

May 20, 2025

Re: In support of H-5196 Child Care for Child Care Educators

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

Erica, the owner of three child care centers in Warwick, and a passionate advocate for early childhood education, believes the Child Care for Child Care Educators program is helping centers stay in business and strongly supports Representative Diaz's bill, H-5196.

Erica learned early in her career that offering free and reduced cost child care to employees both attracted and retained teachers. She has teachers who have worked with her for 20 years. Today, however, the overhead costs of running a child care business make it cost prohibit for owners like her to offer this benefit to employees without support. Owners can no longer afford to take spots from paying customers while simultaneously absorbing the costs of caring for teachers' children.

Erica believes the Child Care for Child Care Educators program is a "win-win" for centers and teachers, and ultimately families and the economy. Offering free child care to child care teachers gives the early childhood field a competitive advantage over other industries. It attracts teachers to the field and incentivizes them to remain in the job. In addition to helping centers have stable staffing to keep classrooms open, the Child Care for Child Care Educators program reimburses centers for the services they are providing to teachers' children. This in turn enables centers to not only keep classrooms open but to stay in business.

Erica encourages you to consider the profound impact that the Child Care for Child Care Educators program is having on the early childhood workforce, and our overall economy, and vote in support of bill H-5196 to continue funding it.

Story gathered and submitted on behalf of Erica by Michaela Keohane, a Rhode Island taxpayer from Barrington and member of the Policy and Advocacy Committee of the Women's Fund of RI.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michaela Keohane".

Michaela Keohane