



From: Kathleen Lamb Tyler
In GOD'S Hands Christian Youth Center

April 2nd, 2025

RE: Testimony on House Bill 96

Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on HB 96. My name is Kathleen Tyler, I own and operate In GOD'S Hands Christian Youth Center, and I represent the CEO Project. I have served children and families in the Cincinnati community for over 25 years and provided employment for many. I am here to ask that you support Ohio kids, families, staff and early learning centers by including the childcare improvements outlined in Governor DeWine's executive budget, most importantly, *investing in childcare as the workforce behind the workforce*, funding federally required changes to copay and caps, reimbursing based on enrollment and raising eligibility for childcare assistance for parents.

My lived experience as a small business owner in Hamilton County informs my request and provides unique insight into the problems facing our industry. This March I lost a key staff member, who was forced out of her housing and unable to find adequate housing that she could afford. Without the increase in the reimbursement rates, we cannot provide a sustainable wage for our staff. Most of our staff receive support and battle the cliff effect, creating a barrier for increased wages. Our system is broken. This is not a partisan issue; It's a people issue. Ohio's children will suffer or excel based upon your decision. I ask that you approve the budget without changes, except to take leadership and increase the reimbursement rates for Early Education centers in Ohio. Raising eligibility for families, investing in building a workforce for early education is an investment in Ohio's children. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

Kathleen Lamb Tyler

*E*ducating Children, *S*erving Families, *A*ffecting Communities

Mrs. Kisha Johnson - FCC Provider / In-Home Center
The Johnson's Day Care Center LLC

April 2, 2025

Testimony on House Bill 96

Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on HB 96. My name is Kisha Johnson and I am the owner of: The Johnson's Day Care Center LLC / FCC In-Home Center. I represent the CEO Project. As a childcare provider in Hamilton County in Cincinnati, District 8th area., I, am a childcare business owner and have been in business as an FCC In-Home Center for the past 27 years. I have served at least 80 Publicly Funded child care families over the years. Through my daily experiences, and business insight.

I am here to ask that you support Ohio kids, families, and childcare educators by including the childcare improvements outlined in Governor DeWine's executive budget, which are inclusive of, but not limited to

Topics:

- **Adopting and streamlining a fully Funded Cost-Of-Care Model to help stabilize Ohio's childcare economy.**

Why this is important and how it affects us - This will help to build and sustain a strong and supportive workforce in childcare businesses and early childcare educators, & help providers increase working wages to at least \$20 an hour, provide healthcare benefits for themselves and their employees, and remove challenging working conditions. Moreover, Ohio is the 51st State that pays the lowest childcare reimbursement rates to their childcare providers/educators. We, as childcare educators, receive less than a livable wage, meaning we make less than employees working at McDonald's on an hourly wage basis. Without unsustainable funding measures, our programs will face financial instability that will impact the quality of care that our centers and in-home centers will be able to provide. With the rising cost of childcare, our mothers have to work more overtime or have to reduce their hours at work to qualify for childcare or just leave the workforce entirely. The proposed rule would change how and when providers are paid and clarify a minimum payment rate for childcare providers.

- **Reimbursing childcare providers at the 75th percentile of the market rate surveys to ensure sustainability and quality care.**

Why this is important and how it affects us - Ohio's reimbursement rate is among the poorest in the nation. As, a childcare provider, we haven't seen a proper increase in childcare rates since we received the 7% cut across the board back in 2005 - 2009 based on the Market Rate Survey's data analysis. To deliver high-quality care, Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) providers need to recruit and retain a highly skilled workforce. That requires child-care workers to be paid adequately for their work, which requires that PFCC providers are reimbursed enough to do so. Ohio was recently ordered by the federal government to increase its reimbursement to at least the 50th percentile of the market rate: the midway point between the lowest rate charged by providers and the highest. The proposed rule restates an even higher standard for equal access: at the 75th percentile. At that level, states can ensure all parents and caregivers can access high-quality child care, regardless of race, income, or ZIP code.

Ohio uses a complex system based on the market rate [survey](#) to determine how much to reimburse PFCC providers. As a result, different providers receive different amounts per child in different counties, making it difficult to describe reimbursement in specific dollar amounts. Instead, the reimbursement rate is expressed as a "percentile of the [market rate](#)": the share of providers who charge less than the state's reimbursement rate. For example, Ohio reimburses at the 25th percentile. In other words, only 25% of similar providers charge families less than the rate at which Ohio reimburses PFCC providers — and 75% of providers charge more. We, as providers, are proposing that legislation move to pay all providers/educators at the 75th Percentile and to pay all existing counties at the same rates across the board for each child's categories, such as for Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers, and School-Agers, and to remove the hourly wages and pay us by the full-time and part-time categories only.

- ***Raising the eligibility requirements for Publicly Funded ChildCare by expanding the Federal Poverty Level assistance for parents who make up under 300% of the federal poverty level, and investing in childcare as the workforce behind the workforce.***

Why is this important, and how will it affect us -? - By raising eligibility requirements for childcare assistance, parents will be able to sustain their jobs and provide stable housing for their family and children, which will make childcare more affordable. Families often struggle to afford child care, especially those with limited means. Families in Ohio can initially enroll in Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) if their gross monthly household income is at or below 145% of the federal poverty level (\$2,783 for a family of three). Once enrolled, they can remain so as they grow their income up to 300% of the federal poverty level (\$5,758 for a family of three). Currently, families with monthly income at or below 100% of the federal poverty level (\$1,919 for a family of three) are not required to pay a co-pay in Ohio. Above that income level, co-pay amounts increase as a family's income grows. The proposed rule would cap that co-payment at 7% of family income. This would provide savings and alleviate some financial stress for many families in PFCC with income over 100% of the federal poverty level.^[1] It would not affect PFCC families with income below that level who do not have a co-payment.

As providers/educators, we are proposing that legislation support making childcare free for early childhood educators and other employees of childcare facilities to support the workforce as well as move to expanding the FPL Federal Poverty Level to under 300% to make childcare more affordable for families.

- ***Funding federal requirements to make changes to copay caps and reimbursing based on enrollment over attendance to meet federal law requirements.***

Why this is important, and how it will affect us -? The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) final rule mandates Ohio to make policy changes to lower childcare costs for families, improve provider payment practices, and simplify enrollment processes. Providers must be reimbursed based on enrollment rather than attendance per the childcare block grant. The impact will lower co-payments, create additional choices in care arrangements, and simplify eligibility determination processes for families.

Capping parents' co-pays at 7% of their income will make childcare more affordable and will help keep the children in the childcare programs and not at home unsupervised. This will also help childcare providers to make ends meet, and plan for the long term by reimbursing providers based on the child being enrolled in the program versus, the child attending the program on an hourly basis. To comply with federal law, Ohio needs to implement changes to childcare subsidy systems, including capping copayments and reimbursing providers based on enrollment rather than attendance, which requires funding for these changes.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Marquita McClendon
Future Achievers Academy
Wednesday, April 2, 2025
Testimony on House Bill 96

Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to allow me to provide my testimony today on HB 96. My name is Marquita McClendon, I am the owner of Future Achievers Academy and I represent the CEO Project. I am here to ask for your support for Ohio kids, families, and childcare providers by including the childcare improvements outlined in Governor DeWine's executive budget, especially:

- **Retaining childcare staff and pay competitive wages by implementing the Childcare Worker Voucher Program**
 - A child care staff worker makes \$12/hour with one dependent; their copay can be anywhere from \$75-\$100 per week for their child to attend the program.
 - By implementing the childcare voucher program, we can offer a higher rate of pay \$12-\$15 while their child can attend the program with minimal cost to the staff worker and also the program.
- **Removing the 2 year waiver and implementing enrollment over attendance can stabilize the childcare industry immediately while increasing the reimbursement rate to the 75th percentile**
 - Johnny is a school age/preschooler and attends a school 9am-4pm. We complete a customized school schedule that blocks out his hours that he is at school. My program is open from 6am-6pm.
 - Johnny attends 8a-9a and back 4p-5p but he only came 5 days one week (2 hours a day x 5 days=10 hours= part time rate of pay).
 - Johnny attends 8a-9a and back 4p-5p but he only came 3 days one week (2 hours a day x 3 days=6 hours= hourly rate of pay which is \$9).
 - Both examples, Johnny was breakfast, snack and I had to pay 2 staff members 6-10 hours to provide care for him
 - There is no stability or consistency in pay which is so bad for business and this an example of why enrollment over attendance is important.
 - Ohio's Market Rate Survey structures our pay rate across the state. We will research the data needed to show a care of cost model which is a model that is used successfully in many other states. Currently, we are receiving the 50th percentile market survey rate.

- **Ensure reimbursement increases childcare workers by mandating at least a \$20/hr wage**
 - Unfortunately the rate of pay for our hourly rate is \$9 per hour
 - Going back to the previous example. (Johnny attends 8a-9a and back 4p-5p but he only came 3 days one week (2 hours a day x 3 days=6 hours= hourly rate of pay which we are requesting to be \$20)
 - Implementing enrollment over attendance will also eliminate the hourly pay rate all together
- **Cap co-pays for PFCC families at 7% of their income and increase the FPL to 300%**
 - Mom has an infant dependent and she makes \$12 per hour, she may qualify for PFCC but so she may have a copay from \$75-\$100 per wk
 - Mom could make \$12 per hour * 40 hours per week=\$480*4 weeks=\$1,920/.07=\$134/4 weeks=\$34 per week copay
 - Mom has an infant dependent and she makes \$15 per hour, she will not qualify for PFCC/Childcare Choice. (\$15*40 hrs/wk= \$600*4/wks=\$2400) Hamilton County infant rate is \$1200/month. That would be half of the parents' check going towards childcare.
- **Please keep presumptive eligibility for child care enrollment applicants**
 - Currently, Dad's application process; an application is submitted April 1st and it is taking the county (14-28 weeks to process the application) April 24 the application is processed. The childcare program can care for the children starting April 1 to assist the family with childcare.
 - If the parent is approved then the family can continue with childcare and the program can back tap for payment.
 - If the parent gets denied then; a payment on denial is given.
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As a childcare provider in Hamilton County in Cincinnati, District 24, on the Westside of town, I met with House Representative Isaacshon and expressed the same concerns addressed in this letter. April 1st marked my 20th year career anniversary. And I have been walking within my purpose the entire time and it led me here today. I am just amazed at how everything is coming full circle within divine order.

The same divine order that I feel the State of Ohio needs to align with in regards to how we are looked at as a state. Having one of the highest rates for infant mortality, having the highest rate of opioid addiction, and having the highest rate of suicide is devastating. While our childcare and education system is failing at 51st at one point.

Let's change this narrative about the State of Ohio. My state is too beautiful to be looked at with all the negative baggage, even though it's attached to a lot of funding but there also is funding in the good things as well like funding our education system for our children.

I became a childcare educator at the age of 21 and I have grown throughout my years being a childcare educator. I started advocating in November 2023 with the CEO Project. I am a Bronze Star program and we work hard for those ratings. We are implementing Teachers Strategy Creative Curriculum and now we added the Science and Reading portion. Aligned with the assessment and observation tools to equip our programs to assess and detect learning disabilities, behavior disabilities and many special needs issues that a child may have early on. The Department of Children of Youth has aligned a phenomenal Step Up to Quality approach that has given us the tools to be a successful educational program. Kentucky child care programs don't even own a base curriculum and they are not required to use them. Those are the positive attributes that I love to brag about that my State requires of me.

There are so many child care programs that have closed due to low enrollment, inconsistency in pay and also due to the current economical changes. That is why it is so important that we implement:

- **Retaining childcare staff and pay competitive wages by implementing the Childcare Worker Voucher Program**
- **Removing the 2 year waiver and implementing enrollment over attendance can stabilize the childcare industry immediately while increasing the reimbursement rate to the 75th percentile**
- **Ensure reimbursement increases childcare workers by mandating at least a \$20/hr wage or remove the hourly wage completely**
- **Cap co-pays for PFCC families at 7% of their income and increase the FPL to 300%**
- **Please keep presumptive eligibility for child care enrollment applicants**

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Tarrezz Thompson-FCC
April 2, 2025
Testimony on House Bill 96

Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on HB 96. My name is Tarrezz Thompson, I operate a family home based type B program in Columbus and I represent the CEO Project. I am here to ask that you support Ohio kids, families, and childcare providers by including the childcare improvements outlined in Governor DeWine's executive budget, including investing in childcare as the workforce behind the workforce.

As a childcare provider in Franklin County, the cost of living for a family of 4 averages \$3,300 a month. That equates to around \$20 per hour. The cost of living doesn't incorporate the cost of childcare that can range from \$700-\$1600 a month per child. That's \$1400-\$3200 for a family of 4. A family of 4 also does not qualify at the current eligibility rate making \$20 per hour. I state these numbers because I'm a family of 4 and a childcare provider who also has similar cost of living expenses, outside of my financial business obligations to maintain operations. Often, I'm pulling from my living expenses budget to cover the cost of business operations. The families aren't able to keep up with the cost of care and I'm unable to make any more sacrifices and still maintain stability for my family. I'm here because I believe Governor Dewine held that in his mind when he wrote portions of the budget such as increasing eligibility to 160%, keeping copays at 7% for families and moving to pay based on enrollment vs attendance for providers. Pay based on enrollment creates predictable income similar to our private pay partners and reduces the need to borrow from living expenses to support business shortages that happen with attendance based pay. Each of these decisions moves the state in the direction of

creating stability for both families and the workforce that serves them to stay in the workforce. I also believe that one of the most transitional ways to increase right size investment is by moving away from the current market rate survey and into a cost model system to operate within the true cost of care. I have seen how the needs of the community and the children we serve shift to a demand higher than preparation for kindergarten. Our children are needing more intentional learning experiences to close development gaps which require higher trained and certified staff. The current model does not account for the investment in training, cost of goods increasing, and livable wages needed to match the increasing cost of living. Under a cost model system, the state would have a better picture of the true cost for care and the real investment that's needed to support its future citizens.

As a business program in the community for over 14 years which identifies as an inclusion program, I've invested in multiple families with a child with identified and unidentified disabilities. In service, each child has a unique developmental need to create a least restrictive environment. Although the recent increases have created mild relief, the truth of the challenge is there needs to be a system that creates a whole picture of the cost of care for all services including inclusion programs. Financial decisions for eligibility and reimbursement are based on archaic numbers that historically result in low investment in the workforce that supports the workforce. When considering the budget, I'm asking you to consider keeping the investments from Governor Dewine, the cost of living working families have, and the tools that are identifying the cost of operations of the very businesses that make it possible for workers to work.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.