

**NEVADA STATE DIVISION OF WELFARE & SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PUBLIC
HEARING TO OBTAIN COMMENT AND INPUT FROM INTERESTED PERSONS ON
THE CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FY 2016-2018 STATE PLAN**

The public hearing to obtain comment and input from interested persons on the Child Care and Development Program FY 2016-2017 State Plan was brought to order by Nova Murray, Deputy Administrator, on behalf of the Administrator of the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 17th, 2016. This meeting was video-conferenced between the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Professional Development Center, 701 N. Rancho Drive, Training Room 5, Las Vegas, Nevada and Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Central Office, 1470 College Parkway, Room 149, Carson City, Nevada.

STAFF PRESENT:

Nova Murray, Deputy Administrator
Miki Allard, Staff Specialist
Jack Zenteno, Chief, Child Care and Development Program
Pandora Lewis, Social Services Program Specialist, Child Care and Development Program

STAFF PRESENT IN THE SOUTH

GUESTS PRESENT:

North

Chelsea Sliter, The Children's Cabinet
Maria Mendoza, The Children's Cabinet
Marty Elquist, The Children's Cabinet
Cindy Johnson, Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development

South

Patti Oya, Nevada Department of Education	Noah Russell, Kids First
Laura Martin, Associate Director, PLAN	AJ Buhay, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
Cherie Mancini, President, SEIU	Denise Tanata, Executive Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance
Brian Shepherd, SEIU	Barb Revis, Fiscal Manager, Las Vegas Urban League
Phil Irish, Kids First	Jennifer Butler, Program Manager, Las Vegas Urban League
Lupe Guzman	Jeanine Johnson, QA Manager, Las Vegas Urban League ECC
Camila Galeana	Brooke Manley, Case Manager, Las Vegas FRC West
Jodi Lynn Fennell	Michael Maxwell/Program Director, Las Vegas Urban League
Maxwell Harcourt	Renee Cbus
Kimberly Miller	Jarod DePastene
Sofia Collado	Sandra Cosey
Malachi Collado	Yolanda Florian
Olimpia Ames	Juan Luis Suarez
George Allen	Orlando Barajas
Sheryle Inga	Gloria Madrid
Chrystal Blessing	Cheryl Cho

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Ms. Murray opened the public hearing at 10:30 a.m. and explained how the hearing will proceed. She explained this public hearing was noticed in accordance with the Open Meeting Law and posted on the Division's website. She asked everyone to please sign in and include e-mail addresses to be included on the Division's mailing list.

Mr. Zenteno announced that in November 2014, President Obama signed the Child Care Development Block Grant Act into law. This reauthorizes the program for the first time since 1996 and represents a historic re-envisioning of the CCDF. The new law includes a number of statutory changes including:

- Posting results of child care provider monitoring and inspection reports on a centralized website
- Providing outreach and consumer education
- Providing at least 12 months of eligibility
- Providing priority services for children with disabilities
- Expediting services for homeless families
- Re-implementing a sliding fee scale
- Providing services at 75% of the current market rate
- Providing services based on approved work schedule, rather than actual attendance
- Expanding background checks to non-licensed providers including family members
- Ensuring families do not have assets greater than \$1 million

***I. CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STATE PLAN**

NEED AND PURPOSE OF PROPOSED STATE PLAN:

Federal regulation requires states to submit their Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plans, in their entirety, on a triennial basis for review and approval. In October of 2014 the Child Care and Development Block Grant was reauthorized by Congress first the first time since 1996. As a result, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care has made significant changes to the plan. The plan has been redesigned to reflect the current status of individual states in the implementation of required changes and provide an overview of CCDF program requirements.

New CCDF State Plan sections include:

1. Define CCDF Leadership and Coordination with Relevant Systems: This section provides information on how the CCDF program is administered in Nevada. This includes defining the agency with decision making authority, consultation and coordination with other agencies, partnerships, and disaster preparedness and response activities.
2. Promote Family Engagement through Outreach and Consumer Education: This section provides information about program availability, financial assistance, and consumer and provider education.
3. Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families: this section provides information on eligibility, increasing access, protecting working parents, and family contribution.
4. Ensure Equal Access to High Quality Child Care for Low-Income Children: This section provides information about parental choice in choosing child care, assessing market and reimbursement rates, and building the supply of child care to meet the needs of certain populations.
5. Establish Standards and Monitoring Processes to Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings: This section provides information related to licensing and monitoring of child care centers and providers.
6. Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce: This section provides information related to professional development for early childhood professionals.

7. Support Continuous Quality Improvement: This section provides information on activities to improve the quality of child care services in Nevada.
8. Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability: This section provides information related to the monitoring of program funds.

Mr. Zenteno announced that based on the requirements of the reauthorization the CCDP in Nevada has made considerable changes to the program that are reflected in the draft State Plan. These include:

- 12 month certification periods – MS 166
- Changed max income to 85% SMI (it was 75%) – MS 170
- Added a definition of a homeless household – MS 218.3
- We are allowing the following rules for homeless households:
 - 90 days to provide verification – MS 131
 - Co-payments are waived – MS 164
 - Added a self-sufficiency plan purpose of care – MS 440
- Added language in the manual to encourage case managers to consider all household income over the past year and come up with a better representation of the households annual income rather than only considering a 30 day history which may happen to be high during that period but significantly lower during other parts of the year – MS 300
- Changed our lump sum income policy to disregard the first \$5,000 – MS 306.23
- Added asset limit of \$1,000,000 – MS 320

In addition, program staff are working to implement background checks for non-licensed providers, increase the reimbursement rate, and develop a consumer based website, each of which will be implemented by their respective due dates.

***II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS (All Comments were submitted in writing and are attached)**

Ms. Murray read the written public comment from KinderCare Education as follows:

Jacob Vigil, Government Relations Representative, KinderCare Education – Written comments received prior to this hearing. The following comments and responses were submitted into record:

To Whom It May Concern,

KinderCare Education has been serving children and families for over 40 years through KinderCare Learning Centers, our employer-sponsored Children's Creative Learning Centers (CCLC), and Champions, our programs for before, after-school, and summer learning.

Here in Nevada, we provide care to more than 1,000 children annually in our programs. Many of those children receive assistance under the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG). We are pleased to offer the attached comments on Nevada's draft CCDF plan for 2016-2018.

Comments on Nevada's draft Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Plan

February 16, 2016

KinderCare Education has been serving children and families for over 40 years and is best known for its KinderCare Learning Centers. We also provide high-quality education and care through Children's Creative Learning Centers (CCLC), our employer-sponsored child development centers, and through Champions, our programs for before, after-school, and summer learning. We offer early childhood education and care through approximately 1,500 community-based centers and employer partnerships and approximately 400 before- and after-school academic enrichment programs and summer camps nationwide.

We are honored each day to provide high-quality education and care to over 170,000 children across the United States, ***including more than 1,000 here in Nevada***. Our children range in age from six weeks to 12 years of age. We are committed to serving all children regardless of background and financial circumstance, and we are proud of the diverse group of children we currently serve. Many of our children in Nevada are from low-income working families who receive assistance under the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), and each year in Nevada we serve more than 60,000 meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

The core focus of KinderCare Education is the quality of each child's educational experience. When parents choose our KinderCare centers, in addition to wanting their child to be safe and well-cared for, they also expect their child to receive the highest-quality educational experience possible. To ensure that our children have this strong foundation, our teachers deliver our proprietary developmental curriculum for children from birth through pre-k that covers the essential domains of child development -- language and literacy development, physical development and wellness, social and emotional development, executive function, cognitive development, and creative expression. Additionally, to ensure a seamless transition from our educational program to a child's elementary school curriculum, we have aligned our curriculum with State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics and with early learning standards in the 39 states in which we operate.

To ensure continued quality and improvement in our educational programming, we embrace the opportunity to subject our centers and our programs to outside review. Our goal is that 100 percent of our centers be nationally accredited, and we have achieved this recognition at over 1,300 of our centers, more than any other provider in the United States. We also actively participate in and support state Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). Further, our teachers formally assess each of our children three times annually to help us evaluate the impact of our programs, to inform parents about their child's progress, and to support improved classroom practice. To provide even more robust data, we are committed to working with states to follow the performance of our children as they enter kindergarten.

KinderCare Education is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the draft Nevada CCDF plan for 2016-2018.

Ms. Murray read the section comments:

Section 1

1.3.1 No state agency consultation partners are listed

The CCDF program has become an essential support in local communities to provide access to early care and education in before and after-school settings and to improve the quality of care. The CCDBG reauthorization recognizes the importance of Lead Agencies coordinating and consulting with representatives from the public and private sector, parents, schools, community-based organizations, child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, child welfare, family support, public health, and disability services. These comprehensive services are crucial in helping families progress towards economic stability and in helping parents provide a better future for their young children.

Mr. Zenteno responded that they have been working with the community to ensure everyone has a voice. The information was presented to the Southern Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Committee a few weeks ago and it was also sent to the Statewide Childhood Advisory Committee. Mr. Zenteno asked that the public provide feedback and comments. The due date for the plan has been moved from March 1st to March 11th, so additional time has been given for feedback. He asked that if anyone has questions or concerns to email or call him. He stated that we are working with the Urban League in southern Nevada and the Children's Cabinet in northern Nevada, as well as 20 or 30 contractors so the public can provide comment. These organizations will send those comments to Mr. Zenteno.

1.3.3 KinderCare Education supports the state's current mixed delivery model of early education and care and recommends the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Child Care and Development Program identify more opportunities to engage child care providers – and other early childhood stakeholders – in developing a robust statewide partnership for early childhood.

Mr. Zenteno responded that there have been opportunities to directly interact with child care providers and that this interaction will continue on an ongoing basis, along with the childcare licensing improvement activities. The Division is in full support of continuing those discussions.

1.8.1 KinderCare Education supports Nevada's plan to create a statewide child care disaster plan. We ask the state to include child care providers in discussions with Child Care Licensing and the Nevada Public Health Preparedness program to create policies and guidelines that will work in partnership with existing program procedures that child care providers might already have in place.

Mr. Zenteno responded that a draft disaster plan is in place. The plan is being re-evaluated and the new plan will be in place by September. Information will be out to the community by mid-summer.

Section 2

2.2.9 KinderCare Education strongly urges the state to provide additional detail about the maintenance of records of substantiated parental complaints. We recommend the Department establish a process for substantiating complaints against all child care providers which includes at least one

unannounced on-site monitoring visit, especially in response to a complaint pertaining to the health and safety of children.

Mr. Zenteno responded there is already a process in place for substantiated parental complaints. It is a licensing activity and Mr. Zenteno deferred to Marty Elquist to respond.

Marty Elquist, of the Children's Cabinet, and Chair of the Early Childhood Advisory Council for the state, responded that Washoe County Childcare Licensing has had a substantiated complaint history look up on their website for several years. The State of Nevada Childcare Licensing is making major improvements to their website and the hope is to have substantiated complaint history on their website as well. A placeholder is in has been established and Laticia Brown is working on it; a link will be coming soon.

2.3.1 KinderCare Education supports the state's plan to develop a consumer education website. We recommend the State clarify in the plan whether the information provided will include data for all child care providers, and not just those serving children on child care assistance. All parents should be able to access the consumer information they need to make an informed choice including the definitions, standards and quality of child care providers.

Mr. Zenteno responded that the data are going to be for all childcare providers and the language will be clarified.

Section 3

3.1.4 KinderCare Education strongly recommends the Department identify a clear, specific strategy for meeting the requirement of a graduated phase-out of assistance. The State should identify exit income eligibility, the dollar amount of 85% of state median income (SMI), and the opportunity for a three-month transition period in order to support long-term family economic stability.

In addition, KinderCare Education recommends DHHS clarify that family co-payment amounts will not increase within the minimum 12-month eligibility period. Raising co-payments within the eligibility period would not be consistent with the federal statutory requirement that the child "receive such assistance" for not less than 12 months. Protecting co-payments levels within the eligibility period provides stability for families and reduces administrative burden for the Department.

Mr. Zenteno responded that the CCDP in Nevada has re-implemented the sliding fee scale. As parents go up in income they continue to receive subsidy with a higher copay. The language will be clarified in the plan.

3.1.6 KinderCare Education strongly supports the Department's policy of allowing an average of up to 365 days of income when monthly history does not provide a clear representation of the family's true income.

Mr. Zenteno responded that eligibility is not re-evaluated over the 12 month period. Parents can come in and report that they have had a change in circumstances , but they are not required to do so.

3.3.1 KinderCare Education strongly urges the Department to provide additional detail regarding the minimum 12-month eligibility and redetermination period for CCDF families. The plan indicates that parents are not required to report any temporary changes until eligibility re-determination. This policy is in alignment with a 12-month eligibility policy but does not specifically state that each child

who receives assistance will be considered to meet all eligibility requirements for such assistance and will receive such assistance, for a minimum of 12 months before the state re-determines the eligibility of the child, regardless of changes in income (as long as income does not exceed the federal threshold of 85% of State median income) or temporary changes in participation in work, training, or education activities.

KinderCare Education recommends the State adopt the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' proposed definition of "temporary change" to include, at a minimum: 1) any time-limited absence from work for employed parents for periods of family leave, including parental leave or sick leave; 2) any interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working between regular industry work seasons; 3) any student holiday or break for a parent participating in training or education; 4) any reduction in work, training or education hours, as long as the parent is still working or attending training or education; and 5) any cessation of work or attendance at a training or education program that does not exceed three months or a longer period of time established by the lead agency.

We recommend the Department create a workgroup of CCDF participating providers to help develop the guidelines for a policy on twelve-month eligibility. KinderCare Education operates child care centers in 39 states and has participated in state subsidy programs already operating on 12-month authorization and eligibility as well as states now required to make that policy change; we would like to offer our support in looking at best practices and identifying the unique needs of Nevada's families and providers.

Mr. Zenteno responded that this information will be clarified in the plan. In reference to the workgroup recommendation, Mr. Zenteno stated that this is a good suggestion.

3.4.1 KinderCare Education recommends the Department review the family copay matrix to ensure the maximum copay is set at no more than 7 percent of family income as proposed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Mr. Zenteno responded that the maximum co-pay is approximately 2%, but doesn't include overages.

Section 4

4.3.1 KinderCare Education strongly recommends the state increase child care center subsidy payment rates to meet the federally recommended 75th percentile of the current market rate. The current rates do not promote quality and equal access. A business offering a similar discount on services isn't staying in business long, is covering costs through another program, or is providing an inferior product. Nevada's children deserve access to high quality child care regardless of financial eligibility and high quality child care centers participating in Nevada's Child Care Assistance Program deserve to be paid at least the 75th percentile of the current market rate.

Mr. Zenteno responded that as outlined in the state plan, the intent is to link subsidy provision with Nevada's Quality Rating Improvement System. It is not finalized, but appears that the CCDP will require subsidy providers to be involved in the quality rating improvement system and the reimbursement rates will be based on their star level in that system. The Children's Advocacy Alliance is doing an analysis to determine what it actually costs for the provider to provide high quality services and this will be the basis for reimbursement rates. Something will be in place by the federal deadline of October 1st.

4.3.2 KinderCare Education commends the State for implementing tiered payments for programs meeting higher quality. We strongly urge the Department to explore implementing additional tiered

rates to target resources to providers serving infants and toddlers to support increased costs in lower child to adult ratios, staff qualifications, and specialized equipment.

Mr. Zenteno responded that he will work with KinderCare to look at the potential to adjust rates. He deferred to Marty Elquist who responded that there is no national standard. Marty deferred to Patti Oya, who agreed that she was not aware of a national standard. Every state does things a little differently.

4.4.2 KinderCare Education is encouraged by the Department's plan to increase rates for high quality child care providers. While this increase would be a positive first step to raising quality, the state's base rates for center care do not promote equal access. A business offering a similar discount on services isn't staying in business long, is covering costs through another program, or is providing an inferior product.

As stated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "establishing base rates at these levels (75th percentile of the most recent MRS) is important to ensure that providers have the resources they need to meet minimum requirements and that providers are not discouraged from serving CCDF children. With subsidy payments higher than the aforementioned base rate, providers can exceed the minimum requirements of health and safety and quality. In doing so, more providers will be able to serve CCDF-assisted children and more quality providers may decide to participate in the subsidy system – giving parents more choices for their children's care.

KinderCare Education strongly recommends the Department secure additional resources to provide equal access and we would support any funding request to meet this requirement.

Mr. Zenteno responded that we are already looking at linking funding levels to QRIS which will drive quality improvement in the state.

4.5.2 KinderCare Education supports the Department's policy on absences, allowing 21 discretionary days per calendar year for eligible children to be absent and for providers to be reimbursed for those days. This policy better supports the fixed costs of providing child care services by delinking provider payments from a child's occasional absence.

Mr. Zenteno responded that the department has already moved from attendance to payment based on a set schedule. Parents are already being reimbursed for absent days, allowing flexibility.

Chelsea Sliter of the Children's Cabinet also responded that the 21 discretionary day policy is still used in some instances but the policy is mainly based on a set schedule.

Section 5

5.1.2 KinderCare Education strongly recommends Nevada require all child care providers to be licensed, complete initial and ongoing training, submit to all background check requirements, including the sex offender registry, and receive annual unannounced inspections to help ensure the safety of all children, including Family, Friend and Neighbor Care.

Investment of state and federal funds should be made in safe, quality early childhood programs that deliver educational outcomes. Public funds for early childhood programs should only be available in settings that are state licensed and inspected on at least an annual basis. The critical importance of licensing in child care settings is highlighted by the dangers and risks that often characterize unlicensed child care. Children in unlicensed or license-exempt settings are frequently at a higher risk of being cared for in unsafe conditions and/or with providers who have not been

trained or certified in child safety procedures. The potential price of such risk –injury or death of a child—is unacceptable. All Nevada children deserve access to child care options that meet the standards of health and safety that licensing provides.

Mr. Zenteno responded that the department currently uses Child Care Resource and Referral staff to conduct inspections and will be expanding that resource pool. Implementation will occur before the federal deadline.

5.1.3 KinderCare Education strongly supports the Department’s plan to develop child care standards for group size for providers receiving CCDF that are currently exempt from regulation, and recommend these group size requirements be extended to all child care providers, and not just those serving children receiving Child Care Assistance. We urge the State to create one standard for all child care providers; studies of high quality early childhood programs found that group size and ratios mattered to the safety and the quality of children’s experiences, as well as to children’s health.

Mr. Zenteno responded that childcare licensing workgroups are meeting to discuss the current regulations and revise them and bring them up to date and address the requirements of the federal reauthorization. This is anticipated to be done by springtime, at which time they will come back and readdress the regulations and determine whether or not it will go into the statewide childcare license regulations.

5.2.2 KinderCare Education strongly urges the Department to work with providers and stakeholders in the timely development and implementation of policies and practices regarding inspections for license-exempt CCDF providers. We strongly urge the Department to recognize the critical importance of ensuring child safety with annual, unannounced inspections, as required by federal law.

KinderCare Education recommends the Department provide more information on the current and targeted ratio of licensors to programs and consider the recommendation of the National Association of Regulatory Administration not to exceed 1:60. We urge the Department to formalize the practice of allowing “manageable caseloads.”

Mr. Zenteno responded that the policies and practices regarding inspections for license-exempt providers is in process. Regarding the ratio of licensors to programs, Mr. Zenteno responded that he will follow up with the childcare licensing staff.

Section 7

7.2.1 KinderCare Education strongly supports voluntary participation in Nevada Silver State Stars. We commend Nevada for recognizing research-informed accrediting bodies as indicators of quality care and education. We strongly support the financial incentives for higher ratings and encourage the state to identify additional resources to assist programs in achieving the highest levels of quality.

KinderCare urges the state to strengthen its current mixed delivery model of early education and care. Current and future investments in early education and care should leverage the state’s mixed delivery model and promote parent choice among an array of high-quality providers.

It also leverages the need for continuous improvement necessary to remain competitive for the benefit of all children. Further, this mixed delivery system meets the needs of working families’ schedules, be they full-day, half-day, before-school, after-school, year-round, or summer only. The

allowance for full day, year-round education is particularly important for children of low income families as it provides for greater consistency and better outcomes.

Finally, it is critical that Nevada's investments in early childhood education and care support children as they develop along the continuum from birth to age 5. The importance of infant and toddler programs should not be overlooked with the attention on four- year olds and pre-k. Seventy percent of brain development occurs during these first three years. Ensuring that pre-k children are served in community settings is essential to maintaining quality and affordable care for infants, toddlers, twos, and three-year olds.

KinderCare Education is proud to provide high-quality care in Nevada and appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on the draft CCDF plan. We are encouraged by the State's ensuring all children have access to affordable, high-quality child care. If we can be of further assistance in the development or implementation of this plan, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you.

Mr. Zenteno responded that the department is working with the Childrens Advocacy Alliance to review the true cost of quality calculator to make sure that when we implement the Quality Rating Improvement System for subsidy providers it will provide an incentive for increasing quality. It will remain voluntary for providers at large in the state but will likely become mandatory for subsidy providers.

KinderCare Education LLC
Jacob Vigil, Government Relations Representative
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Ms. Murray asked if there was any public comment in the north.

There was none.

Hearing No Comments, Ms. Murray asked if there were any public comments in the south.

The following is public comment from the south that was also submitted in writing:

Comment #1

Mary Cervantes
Child Care Fight For 15
CCDBG 2/17/16 Testimony

My name is Mary Cervantes. I am a single mother to a 4 year old son named Dominic. I had to leave an abusive relationship in California which resulted in my losing my job and living homeless for a period of time before I could get back on my feet, working in childcare in Las Vegas.

My son has struggled with autism spectrum that included a period of time in which he was banging his head against walls so violently that he would bleed from his nose and face. As a result of his special needs, I have to be extremely careful about where my son receives care and education.

I am currently working at an Early Childhood Education center where my son can attend part of the day with me in classes. I receive public assistance but often, I go without eating so that my son can eat. We qualified for food stamps. But, we only receive \$16 a month to pay for food for two people. So my son eats cereal regularly and I go without. It shouldn't be this way. I currently work 25 hours a week so that I can also give my son the special needs care he requires. My son has food allergies and requires rice milk and special nutrition. \$16 a month does not even begin to help me with this.

At this time, I am hired to work as a cook in the childcare center. But, I am actually working as an administrative assistant, classroom supervisor, teacher and delivery receiving at the childcare center.

I am making just over minimum wage and we have to walk to where we are going most of the time, because we cannot even afford bus fare.

Childcare costs parents almost \$200 a week. We are one of the richest countries in the world. There is no reason why childcare teachers should be paid poverty wages. With my job, we cannot even afford food and basic bills without public assistance. I definitely cannot afford any additional child care education for Dominic.

I have thought of taking a night job. But, there is no one to take care of my son and if I do this, my son will have no mother around to help him develop into a healthy, well-adjusted young man. I will see him only in passing and his special needs will get worse, not better. This cycle of poverty and lack of support for working families and children must change now.

Obviously, the childcare system is broken. Childcare for children of infant ages to 4 years old are not babysitters. They are Early Childhood Educators who establish the foundation for a child's entire educational future. In order to correct this child care crisis:

- #1. We must establish a wage board** to get feedback on child care worker wages from teachers and parents in child care. **We must raise wages to at least \$15 an hour to break these cycles of poverty and increase citizen self-sufficiency through wages that can actually pay bills in today's world.** *Raising the minimum wage and ensuring the right to a union is the path to protect and empower child educators.*
- #2. There must be a \$15 / hour minimum wage figured into each and every subsidy granted** by the government so that subsidy payments are held accountable for the realistic wages and costs of child care.
- #3. There must be a dramatic increase in federal and state funding to create quality, affordable child care for all so that working families receive the support they need** to be employed while their children gain the essential early childhood education that is the foundation for the future workers of our society.

We want a successful Nevada and United States of America. **To be successful, we must make working mothers and children successful.**

Women should not be pressured to stay in abusive relationships to avoid homelessness and poverty. Yet with poverty wages and lack of childcare support, it appears as if women are discriminated against and punished for doing the right thing by working to support and protect their children. We must act to strengthen our working families now without discrimination or delay.

Comment #2

Sofia Collado
Child Care Fight For 15
CCDBG 2/17/16 Testimony

My name is Sofia Collado. I am a single mother to two young boys ages 2 and 6 years old. My sons and I just fled a domestic violence situation in Florida. I was married to an abusive man and now we must

struggle through welfare and low wage work to support our family with me as the sole provider and caretaker of my children.

I am applying for cashier work in Las Vegas and staying positive about my difficult situation because I must make a good life for my boys. I don't know how I will go to work to provide for my boys when the childcare subsidy program does not come close to covering full cost of early childhood education. I know childcare in Las Vegas costs about \$200 a week. I will be struggling to pay rent and put food on the table for my boys. Housing, childcare and employment are the three things I need to be a good provider, mother, and community member. I want to be able to be a productive, positive member of my community. I need to know my children are housed, fed, safe and receiving proper education in order to do this.

Based on the reality of low wage jobs and high childcare costs, it is clear that the economy and early education/childcare system is broken. Childcare teachers for children of infant ages to 4 years old are not babysitters. They are Early Childhood Educators who establish the foundation for a child's entire educational future. In order to correct this Child Care crisis:

- #1. We must establish a wage board** to get feedback on child care worker wages from teachers and parents in child care. **We must raise wages to at least \$15 an hour to break these cycles of poverty and increase citizen self-sufficiency through wages that can actually pay bills in today's world.** Raising the minimum wage and ensuring the right to a union is the path to protect and empower child educators.
- #2. There must be a \$15 / hour minimum wage figured into each and every subsidy granted** by the government so that subsidy payments are held accountable for the realistic wages and costs of child care.
- #3. There must be a dramatic increase in federal and state funding to create quality, affordable child care for all so that working families receive the support they need** to be employed while their children gain the essential early childhood education that is the foundation for the future workers of our society.

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Women should not be pressured to stay in abusive relationships to avoid homelessness and poverty. Yet with poverty wages and lack of childcare support, it appears as if women are discriminated against and punished for doing the right thing by working to support and protect their children. We must act to strengthen our working families now without discrimination or delay.

Comment #3

Jarod DePastene
Child Care Fight For 15
CCDBG 2/17/16 Testimony

"I am a disabled veteran and a single dad with two daughters who are no longer in my custody. In 2010, I had begun transitioning out of active duty military service. I was a full-time student, and drilling with a National Guard unit. During this time, I had also been in the process of getting divorced. Raising kids on your own is hard enough, but also having to focus on school, as well as the stress of returning to the civilian life after 6 years in the Army? Now that was a challenge. Finding adequate child care was the most challenging part. As a single father, I didn't qualify for programs that normally help single mothers, and normal daycare was far too expensive for me at the time. If I couldn't find a trustworthy babysitter, I had to bring my daughters to school with me. Of course, that wasn't an option at all on drill weekends. For

that, I routinely had to rely on the wives and girlfriends of my squadmates to watch my children.

With no help in sight, the stress levels increased until I made a careless mistake and ended up spending a few days in the hospital. With no one willing or able to care for my children, they were removed from my custody and placed in foster care. I am still fighting the state to this day, to get custody of my daughters back. Were there affordable options for me and my girls, I'm sure the end of this story would be quite different.

To be completely honest, a \$15 an hour minimum wage isn't enough, but it's at least a start. And with how much of our tax dollars go towards so-called "corporate welfare", I'm sure we can find the time and funds to redirect some of those subsidies to quality, affordable Childcare for all families and to pay these Early Childhood Educators a living wage."

Obviously, the childcare system is broken. Childcare for children of infant ages to 4 years old are not babysitters. They are Early Childhood Educators who establish the foundation for a child's entire educational future. In order to correct this Child Care crisis:

- #1. We must establish a wage board** to get feedback on child care worker wages from teachers and parents in child care. **We must raise wages to at least \$15 an hour to break these cycles of poverty and increase citizen self-sufficiency through wages that can actually pay bills in today's world.** *Raising the minimum wage and ensuring the right to a union is the path to protect and empower child educators.*
- #2. There must be a \$15 / hour minimum wage figured into each and every subsidy granted** by the government so that subsidy payments are held accountable for the realistic wages and costs of child care.
- #3. There must be a dramatic increase in federal and state funding to create quality, affordable child care for all so that working families receive the support they need** to be employed while their children gain the essential early childhood education that is the foundation for the future workers of our society.

We want a successful Nevada and United States of America. **To be successful, we must make working families and children successful and a family in the United States should be respected no matter what that family looks like. This includes respecting single father families. I put my life on the line to serve my country so that all people are given life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Yet, I was discriminated against for being a single father and disabled veteran.**

When this country does not even respect the servicemen and children of the society, there is something critically wrong.

I am disappointed and I demand change, for families of all shapes and kinds and for the children we love.

Comment #4

Camila Galeana
Child Care Fight For 15
CCDBG 2/17/16 Testimony

Good morning, my name is Camila Galeana, and I'm a mother to a beautiful and bright little girl named Aerynne. I know the importance of early childhood education and how critical it is to a child's social and educational development. My mom signed me up for a home health nurse program when I was first

pregnant that teaches mothers early infant and toddler care. The nurse emphasized the importance of early childhood education as the building blocks for all future education to come.

My husband and I have been living with our families our whole lives so far, because he makes meager starvation wages at nine dollars an hour as a full-time security guard, and I currently struggle to find employment. My last job was a low-wage job under the table, because that was all I could find, but I had to put food on the table for my baby girl. I was making a pitiful six dollars an hour and sometimes my boss didn't even fully pay me what I was owed.

I don't want to feel like a weight pulling down my family, I want to work, but I need quality, affordable childcare to be able to go back to work and support my family. I had already looked into places like Children's Learning Adventure and it was \$800 per month for my daughter.

We can't even afford rent and food as it is! Families shouldn't have to choose between shelter, food, or education.

I know childcare workers are making the same starvation wages my husband and I have made, so obviously this system is broken. In order to fix the broken childcare system, there must be a childcare wage board to ensure stability in the early childcare educators that will be teaching our children.

The wage board should be comprised of workers and parents cooperating. We need to include the \$15 minimum wage in the payment rates coming from government funding.

Across the board we need a dramatic increase in federal and state funding for early childhood education so parents like my husband and I can have access to quality, affordable childcare. We are a hardworking family with great values. My husband and I both have struggling dental assistant single mothers who can barely make ends meet and now they find themselves supporting us as well. This multi-generational poverty has got to stop. We are one of the richest nations on Earth. We have the funds to drop bombs and bail out criminal banks. It's time we start investing in our future, the children, instead. We are in a crisis, and change needs to happen now. We the people demand a solution. Now.

Comment #5.

Sheri Johnson
Child Care Fight For 15
CCDBG 2/17/16 Testimony

Good morning. My name is Sheri Johnson.

I am a wife, a mother, a grandmother and a former child care director and teacher of 7 years.

I am speaking on behalf of the needs of many children and working families, when I say that the child care system is broken and failing children and families.

Currently, my daughter and 2 grandchildren are living with me.

My daughter, Briana, is a single mother to a 4 month old girl and a 2 year old boy. My daughter works at Carl's Jr. 30 hours a week making \$8.75 an hour and she cannot afford child care, rent, food or her other bills. While working, my daughter is going to school to earn her Nursing Assistant License.

The government granted my daughter what they said was a **100% subsidy** to cover child care expense. I called at least 6 centers in Las Vegas and every center told me that this so called 100% subsidy would still require me to pay out of pocket \$640 a month. So in helping my daughter overcome a broken child care system and poverty wages, I have to give up my retirement and give all my energy towards saving my daughter from an economic system wired to fail.

Where are all of our tax dollars going if they are not going to support our children and single mothers working and seeking education? Between poverty wages and lack of federal and state funding to child care, working families are suffocating. This has to change.

When I worked in child care for 7 years, I was running my own center out of my home. Government subsidies did not cover expenses and parents could not afford to pay any more. I often took deficits around \$5,000 a year as a result of the insufficient subsidies by federal and state funds. All the money my daughter makes at Carl's Jr. working 30 hours a week, goes to pay for the \$640 a month child care expense.

What would happen to her if I were not around to help her?

I stand with the child care directors, owners, teachers, parents and children when I demand dramatic increase in funding for Early Childhood Education.

To solve these complex problems, we have come together and decided that these first 3 solutions are the best place to start in reforming childcare.

#1. We must establish a wage board to get feedback on child care worker wages from teachers, parents and other people on the front lines of child care. **We must raise wages to at least \$15 an hour to break these cycles of poverty and increase individual self-sufficiency through wages that can actually pay bills in today's world.** Raising the minimum wage and ensuring the right to a union is the path to protect and empower workers.

#2. There must be a \$15 / hour minimum wage figured into each and every subsidy granted so that subsidy payments are held accountable for the realistic wages and costs of child care. **This math must be forthright and held to strict accountability standards.**

#3. We must all advocate for a dramatic increase in federal and state funding for child care so that working families receive the support they need to be employed while their children gain the essential early childhood education that is the foundation for the future workers of our society.

We want a successful Nevada and United States of America. **To be successful, we must make working families and children successful. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. Shouldn't our educational and economic plans reflect the value of the children who are our future?**

I congratulate you all in advance, for supporting the victory for positive, responsible child care reform.

Comment #6

James Barker
Child Care Fight For 15
CCDBG Testimony 2/17/16

My name is James Barker. I am a Native Nevadan, a grandfather, and have taught secondary science for twenty years, here in Nevada. When I was working on my Masters Degree in Education, Secondary Curriculum and Instruction, I read several peer reviewed research studies that indicated that one of the best indicators that a student will have success in college is if the student was enrolled in several years of preschool in a recognized institution. Preschool helps students succeed in school, kindergarten through college.

I have always made sure that my children and grandchildren attended a curriculum based preschool for multiple years before kindergarten. My wife, Pamela, is also a teacher and together we have the expertise to determine what institutions are providing more than just babysitting services. Our world is getting progressively more competitive and having an educated worker means not just a high school diploma but a college degree. Insuring that our students perform well in school through college is a national imperative and preschool, for all our students, is strongly correlated to that objective.

Preschool education should be instituted for at least two years with funding by state and federal governments. Preschool teachers should be trained, certified, and paid a livable wage of at least fifteen dollars per hour. A state board that oversees childcare workers; training, certification, curriculum, instruction, and wages should be established. The American family no longer can survive on a single parent's salary and subsidizing childcare for two parents that work is advisable. This board could make determinations as to the financial needs families have for this type of subsidy.

Nevada has one of the least effective educational systems in the country and this investment in pre-kindergarten education would be one of the best investments our state could make to remedy our poor performance in education. I worry about the future of Nevada. I worry about the welfare of my grandchildren and would be willing to pay more taxes to improve their chances of success in this manner. All of society gains when each of its members is given the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Sincerely,
James L. Barker

Comment #7

Jennifer Carner Testimony:

My name is Jennifer Carner, and I have 20 years of child care experience. Last summer, I started working at the University of Las Vegas's Early Childhood Development Center here in Las Vegas teaching their STM program (Science, Technology & Mathematics); and I was hired in at \$10.00 per hour much lower than my expected rate. However, 30 days later, my pay wage was lowered to \$8.25. When I asked why? I was told, "Because you're not enrolled in the work study program." In fact, I was enrolled as a current student.

Furthermore, I worked 9 weeks at the school, and never received a pay check at the \$10.00 or \$8.25 rate until I threatened to report them to the Labor Board, and a lawyer. During my research, I learned that this was their regular practice; many of the workers who are also UNLV students didn't earn the wages that they were hired at, or spent months not getting paid, because there was a pay roll problem. A large percentage of the teachers hold associates, bachelors, and master degrees or are in the process of receiving one or combination. Indeed, many could not afford to put their own children in that child care

center, because they didn't make enough money, and they worked full-time. Unfortunately many of them are having problems paying their own bills. Yet, we are responsible for purchasing a sheriff card which cost \$80.00, take a CPR Class cost \$30.00, SIDS Class cost \$30.00, and take other classes that must be paid-in-full prior to our start work. Thousands of child care workers across the country are experiencing these problems.

I need to make a living wage, other child care workers in this country need \$15.00 an hour, as well as having the opportunity for quality child care offered at an affordable rate. When my oldest daughter was little, and we lived in California my job allotted me a child care subsidy which helped a lot; however, when we moved to Buffalo, New York my job did not offer any child care subsidies. So we were right back where we started trying to find quality, affordable child care. Next, we relocate to Las Vegas, and experience the same things. My husband, and I had no luck, so we decided to continue working split schedules; when I'm working, and going to school during the day he's at home with the girls, and he worked nights. This has been extremely hard on our family, but we've had no choice. Hundreds of thousands of families across this country are struggling to make ends meet, need quality affordable child care, and they need it now.

CCDBG Demands: What We Want!

1. **Establish a Child Care Wage Board**-To Get Feedback on Child Care Worker Wages from Workers & Other Stakeholders in order to Raise Wages for Child Care Workers.
2. **Include a \$15/hour Minimum Wage for Child Care Workers in Payment Rates for Child Care Services.**
3. **Advocate for More Federal & State Funding for Child Care**-So More Families can get Quality Affordable Care.

Comment #8

Kim Miller-Parent Testimonial

My name is Kim Miller and I'm a single mother who is deaf. I have 3 kids, they are grown now but when they were little I struggled to provide for them every day. When I lived in Illinois, with my family they helped me care for my two youngest while I worked. It was fine at first but with my low wages and inconsistent work hours it became harder and harder to ask them for help. Juggling everything became so difficult that it was tearing my family apart. Things became so bad that I had to give both my kids up for adoption. It broke my heart that I couldn't give my kids what they needed to succeed and I thought that an adopted family would be able to provide them with the things I could not. I didn't want them to see me struggle like my mom did raising 3 kids on her own. I continued to keep in touch with them and remind them, as any mother would that I love them but my family still felt incomplete without them. I truly feel that if I had quality affordable child care to support me as I worked none of that would have happened. I would have been able to work as my kids learned. If I was getting paid \$15 an hour I would have only needed one job and could have spent more time with my kids. My whole family would have been together and thriving.

Unfortunately, I know many parents that have the same story. They've worked several jobs and still couldn't afford to care for their families. I've seen entire families fall apart because of finances even though each parent works 2-3 jobs. All this would be avoided if all parents were given access to quality affordable child care that allowed them to work as their child learned. The cycle of poverty that runs thru generations

of families like mine could be stopped only if we were given support. Parents could then focus on loving and nurturing their children instead of trying to figure out which bill they can afford to pay this month. I'm here representing thousands of families here in Vegas and across the country who struggle to afford child care.

I believe that we must:

- Establish a wage board to get feedback on child care worker wages from teachers, parents and other people on the front lines of child care. We must raise wages to at least \$15 an hour to break these cycles of poverty for both child care teachers and parents.
- There must be a \$15 / hour minimum wage figured into each and every subsidy granted so that subsidy payments are held accountable for the realistic wages and costs of child care. This math must be forthright and held to strict accountability standards.
- We must all advocate for a dramatic increase in federal and state funding for child care so that working families receive the support they need to be employed while their children gain the essential early childhood education that is the foundation for the future workers of our society.

God put us on this earth to help each other, so let's work together to fix the broken child care system.

Comment #9

Cherie Mancini CCDBG hearing Talking Points

- Hi my name is Cherie Mancini, I am president of Las Vegas' SEIU local 1107, and we represent 19,000 healthcare and public service employees statewide. Our members are working families that care about their children, the children of the community and the child care programs that are provided to them. *(If you have a personal testimony to share on child care, share it. I.E. the costs, being too expensive? How valuable it was for you as a working mother? How appreciative of the teachers you were? Etc)*
- Families across NV are facing a crisis in child care. In today's economy where 70% of mothers work, the need for child care is a reality for the vast majority of families, but quality child care is out of reach for too many parents. A recent study by the Economic Policy Institute found that child care for one infant costs more than in-state public college tuition in Nevada. At the same time child care teachers aren't paid enough to provide the basics for their own families.
- Another recent study from the EPI finds that the median hourly wage for child care workers is almost 40% lower than other jobs. This often forces our hard working educated teachers to look for work elsewhere making it hard to retain excellent child care workers. Because wages are so low, nearly half of child care workers are forced to rely on public assistance for necessities like food, housing and healthcare. This has to change. *(Possibly share a story of how receiving public assistance or not being able to afford quality healthcare affects low income families).* If we are going to increase quality, we must increase wages. Study after study shows that teacher pay and working conditions are directly linked with the quality of child care programs.

- We need to invest in child care so that all children will have an equal opportunity to learn, play and socialize, parents can get to work, and child care workers will be paid fairly for the important work they do.
- I'm here to comment on Section 4 of the State Plan. **I urge you to establish a child care wage board, include a \$15/hour minimum wage for child care workers when you set payment rates, and advocate for new federal and state investments in child care.**

Comment #10

Renee (No Last Name presented)

Thank you all for being here in support of children, parents and teachers today. My name is Renee. I am a childcare teacher, parent and widow.

I have been a childcare teacher for 15 years. I enjoy childcare. I love children. I feel it is an honor to take care of other people's children so their parents can work and support their families. But the #1 challenge as a childcare teacher who has a family is that I come to work to support other people's families and I make poverty wages that cause my family to suffer and that's not fair or right.

I started off at \$7.25 and now make closer to \$10 as a childcare teacher, but it is not nearly enough to support me or my family. I am the sole provider in my family. I have no outside support. I have no family. I don't drink, gamble or do drugs. I never have. My husband died of brain cancer 3 years ago. I work full time, yet I still have to rely on a great deal of public assistance to survive and keep my family fed and sheltered. Many days I don't even have enough money for my children and myself to take the bus, so I have to walk to where I go to save money.

I have 4 children. They are my world. My oldest son was hit by a car when he was a little boy and now he struggles with disabilities. He cannot care or look out for himself. I will be looking after my beloved son for the rest of his life. He needs me. I have a 10 year old daughter and two teenage children who have to give their time to help keep our family cared for because I cannot afford to hire any help for our family. I just lost my house recently because I could not keep up on the payments. We had to stay in a motel and are moving to a smaller apartment that I can afford. It makes it difficult, nearly impossible at times, to keep a roof over my family's head and pay for food, bills and the most basic expenses. I don't want to be on public assistance. I am a hard worker and I do a job that is critical to our community and country. I teach the next generation.

Childcare jobs want higher education and ongoing training but we do not make enough money to even pay our bills. How can we afford more education or training? There is no upward mobility in childcare. We have no benefits, no support for necessary growth or educational incentives. It is very difficult for a childcare worker to deliver a high level of service and quality care when we are struggling with poverty every single day of our lives, worried about how we will keep our family together and safe.

I want to make way for my children to have opportunities and higher education, so they can fulfill a life of stability and success that is greater than what I can currently provide them. Childcare workers should not have to force their own families into poverty in order to teach other people's children while those parents work.

The childcare system is broken. We are in a crisis. The time is now. We need real solutions, funding and legislative changes now.

We demand

1. A childcare wage board so that childcare teachers, parents and workers are giving critical feedback on childcare wages.
2. A \$15/hour minimum wage for childcare workers included in payment subsidy rates given by the government for childcare services.
3. We need a dramatic increase in funding from federal and state levels to make quality, affordable childcare available for all families.

I see giant corporations and banks receiving trillions of dollars in government aid. The money is there and it should be going to the children and working families now. Children are our future. So, we should be investing them.

Thank you.

Comment #11

Chrystal Blessing Talking Points for CCDBG 2.17

- My name is Chrystal Blessing, and I'm a child care director at K.I.D.S Academy in Henderson, NV. I've been in childcare for over 18 years. Even with all the certifications, awards and hard work that my staff and I put into the center every day, it's nearly impossible to maintain in this industry. I've dedicated my life to this work because I love watching kids learn and grow so they can become productive members of society but every year I find it gets harder and harder to make sure I can pay the bills each month to keep our doors open. I have to juggle our finances to stay open, pay our staff and ensure we can provide all the materials needed for learning.
- As a director I see the broken child care system from all sides, over 40 families at my center count on us to ensure that their children get quality care but unfortunately many of them can't pay full tuition. These families are struggling to get enough hours to pay the bills, while at the same time hoping they don't make too much money and get kicked out of the subsidy system. I see my staff struggle to make enough to provide for their own kids and families even though they are working full time to care for our parent's prized possessions - their kids. Then there's me, the center director trying to support both parents and teachers at the cost of a living wage for myself.
- As a mother, a teacher and center director staying in this field has had its challenges. As a mother I've had to struggle. As a child care worker I once lost my job for advocating on behalf of the children at that center. I had no support, no union to back me up. I had to figure out how my family was going to get by until I found another job. Finally when the opportunity came to own my own center I jumped at the chance. I didn't expect to be making less than I was as a teacher but that's my reality right now.

- Don't get me wrong, I love being a small business owner but I'm not sure how much longer I can just get by. So, I'm here today because I believe we can do better by the parents who rely on us and the child care workers who teach our children every day. In order to fix the broken child care system, I believe that we must
 - **FIRST: Establish a wage board** to get feedback on child care worker wages from teachers, parents and other people on the front lines of child care.
 - **SECOND: There must be a \$15 / hour minimum wage figured into each and every subsidy granted** so that subsidy payments are held accountable for the realistic wages and costs of child care.
 - **AND THIRD: We must all advocate for a dramatic increase in federal and state funding for child care so that working families receive the support they need** to be employed while their children gain the essential early childhood education that is the foundation for a prosperous society.

Children may only be 23% of our society but they are 100% of our future. We must invest in the parents and the providers to ensure children across our county can have the best start in life.

Comment #12

JOYCE WOODHOUSE
SENATOR
District No. 5

COMMITTEES:
Member
Education
Finance
Health and Human Services



State of Nevada
Senate
Seventy-Eighth Session

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February 17, 2016

Mr. Jack Zenteno
Chief
Child Care and Developmental Programs
Nevada Division of Welfare and Supportive Services

Dear Mr. Zenteno:

I am writing to express my support for expanding access to affordable, high-quality child care for Nevada families. We live in a time when an estimated 70% of mothers are working. As a result, child care is increasingly becoming a necessity for parents. Here in Nevada, I have seen estimates that suggest that the cost of child care exceeds the cost of in-state tuition at one of our public universities.

At the same time, child care workers earn relatively low wages, often 40% less than other professions. Many child care workers are forced to rely on public benefits because of this situation. As a former teacher and someone who has worked on child care issues in the Nevada State Senate, I feel confident in saying that pay and working conditions for child care workers are directly related to the quality of care provided to our children.

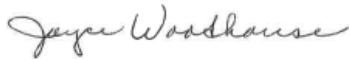
I hope that Nevada will invest in child care and child care workers, and I would urge you to consider taking several important steps:

- Establish a child care wage board to monitor wage and working conditions among child care providers.
- Set a child care worker minimum wage within repayment rates. Child care workers should be paid a livable hourly wage.

- Call on state and federal officials to recognize the increasingly economic strain of the high cost of child care by directing more investment into affordable child care programs.

Thank you for your consideration of these proposals and for your hard work on this important issue. I offer myself as a resource for continued discussion on how we can continue to improve accessibility to child care in Nevada.

Sincerely,



Joyce Woodhouse

Ms. Murray asked if there were any additional comments from the north or south.

There were no additional comments.

Ms. Murray asked if there were any comments not related to items on this agenda.

There were no additional comments.

Hearing no additional comments, Ms. Murray adopted the plan amendments on behalf of the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services, effective July 1st, 2016.

Ms. Murray thanked those in attendance for their participation in this public hearing. She closed the public hearing at 11:50 a.m.