

DAY
CARE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR QUALITY EDUCATION
ALASKA CHILD CARE CENTERS ASSOCIATION

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February 15, 1975

The Honorable Frank Ferguson
State Legislature
Pouch V
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

I regret that we were unable to attend the public hearing on Senate bills 120 and 121 held yesterday in Anchorage and request that this written testimony be entered in the record.

Our organization represents 20 members providing day care and private school to approximately 2000 children in Alaska.

We would urge that a clarification of Senate bill 120 be made prior to passage, concerning the intent as to whether private centers will be funded to care for the children qualified or whether Agency centers will be funded to be in direct competition with private centers. As worded, it would seem that the Agency could choose to enter the field, both regulating and operating. The care to be provided by this legislation is needed, but the great expense per child, which would result from the inefficient operation by a government agency, would limit its benefits. Past experience in other states shows that private centers can provide the services under contract at much lower costs, thereby benefiting more children. The typical charge for day care in Anchorage is \$1800 per year. Parents cannot afford to pay more and centers cannot provide more care under present regulations.

If there are insufficient facilities available now for the number of families requiring service, it is due to the restrictions imposed by state staffing regulations which make operation of a center difficult, if not impossible, unless the operation is fortunate enough to have free rent, free staff or other benefits adequate to offset the deficit. Contributing to this marginal operation is the low rate paid by the state for the care of children of families receiving state aid. State compensation currently paid is less than that paid by the public for the same service, while requiring centers much additional record keeping and billing for only those state children. Payments arrive 60 days after the payment would have been received had the care been provided to the paying public.

The often quoted "federal interagency day care standards," considered the base standard in the country, have recently been modified by Congress to allow lower operating costs in day care. To quote from the January 8, 1975, issue of Education Daily's "Report on Preschool Education": President Signs Social Services Bill - - "Major eligibility changes for social services under the Social Security Act and a relaxation of Federal day care standards are among provisions of H.R. 17045, which passed both houses of Congress on December 20 by voice vote.... Lowers Staffing Ratios. In an effort to reduce yearly Federal day care costs which are approaching \$3,000 per child, provisions of H.R. 17045 loosen minimum staffing ratios and education program

requirements of day care centers. The bill requires that ratios of one adult for every 20 children aged 10-14 be maintained, and a 1 to 15 ratio for children 3-9 years old. The conference committee earlier scrapped a provision which would have required a staffing ratio of one adult for every two infants under 3 years of age, and instead voted to leave the final requirements to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare.

We urge that the Legislature adopt the new Federal staffing requirements in Senate bill 120 and commit Senate bills 120 and 121 to only contracting day care services with private and non-profit operated centers.

Yours truly,

Del A. Brock
Del A. Brock, Ph.D.

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