



**Family Child Care
Association of Maine**

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**Testimony of Deborah Arcaro On Behalf of the Family Child Care Association of
Maine Before the Committee on Health and Human Services Regarding LD 1712
“An Act to Support Children's Healthy Development and School Readiness”**

May 19, 2021,

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Deborah Arcaro. I am presenting this testimony on behalf of the membership of the Family Child Care Association of Maine (FCCAM), asking for your support of LD 1712 “An Act To Support Children's Healthy Development and School Readiness”.

FCCAM is dedicated specifically to supporting family child care providers. Our mission is to unify, promote and strengthen quality professional family child care in the State of Maine. As family child care providers, we understand the critical role of a strong and sustainable child care system in the lives of children and families in Maine.

We believe that strong communities develop when they have a stable and sustainable workforce. Quality, accessible child care is a major contributor in building a sustainability workforce in communities across Maine. The lack of affordable, accessible, and quality child care continues to hurt our communities. Without available quality care, parents’ choices are limited to leaving their children in care that they deem to be substandard, or leaving the workforce to stay home and care for their children. This past year has reinforced our understanding that when parents are forced to leave the workforce there is a negative impact on the economy of our communities.

LD 1712 offers communities the opportunity to define themselves and their goals to support quality child care. Allowing each community to define what supports they need and how they can attain them gives this bill the capacity to support programs of all sizes, types, and demographics, meeting the diverse needs of Maine.

Over the years family child care providers have experienced a variety of barriers in accessing professional development opportunities. These include, but are not limited to, working long hours, working alone, affording the cost of trainings, and traveling the distance to where trainings are offered. LD 1712 offers a coaching model, which allows for specialists to come into the individual child care programs to support providers in their own professional development plan. Having a specialist work within individual programs ensures that providers are able to offer quality child care to the children in their communities.

With the ever present need for quality child care in our state, family child care offers an opportunity for individuals looking to open a sustainable small business as a family child care provider to add to the economic development of their community on many levels: a small business, possible employer, support for the local workforce, and quality care for the children that are Maine's future. FCCAM believes that LD 1712 is a positive step in meeting Maine's diverse needs in building a sustainable quality child care system that provides access to all children and families.

Thank you for your time and attention to this bill.

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