

TOTS' TOWN INC. CHILD CARE CENTER

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To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Mary S. Castrignano. I am an Early childhood educator. I am the owner of TOTS' TOWN INC., CHILD CARE CENTER. I have been open for 34 years. My center is small and only has capacity for 14 students. I employ a staff of three. I offer child care for children ages 12 months to 5. I am advocating for the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act. I also accept children receiving childcare assistance through the State.

I opened up my childcare facility to care for my own two children and found a substantial need to offer services for young children to working families.

The biggest challenge in this field is having consistent enrollment. Children and their families come and go. They change jobs and move. The hardest challenge was when COVID hit. Most families began working from home and it affected my enrollment. Funding from the State kept me afloat during this time, but getting full enrollment was still critical, but still doesn't compensate for what a center charges itself.

Step Up to Wages came along at just the right time. This funding has helped me pay my utility bills, rent and purchase supplies. This helps me be able to continue to care for my students in a positive and caring way.

Childcare workers are essential workers. We are undervalued. We deserve this investment and cannot wait. Please support the Early Educator Compensation Stabilization Act.

Thank you very much. Your assistance in this special matter is greatly needed and much appreciated.

Mary S. Castrignano, Owner