



Prime Time Children's & Youth Activity Center 8816 Donald's Way, Owings, MD 20736 301-855-2221

February 12, 2024

I would like to offer my letter of support for House Bill 500. Increasing the hours served in a child care program from 10 to 20 hours for a determined time period. I have had 11 staff be a part of the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund and receive their degrees in early childhood education or elementary education. The 10 hours a week they have had to work for us have been done at 6 am or 4 pm when those are times of supervision and not necessarily teaching or working with the children and their colleagues. As well as a few weeks in the summer to average out to 10 hours a week so that they get in their 520 hours of commitment. That simply does not help us out the way we expected it to.

What is equally challenging is how they are solicited by the public school system to join them even a year before they graduate as a probationary teacher until they complete college and pass their Praxis Test. This gives us a year of them working for the public school, then coming to work for us for 2 hours a day, then going to school at night. Who do you think suffers from physically and mentally exhausted employees - we do, as do our children. Generally, those 2 hours a day are spent sitting in a chair or leaning on a piece of play equipment and not interacting as they once did with the children. This is not part of the bill, but having them give us more hours of paid time to re-pay their commitment would help immensely *once their degree is earned*, and they can schedule their time around their schedule and ours.

I used to hire people who were college-bound, especially in the field of education, but now look at it as an impending inconvenience with only 2 hours a day for 2 to 4 years of employment. That is sad, even in these times of staffing shortages. So please pass Bill 500 and keep the years of commitment a year for a year and 20 hours a week so we can have them help us with the children using the skills and education they have received, and not merely early morning or late afternoon supervision, but here to work when the children are engaged in activities that they can help with. The children will benefit, and the parents and families will know that their children are getting the high-quality early childhood education we offer from all of our staff.

This is a wonderful program and opportunity to increase the workforce in education of all ages, but it really needs to have some consideration in students earning it and sharing their knowledge with both public and private programs for the benefit of everyone involved.

Respectfully,


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Owner/Director

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