

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# Maine Child Care Advisory Council

Health and Human Service Committee Presentation

01/23/2019

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## Co-Chairs:

Chantel Pettengill - Owner of Pettengill Academy, Lewiston, Parent who does not receive subsidy.

Melanie Collins - Owner of Melanie's Home Childcare, Falmouth, Public at Large

Thank you to Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson and the members of this committee for this opportunity to introduce the Maine Child Care Advisory Council to you.

The Child Care Advisory Council was established, in accordance with Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 35-B, to advise the Legislature and the department regarding child care services within the State. The council shall encourage the development of child care policies that are coordinated among state agencies to promote quality, uniformity and efficiency of service.

\*\* The Maine State Statute outlining the duties of the child care advisory council is included in your presentation packet.

The CCAC is comprised of a diverse membership, who are instrumental in helping the state of Maine to make decisions about the Child Care and Early Childhood Education industry and profession. There are 28 membership seats. We are the only childhood care advisory council legislatively mandated to advise the department and the legislature that has a large broad based membership including childcare professionals from the different type and size of facilities that work directly in the industry. In addition to child care professionals , the council also includes membership from the Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Child Development Experts, the Fire Marshal's Office, Parents of Children with Disabilities and Childhood Disability Representative, Native American Representative , Legislators, and parents of children enrolled in childcare and others.

The broad membership body of this group, encompasses a collaboration of people and resources needed to make comprehensive recommendations to the legislature, that are in the best interest of the licensed professional childcare and the early childhood education industry as well as the children and families of The State of Maine.

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\*\*Membership Seating Chart Including in the Presentation Packet.

The duties outlined in the Statute, states that the CCAC, shall:

- A. Advise the department and the Legislature regarding the coordination of child care services in the State;
- B. Advise the department regarding the preparation of any application, amendment, waiver request, plan or other document submitted by the department to the Federal Government regarding child care funding and recommend changes to the submission when appropriate;
- C. Establish a subcommittee that includes licensing officials, public health and safety representatives, early childhood educators and others considered necessary by the council to review the current system of licensing and registration and recommend a uniform regulatory system for family day-care homes. In its first annual report, the council shall submit its recommendations, along with implementing legislation, if needed, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over human resource matters;
- D. Examine the role and funding of resource development centers and submit recommendations regarding the number and role of the centers in the State. These recommendations must be made in the council's first or 2nd annual report;
- E. Advise how the State can better use child care funds available under the federal Social Security Act and develop a proposal to use federal and state funds to supplement the earned income disregard for families receiving temporary assistance for needy families;
- F. Explore ways in which child care services may be better integrated into a system of comprehensive services for children and families; and
- G. Examine any other relevant child care issues and make recommendations as needed. The council may establish ad hoc subcommittees as needed.

Majority of the seats in 2018 were filled and monthly meetings occur on the first Friday of the Month from 9 am - 12 pm.

Some of the accomplishments the council had in 2018 were:

- We invited input from child care professionals and provided the input to the department for the market rate surveys that were conducted as a component of the Child Care Development Block Grant.

- Collected input and advised the legislature on Child Care Regulation Bills in January 2018. This also included information gathered during community outreach on the recent Rule-Making for Family Child Care Licensing Rule Changes.
- Provided input to the proposed child care subsidy rule changes.
- Provided input at the public hearing for the \$16 million Child Care Development Block Grant.

2019 is looking to be a productive year for the Child Care Advisory Council. With our recent increase in both parent and provider attendance and participation, combined with our legislatively mandated duties, the membership will bring a wide variety of insights regarding the struggles of the childcare and early childhood education industry. This experience will help the council to educate and advise this committee on legislation that will directly impact the industry as a whole.

Other objectives we have for 2019 will be to continue to maximize the collaboration and community outreach **in order** to connect, collect and compile information from the public such as parents and providers and to coordinate that information along with our membership, the department and legislators to come up with recommendations regarding funding, regulations and policies.


We are also seeking to meet the requirement of of the statute by being allowed to access information regarding the states proposed application for the Maine Child Care Development Block Grant Fund and to advise the Department before the application goes to public comment and prior to any and all submissions, waivers or revisions.

We also plan to make recommendations to the Department to help make the subsidy program as well as ASPIRE/TANF programs to be more efficient for the department, providers and Maine Families. At the moment, many providers do not accept these programs due to difficulty maintaining the program for both the family and the provider.

When the new Child Care Facility Licensing Rules are presented for rule-making, the council will work on recommendations to the Department, that is gathered from input from public outreach.

With the increasing discussion about "Quality Child Care," the Child Care Advisory Council will gather public input and work collaboratively to make recommendations that will ensure that there is a balance of quality initiatives and their impact on affordability and availability of childcare.

Evaluate the decline in licensed family childcare and nursery school programs and make Recommendations to the Department and Legislature to ensure parent choice in child care and education.



There has been significant decline in childcare businesses - especially, Family Childcare and Nursery Schools over the past 10 years. This has resulted in a shortage of childcare slots available for enrollment. A few counties in Maine have experienced an increase in licensed capacity due to an increase in licensed centers. It is important to note, that capacity is the maximum amount of children allowed for the size of the building, it does not typically reflect the amount of open slots that a childcare has available for enrollment.

Therefore an increase in a centers capacity does not necessarily balance out the loss of enrolled slots for family child cares that closed.

The state of Maine is lucky to have an amazing diverse advisory council, with such a wealth of expertise to work together on child care issues that are crucial to Maine's economy. The recent work of this council is getting back to the original intent of the council and bringing more parent and Child Care professional voices back to the table to actively advise the legislature and the Departments.

In the packets you received, we have included a brochure summarizing our presentation and the work of the council, the statute that the council follows, the seating chart of membership, and a data pack that shows the trends in the number of child care providers and capacity. Thank you for your time and we look forward to answering any questions and working with the committee in the future.