

Eaton Day Care Center, Inc.  
"Quality child care builds our future!"  
310 S. Beech St. Eaton, OH 45320  
(937)456-1671

6/3/2019

Ohio Senate Finance Committee

To Whom It May Concern:

Having heard that there is a proposal to decrease rates for publicly funded childcare in 13 counties, including Preble County where we are located, rather than raise the rates as will happen for most Ohio counties, **I am writing to ask that consideration be given to maintaining the current rates for rural counties like ours so that we are able to continue to offer the same quality of care to all families who need us. Any decrease in funding will have a detrimental effect on current day care businesses and the families they serve.**

Eaton Day Care has been serving Preble County since 1976, first as a preschool, then adding childcare in 1987. Throughout all our history in Preble County, Eaton Day Care has been considered a place where children receive quality care and preschool education. We began participating in Step Up To Quality in 2013, moving up to a 3 Star rating which we have maintained since 2015. We are licensed to serve 96 children and usually employ 20 - 24 people. **Subsidized children generally account for a quarter to a third of our enrollment**

I started at Eaton Day Care as a preschool teacher in 1991, then assumed the role of Administrator in 2001. My husband and I bought the business in 2004. **We take great pride in providing the best care possible at reasonable rates as we serve both personal pay and subsidized families.** It is a business that we run on a tight budget as we strive to balance fair staff wages to keep the best help possible, while keeping our rates as reasonable as possible for our largely working class community. In addition to trained staff, we provide nutritious meals, educational materials, play equipment and a safe environment – **and it costs us as much to do so as it does centers who receive higher rates for subsidized children.** It is already difficult to keep up with Ohio's rising minimum wage without annually raising our rates, yet raising our rates to what could really help us benefit our staff would likely drive many families to seek cheaper, unlicensed childcare providers in our small communities, as has happened in the past. That will not meet the goal of providing quality early childhood education.

My husband and I are personally committed and sacrificial in our efforts to provide the best we can for children at Eaton Day Care and for our staff. It is a challenge, and the increasing demands put upon us by Step Up To Quality make it even harder to provide for our staff as they deserve because the profit margin is already so very small. It is already questionable as to whether we can afford to continue as a part of SUTQ. **If the amount we receive for serving subsidized children is reduced it will most likely result in our no longer being able to serve those children.** Receiving less money while meeting the same requirements as other centers who are seeing an increase in pay is unfair. Personal pay families being asked to pay higher rates because of a further reduction in funds for subsidized children is unfair. Please reconsider before reducing funding for families in need in Preble County.

Sincerely,

  
Administrator