



Rhode Island Association for the
Education of Young Children



May 22, 2025

The RI Association for the Education of Young Children voices its strong support for H-5196 (Diaz), which would remove the sunset date from the Child Care for Child Care Educators program, remove the cap on family income, and make Early Intervention staff eligible too.

In August 2023, the state launched a Child Care for Child Care Educators pilot program, which is modeled after a successful program in Kentucky, to attract and retain child care educators by making them categorically eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to reduce the child care costs for working parents in the field. The program has been funded with existing federal funds through an FY24, but the program is now scheduled to end in July 2025 unless the General Assembly removes the sunset date.

As of October 2024:

- 570 child care educators with 831 children under age 13 were approved to participate in the program.
- Almost half of the licensed child care centers and about 5% of family child care homes in the state have at least one staff member participating.
- Almost 75% of the approved applicants are single mothers.

With her permission, RIAEYC is honored to share Roshana's story (p. 2 of this testimony) to convey the success of this benefit.

In addition to removing the sunset date, we strongly support the improvements in this years legislation that would remove the income cap and include Early Intervention providers. Many of the applications from two working parent households have been denied because they are over the family income limit of 300% FPL. Expanding this program to include Early Intervention (EI) staff would help attract and retain EI staff and eliminate the waiting list for infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities. To Roshana and the hundreds of educators like her, this program is a life-changing success. **Please keep this benefit in place, or Rhode Island risks further destabilizing the early childhood workforce.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Hildebrand'.

Lisa A. Hildebrand, M.A.
Executive Director
RIA EYC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alyson PG'.

Alyson Panzarella Girard, M.J.
Early Learning & Policy Specialist
RIA EYC



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My name is Roshona Perry, and I am a teacher at Joyful Noise Inc. in West Warwick.

I work as an early childhood educator because I want to be a massive part of our future. I love what I do and that I have such a critical part in the future of our children and the next generation. My students are like my children, and I want to do what is best for each and every one of them.

I am a mom to a smart, outgoing 1-year-old. I recently had the opportunity to allow my son to attend child care because of the Rhode Island Child Care for Child Care educators program enacted in 2023 and extended in 2024. Before the program, my son was staying with a family member because I could not afford the cost of child care myself. I am lucky enough to have some help, but I always hit a crossroads when one of my helpers was sick or couldn't take him. That caused me to call out of work and miss out on pay or use sick time.

With the Child Care for Child Care Educators program, I got to send my son to the early learning center where I work and where he has FLOURISHED. I would be DEVASTATED if my son couldn't attend the center anymore if this program ends in July 2025 as currently scheduled in state law. The price for care is so high that I would be working just to be able to send my son to child care, leaving me with little to nothing to pay my bills and afford groceries and other things my son needs.

The programs have helped me greatly, and I'm sure they have helped others. If I couldn't send my son to child care, I don't know if I could stay at my job, and we need all the child care workers we can get. This is for the future. Think about the future when you make the decisions for the next step.