

Submitter: Dusty Stroud
On Behalf Of: CACFP
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5515

Co-Chairs Ruiz and Sollman, and members of the committee,

My name is Dusty Stroud, and I am the director and lead teacher of an in-home daycare and preschool in Redmond, Oregon. I have been in this role for about 4 years and have been enrolled in the Child and Adult Care Food Program for 3.5 years.

In my Preschool Promise Program, I currently serve lower-income families. Initially, I served about 8 children daily, including both private pay and state pay families. I took it upon myself to provide these wonderful and bright children with a variety of healthier meal options, rather than the traditional string cheese and goldfish. I have seen children show up daily having been fed sugary doughnuts or goldfish for breakfast. For working families, or just due to the general cost of food, it is hard to maintain a healthier diet for their children.

Children struggle to maintain focus and a positive, energized state of mind when they crash after an hour of being at school or daycare playing. They have meltdowns, are tired, and their tummy hurts from the sugars and empty nutrients being fed to them daily. I serve children with ADHD and children on the spectrum who struggle the most with a "junk food diet," making it difficult for them to be happy, focused, or playful.

Families are so pleased and can come together with providers when they see their children thriving, learning, and in a better mood, knowing they are being fed a variety of healthier food choices. With that, comes a bill though. Take for example the price for Costco eggs. Over here, prices for eggs, milk, and essentials have skyrocketed even more. I am in the tier 1 reimbursement, which means I receive a few cents more per meal because I serve lower-income families, but we are talking cents to the dollar for healthier foods, and that cost of healthier foods for children adds up daily. An example would be I serve 4 kids in that month with a reimbursement of \$157, and with the actual amount spent in the same month I spent about \$300. And that is essentially coming out of my personal finances because I care so much for the well-being of these children and don't think twice about it because I am a parent also to a child with ADHD.

Additionally, when the KIDKARE system, where we enter our sign-in/out times and meal information, doesn't work because of lost internet or other interruptions, we lose those reimbursements for the day. That adds up. These funds are crucial in a

provider's budget to help support the families and the meals we feed these young children. These funds go directly back into supporting this cause.

CACFP funds are crucial to support the families and meals we provide. If we are not supported, how can we truly support these children in learning at a young age and expect them to have the right mindset and happy hearts to learn and grow?

Please increase the Child and Adult Care Food Program reimbursement to support these children, their families, and us as their caregivers. Thank you.