

Submitter: Andrea Metheney
On Behalf Of: Herlin Alvarez
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5514

My name is Herlin Alvarez. I run a certified child care and am in the process of opening a second location in Marion County. Right now is when providers like myself need help the most.

I have been working in the area of early childhood education for almost 7 years. Throughout that time I have faced many structural barriers that have made it difficult to keep going. When I did child care in a less professional way (un-certified) it was a little easier because I worked alone – but I could only serve a few children. I changed my license to a certified license, and decided to move to a bigger place so I could serve more families. But this is becoming more difficult for us than I expected. One of the main reasons is that I haven't been able to find staff.

We have a huge shortage of child care providers. I think it is due to many things. For example, lack of good financial compensation, a lot of pressure but lack of support from the agencies that regulate homes and centers, lack of adequate staff, lack of financial and educational support for those who want to start, and the list goes on. My child care serves Spanish-speaking families, but there are even fewer Spanish-speaking people for me to hire. This has truly become a crisis, especially for families that need care that is in their home language and that is culturally appropriate for their children.

That's why I am urging you to invest an additional \$500 million dollars in the Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) program. This critical funding will help address the systemic issues plaguing our child care system, including the lack of availability and affordability of high-quality child care options.

We have a responsibility to take care that future citizens are in a safe place and that we meet all their needs. But right now it is a very difficult business to work in. I have spoken with other providers who prefer to work alone so as not to have so many expenses and challenges, but that way they cannot provide services to very many children.

Families need access to affordable quality child care so they can be financially secure and thrive. My dream is to open several places in the future, for all the needs that there are. But I can't do this without investment from the state. Child care is critically important and it needs your support. Please support providers like myself and fund child care this legislative session. If you need to use state savings funding

to do it, know that we support you!

Thank you.

Herlin Alvarez

Mi nombre es Herlin Alvarez. Yo dirijo un centro de cuidado infantil certificado y estoy en el proceso de abrir una segunda ubicación en el condado de Marion. Ahora es cuando proveedores como yo necesitamos ayuda más que nunca.

He estado trabajando en el área de educación infantil temprana durante casi 7 años. Durante ese tiempo, he enfrentado muchas barreras estructurales que han hecho difícil seguir adelante. Cuando hice cuidado infantil de manera no profesional (sin certificación), era un poco más fácil porque trabajaba sola, pero solo podía atender a unos pocos niños. Cambié mi licencia a una licencia certificada y decidí mudarme a un lugar más grande para poder servir a más familias. Pero esto se está volviendo más difícil de lo que esperaba. Una de las razones principales es que no he podido encontrar personal.

Tenemos una gran escasez de proveedores de cuidado infantil. Creo que es debido a muchas cosas. Por ejemplo, falta de compensación financiera adecuada, mucha presión pero falta de apoyo de las agencias que regulan los hogares y centros, falta de personal adecuado, falta de apoyo financiero y educativo para aquellos que quieren empezar, y la lista sigue. Mi centro de cuidado infantil atiende a familias hispanohablantes, pero hay aún menos personas hispanohablantes para contratar. Esto se ha convertido en una crisis, especialmente para las familias que necesitan atención en su idioma nativo y que es culturalmente apropiada para sus hijos.