

Erica Medina
1997 Broad Street
Hartford, CT 06114
(860) 956-8882

Labor Committee ***In support of SB 352***

My name is Erica Medina. I am a licensed childcare provider in Hartford with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Eastern Connecticut State University. I began working with Care4Kids as a substitute for my mother, Glenda Medina, who has been a childcare provider for about 10 years. I started my own daycare about 7 years ago. The children I take care of are between 6 months and 4 years old.

I'm submitting this testimony in support of S.B. 352, in lieu of coming in person. I have 6 families who depend on me and it's very hard for me to close my daycare. I also have after-school children who arrive around 2:30pm. Weekend meetings would be more convenient for me, but I understand that your schedule is different.

I've designed my curriculum to prepare the children for kindergarten – and I update it every year to reflect changes in the Connecticut state curriculum. For example, I teach the basics: shapes, colors, numbers, writing their names, and some Spanish. They also learn the skills of life. We have kitchen time, puzzle time, etc; their activities change daily but there's structure. In addition, we have time scheduled in each day for reading (e.g. sounds, letters, subject comprehension, how to hold a book) and structured circle time. I do my best to ensure that by age 5, the children in my care are ready for kindergarten.

I am an early childhood educator, not a babysitter. I, along with other licensed and unlicensed providers, am a professional in my field. We all should have a say in improving the Care4Kids system. That's why I support the union that we providers voted for and our right to collectively bargain with the state.

I have several improvements that I would like to see at Care4Kids. For example, we need an improvement in customer service. One of my parents sent in her redetermination paperwork three times. She received her fax confirmation and assumed that the paperwork had arrived. We later received a letter from Care4Kids saying that she was about to be cancelled from the program in 2 days due to missing paperwork. The parent then called and harassed Care4Kids until they double-checked for – and found – her paperwork.

Why does this have to happen? It's a common story and not all parents have the time or personality to be on top of Care4Kids. If she hadn't gotten re-approved on time, the parent would've lost her job – she's a single mom without any family support so she had nowhere to leave her child. Paperwork inefficiency has serious consequences for