

May 22, 2025

Re: In Support of 5281 – Childcare is Essential Act

Chairman Abney, Vice Chairpersons Slater and Marszalkowski, and Members of the House Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families (RICCF), I write in strong support of H5281, the Rhode Island Childcare is Essential Act.

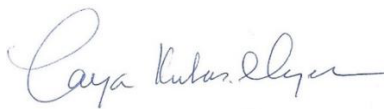
Affordable, high-quality childcare is a cornerstone of family economic stability, child development, and workforce participation—especially for working parents, single caregivers, and those pursuing education or job training. This bill takes a bold and necessary step forward to ensure that families across Rhode Island, particularly those with low to moderate incomes, can access the care they need without sacrificing opportunity or well-being.

By expanding eligibility for childcare assistance, capping family contributions at 7% of income, investing in rate increases tied to provider quality, and introducing an infant bonus rate, this bill directly addresses the chronic underinvestment in early childhood care and education. Furthermore, it recognizes childcare workers as essential contributors to our economy and communities by supporting compensation levels that reflect their value.

Children thrive when they have access to nurturing, stable, and developmentally appropriate care. Families thrive when they can work or go to school knowing their children are safe and supported. And Rhode Island thrives when we invest in the systems that support our future.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration. RICCF stands ready to support the implementation of this legislation and to continue working with our partners to ensure a strong, equitable childcare system in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,



Tanja Kubas-Meyer
Executive Director, RI Coalition for Children and Families