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Testimony Re: H-7123, Article 13, Child Care Assistance Program
House Finance Committee
March 2, 2022
Leanne Barrett, Senior Policy Analyst



Rhode Island KIDS COUNT coordinates the Right from the Start Campaign, a state policy coalition led by eight organizations to advance state policies and budget priorities that will help families with young children.

Both Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and the Right from the Start Campaign **support the Governor's proposals in Article 1, section 13 of his FY23 budget proposal to increase rates, lift family income limits, and make eligibility for low-income college students permanent for the Child Care Assistance Program.**

In December 2021, there were 6,110 children receiving child care assistance in Rhode Island, the lowest number in at least 20 years. The number of subsidies is down 42% from 10,580 in December 2019 and down 57% from 14,333 in December 2002.

In January 2022, the pandemic rates for the Child Care Assistance Program expired which meant that rates were cut for 8 out of 10 infants, toddlers, and school-age children in the program. The current CCAP rates do not meet the federal equal access standard, which was a standard the General Assembly adopted in 1998 and then repealed in 2008.

Governor McKee's budget proposal would:

- Provide rate increases for child care programs serving children in the Child Care Assistance Program, bringing rates up to the federal equal access standard, but only for children under age 6 in child care centers that have achieved a high-quality (4 or 5 stars) rating in BrightStars.
- Lift the family income limit to qualify for the Child Care Assistance Program from 180% to 200% of the federal poverty line (from \$41,454 to \$46,060 for a family of 3), the first proposal from a governor to expand family income limits for the program in at least 20 years.
- Remove the sunset provision for the pilot program which makes low-income colleges students eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program.

These investments are absolutely needed and we urge you to consider additional investments to increase rates for children of all ages in all settings so they meet or exceed the equal access standards and to significantly increase the family income limits for the program, both at the entrance like the Governor proposes and at the exit. There are many families in the

program now who cannot accept wage increases, work extra hours, or take on additional shifts because their income would then exceed the program limits. They would then lose the subsidy, but are not able to pay the cost of child care on their own. Felicia Powers, a mom from Woonsocket with a 2-year-old, puts it well – the system keeps parents stuck in low wage jobs and seems like it is designed to hold us down.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. We applaud the Governor for his proposal to improve rates and lift family income limits for the Child Care Assistance Program.

Type of Care/Age Group	CCAP Rates 5/31/20	CCAP Pandemic Rates 6/2/20 - 12/31/21	CCAP Rates Effective 1/1/22	CCAP Rates Proposed by Gov. McKee for FY23	CCAP Rates in 2022 Child Care is Essential Bill (Diaz, Cano)
Center: Infants & Toddlers					
1 star	\$198.48	\$257.54	\$236.36	\$260	\$281 (75 th 2021 MRS)
2 star	\$203.32	\$257.54	\$244.88	\$265	\$294
3 star	\$218.81	\$257.54	\$257.15	\$270	\$308
4 star	\$232.37	\$257.54	\$268.74	\$289	\$322
5 star	\$257.54	\$273.00	\$284.39	\$300	\$335 (90 th 2021 MRS)
Center: Preschoolers					
1 star	\$165.75	\$195.67	\$207.51	\$217	\$250 (75 th 2021 MRS)
2 star	\$169.80	\$195.67	\$212.27	\$220	\$257
3 star	\$177.88	\$195.67	\$218.45	\$225	\$265
4 star	\$182.73	\$195.67	\$223.50	\$250	\$273
5 star	\$195.67	\$260.00	\$231.39	\$260	\$280 (90 th 2021 MRS)
Center: School-Age Kids					
1 star	\$146.26	\$200.00	\$180.38	\$188	\$238 (75 th 2021 MRS)
2 star	\$146.26	\$200.00	\$182.77	\$196	\$241
3 star	\$146.26	\$200.00	\$185.17	\$200	\$244
4 star	\$146.26	\$200.00	\$187.57	\$205	\$247
5 star	\$146.26	\$245.00	\$189.97	\$210	\$250 (90 th 2021 MRS)
FCC: Infants & Toddlers					
1 star	\$188.59	\$224.43	\$188.59	N/A*	\$250 (75 th 2021 MRS)
2 star	\$190.47	\$224.43	\$190.47	N/A*	\$254
3 star	\$201.79	\$224.43	\$201.79	N/A*	\$257
4 star	\$207.45	\$224.43	\$207.45	N/A*	\$260
5 star	\$224.43	\$224.43	\$224.43	N/A*	\$263 (90 th 2021 MRS)
FCC: Preschoolers					
1 star	\$171.45	\$171.45	\$171.45	N/A*	\$239 (75 th 2021 MRS)
2 star	\$171.45	\$171.45	\$171.45	N/A*	\$241
3 star	\$171.45	\$171.45	\$171.45	N/A*	\$244
4 star	\$171.45	\$171.45	\$171.45	N/A*	\$247
5 star	\$171.45	\$171.45	\$171.45	N/A*	\$250 (90 th 2021 MRS)
FCC: School-Age Kids					
1 star	\$162.30	\$162.30	\$162.30	N/A*	\$200 (75 th 2021 MRS)
2 star	\$162.30	\$162.30	\$162.30	N/A*	\$212
3 star	\$162.30	\$162.30	\$162.30	N/A*	\$225
4 star	\$162.30	\$162.30	\$162.30	N/A*	\$238
5 star	\$162.30	\$162.30	\$162.30	N/A*	\$251 (90 th 2021 MRS)

* Governor's FY23 proposed budget states that family child rates will be determined through collective bargaining.