



Children's FRIEND

Making a difference...
one child at a time.



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May 18, 2023

Chairman Louis DiPalma
Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: In support of Senator DiMario's bill, S377

Dear Chairman DiPalma and members of the Committee

We write in strong support of Senator DiMario's bill to provide child care for child care educators.

For 189 years, Children's Friend has worked to advance the well-being and healthy development of Rhode Island's youngest and most vulnerable children. Today, alongside our permanency, home visiting and nutrition services, we provide high quality child care to hundreds of families at our 13 licensed early childhood centers across Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls, which have earned 3, 4, or 5 stars on the BrightStars Quality Rating System.

Children's Friend continues to face a significant staffing crisis and we find ourselves unable to keep all our classrooms open due to our inability to staff those classrooms adequately. This is not about the need or interest of families – we have waitlists – especially for our infant/toddler classrooms. These classrooms are closed because we do not have enough staff.

This bill would help address this staffing crisis by allowing staff to access the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) program regardless of income. We think this could be a big incentive to hiring and retaining staff – perhaps even encouraging some staff who have left the early learning workforce to return. We applaud this innovative idea and hope you will pass it as part of a package of legislation that includes reimbursement rate increases that will help shore up the early learning system across the board.

Thank you for your time and review of this testimony and for your continued efforts to support the children who are the future of our State. If you have further questions or need any additional information, please contact me at dcaprio@cfsri.org.

Sincerely,

David Caprio
President and CEO