

Debra Thompson

From: Sharlay Mamoe <sharlaym@pccen.org>
Sent: Thursday, December 15, 2022 7:06 PM
To: Assembly
Subject: Testimony for Early Childhood Education Incentive Program

Hello,

My name is Sharlay Mamoe. I am the Executive Director of the Petersburg Children's Center; we are facility that cares for infants as young as six weeks to school age children who are typically 10 to 11 years old. We provide a preschool curriculum to 3 to 5 year olds and are open for most of the school and calendar year only closing for very specific holidays or in service type closures.

This education incentive program is an exciting endeavor for me as an administrative provider for this profession. We have quite a few caregivers/teachers who are currently working on getting their Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) to improve their commitment to the children and families they work with. The CDA is a commitment made by the individual and not a requirement for the facility we work at.

My staff, although they perform a very important duty every weekday they come to work, make very little in comparison to what others in different fields of work are making. At the Petersburg Children's Center the starting wage is \$13, with the only benefit being paid time off that is given after 6 months of working with us. Childcare, as is many other caregiving types of professions, is very demanding, exhausting and often stressful. Our teachers are often working on weekends, staying up all night thinking of ways to better help a child in need, and often feel guilty when they are away and need to take time for themselves. There have been many people who have worked at the Petersburg Children's Center who have said they love to work with children, and they would love to do it for their career; however it just does not make ends meet, and they need to be able to make a livable wage.

When I had to pull my daughter out of Petersburg Children's Center, for personal medical reasons, they did not have any room to readmit her until the expansion opened up. For three months I had to pay for a private high school student to babysit her while I was at work. I would come home to my baby girl just wearing a diaper, tv on Disney channel and the babysitter sitting on the couch with a phone in her hand. I was paying the babysitter the same amount, \$10 an hour, that the staff at the Petersburg Children's Center were making at the time. The difference between what I was paying for from my private babysitter and the care I was paying for from the center was astronomical. I always wondered if she ate, if she got any socialization, if she only watched tv all day, etc. etc. At Petersburg Children's Center I know the children are fed breakfast, lunch, and snacks; they go outside, teachers read to them, they learn their alphabet, numbers, shapes, get potty trained, etc.

I would like to close this testimony to say the teachers that work in the early childhood education field are doing the second most important job of a child's life. Their parents are the most important, however the caregiver/teacher that interacts with children for upwards of 9 hours a day is extremely important. Caregivers/teachers are often underappreciated and underpaid. This is not just the problem of the private sector, it has a multitude of different factors and requires a creative and inclusive approach from many different organizations and I hope we get the support from you all on the Petersburg Borough Assembly.

If you would like more information about anything, or have any questions for me please feel free to contact me via email. Thank you so much for considering investing in Petersburg's early childhood educators; in my opinion it is a valuable investment. Thank you!

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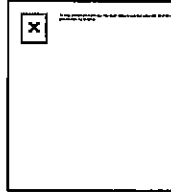
Thank you!!!

Sharlay Mamoe
Executive Director

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