not use their Early Learner scholarship. Passing this 40% threshold and extending the time frame past July is urgently needed.

There are two major positive aspects to this quite simple line.

1) It extends the utilization of Early Learner Scholarships at all programs past July.

- This allows parents and providers to provide the most critical impact of a child's success and that is **continuity of care!** Parents/guardians/children can stay connected to the one known they have had which is care setting for their child. Without this change, they will need to find a different care setting. Without this change, providers will need to adjust their enrollment. **In this Emergency Peacetime Crisis both are difficult to do.**
- This change also allows Licensed Family Child Care more time for the opportunity to step into the Parent Aware system and become rated.

Parent Aware has been a challenging program for Licensed Family Child Care providers to participate in and obtain the 3&4 Star ratings. We are small businesses and financial decisions are critical.

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.



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

For example:

- The incentives structure has encouraged programs to stay at the 1&2-star ratings levels. Only recently have the 4 star rated programs been awarded grants.
- Due to lower funding at the Pathways I program level, there have been fewer clients searching for care and therefore, less incentive for Family Child Care providers to participate.
- The language and phrasing on the application is exclusively center and school-based discouraging providers from engaging as they do not 'see' themselves as part of the process.

2) 40% eligible programs participating gives a measurable criterion to determine when there is a potential of available care settings prior to narrowing to 3&4 Star Rated Programs.

I believe this is the 3rd time we have been at the shift point as the criteria has been based on a calendar of 2 years, not the capacity of the program to meet needs.

MCCPIN has been involved with work groups to make changes to these challenges to support Licensed Family Child Care toward greater participating in the higher ratings but this is a slow process.

Please support the extension of Early Learner Scholarships being used at all Parent Aware Rated programs until the 40% participating criteria is met. **This 40% threshold will support the 'mixed deliver' which is vital to Minnesota's model.**

Cyndi Cunningham

MCCPIN Public Policy Chairperson

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.