

Hello, my name is Debra Messinger. I am the owner operator of Brighter Beginnings Childcare & Preschool. I have been in business as a licensed childcare provider for going on fourteen years. I writing to voice my concerns regarding SB236. Please support family child care providers and the children and families we serve by:

- > Striking language and any amendments that would be harmful to family child care providers.
- > Support children and families that impose a ban on suspensions/expulsions.
- > And continue to study the issue and add more comprehensive audits, and data collection along with the parent education components to the bill.

Oregon needs to make sure real data is collected, shared, and evaluated and that a program of comprehensive resources, supports and parent and provider protections are fully resourced before mandating a ban that may make children, families and providers unsafe.

My story. Background Credentials: MA in Education and a MS in Special Ed. I run a small in home childcare preschool. I enrolled a child in my program after a two week part-time introduction period (half-days, summer - we were mostly outdoors during his trial period). He seemed quirky but ok. I agreed to enroll him and explained the 30 day trial period in my contract. During the late summer we had an air-quality alert situations requiring us to be indoors. This child starting refusing to be in the same room for group activities, would often not come to lunch or eat, and exhibited low social skills. I called up his previous provider and learned that he had been let go because the parents refused to parter with the daycare and give the child set limits and did not want to have him evaluated with EC Cares and he was exhibiting concerning behavior. I too, had noted when we were dancing, he would not join the others and instead wanted take down all the CD's, everything on the tables and run into the other room. When I would try to engage him in any activity he had little interest or focus. His aunt picked him up one day and his sister was with her. She was severely autistic and in a wheelchair. I realized this child needed more help that I could provide and made calls about trying to get him evaluated so I could have help from Exclusive Care, but soon realized it could take months and I would need parent consent. I attempted to conference with the family and they did not think there son had any issues out of the normal. I explained that I did not have help in the afternoon and that I did not have the resources to work with him so I wanted to give them a two week notice before the end of our 30 day trial for them to find another childcare before September. The family left, but the dad opened up a Facebook Page in the name of my business and bad mouthed me repeatedly and continued to do the same on Yelp, Google Plus making up stories about me. One of my parents was an attorney and she agreed to write a letter threatening to take him to court and sue for slander if he did not retract his statements. I would not be in business today if I had not been allowed to expel his because he was not a fit during our 30 day contractual trial period.

On another occasion, I enrolled a parent on EDRC, three months into my program she hit a child with a bathroom stool splitting his lip open. I expelled her immediately. I needed to be able to protect the other children in my care. This child's mom had a new live-in boyfriend and the child started to have anger management issues I could not control. Had I not been allowed to terminate her I would not be in business. It shook me to the core so much that I withdrew from taking EDRC and DHS children. I have prospered the services I provide a private pay provider. It was scary at first to not have children funneled to me through the system, but I realized that parents have the right to have a choice and have private pay providers, some expulsions are necessary.