

Mrs. Kisha Johnson - FCC Provider / In-Home Center

The Johnson's Day Care Center LLC

Tuesday, May 13th – 9:30 am

Testimony on House Bill 96

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on House Bill 96.

My name is Kisha Johnson, and I am the owner of The Johnson's Day Care Center LLC / FCC In-Home Center located in Cincinnati. I represent the CEO Project. I am a

business owner and have been in business as an FCC In-Home Center for the past 27 years. I am here to ask that you support Ohio kids, families, and childcare educators by including the childcare improvements outlined originally in Governor DeWine's executive budget, especially *raising eligibility for childcare assistance for parents, investing in childcare as the workforce behind the workforce, and funding federally required changes to copay caps and reimbursing based on enrollment.*

The following is what I support and would like to see changed:

- **Adopting and streamlining a fully funded Cost-Of-Care Model to help stabilize Ohio's childcare economy.**- This will help to build and sustain a strong and supportive workforce in childcare businesses and with early childcare educators, & help providers increase working wages to at least \$20 an hour, and provide healthcare benefits for themselves and their employees, and remove challenging working conditions.
- **Payment Processing Concerns / Being Paid Prior To Holidays** - Through the years, we small business owners have grown accustomed to ODJFS not paying us on time. Small businesses live and die on cash flow and it is disheartening that this problem can't be solved. One item that could lessen the burden on us small businesses is for the department to pay us before a holiday instead of after a holiday. This simple change in practice would minimize a financial burden that we businesses bear. We are asking for legislators to make this change on our behalf.
- **Reimbursing childcare providers at the 75th percentile of the market rate surveys**- Ohio's reimbursement rate is among the poorest in the nation. As a childcare provider, we haven't seen a proper increase in childcare rates since we received the 7% cut across the board back in 2005 - 2009, based on the Market Rate Survey's data analysis, and ODJFS Customary Reimbursement Rate Sheets. To deliver high-quality care, Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) providers need to recruit and retain a highly skilled workforce. This requires child-care workers to be paid adequately for the work that they do, which requires that PFCC providers are reimbursed enough to do so. Ohio uses a complex

system based on the market rate [survey data analysis](#) to determine how much to reimburse PFCC providers. As a result, different providers receive different amounts per child in different counties, making it difficult to describe reimbursement in specific dollar amounts. We, as providers, are proposing that legislation move to pay all providers/educators at the 75th Percentile, and to pay all existing counties at the same rates across the board for each child's categories, such as for Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers, and School-Agers, and to remove the hourly wages and pay us by the full-time and part-time categories only.

- **Presumptive Eligibility Payments To Providers** - We are asking legislators to streamline a more efficient application process for families to be approved or denied in a timely manner, to ensure that childcare programs and families don't have to endure additional disparities around the approval or denial waiting process. Providers are asking for a 2 to 4 week application final process window for families and to help ensure programs are not losing families due to the long application process, and no funding streams during the wait time and lastly, to ensure that families are NOT losing their approved activities such as: school and job placements, due to the long awaited process for being approved for the PFCC and/or ChildCare Choice Voucher Programs.
- **Child Tax Credit** - We are asking that legislators support the child tax credit in Ohio. This would be the start to some financial freedom for families.
- **Raising the eligibility requirements for Publicly Funded ChildCare by expanding the Federal Poverty Level assistance for parents who make up under 200% of the federal poverty level, and investing in childcare as the workforce behind the workforce.** *Reason - By raising eligibility requirements for childcare assistance, parents will be able to sustain their jobs and provide stable housing for their family and children, which will make childcare more affordable.* Families often struggle to afford child care, especially those with limited means. Families in Ohio can initially enroll in Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) if their gross monthly household income is at or below 145% of the federal poverty level. The proposed rule would cap that co-payment at 7% of family income. This would provide savings and alleviate some financial stress for many families in PFCC with income over 100% of the federal poverty level.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.