
Public Hearing

before

ASSEMBLY ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WOMEN

*“Discussion of general issues of day care and testimony
concerning specific efforts to promote regulatory flexibility”*

LOCATION: Committee Room 16
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

DATE: May 6, 1997
1:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF COUNCIL PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Diane Allen, Chairwoman
Assemblywoman Marion Crecco, Vice-Chairwoman
Assemblywoman Rose Marie Heck
Assemblywoman Loretta Weinberg
Assemblywoman Shirley K. Turner



ALSO PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Barbara Wright
District 14

Norma Svedosh
*Office of Legislative Services
Council Aide*

Deborah K. Smarth
*Assembly Majority
Council Aide*

Desirea Hughes
*Assembly Democratic
Council Aide*

***Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by
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ASSEMBLYWOMAN DIANE ALLEN (Chairwoman): I would like to call the Assembly Advisory Council on Women to order. I want to start off by apologizing for my near lack of voice and apparent problems that did not happen on the Assembly floor. I want to assure everyone; we occasionally have arm injuries from too much twisting but generally not involving the neck. (referring to cervical collar Chairwoman Allen is wearing)

On a much more serious note, we're gathered here to take testimony on a very, very important concern that all of you and all of we have, and that is, the child care situation in the State of New Jersey. Our Council has spent this year taking testimony and examining it and trying to come up with new ways of expanding the child care slots in the State of New Jersey, enticing many groups to come together on it, and finding ways to cut costs. In a day and age when more and more households with children have situations where both parents are working, it's necessary that we come up with more and better, safe day care centers, but these facilities have to be places where the needs of our children are met such as they would be at home.

The need is ever more growing in light of the implementation of welfare reform and the need of single mothers to improve their education and their work opportunities while knowing that their children are safe and that they are being exposed to appropriate stimuli and that they are enjoying their stay at day care.

I'm aware of Governor Whitman's recent announcement of new funding initiatives, the focus on providing more day care centers and enhancing training of day care providers and their employees, but the Assembly Advisory Council on Women is concentrating on a very important

policy niche that I think will offer tremendous opportunities for all who need and desire this assistance. As a matter of fact, I believe that those funds could be used for such innovative measures.

The Council will concentrate on exploring ways to promote regulatory flexibility without jeopardizing the quality or safety of day care, and in so doing, we hope to bolster the establishment of new facilities and volunteerism networks to deliver day care services. The networks could provide day care at locations that are convenient and where the day care population need is critical; for instance, churches, not-for-profit centers, community-based groups can locate their services at community colleges, four-year schools, small- and medium-sized companies, neighborhood facilities, and so on.

The Advisory Council on Women will look to the knowledge and expertise of the Department of Human Services, professionals in the field, and the Advisory Council on Day Care and others to assist us in crafting this important package of initiatives.

In the economic development field, we've heard about reengineering government so its role is limited to becoming the catalyst for the development of new private infrastructure to improve the business climate and the servicing of the business community. The Assembly Task Force on Business Retention, Expansion, and Export Opportunities and the Governor's Economic Master Plan Commission effectively recommended the creation of such networks to customize services to various firms and diverse industries. Prosperity New Jersey is now giving life to these initiatives. This paradigm and

conceptual framework must now serve as a means to reinvigorate the state of day care in New Jersey, as well as the nation.

Since 1947, when only 200 centers served 10,000 children, we've seen the marked increase in such facilities. According to the Department of Human Services, we now have approximately 3000 licensed centers, and they serve more than 191,000 children in the State of New Jersey.

Now, we can view this as a positive development; although, some may view it as a failure of society to encourage social policy that provides incentives for family compound settings to encourage the family unit or the greater family unit to take advantage of built-in day care by family members. The intergenerational component of day care is an important feature that we can't overlook.

The Advisory Council on Women will take a look at options to promote family day care where parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles can play a role in providing day care for their loved ones. We need to excite the imagination of day care service providers, of teachers and parents so that they can join together to create neighborhood-based facilities close to their homes that provide the kind of environment for their children that help the children grow.

Just as private charter schools are being developed to offer new options in providing education to children, we need to encourage the formation of innovative child-care centers in geographically strategic locations that service small enough groups to make day care an exciting learning experience. Large companies like Johnson and Johnson, Hoffman-La Roche, and AlliedSignal -- some of whom have actually testified before this Committee

-- have the fiscal resources necessary to establish day care centers on-site for their employees. But the employers who run small- and middle-sized firms don't necessarily obtain, or aren't able to provide, those perks. The companies lack the necessary fiscal and other resources.

While the Council will study whether any incentives can be used to encourage such firms to pool resources, it is economically viable for them to either provide directly or contract out with the appropriate private agencies to offer such an invaluable service for their employees.

I look forward to working with my fellow colleagues who are serving on this Council, as well as the administration, to not only find new ways of offering day care that is good, safe, and enriching, but also to appropriately target that \$8.5 million announced by the Governor's initiative for new and innovative day care approaches such as these.

We have quite a few people who have signed up to testify today. I would urge you to keep your testimony -- not brief, but certainly to the point and with a concern for those who will come after you. It's very important that we do get all the testimony, and we do ask that if you have any written testimony that you provide it for the members who are here. And if you have not brought written testimony, but you can later on provide us with that testimony, we would appreciate that.

Let's begin with Regina Purcell, Associate Director for Social Concerns, New Jersey Catholic Conference.

REGINA PURCELL: Thank you. I'm Regina Purcell, Associate Director of the New Jersey Catholic Conference, and with me is Mary Davey,

who is Associate Executive Director of the Diocese of Metuchen's Catholic Charities Agency.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the scope of child care programs in the Catholic Church, and then Mary will speak about the specifics of the programs in her agency.

The Conference approaches the issue of child care from several perspectives. The bishops are foremost pastors who understand the struggles of parents to care for their children at home and while they are working. The bishops lead a Catholic community deeply involved in providing quality child care to children of every race, religion, and region throughout the Church's parishes, schools, and social service agencies. We serve the child care needs of thousands of families across the State and are especially proud of the quality care we provide in poor and underserved communities.

The bishops are also religious leaders who support State policies that strengthen families. No government can love a child, and no policy can substitute for a family's care, but clearly, families can be helped or hurt in their irreplaceable roles. Government can either support or undermine families as they cope with the moral, social, and economic stresses of caring for children.

Increasingly, the availability of safe, affordable child care is clearly a policy that is needed. But other policies have to complement the expansion of child care. Workplace policies that promote the family, such as flexible employment terms, can help ease the pressure on the child care system. An expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit and other changes in tax policy can help parents care for their children at home or to better afford the costs of child care.

The Church in New Jersey is making significant contributions toward providing child care services. At the time of our last child care survey, through the Catholic community in 1989, over 15,000 children statewide were being served in Catholic programs. The number has increased significantly since then. Child care services include infant, toddler, prekindergarten programs, as well as before- and after-school care.

Catholic Charities' agencies continue to look for opportunities to expand their child care services. Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Metuchen has become a leader statewide in providing child care. Catholic Community Services in the Archdiocese of Newark is renovating St. Adelbert's Convent in the City of Elizabeth, which will house a child care center for 60 children. Two centers with a licensing capacity of 300 child care slots opened in Passaic in the Diocese of Paterson several years ago. Unfortunately, not all slots are filled because there are not enough child care vouchers available to help parents pay the costs of care. More Catholic schools are offering before- and after-school programs. Parishes without schools lease property for child centers or operate their own centers.

Under Work First New Jersey, the need for child care becomes a priority. The law provides -- and this is a provision that's required both under Federal and State law -- that a recipient of welfare shall not be required to engage in a work activity if child care is unavailable for the recipient's dependent child. The Catholic bishops have applauded this provision. We urge the Council now to monitor carefully how unavailable child care is defined in regulation. We believe that no parent should be pressured to accept child care that is less than adequate. In the rush to expand rapidly the amount of

child care to accommodate Work First New Jersey recipients, we must not sacrifice the safety or quality of care. All children, regardless of their parent's income, deserve decent, safe care.

Thank you, and I'll turn it over to Mary Davey.

MARY DAVEY: Thank you for this opportunity to--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Try it one more time. (referring to amplification microphone)

MS. DAVEY: Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this afternoon.

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Metuchen is a voluntary, nonprofit, multiservice agency that provides over 170 programs in Middlesex, Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren counties.

The concept of outreach, especially to the economically disadvantaged, family support, and community-based services are common denominators among Catholic Charities' programs. In Fiscal Year '96, Catholic Charities provided day care to 344 children in six centers and school-age child care to 1237 children enrolled at twenty-two sites in four counties.

Catholic Charities has been designated the unified child care lead agency for the counties of Middlesex and Somerset.

The goals of this agency's child care programs all include: to provide quality care to the youngsters under our supervision; to assist low-income, often single-parent, households to secure employment and/or attain educational goals which further their employment; to provide subsidies to children under the Division of Youth and Family Services' supervision; to provide information, training, and technical assistance to licensed or registered

child care providers, as well as to the general public; and finally, to provide an opportunity for individuals to become gainfully employed in the child care industry.

Catholic Charities believes that the changes in Federal legislation offer New Jersey an historic opportunity to develop new solutions to the shortage of quality services for young children and their families, to better coordinate the existing services, and to try to customize the fit between consumers' needs and the various types of child care services available.

At times, the lack of coordination has frustrated both child care policy efforts in the past and consumers. The supply of child care services developed in response to family needs has often been a confusing array of public and private programs, housed in a variety of settings, and frequently subject to eligibility guidelines that vary widely from one program to the next.

In addition to reducing customer confusion, we must significantly expand the number of slots available in both traditional and nontraditional care. Church members can be an integral part of this support. Although currently many churches are struggling to address their own financial needs, their parishioners are often generous volunteers. Catholic Charities views child care as one service in which church volunteers have often developed transferrable skills from their parenting and teaching experiences. For example, their participation can often make the difference in maintaining a special needs child in a normalized setting. It is certainly a setting that, with consistent involvement, can bring mutual reward to both volunteers and to the children being served.

Through Catholic Charities' volunteer programs, its staff will actively encourage parishioners at churches and other places of worship to provide volunteers to assist in augmenting day care services. Church members can also be recruited to provide nontraditional service such as family day care for parents working second shifts.

Catholic Charities would be most concerned, however, about regulatory flexibility that increases child care slots by reducing the staff to student ratio, by reducing the minimum life safety standards, or also, the square footage requirement of 35 square feet per child. The safety and the environment of the child's experience must remain our primary concern. It is crucial that children, often who are in care both before and after school, have the space for active, creative, and often physical programs.

These issues being addressed, Catholic Charities asks your consideration of three other child care recommendations.

I'm going to summarize some of this just in the interest of time. The first recommendation that we would, again, look toward is to exhibit leadership by building a diverse and highly qualified child care system with parental choice and equal access for all families. To achieve this goal, we recommend development or expansion of local consortium, which consists of a diverse group of consumers, as well as the providers, representatives from the local boards of ed., the boards of social services, school-based services, adolescent pregnancy and prevention programs, teen-parent programs, and members of human service advisory boards, business leaders and religious leaders, with the State and local government.

We feel that this would help to have input from all of the various sectors to anticipate trends and plan as some of the new changes are implemented so that we can best have a coordinated effort to serve these families.

Our second recommendation is, obviously, the development of more subsidized child care slots. In the counties that we represent, we already know that there are 299 families in Middlesex County, 45 families in Somerset County, 27 in Hunterdon County, and 66 in Warren County who are waiting for New Jersey Cares for Kids subsidies under the current program. And as families move off welfare rolls, their eligibility for TANF subsidies will end. Many of these families could then end up displacing the low-income working families who are presently receiving those care subsidies, thus, either creating longer waiting lists or creating a situation for some of the families who now receive Cares funding to end up actually back where they would need welfare assistance.

We would certainly recommend creating additional slots and also, if possible, restoring the SSBG-subsidized slots in the licensed day care centers for those families requiring that assistance.

We would also recommend and support the vigorous recruitment of family day care providers and continued development and expansion of licensed day care centers. With proper training, the child care industry can provide some opportunities for gainful employment for those coming off welfare rolls. Potential interested providers can already receive some of that information through the unified child care agencies.

We would also recommend surveys being completed in local school districts and parochial school systems to determine if the schools currently have before- and after-school-age child care programs or would be interested in developing such and working with current providers to develop programming and ascertain if the school has the space to initiate such a pre- or after-school program.

We would also pursue partnerships with the business community, as well as the church community, to develop creative partnerships for either on-site child care or working with their volunteers or corporate giving plans to help do some of the renovations to centers to increase the number of children who could be seen by enhancing some of the life safety issues that may need to be resolved.

Lastly, we would also welcome Governor Whitman's Bright Beginnings, her early childhood initiative, that we see, again, as a good beginning, but that we must continue to assess and evaluate what is needed to provide the best for all of our children.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I would like to ask what the average cost for one child in your day care system is -- let's say the under-six day care.

MS. DAVEY: It varies, again, because we try to do all of our programming on ability to pay and a sliding fee scale. But the full cost would be approximately \$125 a week in day care or about \$140 a month in after-school care.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: And how much of that \$125 actually pays for the use of space?

MS. DAVEY: Again, it varies totally by the facility. In all of our programs, probably 80 percent to 85 percent of our cost has to do with appropriate staffing for the youngsters involved in care.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: And what -- how many staff members-- How many children per staff member do you generally have?

MS. DAVEY: Again, it depends on the age of the child, because there are specific ratios required for licensing depending on the age of the children. With the very young children, if you are talking about infant day care, you're talking about one to four. With the older, school-age children, you might be talking about one to eighteen. We try to stay under those guidelines to, again, usually do, maybe, one to twelve with the older youngsters to try to maintain a safe program that involves a good level of interaction with the adults.

We also try to do things like use interns from local college programs or graduate programs to augment the staff-student ratio through, again, in a sense, a volunteer experience.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Has the volunteer experience -- this question to either of you -- been a positive one?

MS. DAVEY: I would say definitely so. It's positive because the intern is usually fulfilling a school requirement, and at the same time, the program can benefit because it enhances the ratio with a person who is motivated to learn appropriate child care, human growth and development, child development course work.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Other questions from members?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Yes, thank you.

You talked about recommending, at a minimum, the restoration of the SSBG-subsidized slots. I'm a little confused on which program is which. What happened to those slots?

MS. DAVEY: Not just child care, but many of the programs experienced a reduction in the SSBG funding to counties, and various programs had to absorb those cuts. And it varies by program and it varies by county.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Is that a combination of Federal and states?

MS. PURCELL: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Do you know how many slots we lost? Do you have any idea?

MS. DAVEY: Again, that varies. I could try to get that information for you, but I'm not positive, statewide.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Just in the day care component.

MS. DAVEY: Again, I'd want to get that by county for you, because it differs--

MS. PURCELL: We could only get the Catholic--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I think we have some people in the audience who will be able to provide that information, specifically.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Okay. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Questions anyone?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: I just want to thank you for being here. I know it's good work that you two do, and I certainly agree with your suggestion of having better tax deductions for these parents who must keep their children in day care. As a matter of fact, I have legislation in on that. I don't think it's quite enough, but it's even difficult to get that with the tight budget that we have.

Thank you very much.

MS. PURCELL: Which we're supporting, Assemblywoman Crecco -- your legislation.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Thank you very much.

Carol Kasabach, Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry.

Welcome.

C A R O L K A S A B A C H: Regina and I see each other a lot.

I am Carol Kasabach, the Director of the Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry in New Jersey. It's a ministry of the Lutheran Church to advocate justice for the poor and the powerless.

I am also a member of Commissioner of Human Services Bill Waldman's Work First New Jersey Task Force Steering Committee and taking a look about implementing Work First New Jersey.

When Deb Smarth called me, I put a call out to our Lutheran child care centers, and I want to give an example of one of the centers I was able to reach and some of the concerns that were raised by the director of that particular organization.

This is Children's Circle at St. Andrew Evangelical Lutheran Church in Parsippany, Morris County, a very affluent county in our State.

The director, Karen Beacham, gave me this information, and if there are more questions, we can always contact her.

When St. Andrew was assessing the need for child care in Morris County, they found that, with regard to infant care, only 7 percent of the need was being addressed, and this was three years ago.

A comment was made earlier about the ratios with children, and depending upon the age of the child that's how many children are allocated per adult. In New Jersey, the regs are one to four for infants, one to seven for toddlers, and one to fifteen for over that. This is very significant because it impinges on the cost of child care and the people who are providing the child care.

The National Association for Education of Young Children has a ratio of one to three for infants. In talking with Mrs. Beacham, she indicated that New Jersey's standards were pretty close to the National Association. Some were less, some were more. So you can see, even with the infant care, that ratio.

With regard to staffing: The availability of trained staff that they can afford in Morris County really puts a burden on those folks. Because it is such an expensive county to live in, it's necessary that the salaries are higher so that the people who are working there in the child care industry can live there. The cost for child care in this particular place is \$780 a month, full time. Full time is five days a week and anywhere between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. -- that's the area.

Others do it cheaper, but they don't have the kind of facility or the kind of space that this particular place does. They do not use stackable cribs.

They are in a well-lit area. They do not use a basement, and they do keep to the ratio.

A concern that was raised was that DYFS -- the Division of Youth and Family Services -- reimbursement rate is \$586 a month, and this is for three days or 30 hours a week. That's considered full time.

An example was given that there is a child who is cared for in this center because the child is in foster care placement, the mother -- the foster mother -- is only able to afford three days a week here and has worked out a deal with her employer to work two days a week at home.

Now that's pretty good, if you have an employer that you can do that sort of thing, but that's the constraint with regard to that reimbursement rate. That's very important.

I'd like to talk for a minute about inspections. My understanding is that a license is renewed once every three years, and according to the person I spoke with, a visit is made to inspect just when the license is due. She has not experienced any kind of drop-ins. She is a service provider who had worked in Pennsylvania, and they could expect drop-ins at any time, which is good. This she has not experienced, and she understands from listening to other service providers in the area that there are no drop-ins unless a complaint is filed.

Another concern that was raised is the point about this ratio. If, in fact, it's a four to one ratio for infants, what, in fact, a child care facility might do is to say, "Well, we can only have your child for so many days, and then another child for so many days," so that they don't go over the ratio. That's, again, you know, filling those slots, and that's a concern.

Ms. Beacham indicated that the Bureau of Licensing is very helpful every time they are called, and that was good. She would encourage this drop-in policy to keep everybody accountable and on target.

I have some concerns, now, with regard to those folks that are receiving public assistance. Right now, the law says that anyone who has a child 12 weeks or over is required to take part in TANF -- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. I indicated how difficult it is to provide the infant care at that kind of ratio. There has to be an appropriate reimbursement rate or people will not be able to provide the child care. They are going to find ways-- People are going to find ways to cut corners. It doesn't matter if you have regulations.

Another concern that some of us have is with sanctioning. If a mother is not comfortable with a particular child care arrangement that seems to be available and says to her worker, "I am not comfortable with that," what if the worker says, "Well, I'm comfortable with it. That's available; you take it." We have to make absolutely sure that people are not being sanctioned indiscriminately. I remember being at a conference once on education, and it was quite profound when a person said, "A school that's not good enough for my kid is not good enough for any kid." And I think that goes with child care, too. We have to look at it as mothers and fathers. If I wouldn't feel comfortable, then that's not a safe place for my kid, and I'm going to be worrying about my child that whole time.

Another concern that we've been looking at is something called AWEPP -- the Alternate Work Experience Program; that, if, in fact, a person has a job, but they have an opportunity for training or education, the way that

things look now you still have to be working a certain number of hours, whether it's 15 to 20 hours, and then you can take the education -- go for the education and training.

Well, if, in fact, you have a child care slot for your child for the 20 hours, then you have to go home and then you have schooling, either in the evening or something of that sort, you can't have your child in that same center. So there has to be that kind of flexibility, and is there the flexibility for a parent to have the dollars available that they can mix and match their child care providing as they're going through this?

Regina and the other lady with her indicated about volunteers. I'm really very concerned about the dependability of volunteers. Sometimes the perception is that there are people sitting in the pews waiting to stand up and volunteer their time, and we find in many of our churches that just like every place else people are working two and three jobs to keep their heads above water, so it is very difficult to depend upon that.

That's really all I have to say at this time. I thank you for the opportunity.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Good. And I tell you that I know that we have some people who will be discussing about the dependability of volunteers, so you will probably want to listen to catch that.

Any questions from anyone?

Assemblywoman Crecco.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: Are the volunteers trained prior to working in the centers?

MS. KASABACH: I'm not the one to ask about that. I really don't know.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: Oh, all right. That would probably be an important factor.

MS. KASABACH: Absolutely. Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Assemblywoman Turner.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TURNER: Yes, you raised a very important issue, one that has been of great concern of mine ever since the welfare reform program came into effect, and that is, the shortage -- the acute shortage -- that we have with infant child care. Our program here in New Jersey, as you know -- as you indicated -- requires that after 12 weeks, a mother has to go to work, whereas with the Federal program it's a year. That's one of the reasons I voted against the welfare reform bill, because I think we're putting the cart before the horse when we have welfare right now not meeting the needs that currently exist. These women who are on welfare and those people who are part of the working poor cannot find adequate child care, particularly for infants, and now we're going to have a whole other population of mothers looking for infant care. And it is very labor intensive, as you mentioned, and it costs a great deal, so it just does not make sense to me why we would force women into the workplace after 12 weeks, when the child care -- the infant care -- is just not available.

Have you found a large number of women -- you may not in Morris County, but I know in Mercer County we have found that to be the case -- that there's just not sufficient infant care available to meet the needs

currently, much less meeting the needs that will be coming after two years or less?

MS. KASABACH: I live in Mercer, and there are some really good folk here that can answer those kinds of questions.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TURNER: But your program is in Morris? You were mentioning Parsippany.

MS. KASABACH: For infant care. Yes, but even there, they're not meeting the needs of the population there. And I'm not talking about just those people who are very low income. I'm talking about across the board, just the availability.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TURNER: And the cost.

MS. KASABACH: And the cost, right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TURNER: Right.

MS. KASABACH: AT&T, I believe she told me, has child care for \$840 a month for their own employees up there.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TURNER: For their own. And they probably have a long waiting list.

MS. KASABACH: I don't know.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Thank you very much.

William Camp, Camden City Revitalization Coordinator.

WILLIAM CAMP: Good afternoon, ladies. I come to you today to speak to you about the day care centers and such as that. I represent a group of Christian athletes -- professional athletes -- that are involved in a project that's ongoing in the City of Camden. It's the development of a commercial shopping center, 180,000 square feet.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Is your microphone on?

MR. CAMP: Red. Red is on? (referring to microphone)

While we were developing the plans for the shopping center, we sort of fell into what I'm going to speak to you about, and it's about the public assistance and the workforce and welfare reform and mothers go on welfare. We found that during our speaking to the community at church groups, two of the biggest problems were day care and transportation.

The day care part we sort of incorporated into our plans. We are building a day care on the site, and this will serve two functions. The first function is doing a training period of the working mothers that we are willing to take into the program and put into the program, that we will erase one of their biggest concerns, which is day care.

During the training period and then during the actual employment on the site, there will be approximately 240 jobs manufactured there, and the wealth of the jobs are earmarked for public assistance in every format. We have negotiated with First Union Bank, which will give us -- we're in the process now of buying a building in close proximity to the site of the development for temporary quarters for the day care center.

We have also incorporated retired professional people such as school teachers and accountants and whatever -- most of them are women -- to staff -- and church groups -- to staff our day care center. One of the principal objects of this day care center is not only to house children -- which is a bad term, but that's the term that's used -- is to give them a head start on education so that when they leave our day care center, as we call it, as we speak, to send them on into the school system, that they will be on par with

most other children that receive other than mom and pop care, meaning typically *ABCs*, learning how to count, telling time, but more importantly to get their minds in gear for what school is all about. If we don't do something on this scale in a program such as this, we'll be back here 10 years from now discussing the same thing.

We're not looking for anything from the State. Our cost is approximately -- we're at 10 percent of what the mother's or the family's total salary will be, their take-home salary, which is not going to be a lot, anyway.

Also, on-site, we're building, with Cooper Hospital-- We signed a lease with Cooper Hospital this morning to build a primary care facility, which we're going to work along with the County Prosecutor's Office, who is going to staff part of this facility for child abuse, domestic abuse, and such as that.

The reason for this is that there is -- psychological abuse comes in, as you all know, in many forms and ways. By doing this we're hoping that by bringing the children into the day care center, having them in a controlled environment where they will enjoy themselves and not only have a learning experience, that any problems they may have will be dealt with on-site. Any problems that they're having in the community, or such as that, will be dealt with on-site.

I'm here just to speak to about trying to speed up the process. We don't have a permit, and I'm finding out now it may take us some time to get the permit. We're ready to go. We're on the fast track with this development. We've already met with the State. We have our loans guaranteed from the bank. We're expecting to start construction the first week in June to have the

doors open by April or May of next year. We're talking about a long training process for the mothers and the fathers and the parents that are on public assistance. Once we start this program, we have to have somewhere where we can have a day care center, and I understand we have to be licensed. I just found this out within the last week from one of your staff.

It's very, very important that we sort of get through all this red tape and muckety-muck and get into the real process of opening these centers up. We're doing this--

We're not asking you for any money. We're not here today for that. This is our money, and this is the development corporation's money that is being put up that's funding this, along with, as I said, the Christian Coalition of Athletes -- professional football, baseball, and basketball players throughout the country.

As a matter of fact, the two most active members of this group play for the Kansas City Chiefs. One is from Pennsauken, New Jersey.

We would just like to express our concerns that a normal day care center, what it means and what it should be. We feel strongly that the day care centers should occupy some of the time of getting the children's minds in gear for what school is going to be all about. It's not like a regimen. It's not -- I hate to call it training -- but the pure fact is that some children go into the school systems today not prepared for school. They don't know what the discipline in the school is, and they sort of take it the wrong way. This way here, through our plan -- our concept of what a day care center may be -- is that we would like to get them more actively involved in what the time of the

day is and how you're supposed to do things and such as that, and prepare them for school.

Is there a problem with that? I didn't come to argue or anything. That's all I came for. I'm here to express a desire for the process to be speeded up.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Do you know what specific permits you're lacking? Are they just--

MR. CAMP: Permits for the building, we have. We're not lacking anything. I understand we have to be licensed.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: We'd be happy to work with you and--

MR. CAMP: And there's a long, long wait for that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: We'd be happy to work with you to help you make sure that this--

MR. CAMP: I'd appreciate it. It would really be a -- relieve one of our major stumbling blocks right now.

Everything is oriented here -- this project -- it's 90-- Well, we're a little closer than that. We figure 92 percent of the people that are going to be working are going to be Camden City residents. Of that 92 percent, 71 percent -- this is just a figure that we, through a study that we did -- will be people who are coming off public assistance, and it involves a lot. It involves a lot.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Do you have a sense of what percentage of those working there will be volunteers?

MR. CAMP: All of them. There are no paid employees at this day care center. It's being run by the Christian Coalition of Athletes. They're donating their time. We have already reached out to the business community -- the retired business community -- to bring retired teachers and such as that in. That's going to be the crux of everything.

The only thing that is going to cost is to maintain the building and that is being provided by the development corporation. The staff is being provided by total volunteers. We figure 10 percent of the participant's payroll will cover any cost that is incurred there.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: And what do you anticipate that 10 percent number being?

MR. CAMP: Well, if it's \$300 a week, it's \$30 a week.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: You think that will cover your costs?

MR. CAMP: We're underwriting all the other costs. We're talking about children; we're not talking about a building here. We think everybody's concern should be that. We wouldn't be here today if they took care of this 20 years ago.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: This is the kind of thing that many of us are looking and working toward -- looking at and working toward -- the idea of a community-based day care that is supported by, as you say, those in the community, those who are retired can come and volunteer, those businesses who can help out and underwrite. I think we'd probably like to--

MR. CAMP: We're looking for-- We're not looking for too much. What we're looking for is some way we can get on the fast track with the day

care center. That's something that we're looking we have to have open within the next six weeks. We really do, and in order to do that, we have to come here. That's why I'm here today.

There are other people out there exactly like us. It's just not only us. There are other people who would like to be involved, but sometimes you get scared by the red tape in Trenton or Washington, D.C., wherever it may be; it doesn't make a difference. It's a very scary process if you're not strong enough to go dive into it. And unfortunately for me, I was picked for that, and after I contacted your office, here I am.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: All right. Very good.

Assemblywoman Heck.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thanks.

I think that's commendable, but you have to understand, you're entering a world that is so very important that you have to be cautious, and time limits shouldn't be your major concern. I think quality of care is what we're looking at here.

And I commend your group for wanting to do this, particularly in an urban area, where it is so needed. May I respectfully suggest that you approach organizations who have been in the business, so to speak, for a long time, and they can help you not only get through the red tape, but put the program together in a very proper manner.

I think you can reach out to Catholic Charities. You can reach out to the YWCAs, the Boys and Girls Clubs, people of that nature, and a lot of groups who have already spoken here today. I think in your particular case, though, you're in a unique position, because one of the things that we've

learned in recent weeks, through the new innovative experiences that have been coming through brain research, that children between birth and the age of five really need intellectual stimulation. So what I'm looking toward, and this Advisory Council, I believe, is looking toward is an improvement and innovation, as well as bringing together dollars, possibly from the Core Curriculum grants that are being put together.

But you're saying you don't have money problems?

MR. CAMP: We don't need money problems. We're trying to put together--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: No, I'm asking you, you have no--

MR. CAMP: I understand.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Then you can access retired teachers, retired child care people, who could put a program together that would be marvelous in an urban area, because, again, the children in urban areas don't have as much opportunity, as in a place where they're born into affluent families, where there is intellectual stimulation.

I've been told by educators, as recently as this morning, that if children are given that unique experience early on, we may have less of a need for special education in future years -- in later years.

So I think it's so important what you're doing, but may I respectfully suggest that perhaps we meet later, and I'll just go out into the audience and team you up with a couple of people who could give you the proper guidelines so that you could move ahead quickly, but again, in a good manner where you'll have quality care.

MR. CAMP: Yes, ma'am.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: There are several that I can even put you in touch with--

MR. CAMP: I appreciate it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --who are retired superintendents, who are volunteering their time to put these programs together, especially in urban areas, because there is a great need.

MR. CAMP: That's why we targeted Camden. I'm from Camden.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Great. I think it's wonderful. I'll meet you in the hall in two minutes.

MR. CAMP: Are there any other questions?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Are there any other questions?
(no response)

We also have our staff out there, as well, Assemblywoman Heck. Our district goes down to the border of Camden. I don't know whether you'll be drawing any people from the Pennsauken area or not.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, I'm sorry.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: That's all right. All of us can give information. That's perfect.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I don't believe that this should be geared to a particular county.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: No, you're right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: This is a statewide problem.

MR. CAMP: It's a worldwide problem.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I'm not concerned about so much where he is from. I'm concerned about the fact that we're talking about an urban area, and we have those all over the State.

MR. CAMP: Everything we're doing here is earmarked toward urban areas. Being as I am from Camden, and we're doing this project in Camden, but I agree with you that professional people will be a lot of help to us. We are just people of meager means.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: We desperately want to see what you are doing succeed, because this, perhaps, fits into the paradigm that we are also looking at, and we want to see it succeed not just in Camden, but all across the State. It's a way to get good day care to everybody.

So thank you very much for being with us.

MR. CAMP: Thank you for having me.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I'd like to call Bea Urban and Cynthia Mott, from the Medford Leas Retirement Community. And I ask that when you speak into the microphone, you bring it very, very close to your face.

B E A U R B A N: My name is Bea Urban, and I'm Director of the Child Day Care Center at Medford Leas Continuing Care Retirement Community in Medford, New Jersey. I am here today to give testimony regarding our experience with using volunteers from our retirement community in our day care program.

As I'm sure you are aware, the average life span in our country is steadily increasing, with people staying healthy and vital much longer than in the past. At the same time, the number of working mothers who need day care for their children is also on the rise. What do these two facts say to us? Why

not draw upon this wonderful human resource to help fill the growing needs of our society.

Our experience at Medford Leas has been a very positive one. We've found that putting retired people together with young children is a winning combination. In this mobile society, many children do not have grandparents nearby. At Medford Leas, the children have resident surrogate grandparents who offer maturity, experience, and expertise in a variety of areas. Some of our residents have worked as teachers, librarians, doctors, psychologists, and so on. Others have many interesting hobbies and experiences they can share. Most are parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents. Working well with children is not a matter of having the right courses in college or a professional educational background as much as having a genuine enjoyment of children and an intuitive way of interacting with children. Putting the generations together helps the children learn about another time, other places and points of view. Somehow, when the two generations get together, something magical happens.

Magic happens for the retired volunteers, as well, when they are received with respect and open acceptance. Too often seniors feel useless and isolated when they are no longer active in their jobs or roles as parents and caregivers. The loving relationship built up with the children helps to fill this void and makes them feel needed again.

Churches, community centers, and senior citizen centers could all be involved in providing new sources for child care, both in terms of physical site and volunteer staff. Some degree of training and orientation would be advisable, but it could be done by the professional day care staff or through a

State program. From my own experience in Pennsylvania, I know that they did have a program which trained senior citizens to work in day care.

Again, I would like to emphasize that this is a valuable resource, and every effort should be made to make it possible to take advantage of it.

I would like to add that we do not use volunteers in place of staff at Medford Leas, but in addition to our staff.

Cynthia Mott is one of our residents who works in our day care, and she would like to say a few words.

CYNTHIA MOTT: I'm Cynthia Mott, and I'm a resident of Medford Leas Retirement Community and a volunteer at the child day care center.

One of the most important aspects of my life at Medford Leas is the opportunity that I have to work with the children at the day care center. I'm a trained art teacher, so I bring a special skill to the center. But the rewards I find personally as a volunteer are equally important.

I really like to work with the children, and I want to be there. It enriches my life, and when I'm not in the day care center, I find that I'm thinking about the challenges and planning my lessons to see how to approach different situations.

I believe the children benefit as well. I think my age allows me a different perspective, and as a grandmother figure, I provide a presence that may be missing in the lives of some of the children. We all learn acceptance and respect for other generations.

I'm lucky because I live where this experience is readily available to me. I think that it is an experience and an opportunity that many retired people would appreciate having if it were available to them as well.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Cynthia, if I could ask you, do you just drop in or is there a specific time?

MS. MOTT: No, I have a schedule. I'm pretty close to Bea. We talk about what's going on. I put in my notions. We work it out together. I come. The kids see me. We do our painting.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Bea, how many volunteers do you have, how many children, and how many staff?

MS. URBAN: In our day care, we have at one time, probably, around 30 children, at one time. We take children from six weeks to age five, and we have 10 staff members, not all there at the same time.

As far as volunteers, we have a variety. We have volunteers that come once a week. We have volunteers who stop in every day just for a few minutes, some who come once in a while. We have a whole variety, depending on what the residents feel comfortable with. Sometimes they do something once a year. It all depends on their needs and our needs.

We have three volunteers who come on a weekly basis, and others who come in different capacities.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Do you think that it would be possible to partially staff or help staff using volunteers, such as Cynthia Mott, if they were able to, very specifically, say, "I will be there every Monday," or, "I will be--"

MS. URBAN: I think it would be possible as long as you had a backup, you had a system going. It would have to be a knowledgeable person running this--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Certainly.

MS. URBAN: --and coordinating it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Any questions?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Can you tell me a little bit more about the program that you do operate at the retirement center?

MS. URBAN: Yes. We have a day care center for the employees who work at the retirement center.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: And tell me a little bit about the retirement center itself. Is it apartments?

MS. URBAN: We have town houses and apartments, and we have a nursing area, so we have an intergenerational program with the nursing home, as well. So some residents come down to the day care, and we go to the other residents -- we have residents that we go to visit in their apartments because they want a visit. So we have a regular program that runs all day, and we have three different rooms, depending on age.

But the children are very much a part of the community. It's an integral part of the community. It's been running for almost 10 years now.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: So then you are an employee of the retirement community?

MS. URBAN: I'm the Director of the day care, so I am an employee of the retirement community.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: And it's just for employees?

MS. URBAN: We also take community people. We take other people when we have room, but we were set up originally for the employees.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: To your knowledge -- if I may, Madame Chairperson -- are there any other programs like this in the State?

MS. URBAN: In New Jersey, at a retirement community? I know there are in Pennsylvania. I do not know of any in New Jersey. There may be, but I don't know.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: And you said you've been operating there for 10 years.

MS. URBAN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: And does-- How many on staff did you say you have, paid staff?

MS. URBAN: Ten.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Ten.

MS. URBAN: But some are part-time, some are full-time. And it's just a very loving relationship. The residents come to our open houses and our graduation and we just a very close-- We have grandparent's day, and they come down, and they're the grandparents to the children who don't have a grandparent to come. It's a very good relationship to all.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: And the retirement community provides the space for the day care center.

MS. URBAN: And they subsidize half of the cost for child care for the employees.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: It's a fascinating idea, and something that I never heard of before, and, in fact, we have several retirement

communities in our area, in Bergen County, that are somewhat similar to what you are describing.

MS. MOTT: The only thing that it does is that it ensures a pretty high level of employee, because to them it's a big advantage to know that they can have their children taken care of right there.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: On-site, right.

MS. MOTT: And the caliber, we think -- the residents think -- is pretty nice.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Well, that's very interesting. We might be able to use them as a resource for other such programs.

MS. URBAN: I'd like to add that, while we're not talking about this, having the nursing home is also a wonderful asset in terms of child care. Our children grow up with very different attitudes toward people with disabilities. They do not think anything of someone with a cane or a walker or wheelchair.

The other day we had a resident who was all strapped up with her hand in a brace, and a child asked me a question, "Why does"-- And I was involved in something else and didn't hear the whole question, and I said, "Why is her hand in a brace?" She said, "No, why does she have a Winnie-the-Pooh napkin in front of her?" There was nothing abnormal about having her hand in a brace.

This kind of senior-child relationship is a very precious one, and I think it has far-reaching ramifications for all of their lives.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Thank you for sharing this with us. I appreciate it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Again, this rather fits what we're looking at and hoping to replicate.

You say that half the cost is paid by Medford Leas?

MS. URBAN: Right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: And also the space then is also provided as part of that cost or for free?

MS. URBAN: We kind of invaded Medford Leas. We moved out the knitting and sewing group, and they found another room for them. They made space that was already there. They did not build a new facility. Food comes from the kitchen. It's the same food the residents eat. That is factored in.

We pay a certain -- in our budget, a certain amount is for electricity and a certain amount for food, and that's factored in the cost. We charge \$26 a day for people in the community, and then half that cost for the residents. That would be for an infant. It's less for the older children.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Do you know that number?

MS. URBAN: It's \$22.50 for the older children for the community, and it's \$26 for the younger children for the community. We supply diapers, and we have, of course, a smaller staff-child ratio in the infant room, so we charge them more there.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: This is very important because we need to find a way to expand child care slots. If we can use volunteers, if we can use this community base where the space is already there, where there are loving helpers already available, it will make such a difference in our ability to accomplish what we need to for the children in this State.

Assemblywoman Wright, welcome.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Can you tell us, do you know if your program is self-sufficient then, or does it run at a deficit? Are you required to have a positive bottom line?

MS. URBAN: I have a budget that I am expected to toe, yes. And what we do, I mean, if I'm not meeting the budget, then we will increase our rates slightly. Sometimes we go two years without increasing rates. We might increase 50 cents or a dollar a day. We increase only when we absolutely need to.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: But you're not being subsidized?

MS. URBAN: We have no subsidy, just what the residents contribute. As part of their monthly payment, a certain amount is factored in for child care in with their other costs, so it's spread among all the residents. But we do not get any subsidy from the State or Federal.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: We like that even more.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Could you tell me how many employees and how many residents you have?

MS. URBAN: We have almost 600 residents. I don't know the exact number of employees.

Do you know, Cynthia?

MS. MOTT: I don't have any idea, but there are -- a lot of residents have really needing full-time care--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Provided by the--

MS. MOTT: --and you can just go from-- Where I live, they call it the burbs, and I have no-- I don't take any meals. You can go from that or you can go for complete care.

MS. URBAN: We probably have 400-some employees. I'm not sure of the exact number.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Assemblywoman Crecco.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: This is just for the employees' children, is that correct?

MS. URBAN: We also take children from the community when we have room. What's happening is, it's such a wonderful place to live that nobody leaves, so their children get older and -- wonderful place to work that no one leaves, so the children are getting older of the people who work there, and it has opened some slots in our day care.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: But your employees live on the ground? Is that how it works?

MS. URBAN: No, our employees don't live on the grounds.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Because you say residents. That's where I'm getting confused.

MS. URBAN: The residents are the retired people.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Yes, okay. But you-- I heard a cost factor. You said residents and employees. But the employees pay?

MS. URBAN: The employees pay half and the residents pay half. As part of their monthly fee, they factor in the cost of all the things they are receiving, and part of that is with child care. And they voted to do this when they started the child care. I mean this was--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: That's marvelous.

MS. URBAN: The community was there first, before the child care.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: That's wonderful. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: The residents understood that this would help get them a high-quality, long-term employee.

MS. URBAN: And many residents appreciate having children around. They like the feeling there are children and seeing our playground.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Great. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Excuse me. Before you leave, I was thinking of you as the director of the day care center serving as a resource, but obviously, now, with what you're saying, we probably could use representatives of the residents to be able to speak to other communities to let them know what the positive effects of such a program on-site could be, in terms of their own well-being and in terms of the kind of staff they can attract to be of service.

Maybe we'll put the two of you on a road show.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I have to say, as I let you go, I should admit that I'm familiar with Medford Leas, having served on their board in the '70s and early '80s, and will also admit that bringing these two groups of youngsters and older people together originally came from me; although, I did not actually implement it. But clearly, this is an idea that I had hoped that by now would have caught on and spread like wildfire, and it

hasn't. It's an idea that clearly works, and hopefully, we will, as a Council and as a State, help maybe now to move this ahead.

Thank you.

Ceil Zalkind, Association for Children.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Before Ceil speaks, I would like to mention that Ceil is such an advocate for children on so many levels. When I first came to Trenton, many years ago, she ran into my committee and told me, "Let's not spend time reinventing the wheel. We have a lot of research." So what we're seeing today is a testament to the fact that there are a lot of innovative ideas out there, but they have to be propagated to the entire State.

C E I L Z A L K I N D: Thank you very much.

Thank you. I'm Ceil Zalkind. I'm the Associate Director of the Association for Children of New Jersey, which is a State-based child advocacy organization located in Newark. We don't provide any direct services, so the ideas that I have come from other people. We're not involved in any direct service provision, including child care.

I have to commend you, Assemblywoman Allen and the members of the Committee, for holding this hearing. I think this is the most critical issue today. If you look at what's going to happen with Work First and the number of women and children who must be involved -- who will be required to be involved in this program, the success or failure of this program, I think, depends on one or two things -- or two things totally: jobs and child care.

The availability, the affordability of child care will be the most critical factor in whether this program succeeds or fails in New Jersey.

And as you heard from other speakers, it's even more critical in New Jersey, because our State chose to require women with children over the age of 12 weeks to work. So in some ways, we're harsher even than the Federal law requires.

I'd just like to begin by telling you what I think are three -- or what our Association believes are three key principals that you should keep in mind as you proceed with this enquiry around how do we expand child care to meet what will be an extraordinary need over the next few years.

One is, we feel very strongly that you cannot sacrifice quality to save money or to develop more child care slots. It's going to be very tempting. The temptation is there. Some other states who are ahead of us in Work First, who acted even before the Federal law was passed have already begun to use homes that are not approved. They call them exempt homes, informal homes. We have a category of approved homes here in New Jersey. It's tempting. They have a role in the child care community to provide some assistance to parents who need child care at unusual hours, but we should not depend the system on unregulated child care. I think this is a very critical issue.

If you look at our category of approved homes, which came out of the Family Development Act, they do not have the same standards that other family day care homes have. People are not required to have criminal history background checks. There is no requirement for a health screening. There are some key elements that must be assured, because these are very young children who are going to spend a great part of their day with another caretaker.

Other states' experience have been alarming. According to the Children's Defense Fund, last year California did a study of its informal or its

exempt homes -- those that are not required to meet the licensing level for family day care homes. They found that 5 percent of those people had criminal convictions, and of those 5 percent, more than half had criminal convictions for child abuse.

So we can't give up on the quality issue. It's absolutely critical.

The second is that we have to maintain choice for parents. I think you've talked about that. You've heard some testimony on that this morning, but choice means more than just vouchers. New Jersey has a very effective, I think, voucher system for parents, but it also requires maintaining an infrastructure of child care that permits choice.

If you look at where the child care centers are in our State, you see a dwindling supply in the urban areas, probably the areas that need center-based child care more than any other area of the State. Part of the support for those child care centers has come through a payment system that provides a sound permanent or ongoing fiscal base for those centers. We have to maintain that, so many states are looking at balancing the use of vouchers with subsidizing child care in centers and also looking at some of the exempt care to give parents a true choice in child care.

I think the last issue that's absolutely critical and also will be tempting is that we can't sacrifice the working poor to the child care needs of those individuals who now will be required to participate in work or an alternative experience under Work First. There are working-poor families who absolutely rely on child care vouchers to keep them working. If they lose their vouchers, they will not be able to work. We can't just recycle people. We have

to really confront the issue of the child care needs and how we're going to pay for it.

I wish I could sit here and tell you it's going to be cheap and it's going to be easy; it's not. I think you'll hear a lot of innovative ideas. I think the individuals who testified prior to me had some excellent suggestions. It certainly is an idea to explore.

The bottom line, though, is this is going to cost money. It's part of the investment. It's not just simply moving people to work; it's providing the investment so they can do it effectively.

Some ideas that I'd share with you about what to keep an eye on as this unfolds: Again, we're at a critical time in our State. I think it's absolutely important to keep up the State share of child care. New Jersey has an excellent track record of matching Federal funding with State funding. We participated in a budget project last year with the National Association of Child Advocates, and probably the one thing in our plus column, compared to other states, is that we have provided State funding to support Federal funding for child care. We've maximized every Federal dollar for child care. We can't give up on that.

The temptation is going to be there. We are going to get an infusion of Federal money over the next couple of years to implement Work First and the TANF Program. It will be a temptation to reduce State dollars and let the Federal dollars fill the bill. Now is not the time to do that. It's really the time to keep up the State's share to increase the supply that exists.

Second is, I think we have to make a commitment to reinvest savings. What sold Work First, what sold the idea of welfare reform was that

it would ultimately save State money, that it would enable people to become self-sufficient, but there would be a savings of funding. It would be tragic if that funding went back into the general treasury.

I know that realistically that will happen to some of the money, but you should really act to set aside a portion of that to develop new child care and maintain child care for people who need vouchers.

There has been some commitment as Work First was developed to what was loosely called a reinvestment strategy. I think that, while you are a very impressive group, it would be critical to make sure that that happens.

Third, I think there has to be some effort to make sure that the early childhood funding that has been set aside in the school funding bill is used. The school funding law set aside this year I believe it was \$288 million to assist certain districts, including the 30 special needs districts -- the urban areas -- establish early childhood programs. Unfortunately, the money is there, but there are not sufficient strings attached to it. So districts are encouraged to use that money for child care; many are not. Many are using that money to make up for holes in their budget.

It's difficult for many of the urban districts. It's not just a question of will, it's also a question of space. When we looked at the 30 special needs districts following the Quality Education Act, the number one issue that residents described as needed in their school system was all-day kindergarten and prekindergarten programs. The number one obstacle to that was not program dollars but where are they going to put the kids. Space is an issue.

It's going to take a lot of work, but this education law provides an opportunity that did not exist before. There is an emphasis on early childhood. I think you have a responsibility to provide some direction and some responsibility to the districts so that the money is used for early childhood.

There has been some discussion already about coordinating existing services. The Governor has recently announced Great Beginnings Proposal attempts to do that. That's a great step in the right direction. I think it would be very positive to build on that. You have Head Start. You have State-subsidized child care. You have early childhood programs in the schools. There has to be a way to coordinate these programs, maximize their resources -- not just their funding resources, but their space, their expertise, their staff. I think this is a direction to go in.

Fifth, there is one small issue, which the Office of Legislative Services has highlighted this year in the Department of Human Services Budget Analysis, the Bureau of Licensing and the Division of Youth and Family Services, which is responsible to license child care centers, which we believe does an excellent job. Fees they collect for licensing go to the general treasurer. OLS has estimated that this is about \$175,000 a year. Their recommendation in their budget analysis is to give it back to the Bureau of Licensing to reinvest to make sure that that unit is able to continue in DYFS. Small step, we're not talking about a huge amount of money, but something that might be very positive.

The Children's Defense Fund has done some excellent analyses of what's happening in other states. I was not able to prepare my testimony in

writing. I'd be glad to send it to you and also to share with you some of their recent publications, *Helping Parents Work and Children Succeed: A Guide to Child Welfare in the 1996 Child Welfare Act*, which came out in January. I urge you to take a look at it because it does some state-by-state comparisons. It also discusses some efforts some other states are making.

Colorado has set up an infant tax checkoff similar to our Children's Trust Fund and the Wildlife Protection Fund. Very small, this is not going to support child care, but they are using it to enhance quality measures for child care. Colorado is also exploring significant income tax credits for parents to be able to afford child care.

Rhode Island has made a commitment: they will provide state funding for child care that is necessary.

And interestingly, Georgia has said, "No child care, no work." If a parent is not able to access child care, the sanctions that would normally attach for not working would not attach. I think that's a provision that's in our Work First bill. It's left to the Department to describe what it means if a parent cannot access child care. I would urge you to look at that most liberally to ensure that someone who truly can't get child care is not penalized.

I'd be very glad, as we hear from other states -- we're part of a national network -- to share further information with you, and I commend you. I think this is a very critical issue and a very critical time to raise it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Thank you very much.

Assemblywoman Heck, did you want to speak?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I did.

Ceil, again, thank you very much for being here. I think what you said is important, especially giving information as to the existing resources, because in some towns they are out there, and no one knows how to reach them.

So I think an educational outreach as to what is available is most important. And I think the maximizing of dollars such as is in the education funding is absolutely vital. And the use of buildings that are housing YMCAs, YWCAs, church groups, Boys and Girls Clubs all can be utilized rather than spending it on a building program. I think we have to think in terms of the human factor here, and the fact that we need so many urban centers that we should concentrate on that, and join the educational piece with the day care/child care program to maximize its success so that, when the children are ready to go to school, they're out there, their IQs are better, they're on an equal footing with a more affluent area. I think that all of the work, day care programs, such as we have in Bergen County with the Hackensack University Medical Center, where people are absolutely anxious to work there because they have the most wonderful child care facility there, and they can move-- If it's a nursing mother, they can go to the child care facility and take care of a child, and we have a lot of that going on.

I know that in Bergen County, also, we have a kind of an ethnic program going on, where people from other countries are now sharing their abilities for child care, because they are very well educated women, and they reach out to their areas on a one-to-one basis to bring them into child care and a working facility.

So all of the information that's imparted here today, through the efforts of our Chair and the Council, I think, will come to fruition, and hopefully, we'll receive your information in writing.

And, Ceil, I do want to tell you about the need for the Work First New Jersey and the child care piece, that women can't find child care. That is a major concern. I've spoken to the Human Services Commissioner. He has assured me that would be a place he is most sensitive to, and as far as the piece of saying, "Well, after 12 weeks--," well, I've been told by women who were working on this that women who are of average means or a little below average have to go back within a week. So I mean, there is--

They want equity, too, because they've reached out to us and said, "Would you pay us, too."

Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Any other questions? (no response)

MS. ZALKIND: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I'd like to call Elizabeth Ryan Medley, Director of Ryan Academy, Vice President of New Jersey Child Care Association.

ELIZABETH RYAN MEDLEY: Good afternoon.

I've provided some copies of a letter from Lisa Forrester, who is the President of the New Jersey Child Care Association, and you should all have copies of that for yourselves to review. And in addition, I'd like to just cover, basically, two things.

First, some background about child care center within the State of New Jersey. Our Association, the New Jersey Child Care Association, is a network of about 130 licensed child care providers in New Jersey. And myself, I'm also the Director of a preschool in New Jersey.

Just some background on funding: Within our Association, among the licensed child care providers, profit as well as nonprofit, infant care averages about \$200 per week in a nonsubsidized program. As a minimum standard, the child is in a licensed, safe setting where the entire building has smoke alarms, fire suppression systems, two exits out of each room, and the infants are located in areas where their safeguard is much higher than that of their own home, along with one teacher for every four children, and the teacher herself needs to earn a living salary.

In a family day care home, registration is optional and individuals can have up to five children within that home with so much as a working smoke detector. At \$200 a week for the cost of quality versus less than half of that in a basement, where do you feel parents of children -- parents who have children, coming off the welfare rolls, will send their children?

My recommendation is for the Council to help by providing vouchers to parents to subsidize the cost of care in licensed settings, making it affordable to all families, and I strongly encourage family day care homes to meet standards comparable with that of licensed centers.

In increasing child care slots and the appropriate use of funding, I'd like to encourage the Governor's initiative to go beyond the nonprofit sector, to include for-profit centers, as well. Simply because a center chooses

to operate as a for-profit corporation, the tuition rates for parents are often very competitive and, at times, lower than that of a nonprofit counterpart.

For example, in Mercer County where our association is based, at one of the higher-quality centers -- a for-profit center -- infant care costs approximately \$11,000 per year, and that still does not fully cover the cost of care for the child. Child care is primarily subsidized by the low salaries paid to teachers. At this center's competing preschool, which is a nonprofit child care center, infant care costs approximately \$18,000 a year. Their salaries at this center are much higher, but most of the children do not attend at \$18,000 a year, most of the children do not attend full-time. More money to nonprofit corporations may not necessarily translate to more money for children.

In conclusion, salaries are generally the highest cost among most child care providers, up to 70 percent to 80 percent of the operating costs for a child care center. Any subsidies that the Council can provide-- For example, matching funds for teacher's salaries or monetary incentives tied to longevity in the field, professional development, or other factors is one way to increase the quality of child care for children. While volunteers are helpful, a consistent, trained caregiver is truly in the best interest of children.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: Thank you.

Are there any questions?

I guess it's just the two of us here. (referring to the absence of Council members)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: May I just ask the witness--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: Yes, Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: You mentioned your-- The Child Care Association is in Mercer County.

MS. RYAN MEDLEY: Right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Where is it located?

MS. RYAN MEDLEY: Monmouth County, Monmouth Junction. That's where our headquarters is located, but we represent centers from all 21 counties.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: You mentioned someone in Mercer County. Who was that?

MS. RYAN MEDLEY: The centers in Mercer County?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Yes. Who was the person you mentioned -- or the center?

MS. RYAN MEDLEY: There are two centers in Mercer County.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Yes.

MS. RYAN MEDLEY: One is the Harmony School, and the other is the Princeton Montessori School, as far as for profit and nonprofit.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: I represent Monmouth Junction and Hamilton.

MS. RYAN MEDLEY: Okay.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Thanks.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: Thank you, Assemblywoman.

Thank you very much.

Alta Moore, the Atlantic County Women's Center.

A L T A M O O R E: Good afternoon.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: Good afternoon. Are you Kathy? Kathy Miller?

MS. MOORE: No, Kathy was not able to be here.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: Oh, okay. I see two people. I have two names.

Thank you.

MS. MOORE: All right. Thank you. On behalf of the Atlantic County Women's Center, I would just like to thank you for this opportunity.

The Atlantic County Women's Center is now the single entity, as far as being a sponsoring organization for family day care and handling the TANF piece in our County.

I have a young lady here with me who has, pretty much, come through the ranks, and her name is Joanne Martinez. I would just like for her to give you a few comments, give a little background, as far as her experience in our system.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: Thank you.

JOANNE MARTINEZ: Well, like she said, I am Joanne Martinez. I have a little different aspect of the history of child care, since I was one of the participants who went through the system.

It was real difficult as a participant to get off of the system because of child care. I come from a background where I was a single parent -- had more than one child, let's just say that -- and it was real difficult. I went through the welfare system, through CWEP, through jobs training, and now I'm employed at the Atlantic County Women's Center.

One of the things that has been much easier for me is that right where I work there is a day care center, so I have the opportunity to take my son with me to work. One of the things that I suggest that will be much easier-- Because it's easy, if mothers are forced to go into the workplace, because if they say they're going to sanction you or take you off the program, you don't have a choice. But what type of quality work is this mother going to give if she's not confident of where her child is? I think one of the important things is to probably set up something where there could be child care right within the workplace so that mothers can give better work to their employers. Like a lot of other women say, that's the most difficult aspect, getting quality child care.

Also, after you go through the system and you're employed for a while, a lot of women are taken off because of the amount of money that they make, or what have you. But, like I was discussing with Ms. Moore on our way here, what is a good income, per se, to take the women off the child care assistance? So I think that's also one of the things that needs to be looked at, so the mothers aren't cut off so quickly. It's very fearful knowing that you're going to get cut off and you still have to work and still need child care, because I've encountered several participants with this problem. So I think that the standard of what your annual income is needs to also be looked at.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: Thank you very much.

You certainly have a very good point there, because the bottom line is what do you take home and what is the cost of living, and that's something we definitely have to look into.

Thank you.

MS. MOORE: Just a couple of other points-- Also, the idea of having employers who have child care on the premises: If that is something that could be considered in terms of some kind of -- as subsidy moneys are put out-- If there were some kind of incentive that would encourage different employers to allow that type of setting so that more of our participants would be able to take the children right with them, especially if there are extended hours.

As I've mentioned, we're from Atlantic County, and our prime vendor down there -- our prime employer -- are a lot of the casinos. Very few of our participants start out Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 5:00. They start out at various hours, and that is part of the child care problem, also. So if an employer could have incentive to have more day care slots that would be very helpful, also, for our women.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I will say that we would like to see more corporations do that. As you know, unfortunately, the vast majority of companies are on the small side and just can't provide that kind of thing. But we're hoping to bring them into this new tier that we're looking at and have them be sponsors, have a consortia of small businesses that are somehow sponsors of each individual small community-based child care center. So while you might not be bringing your child with you right to the workplace, they would go to a very close place that your employer, hopefully, would have some contact with.

Are there any questions?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: Do any of the casinos have child care facilities today?

MS. MOORE: Only two that I'm aware of.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: There are.

MS. MOORE: And also one hospital facility, but it is mostly limited to those who are employed right there, you know, employed at the casino, that specific casino.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: There are two. Thank you.

MS. MOORE: I'd just like to also point out that our family day care registered providers have traditionally been held to five slots. This is, when we're talking about expanding day care, of the possibility of enhancing our day care networks that the people-- Possibly they do have some very large, beautiful homes and, given the opportunity, could really provide for more than exactly five children. That's just something to really consider. I hope that that could be touched on legislatively.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Are there any questions? (no response)

Thank you very much.

MS. MOORE: Thank you.

MS. MARTINEZ: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Barbara Horl, the Division on Women, the Department of Community Affairs.

BARBARA HORL: Thank you, Assemblywoman Allen. The Division on Women appreciates the opportunity to testify here today and is grateful that this Council is continuing to explore the many issues attendant to New Jersey's child care needs.

Only by shining the light on this important topic will we as policy makers clearly see what needs to be done to make child care affordable and available to all the women and men who rely on others to supervise and care for their children so that they may work outside the home. Welfare reform has made this even a higher priority than it was before. Now more than ever it is important to forge the links between business, religious, and nonprofit groups that make up our communities. What serves one, serves us all. The quality of life in New Jersey for years to come will be dependent upon the decisions we make now about our children.

In the interest of time, because I see that you have so many people in front of you, and because I have written comments to submit, I will cut to the chase.

The Division on Women is committed to enable women to become financially independent, as you know well. Through displaced homemaker centers, urban women's centers, and Hispanic women's centers, thousands of women are transitioned yearly into the paid-labor market, where many embark on the road to self-sufficiency and dignity for themselves and their children.

Day care and after-school care are offered in some of the centers if there is room for them; although, several provide no child care at all. Many of the centers contacted us in preparation for this hearing today. The centers, as you know, are good barometers of what is good for women. Many will tell you that child care programs that are available now around the State, that they know of, are really struggling, and that's a concern that they expressed to us.

They have a concern for volunteer network for this same reason; that many nonprofits are barely making it as it is, and so they worry about the

stress on the system. Most of the displaced homemakers' centers report that there are not adequate child care services in the communities that they serve, and what exists is not always reliable or affordable.

They all expressed the fact that child care needs to provide late and alternative hours for women who are going back into the job market who have to, perhaps, work shift work and that that really is an important consideration. Accessibility by public transportation should be something that's factored into the equation when one goes to develop networks. Special needs children also need child care, something else that they believe is very important.

Several centers feel that corporate sponsorship should be encouraged -- and just what you've heard here today -- since it keeps the parents and children in the same spot, which is beneficial. That makes the win-win, nobody worries about what's going on. They stressed the need for more subsidized slots -- again, what you've already heard. The great need seems to be for infant care, and they're very concerned that the needs of both welfare parents and working-poor parents are taken into concern because there is going to be such a fine line between the two.

Much of the end of my comments-- Assemblywoman Heck mentioned about the development -- all the kinds of things that we're learning and the concern for quality care. All the evidence that's been shown about the one-to-one relationship, developing the verbal skills, the unique qualities that a child develops into we're seeing more and more or at the very, very beginning. So with this knowledge, we have an even greater task ahead in the care that's provided to very young children.

We thank you for permitting us to share our thoughts with you today. The Division on Women stands ready to assist you in any way that we are able to, and we hope that you will call on us to do so.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Thank you very much.

Are there any questions?

Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Barbara has been involved with these types of issues for many years and when she was an Assembly aide, as well.

Barbara, I've learned that what we talked about before, as far as the education dollars that were mentioned and the Human Services' plan is beginning to be worked on by -- both Commissioners have been in contact. I think it would be important for the Division on Women to play a role in this, and I think it's important for you to reach out to policy planners -- and Fran Hahn (phonetic spelling), in particular, to give her some of your information. Because, I think, it's vital to that planning stage that everything be taken into consideration.

Thank you very much.

MS. HORL: We'll be very happy to do so. Thank you, Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Thank you very much.

Harriet Learner.

Welcome.

H A R R I E T L E A R N E R: Hi. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak. My name is Harriet Learner, and I own Little Learner Academy. I have been in the day care business for 22 years. I have seen the day care field change tremendously.

Twenty-two years ago, when I first started with my center -- my first center -- I had approximately 40 children in my school, and 38 were coming either part-time in the morning or part-time in the afternoon; the other 2 came all day. I now own two other centers -- Little Learner Academy -- and I have approximately 150 children attending my center. I would say about 90 percent of my children are with me all day -- 7:00 in the morning till 6:00 at night -- and the rest of the children come part-time, most of them in the morning, some of them before or after school or before or after kindergarten. So there has been a tremendous change in the child care field over the last 22 years.

One of the issues that I'm really here to address is the exclusion of for-profit centers in the proposal before us. As a for-profit center owner, I employ 30 women -- actually, I employ 28 women and 2 men. I also provide a place for college students to come and do their practice teaching. I provide a place for seniors in high school to be part of the work-study program. I provide a place for parents to place their children and know that their children are being properly cared for.

And the example that I'll give you is: In my infant care room -- I take 12 infants at my center -- my ratio is 3 to 1. More importantly, the person in charge of my infant room was a pediatrician. She was a pediatrician

in Russia, not license as a doctor in the United States; however, she has all the training behind her of being a pediatrician.

In addition to that, I'm an emergency medical technician. I've been riding in ambulances for 15 years. I am a CPR instructor and a first aid instructor, and every single one of my staff members is CPR trained and about half of my staff is first aid trained, as well. In addition to all of that, I provide employment, as I said, for 30 people who pay taxes to New Jersey. And as a child care provider, of course -- a child care center -- I pay taxes to New Jersey, as well.

I'm upset about the exclusion, again, of for-profit centers who are providing quality care for children from receiving any of the money that is being proposed for this project. I believe that there should be a voucher program where the family is found to be eligible and that the money be provided to child care centers via the families who are provided the services. I think that's the equitable way of doing it, and I think that would improve centers.

Another thing that disturbs me is you're talking about providing funds for centers -- for nonprofit centers -- to be built. I know that there are centers -- luckily, knock on wood, not one of mine -- that have openings right now that are for-profit and you're not considering using that space. I think this is a viable solution to providing more child care.

I also would like to say that I have a waiting list for my infant care room, and several people here have spoken about infant care. I have people coming to me two months pregnant to put their children on my list. When I have my list of children waiting to get into my center, many times, I have Baby

So-and-So, because these are children that have not been born yet. I think that's a sorry state of affairs, for parents to have to find a center when they're two-months pregnant. We need more child care facilities, and I don't deny that. But I think you should be looking at for-profit centers as much as you're looking at not-for-profit centers.

That's really all I have to say. I was here for another meeting and didn't even know this was on today, heard about, and said, "I have to get my two cents worth in," so here I am.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: We appreciate your two cents worth and more.

Thank you.

Are there any questions from anyone?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Chairwoman Allen.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Yes, Assemblywoman Wright.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: I just want to reinforce what has been said about the for-profit centers, because, we did the legislative policy discussion at Princeton University -- when the First Lady came -- and one of the groups in the afternoon session that I Chaired was Professional Development, and that same theme came forward from the -- particularly people involved in delivering -- for-profit centers. This issue of for-profit centers-- I think we have to find some way to deal with this issue, so I hope--

I'm not a member of your Council. I'm just listening today, but I hope that we can-- I'll be glad to work with you on this. I had a cadre of people, of experts, also who are focused on this.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: You're absolutely right. For-profit centers are a very important part of child care providers at this point, and we certainly want to see them continue in that role. There is no doubt about that.

What we're trying to do is deal with what you mentioned, that there are not enough child care providers out there now. I'd love all of those slots to come from for-profit providers. The problem is there are so many folks out there who just aren't capable of paying what it takes for you to run your center at the level that you do.

MS. LEARNER: Could I just say something on that?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I would love to know the specific numbers, if you wouldn't mind giving us--

MS. LEARNER: I have them written down right here. I was hoping you would ask me that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Go ahead.

MS. LEARNER: As you've heard before, because of the child-staff ratios, infant care is more expensive than any of the other programs. For my infant care, I charge \$640 for four weeks. In other words, I charge \$160 a week for infant care. I am providing a three-to-one ratio in that room -- worst case, I go to four-to-one, rarely. Most of the time that particular room is three-to-one staffing, with, as I told you, a woman with a pediatrician's background.

My wobblers, which are the children up to two and a half, pay \$145 a month -- I'm sorry, \$145 a week, or \$580 a month. And for my children two and a half and older, I charge \$500 a month, or \$125 a week. I think I am more than competitive with the not-for-profit centers.

In addition to that, I provide anywhere from two- to five-days-a-week care for a child. I provide care from 7:00 in the morning till 6:00 at night, three days a week, four days a week, two days a week, whatever. I also provide part-time care, and I will adjust my rates if someone needs extended care.

We also have children who attended public school kindergarten part of the day and come to us part of the day, and I have an arrangement with the Rockaway Township Schools -- which is the area my centers are in -- where they do the busing. They bring me the children from their school. They pick up to bring them to school in the morning. They bring them back to me at the end of the day. With my kindergartners: We have two kindergarten classes. One group goes to public school in the morning. The other group goes to public school in the afternoon, and the township buses are providing all of that transportation for us. And that's because of my activity in the community. They are now providing that for all of the child care centers -- not just mine -- in Rockaway Township.

I think that that's something that could be extended to other towns if there were a good working relationship to provide that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Wonderful idea.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I think we should look into it and see what we can do about this, Madam Chairwoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Good. Thank you very much.

MS. LEARNER: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I'd like to call Alma Hill-Byron, Executive Director of L.I.F.T.

It's good to see you.

ALMA J. HILL - BYRON: Thank you. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I'm going to ask you to speak very closely to the microphone. (referring to PA microphone)

MS. HILL-BYRON: All right.

On behalf of L.I.F.T., our executive board staff, and our clients, we would like to thank you for having invited us here this afternoon.

I thought I had it all together in my head as to what our approach should be today. Then, at 2:00 this morning, when we were looking at the news -- the rehashing of the news -- I saw, all of a sudden on the TV, the picture of a young woman in the custody of the police here in Trenton, and all of a sudden, I looked at her face and realized that I knew her. It was because of that -- I knew her and she had been a part of our program at L.I.F.T. and graduated from our parenting classes and had fallen by the wayside.

She had fallen because, although we did our best to prepare her to care for her children and to maybe get herself off of dependent services, we did not have the infant day care services that she needed at the time. So much to my astonishment, I saw in the papers this morning, accusing this young woman of turning tricks and leaving her children not being cared for.

We are here today, our Board President, Patricia DeCardona-Weltch, and our volunteer fiscal person, Bela Komensky, who has been with us now since 1988 and is still a volunteer and has empathy and understanding, certainly, for the clients we are trying to serve.

L.I.F.T. is now 15 years old, and we had the day care center planned into the program, 24-hour services, taking the infants when they were

one month to six weeks old so that these young teen mothers and fathers could get back into school and get on with their lives. Somehow or another, we were not selected for any of the day care programs.

Maybe I don't understand too much, because, as you can see from our mission statement -- and the sheet that I sent to this Council -- that we planned in a holistic fashion so that we could address all the pitfalls and the weaknesses that could come from young women and young men having children too early in their lives. But maybe it was because we could not write proposals in a competitive sense, to make it compete with other people who had the knack of writing and asking for funds and for being funded and making it believable.

So here we are looking at someone who we had invested a lot of time and energy in, who we thought would be a success, and now she is rather devastated with three of her children having died in a fire and having her being accused of not being a fit mother.

I saw Assemblywoman Diane Allen at the Council of Churches meeting earlier on and was so impressed with what she had to say about what her expectations were for day care and thought that, well, we should certainly hitch our star to what she was trying to do -- hoping that someone would look kindly on us and give us an opportunity, since we have a very successful program in the middle of the city.

I am called the black Mother Teresa of Trenton, because I'm always there, even when other agencies are closed. Although we don't have the money, we have prayers and good wishes of everyone, and we have succeeded in giving services.

Now, I might not understand what the emphasis of this Council is, but we certainly have people here who have had the experience of presenting programs, developing programs, and will speak to you on behalf of L.I.F.T. I don't know which one wants to go first, but--

Pat Weltch is our new Board President, and she brings another ethnic group to this group. So I'll shut up for a minute.

PATRICIA DeCARDONA - WELTCH: Again, this morning, prior to coming to this meeting, we always open in prayer because we know who runs the show ultimately. This really touched our hearts, so bear with us because we're grieving the deaths of these three children. (referring to newspaper)

To reiterate Assemblywoman Allen's opening statement, affordable day care is critical and crucial, particularly in the face of welfare reform. Just think if affordable day care had been available to Brenda and her family, these three young, untimely deaths may have been prevented. Ms. Melandez was an active participant L.I.F.T.'s parenting classes and other services for several years.

L.I.F.T. has sought and requested funding for an affordable day care center; however, it appears that such requests have fallen on deaf ears. We're here to be the voice and ears for these children and their families -- the ones having complied with recommendations, treatment plans are graduated back into the streets that held them hostage to begin with.

Allow us to be the bridge to facilitate the continuous support these families need to heal and succeed, and encourage the development of subsidized day care with a multicultural perspective so that no one is left out

due to language or cultural differences. We're in this together and can only resolve it together.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Thank you.

B E L A K O M E N S K Y: Thank you for having this public hearing.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Would you pull the microphone closer to your mouth? (witness complies) Thank you.

MR. KOMENSKY: My name is Bela Komensky, and I used to be a Chief Fiscal Officer for the Division of Youth and Family Services for a number of years. I started working in the Division of Youth and Family Services in 1973. I worked there for a number of years. I worked with child care -- the early day care centers -- with social services, with the block grants, from the financial standpoint and then from the contracting area.

Then I went to the Department of Human Services and I worked on Federal funding. I worked on maximizing the funds for the State of New Jersey, because I felt that many other states were getting their share of the money, but New Jersey was lagging. So we organized and we pulled together in such a way that we understood what made the money move. But the one thing that I didn't realize was that the money really needed to go to the right places, and the right places are for kids and families. Whenever I looked at the numbers, I noticed that 60 percent of the dollars never reached where it was intended to, which was the kids and families.

At that point, I really believed that we needed to look at the whole system. And I was unable to look at from the perspective of the State because the State was looking at it more from their own point of view, and their point

of view is always the appropriation, the various offices, and the offices and what their responsibilities are, and the primary point of view-- They totally lack and miss the point that it's all about people.

That sort of led me to the point where I said-- After seeing a Director who tried to do something at the Division of Youth and Family Services leave the Division because of disagreements with the upper ups, I really felt strongly that I could no longer perform my job. I could no longer see the point that pushing paper was more important than people.

So I just noticed one day that a paper was coming through my desk, and it said that an organization -- that I happened to know a little about -- in Trenton was getting its fund pulled for a number of reasons. (displays emotion) One of the most important reasons was for not keeping its paperwork in a proper manner, for not being able to account for every nickel and every dime, and this was the reason for the funds to be pulled, and this was in 1988. I definitely felt that this kind of a situation can be corrected one way or another, but that's not the direction that the agency went. The direction it went was to pull the funding and discontinue the services with the agency.

Thank you. (Assemblywoman Weinberg gives witness glass of water)

What I thought we needed to do was to go into the community and to use every part of government -- its resources, its manpower, its funds -- and to move into the communities and do those talented things that the State workers are so capable of doing but to do it for a purpose and to the benefit of families within the cities and within our communities.

Well, I resigned from my job and wasn't sure what to do, but I looked at a number of different things, and I thought to myself, I've got an education, I can do this and I can do that, etc., etc. But each time, the one thing that kept on in my mind was the people in Trenton and the people, especially, on Warren Street not getting what they're entitled to just like every other child. So I volunteered-- (displays emotion)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I think it's important to note that God works in mysterious ways. I think you were being moved in the right direction.

MR. KOMENSKY: But volunteering was just the beginning, seeing what really goes on and being and walking with the people is really when you know how fortunate so many of us are.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: One of the things that we really want to be able to do is to support programs that already exist, that do the kinds of things that we need to have done, which is provide the community-based child care, doing it in the way it should be done where children are truly cared for and treasured and valued and enriched.

What you're talking about I think probably all of us have seen, from time to time, when government slips up. It surely happens, there is no question about it. Unfortunately, there are times when people in government have the sense that one size fits all and that if you don't fit right into this exact little box, then we're going to get rid of you, instead of maybe helping you fit or changing the box size.

We're trying to move outside of the box and do something that, maybe, is a little bit risky because it is an idea that hasn't been tried here, but

we know that we've got to do that and we've got to support those grassroots efforts that are making a difference. That's why we needed so much to hear from you and some of the other groups who are here.

I'd like to ask, apart from the fact that perhaps government has failed you from time to time, how you see government very specifically being able to step in and help now?

MR. KOMENSKY: Well, a number of things. Number one, if we start really looking at the community and we start looking at people in the community, what their needs are, and organize accordingly so that those needs are met not by government, but by people in the community. We need to listen to what people have to say in the community, and bureaucrats -- me, I was one--

I don't know the answers. We never did, but yet we got paid and we thought we knew the answers. The answers really lie in the community.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: How can government be the catalyst, though, to bring the community together -- to not only listen, but to also then finally support and move forward?

MR. KOMENSKY: Well, different communities are at different stages, and some communities are much more together and are working so closely with each other -- with nonprofit, with for-profit businesses, with government -- at all levels that they are really paying attention and looking at what makes sense for that community.

I think those and all other communities need to be supported to accomplish their objectives so that they can say that there isn't a single child

left behind, that there isn't a single brain that hasn't been challenged -- and not just walked through school -- and that the schools that they go to--

I mean, just the other day I had an opportunity to be part of a Net Day New Jersey. I walked through one school. I walked through a nonprofit, which is a Boys and Girls Club, and I'll tell you, those facilities were really something. We need to really see what they are.

The environment has to be in such a way so that we can succeed -- the people in the environment can succeed. If someone is hungry, they can't pay attention to anything else, and if they don't have clothes they can't consider looking for housing yet. First, they'd want to have the clothing that they need so they don't freeze in the winter. If the power is shut off, they will find a way of providing a light. Sometimes it's not what we expect.

So I really believe that looking at it from the perspective as to what are the great resources this State has available to it, and how do you take those resources -- not in the traditional manner, but in the way that you've been talking about, looking at getting out of the box and moving into the communities in such a way that we do empower everyone to be part of it, and create enough activities that there isn't anything left that a community needs to accomplish because every one of its members have the education, the health care that they really need, the housing that they need. And that creates a lot of jobs.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Any questions?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Are you saying that we should have a more aggressive outreach program?

MR. KOMENSKY: Absolutely. What good is it when a person comes to the hospital and says, "I'm dying," why not identify what the problem is and deal with it with nickels and dimes that you could correct the problem?

MS. HILL-BYRON: Preventive measures. And it has been-- Our success has been because we've had a very intensive outreach program. Now, all of the things you see on this sheet (indicating) and our mission statement, the foundation of L.I.F.T. as to what we are today, have been accomplished, along with the adolescent pregnancy prevention, the safe-summer enrichment program, the clothing, the food, the shelter, the networking. It has all worked for us.

The late Art Holland bought that building that we're in and gave it to us before he died. We didn't have-- We had 20 years use of it. We didn't have funds to renovate; however, they gave us a limited certificate of occupancy and allowed us to do our work. So we have been successful, as I said, for 15 years.

Now, I think it's quite reasonable for someone to trust us by this time -- that we do know what we're doing. We do care about people, and we are willing to share whatever our strengths, and that we are ready for that day care-- We did have a day care center, but DYFS wanted us to take children who were 18 months old. By the time these girls come back to us, in 18 months, they will have had another child, sometimes two, and so it's losing-- We're kind of working in vain.

The other thing they don't look at is to provide proper housing for these adolescents. If you're not 18, you get no consideration at all. Grandparents? Forget it. They don't do anything for grandparents either.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: So clearly, we can't do this in a vacuum. We need to look at all of the other support things that need to go along with it.

MS. HILL-BYRON: Yes. Yes, right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: As I listen to you, a lot of things go through my mind. Rose mentioned aggressive outreach. The problems we find with wonderful programs like yours is that you are so busy serving the communities you don't always cross all the *T*'s and dot all the *I*'s to get the right kind of applications in.

I have a day care program like that in my own area, in Englewood -- the West Side Infant Day Care Center -- which I've given information to Assemblywoman Allen about. It's a program that serves what I fondly call the baby mommies, the very young girls who have had babies. They are able to take care of 15 children. They have 50 on the waiting list. They get the mothers through school. The graduation rate is very high. It's very labor intensive because they need transportation to pick up the baby mommy and the baby in the morning and take the baby to day care and, then, take mommy to school or these young girls will have no way of getting back and forth. They just have cut out their transportation component because of lack of funding. It's the same kind of thing: They've been so busy providing the child care and the parenting classes for the young mothers and the information about how

not to get pregnant a second time that they have not been able to get into the bureaucracy so that they could get additional funding.

I think that's maybe-- One of the unanswered questions is how we reach out. I mean, we know we should and we have hearings like this, and then, we all get very busy and go back and we get thick reports. How we reach out and provide the services that you need and give you the resources and keep the ongoing relationships or networking or whatever words one wants to use to -- so that you don't have to read headlines about a case that was lost in the system.

MS. DeCARDONA-WELTCH: If I may say something-- I believe that -- and we've discussed this before -- there are a lot of preliminaries that need to take place. If a person doesn't have a place to live, if they're hungry, etc., and we're not addressing those basic needs, these are the things that happen. So we may have all the good intentions, we may have all the good policies, but if the preliminaries are not being acknowledged by funding sources, etc., as viable or reimbursable services, then our programs fall.

L.I.F.T. has always been committed to providing these services -- although we're not paid for it -- because we know that the basic needs have to be met in order to get the teen mother's attention or the teen father's attention to prevent these untimely deaths, to prevent them from going into substance abuse, to prevent high school dropout rates, all of that, and that is not being acknowledged. That is not being acknowledged in a financial manner, in a philosophical manner, or in a theoretical manner. It is not being acknowledged. It attacks the morale of the staff and the person now in the mission of organizations such as ours and others that are present.

I would strongly encourage a lot of you to come and see for yourselves -- not just by our testimony-- I was a teen parent. L.I.F.T. helped me. Today, I'm President of the Board. I never envisioned that I would be President of the Board, because I never thought I'd get through the finals in college.

But that's important. If they didn't deal with me and meet my preliminary needs, I would not be here today in the position that I am professionally and otherwise. I think that those are the things that we really need to look at. That those -- the preliminaries -- basic needs -- not to sound redundant -- are not being acknowledged and are not being met.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Are there any other questions?

Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: I was just-- So you're not just a day care center. You have more than a day care center. Is that so?

MS. DeCARDONA-WELTCH: We have a multitude of services.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: Pardon me?

MS. HILL-BYRON: We are a multipurpose, holistic center.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CRECCO: Oh, I see. I see.

MS. HILL-BYRON: I started a long time ago, back in 1965, you see, with the first neighborhood family planning clinic, then, went onto the group home for girls, and then, to the health center. Then, Paulette Sapp Peterson, who is a judge, called me and said, "Mrs. Hill, I have six young women who came to me in my court today. They came because they were truant. They were truant because they had babies and had no babysitting services, and what are you going to do about that?"

So then, I decided that I would leave and try to-- Knowing all the backgrounds, now, from before -- the antipoverty days and all of that -- I felt that the services were fragmented, always. So we then planned a program that would try to deliver all of the services, whether directly or through networking, or whatever, and so that's how L.I.F.T. was born, really.

The late Barbara Sigmund contributed so much. The Reverend Daphne Hawks (phonetic spelling) and I know that this program was ordained by the Almighty Himself--

MS. DeCARDONA-WELTCH: Amen.

MS. HILL-BYRON: --otherwise, we wouldn't have survived. So thank you for understanding. You know we have to have faith in order to make it, and that's what we've done. Now I'm 75 years old, and I want to retire. So I want you all to help me build that infant care center so I can get--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: You're not going to retire.
(laughter)

Thank you. Thank all three of you very much.

MS. HILL-BYRON: Thank you. Thank you so much for listening.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Ann-Linn Glaser.

ANN - LINN GLASER: Assemblywoman Allen, and members of the Advisory Council on Women, I really want to thank you sincerely for the time and effort that you're putting into ways to help our State better serve the needs of our children.

My name is Ann-Linn Glaser, and I am an educational consultant with a speciality in early care and education. I serve on the Executive

Committee of the Child Care Advisory Council, and I'm currently the representative of the Council on the ad hoc committee that is examining the child care regulations.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Excuse me. You need to remove your hand. (referring to microphone switch)

MS. GLASER: Oh, I'm sorry. Can you hear me better now?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: You need to push it down and then take your finger away.

MS. GLASER: Can you hear me now?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Is it red when you're doing that? (referring to microphone)

HEARING REPORTER: It's the cutoff switch from up there.

MS. GLASER: Okay.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: You're okay.

MS. GLASER: Again, my name is Ann-Linn Glaser. I'm an educational consultant with my specialities in early care and education. I serve on the Executive Committee of the Child Care Advisory Council, and I am currently the representative of that Council on the ad hoc committee that is presently reexamining the child care regulations, which DYFS' Bureau of Licensing uses as a minimum standard of care. That's the issue that I'm primarily interested in addressing today.

You used a term in your flier that announced the meeting today of regulatory flexibility. Frankly, all of the programs that I've been hearing about today that are using some very unique and creative approaches to child

care wouldn't really require any regulator flexibility, and that's something that I'm very pleased to hear.

The process that the Bureau of Licensing is currently undergoing is really quite a unique one. Licensing has created a very diverse group that represents all aspects of the child care community. Although some of the members of this committee are sponsors of for-profit care, while others are representative of the more theoretical academic approach, we all agree on one theme, and that is, that the current regulations need to be continually strengthened in order to provide appropriate care for our youngest children. That care needs to be safe and healthy care, as well as appropriately stimulating.

We need our providers to be well trained, and we need-- There needs to be -- to the needs of all providers of care who are attempting to continue to raise the bar on what we can accept as minimal standards-- While at the same time, we don't want to jeopardize the viability of child care as a business. As you've heard today, the nonprofit sector is a very important sector in the child care business and in the child care providing world.

As we learn more about what types of care enhance the future potential of our youngest children, we must be sure to give that minimal level of care and better for our children who are most at risk. The providers of care are asking for more standards not less, which is really so interesting. We sit at our meetings, the providers of care are saying regulate us more, and DYFS is trying to be very sensitive to the needs of the child care community in not legislating people out of business, but they're hearing our message and they are responding to that call.

I sometimes-- I'm almost feeling like we're having a love fest for DYFS here today, but the truth is that the Bureau of Licensing is very responsive to the needs of the child care community. And that's no more evident than it is in the process that we're undergoing to reexamine the regulations.

We're aware that we can't currently service the needs of all of the children who are in need of care and the increased caseload of children we are expecting to need care as the new welfare system is played out. We're all searching for creative new approaches to provide the increased slots we need and no initiative should be discarded until we've worked together to work out the kinks and make our goals of more child care possible. However, we must be very careful that quality is not set aside in the push for more slots.

We should look at some categories for care that other states are pursuing or have been successful with, in the past, such as a group home category. We might reexamine some successful models that exist within our own State -- and you've heard from many of those models today -- and adapt these models to the current realities we face.

One such model that I don't think has been addressed today is the cooperative nursery, which was originally established to provide care and education where much of the labor is provided by parent volunteers who are supervised by qualified child care staff. This model might be adapted to a cooperative where the volunteer staff might be other than parents, perhaps community volunteers, in areas where need is high but resources are few.

But as we're looking to new providers of that care, we must be sure these new providers are well trained and well supervised and that they will be

consistent in their delivery of care. In cooperatives where parents are the volunteers, the commitment comes from the parents' commitment to their own children. If volunteers other than parents are used, we need some other incentives to provide the consistency and reliability which has been found to be a key issue in effective child care. Volunteers are those not used to the rigors of daily work must be carefully screened, monitored, and motivated to be sure they are there on a daily basis, ready and able to give these children the care they need so desperately.

We also need to provide a forum where legislators, such as yourselves, technical experts in child care, and members of the community and governmental agencies can all sit down at a table and come up with the creative approaches that will work best for our children.

Ratios and group size are one of the greatest predictors of success for children in early care and education settings; training of caregivers is another. We must be most judicious in our approaches to be certain that we don't lower standards that are not yet even at an acceptable level. Perhaps the Child Care Advisory Council can work with you to arrange such a collaboration. The Council has a great deal of experience to offer in this regard.

Thank you, again, for your time and the focus you're placing on child care and early education issues. I hope this is the beginning of a very fruitful process.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Thank you.

Are there any questions? (no response)

Thank you very much.

I'd like to call Eugene Jones, Dean of Community Services and Business Development at Burlington County College.

Welcome.

EUGENE JONES: Good afternoon, Assemblywoman Allen, and the Advisory Council on Women.

Burlington County College has provided a day care service for the past three years, and I feel that these services are necessary for our students not only those who are on the welfare rolls, but also for our students and our staff. Day care and transportation in Burlington County, I think, are two of our most critical needs.

As far as our child care center is concerned, during the last three years we've enjoyed a unique relationship with the Archway Little Folk Program. They're one of the leading day care centers in the State. They provided us with a fully certified day care center and provided the activities that were necessary for our children. Burlington County College provides the facilities and Archway provides the program.

The College is very much involved with the Job Training Partnership Act Program and also the welfare recipients and its program offerings-- During the time the students are in training, day care services are provided. At Burlington County College, we provide transportation for welfare participants; however, we would be charged such high insurance premiums that it would not be feasible for us to transport the children.

Training and day care services are on the same campuses at Burlington County College -- one in Willingboro, New Jersey and one in Pemberton. With the Work First Program in effect, the work location for the

participants will probably be different than the training sites which will provide even more difficulty for the parents.

We've had our share of problems over the three years, but we've had difficulty in maintaining an adequate enrollment which is necessary to pay staff who work in the center. Unfortunately, we don't have any outside revenue sources that are coming in, and with the enrollment problems, we have lost revenue and we've had budget deficits.

If we're to make a significant impact on the welfare problem, we will not only have to provide stipends for clients so that they can pay for the services, but also a subsidy to the day care providers to enable them to continue providing the services without sustaining a loss. In Burlington County, day care services where we are cost approximately \$85 per week, and entry-level jobs do not provide enough income to pay for these services. I therefore conclude that to be successful in providing services to welfare participants, the day care providers have to be subsidized.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Let me understand, the \$85 per week goes strictly to pay staff? Is that accurate?

MR. JONES: To pay staff and incidental costs like supplies and materials, things of that nature.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: But the space is not-- The space is donated?

MR. JONES: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Free and clear.

MR. JONES: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: And you're open, also, to the community or only to students?

MR. JONES: We started out -- we were open only to the students, but now we're open to the community and also to the staff.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: And you still don't have enough people to fill your slots?

MR. JONES: Recently, we have gotten people in the community. We've just opened up to the community and we have -- the numbers are increasing now. But it has been a learning experience for us.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Are there any other questions?
(no response)

Thank you very much.

MR. JONES: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Oh, wait, excuse me.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Thank you, Madam Chair.
How large is your facility?

MR. JONES: Well, we have one facility in Willingboro that has a maximum of 15 students.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: It's 15--

MR. JONES: And our center in Pemberton has a maximum of 45.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Forty-five?

MR. JONES: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: And at what numbers are you operating right now?

MR. JONES: Pretty much full at the Willingboro center -- about 15 -- and about 41 at the Pemberton campus.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: All right.

Thank you very much.

MR. JONES: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Ms. Jesse Arnold? (no response)
Allyson Dobbs.

A L L Y S O N D O B B S: If it's red, it's on? (referring to microphone)
(affirmative response)

Good afternoon. My name is Allyson Dobbs. I'm a licensed social worker in the State of New Jersey and the Director of Government Affairs for the National Association of Social Workers, New Jersey Chapter. We have a membership of 6500 professional social workers who work with children and families throughout the State.

It's exciting to be here to talk about solutions, and at this later time in the afternoon, probably all of our suggestions and concerns are mirrored in the other testimony that has been given. But I'll be brief and really touch on two points that I think are worthy of reiterating.

NASW has always advocated for high-quality standards with adequate safeguards for children, and we believe that the children's services should always be provided by appropriately trained, qualified, and licensed providers. This is crucial to child care because inadequate care threatens the fundamental biopsychosocial development of our children.

Inadequate care, as Assemblywoman Heck had pointed out earlier, is linked to poor social development and poor performance in school. And, as

a recent *Time* article pointed out, it comes down to affecting the neurotransmitter development in children at a certain age, so it's crucial that qualified people who understand life cycle development and childhood development are supervising and running programs for child care.

Also, in the absence of quality, affordable child care, parents are unable to transition successfully into the workplace. We believe access to needed services, like child care, regardless of economic, geographic, or ethnic status must be guaranteed if all families are going to achieve self-sufficiency. Like so many before said, if Work First New Jersey is going to succeed in the long run, affordable, quality child care must be the State's priority in order to support working parents and, in essence, keep the family units healthy and whole. We would wholeheartedly support more subsidized child care slots, reinstating the funds that took place because of the social service block grant cuts.

We also would like to point out that it seems natural to be enthusiastic about volunteerism when thinking about solutions to the current child care crisis, and we encourage that, but we would like to temper that enthusiasm with some realism. Volunteers can nurture our children, but they cannot replace professional child care workers. We feel very strongly about that. While volunteers most wholeheartedly should contribute to and collaborate with professionals on solutions to the child care crisis, they should not decrease the availability of suitable, qualified, regular professional staff. As I said before, it's imperative that staff be trained in early childhood development.

The last point that I'd like to make is, the Association feels very strongly for the need for a monitoring system to be in place to protect children in child care. We believe that all professionals and volunteers must be subject to safety background checks and regular site inspections must be done where all child care services are provided.

We'd like to thank you-- I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I will hand out my written testimony. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Before you do that, let me ask you a question. I understand your concern about not having volunteers replace professional child care workers. I have a question, though, about when we say that we must have one staffer per three infants or four infants and all of these other numbers. Are you saying that all of those must be professional child care workers?

MS. DOBBS: I don't know about that. I've supervised a volunteer program before. I worked for Senior Companion Program in Camden, New Jersey. I know that volunteers -- committed volunteers -- are reliable. I think things come up, though, and there needs to be a backup. There needs to be a system in place where professionals can -- I hate to use the term -- safety net the provision of services.

So I think if you can get qualified volunteers-- And I think training should also be a priority where money goes for volunteers and for professionals for child care. But I think that is an issue, so there needs to be a backup system to a volunteer system.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: If volunteers had some amount of training and also there was a backup system, you could see some volunteers filling some of those slots?

MS. DOBBS: As long as they're supervised by trained, qualified child care workers.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Yes. Good.

Are there any other questions?

Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: I'm going to put the emphasis not on volunteers with -- really a comment I'd like to make-- While we talk about the importance of early childhood development -- and we're seeing more and more in contemporary literature about that, about how important and it isn't only from up to age five, but really from birth to age one is where so much of the necessary stimulation has to take place--

While we want to put more and more of our children into child care, we have not spent a lot of time on the fact that in order to professionalize and get properly trained people, we're going to have to upgrade this profession both in terms of salary and general respect so that the field of child care -- particularly early childhood care -- is not looked upon as "Well, we can just take all these people who don't have jobs and make them child care folks."

So I think that we have to do our part to kind of -- by we, I'm looking at my colleagues up here, really -- uplift-- We all know, those of us who -- and most of us here have been mothers, I guess, so we all know what it really means, and we didn't get paid that weekly salary or get too many benefits -- health benefits--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Got a lot of love, though.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: A lot of love, yes, hopefully.

MS. DOBBS: And a one-to-one is usually a better ratio.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Yes, and I remember how busy I was with one infant.

MS. DOBBS: Right. Right. I think program development is the key there.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: The first one seemed to have kept me busy about 18 out of every 24 hours if not more from time to time.

But anyway, I think you know the point I'm making, that we really have to give some -- shine some light on this as a profession, which it should be since we recognize how important what child care people are doing is to our own future and society's future.

MS. DOBBS: And not everybody coming off the welfare rolls is suited.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: Right.

MS. DOBBS: That doesn't make them good or bad or otherwise. I mean, I know I couldn't do some things. My personality isn't suited for that. So that's something to look at, that not everybody -- that's not a solution for everybody.

But I think in the *Time* article they said zero to three, that is the crucial time, and it takes a certain type of activity to form the neurotransmitters in people's brains and it's a one-shot deal. You don't get another chance. So I think it's very important to look at program development, as well; that there is a structure to activity and that people are

overseeing that and ensuring that in everybody, because the people-- We talk about saving the children for low income, middle income, and high income, that's where the even playing field begins.

So thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Assemblywoman Heck, did you want to make another comment?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I just wanted to again note that a combination of all of the people involved is necessary, as well as training. But I do think that monitoring is essential in the world we live in today. I mean, we've had so much adversity, so many people going into child care or areas where children are for other than wonderful reasons. So monitoring and a good check of the people taking care of the children--

MS. DOBBS: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: --is absolutely essential, whether they're volunteers or professionals. I think a background check is absolutely a priority.

But I also think that volunteers and the love that grandparents and parents can do on a volunteer basis is also essential, but what you said is true. Because as a volunteer -- calls on their time, may just say, "Well, I can't show up today," where the professional or the paid-for person is absolutely, "That's the job." You have to have a great combination of both, and I think it's important to the child also that a person or the professional is not stressed out because of doing it all oneself.

MS. DOBBS: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: Thank you, Assemblywoman Allen.

I just wanted to restate that in relation to this public policy seminar that the Legislature did with Princeton University-- Unfortunately, there were very few formal outcomes, but my group did do a recording, and when that comes to me from the person who did it, I will forward that to you, because one of the things that our professional development group discussed was certification of child care workers. They had a lot of opinions on that. I mean, that's a whole issue.

I'm on the Education Committee, and I know that I can continue to work on it over there, but they're very clear about what they need, what is ongoing right now in certification, and how they would recommend that changes occur. So it didn't take us more than an hour to lay out some of these ideas. So I think what would be valuable to you is, at least, that summary report and then-- The high quality of people who were in the room -- there were like 35 people, they were some of the people from the same groups as today -- associations and experts who knew very much more-- I happen to be a nurse, but I'm a nursing educator not an educator of people who are now early childhood-- But I'm a childbirth educator, so I have devoted a lot of my career to those two months before the baby is born.

So I do want to forward that to you when it comes to me.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WRIGHT: You reminded me that I need to get it into my office, and we'll share that with you. Because I think that what we have just heard, and I think Assemblywoman Heck reinforced it, is

this a great area to get involved in entrepreneurship clearly, and the kinds of people who sat around that table-- I was so impressed because I haven't been exposed to more recently -- it was so exciting -- and that's why I made them write something down, because I wasn't going to leave that room without getting their great ideas on paper.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Excellent. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

Robert Furlong from Long Branch Tomorrow.

ROBERT J. FURLONG SR.: My eyes aren't too good, so I can't see everybody's name, but I'd like say hello to all of you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Excellent.

MR. FURLONG: Okay. Just to introduce myself, my name is Bob Furlong, and I started the group called Long Branch Tomorrow in 1993. Its original purpose was to provide a public-private partnership to redevelop the oceanfront in Long Branch. I've been an entrepreneur for 42 years, and I've dealt with all levels of people -- bureaucratic people and otherwise -- and I find that each person is acceptable as they are and not the position they hold. So I hold nothing against bureaucrats. I love them. (laughter) They're great to do business with.

However, Long Branch-- Not everybody knows about Long Branch. It's a town with 30,000 people. It's a special needs-- It's an urban-aid district. It's a UCC town. It's got all the requirements to get all the help that's possible from the State of New Jersey.

Along the way, in dealing with the UCC, I realized there was a social side that we were missing in this economic development. I realize economic development came first because before you can do anything you have to provide the jobs, then, you have to provide the people to take the jobs. Sixty-three years ago, the welfare system was instituted in the United States, and for sixty-three years we've lived with it, with the full realization it truly wasn't working. They took the bull by the horns and they said, "We're going to change this thing." And obviously, it's not an easy matter, because you can't take a situation that has gone on for that length of time and do it over night.

So I set up a committee in Long Branch called Breaking Barriers. I have only one copy of our whole program, and it was designated for the Governor today, but I decided to come here instead. I can see her anytime, but I can't be here anytime.

Basically, it's very simple. We're not really rocket scientists, but we took the people who were the players in the town -- among them, myself, the Executive Director of the Long Branch Housing Authority, the Superintendent of Schools, the publisher of the local newspaper, the Director of Community and Economic Development, and the Director of Brookdale Learning Center -- our local school. Around them, we wrapped an advisory committee which basically were the surrogates for all these people, and they were very talented. It's called Breaking Barriers: From Welfare to Work, a community-based program whose broad purpose is to assist members of the welfare community to achieve meaningful employment.

In order to achieve this objective, we have reached out to the community and formed a committee with different levels of expertise, but together bring to the table the ability to deal with every level of concern to ensure success. There is a series of steps you must take before we can move forward-- And then we started to learn what we started to do--

First of all, we had to get the clients of the plan. So now we brought in the welfare bureau -- whatever they call it -- from the Division of Family something or other -- development from the county and got their help to identify the people who were involved -- needed help. There was about 1000 people who we were dealing with.

And we set up a matrix, because not everybody needs the same type of help. Some people can go from welfare to work in a half an hour, they just happen to be moving from one job to another, they're on welfare in between. They're not a serious case. Then, there are people who haven't got high school degrees. There are people who are fourth-grade reading-- There are people who can't speak English. You can't treat them all the same.

So we wanted to be able to identify the different levels of need, and we did that by working with Brookdale. That has all the ability to do that sort of thing, so we brought the college into the picture. Then, we identified areas of job opportunity. Long Branch is not an industrial area. There is a lot of health care. There is a lot of child care, a lot of food service, environmental remediation, retailing. Then, everybody had to become computer literate regardless of what level of education they had.

The next thing we had to do is market the program to the employers. We're calling all the human services people, setting up the

committee, and they will proceed to identify areas that they can employ people. There are all kinds of programs at every level of government that will compensate them for this effort, beside the wonderful feeling you get from helping people.

We've created a career center in Brookdale. We're doing that as we speak. We're going out for a mentoring program -- bringing in all the volunteers you're speaking about, people who like to watch these people get up in the morning, go to work, and talk to them when they have problems.

But now let's talk about the barriers we're trying to break. Every bureaucrat I spoke to, spoke of two barriers: Child care and transportation. Obviously, nothing is going to work without those two elements. All the talk here today is worthless if you can't handle those two elements. So we approached it a little bit differently, and this is where I wanted to, perhaps, add something to your meeting today, and I'm going to show you the problems involved.

First of all, here's the manual (indicating) of requirements for child care centers. It's 103 pages long. It's written into regulations and legislation. All the things you talked about are meaningless if you can't satisfy this 103 pages. In this are all the questions you asked -- are answered here. The amount of staff-to-child ratio is right here, everything is blueprinted. Anything you ever wanted to know about the doors you need in every room, the windows you need in every room, the amount of square footage you need of play area.

I happen to be renting a partial building of mine to a child care center. It's costing a fortune. It's taken forever to get it through the planning

process. They're breaking my heart, and this is a town that possibly needs child care centers. It's a for-profit center.

It takes 250 hours of training to train a child care person to get a license. It takes 250 hours of on-the-job, as well. That's 500 hours. So you're not going to take a volunteer and sit them next to an infant and say, "Help me here. We'd like your help," because you can't get the insurance. The mothers will scream. If something happens to the kid, you're liable. So all those things you'd like to do are not easily done.

So what we decided to do was combine the Welfare to Work Program with the Child Care Program, so the Department of Housing -- HUD -- is training young ladies in their facilities. So what we'd like to do is train them in our facility which we're going to put together. It's not built. It's a building that we're looking at right now. So we can train these young ladies in our facility, and then their children can be in the facility so we can break that problem that's part of it.

And the other part, we figured we would get major people to provide us with vans -- which I'm very comfortable with that fact, I'm sure I can do it. But we'll set up a little transportation group of men and train them to be able to get licensed to drive vans -- and what have you -- possibly set up a Subchapter-S corporation for them, put them in business, make them stakeholders, and then they'll drive the kids to and from, and however we get them paid for, we will do that. So now we have the women in the child care, now they're becoming licensed and they're going to get paid, and they can also go out and work and their children would be taken care of in our child care center.

But guess what? There has been some lobbying going on that you don't know about. I think they snuck something into the bill -- either the Federal or the State level -- that you can't train child care center people in for-profit organizations, only in nonprofit. Well, that cuts down the possibility quite a bit of training these people who you'd like to get to go into those child care centers, so I would suggest that you look into this.

I sat next to a Mr. Navaro (phonetic spelling) who is the Assistant -- in the County of Monmouth, in the Welfare Department. He was moaning to me about this problem. He said, "Nobody knows about this." I said, "Really? Well, I know seven Senators who are going to know about this pretty quickly," and now I happen to know about six Assemblypeople who are going to know about this quickly.

This is the type of problem you run against, because, you see, all the desire to do good is great, but you run against reality, and it's very difficult to get things done. The secret is to do it on a community basis, to have the leadership. The volunteers belong in organizations like mine, but you have to use professional people and the most important person is the Director. Now, what do you think these people are going to get paid?

You say you wanted to raise the standards of all these people. What do you think they're going to get an hour? Do you think you're going to get the top flight? They're going to get \$6 or \$7 an hour.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEINBERG: I know that.

MR. FURLONG: So you have to have a great Director and Assistant Director who oversees. The insurance costs are probably enormous. But you can get interns from schools. You can get teacher-trainers. Those are

the type of volunteers, and they get something back, they get the credits and things like that.

So basically, to get this thing to work, you do have to be creative, but you have to be creative within guidelines and not just wish lines. Where do you get the mentors? You get those-- Volunteers are great for mentors. Where do you get the help from? Every bank and every organization I know is cutting back on funds for community projects. We used to get \$5000 from a bank, we're lucky -- from a utility. Three of them cut us off. They said, "You've had enough." Banks give us like \$1000 at a shot. If you get CDBG money, they say they own you. The money has a string. Suddenly, you're involved with the political apparatus rather than independent. So all these things are constraints, so the secret is to identify the deepest constraints and try to loosen them up.

I don't know about regulatory change, but 103 pages might be a little much. I mean, maybe there's a little bit of flexibility here we can do something with. But I'll tell you something, I don't doubt in the least, when we talk to the licensing person, he will want us to cross every *T* and dot every *I*. There is no looseness here because it's important that you do the right thing.

I'm very happy to be here. I just happen to do it coincidentally. I'm on the mailing list for the women's group that this other young lady talked about, and being that I'm very aware of the child care problem, I just took the time, and I'm very happy I did.

It was nice to meet you all.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Thank you very much.

I wonder if it's possible for you to write down for us the 10 -- you hit a number of problems, but if you could go into a little more detail on, say, the top-10 hits that were your greatest problems, that we might be able to actually address and do something about. You've given us a thumbnail on some of them. I wonder if we could ask you to--

MR. FURLONG: Sure. I would-- I think I heard all 10 here from all these other folks. They hit on a lot of them.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Well, we may have them in our notes, but if you could just identify and pull them together and say, "As somebody who has tried and put it together and gone through all of this, these were the places that we had the most problems." And if you have your solution or a suggested solution, we sure would appreciate it.

MR. FURLONG: Thank you. I appreciate it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Thank you very much.

Regina Finn. (no response) Kathy Ross.

KATHLEEN C. ROSS: Thank you very much.

My name is Kathy Ross, and I'm Executive Director of Child and Family Resources, which is located in Morris County. I want to try to tailor my remarks somewhat in response to earlier comments that we've heard, as well as to give you some very specific opportunities to address at the State level, that can respond to the issues of expanding child care within the context, always, of quality.

There is a quote that I would like to start my comments with that really has become -- that really crystallizes for me so much of what we've been hearing recently, particularly the new report on rethinking the brain that was

highlighted at Princeton last week. This quote actually came from *Starting Points*, which was the Carnegie Report on zero to three. It's from Irving Harris. "For a baby, those early weeks and months of growth, understanding, and reasoning can never be brought back to do again. This is not the rehearsal. This is the main show."

So that every initiative that New Jersey might want to consider to either create new child care supply to expand those resources, must always, as a baseline, have a commitment and a reflection of quality, and that child care must be for all families. It should not just be for one segment of our population because no one chooses to be poor forever. They hope to move into the mainstream.

Issues around supply, if we're going to link them to quality, particularly with the Governor's new initiatives, there-- She has referenced a grant and loan program. We can have as an attachment -- or a recommendation to those grants and loans can be an attachment that states quality, such as accreditation. It might include the \$350 to apply for accreditation as a child care center or as a family child care provider so that the dollars will always bring that commitment back to quality.

If we want to expand family child care, which -- in the State of New Jersey right now, we have thousands of providers across the State who are on waiting lists to become regulated family day care providers. And it's critical that providers become regulated because it impacts on whether or not they can access the Child Care Food Program -- which provides school lunches within the family child care setting -- but it also determines whether or not they're going to be able to accept children of parents coming through Work First New

Jersey. If you're not regulated, the payment rates are such that there is very little motivation to take a Work First child. So we need to look at that. And I'll get to some other issues around reimbursement rates in a few minutes.

Also, as we look to expand the regulated family child care market, we should encourage providers to offer odd-hour and weekend care, because many of the Work First participants coming into the workplace are going to be employed with businesses that are not going to operate with traditional hours, particularly in the beginning.

Another opportunity for the Council and New Jersey, as it begins to look at increasing its investment in quality early care and education, is to look at what the corporate sector is currently investing in this area. The American Business Collaboration, which has a very active group here in the State of New Jersey, is investing over \$1 million. Two years ago, I think it was over \$1 million, and they've renewed that investment again in additional initiatives that focus on early care and education, as well as dependent care issues.

So how can the State of New Jersey link what its needs are with programs that are being underwritten by the business community, which has to have as a commitment back to them that it's going to affect their workplace or their employees? But many of their employees live in the same communities as where the State of New Jersey has a need to provide resources, too, so how can the dollars be pulled together to piggyback on each other?

I think one of the challenges that State government often has when it's looking at how to invest its resources is they tend to look at it within

that box that, Assemblywoman Allen, you referred to earlier. And it's "I have government dollars and this is how my government dollars have to be spent."

But in order to be most effective, if we can pull together the representatives from government, the representatives from the business community -- who have many of the same issues, be they small-, large-, or medium-sized businesses -- as well as the many foundations in the State of New Jersey that are investing significantly in the area of early care and education, and create this real think tank, this champions' roundtable that's going to be willing to look at how all of their resources can most effectively be pooled together to create what is, in reality, the end result that we're seeking for our children here in the State of New Jersey and for their families.

Some other areas that you may want to consider do go back to zoning issues. In the State of New Jersey, most child care centers have to be in commercially-zoned areas, and as soon as you're in a commercially-zoned area the costs are going to be higher not only per square foot, but land. In residential areas, the cost is often less.

There are models in other parts of the country, particularly California, where any new developer who is developing over a certain number of square feet or acres of land space has to set aside a physical piece of property within that development for a child care center. Or if you're building a new office building in San Francisco, you either have to have an on-site child care center or, if not, you pay so many dollars per square foot of your internal space that goes into a fund to create child care in that area. So if they can't put it on-site, there is an automatic payment into a pool of funds to create an opportunity to expand supply.

Around family child care, which is the care of smaller groups of children in residential areas, there is still the need for real accurate zoning relief. I know the Legislature, several years ago, passed regulations that allowed family child care in residential areas, but I understand that was a pre-- There was a piece of legislation that had been passed earlier that had not been taken off the books, at least as was shared with me, so that the issues of zoning still are a problem in New Jersey in some communities.

But also to consider the larger group home, family child care settings, which would mean that the State of New Jersey would have to go back and look at its current adoption of the BOCA Codes, because BOCA Codes immediately state that you have to go to institutional settings as soon as you hit that magic number of six. Yet, in many parts of the country there are very, very successful larger family child care programs where you have two adults for that same number of ten -- which is the same as the one-to-five which we have here in New Jersey right now. So that's another option to consider.

Also, child care tax credits to provide incentives to employers to either provide on-site or to support the cost of care for their employees in community-based settings. The initial legislation by Assemblywoman Vandervalk, as well as Assemblyman Dalton, initially stated only in the nonprofit sector, but there was agreement that it would be expanded to include for-profit because really what's not -- the heart of the issue is not the legal status of the institute that's providing care, but it's ensuring that it's creating a resource within the community where care is needed and that the quality is such that we need. So really the legal status should have no bearing on whether or not tax credits are made available.

But as I'm working with Assemblywoman Murphy to bring this legislation back, I went out and I touched base with a couple of employers in New Jersey, submitted the legislation to them to find out whether or not this really would be meaningful for them. Would it really be an incentive? Would it help them make that decision to invest, if not in on-site care, and there are many reasons why they will not do that, but to provide some level of support in area child care programs? And the feedback that I got, very specifically and directly, is that legislation would make a significant difference.

There are 10 companies that I have on my tickler list -- as the legislation begins to move forward -- that really want to know what's going to happen and when because it may be a driving force for them in becoming more actively engaged in supporting their employees' child care issues.

If we go back to the quote that I read earlier from Irving Harris and much of the information that we're getting on rethinking the brain and its insights into early development, I think we have to go back to looking at some of the strategies that were discussed today and what the impact really could potentially be for children; that has to be the litmus test. As we develop any new public policy or any new initiatives, the first question needs to be: What will this do for children? How will this help and support their needs?

The use of volunteers is extremely important in any child care program anywhere -- anywhere in the country and anywhere in the world -- and it's very, very highly valued. But if we go back to ask that question of how does this affect children, particularly for very young children, they need to know who that adult is, to know that that adult knows what their style is, what a cry means, when they're frustrated, when they're overworked, when they're

hungry, when they're tired. All of those kinds of things really only come when you develop a good, strong relationship with an adult who knows you, and volunteers, typically, cannot commit to coming every day for half a day for a full year.

So to have adults rotating in and out as part of your structured staff may not necessarily be good, according to the research that we have before us in supporting the developmental needs of those children. As additional laps to sit on, as additional support to staff, as another adult to interact with one-on-one, to have that contact and the dialogue back and forth, yes, it's very important. But I would strongly urge you to reconsider the concept of them being a permanent part of the program unless they can be there consistently day to day to day to day, particularly for those very young children.

The issue of raising salaries in this field-- Of course those of us who have been around for 25 years and more, like many of us in this room today, would strongly support that. But we also have to understand the impact that that has on the cost of care. As soon as you increase the wages and benefits to those of us in the field, you're going to dramatically increase the cost of care. And while I'm a strong advocate for increasing that cost, because the investment you make in training and professional development will be realized because you'll be able to keep those staff in those very same programs, when you look at what the cost of care is -- and in Morris County, the average cost of care for an infant in a center-based program is \$175 a week, the top fee per week is \$240 a week, so the cost of care is already considerably high-- So we have to look at what the implications for that may be.

That brings me also to the issue of reimbursement rates. We clearly have a need to create new supply. We have severe shortages throughout the State of New Jersey, particularly for infant/toddler care. But we need to look at what the State of New Jersey is currently paying as it purchases slots, as it uses its voucher dollars to access care.

As I shared with you a minute ago, it's \$175 a week on average in Morris County for an infant slot, and the State provides \$121 a week. So I will share with you -- I'll send back, because I've really jumbled up my comments here today based on what I've already heard -- what the impact of the difference between the market rate and what the State of New Jersey will provide to a parent coming through the Work First Program actually is on their pocketbook. And in many cases, a family of four who is earning -- and I actually do have a model here-- A family of four who is earning \$15,600 a year in annual income, when we look at the subsidy that is provided by Work First, the copay that is required by Work First, and the difference in the market rate -- what that parent has to pay on top of what's already required -- the total family income paid for child care, even with the subsidy, is 29 percent. And 29 percent of \$15,600 does not leave a whole lot left to that parent. So we need to look at the reality of a statewide market rate. Again, it's stepping outside of the box.

The cost of care in Southern Jersey and in other parts of the State is much less than it might be in suburban New Jersey or in Bergen County or in counties like ours, and if we're talking about equal access and real parent choice, we need to make sure that we're reflecting what those market rates are to enable those families to have access to care.

Community colleges, such as the two that were represented here today -- particularly the last one -- spoke about difficulty with maintaining slots. I know in Morris County, we have a wonderful child care program on campus, but it's closed when the college is closed. And if you're closed when the college is closed and you still have to go to work when the college is closed, then you have to find different arrangements. So if community colleges can ensure that their programs are open according to a normal workday and not specifically the way the colleges schedule their breaks, then it would provide more support and you would have more families who might be using the college for their classes to take advantage of it on a full-time basis.

So I think there are many challenges, but there are also enormous opportunities if we choose to look to partner with the many other interested individuals and funding resources that are available to the State of New Jersey in order to most effectively use the dollars that you choose to invest.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Thank you.

I know probably you're not thrilled about having been the last person to speak, but I want to tell you--

MS. ROSS: Did my body language tell you that? (laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Well, I want to tell you that you pulled together everything that went before in a wonderful way, so I'm thankful that you were the last one, and I hope that you'll take that gratitude in the right way.

I suppose there is one thing I want to ask you, and that is, when you talk about how important it is to have volunteers be there on a consistent basis, and I think it's fair to say that that's almost an impossibility--

MS. ROSS: Yes, it is.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: I think at some point-- Let's take away the very, very young ones. Let's look at toddlers and look at slightly older ones. Could we, perhaps, use volunteers there who may not know exactly what this child is all about? However, because we use volunteers, that parent will be able to put that child in day care and go out and have a job. What should we value more? How do we make these decisions if we're put in that position?

MS. ROSS: Well, I think the reality is we have to go back, as painful as it may be, to that question of how will this benefit or create a problem for the child. I think we also need to look at the assumption that the volunteers are even there. When I talk to many of the volunteer organizations like Volunteers of Morris County or Jersey Cares, I mean, it's very difficult to find the volunteers because many of them, even though they may be 65 or older, are in the workplace right now. So to assume that the volunteers are there may be a challenge.

But if we go back to that litmus test of what is best for children, based on the research -- not only the rethinking the brain, but research that has been out for many years -- one of the most critical attributes of a successful early care experience for children is that they are with a caregiver, day in and day out, who they know they can trust, who is going to be able to be responsive to their needs, and you cannot do that if you're there once a week. You won't understand that if you happen to be the person who is going to be with that group of four kids for all day Tuesday.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Well, I'm assuming that there is going to be more than four. Let's say that there are twenty or forty children all together and that there are some caregivers who are paid staff who are there every day, the supplement comes from volunteers to meet all of the present regulations.

MS. ROSS: But if you look at the present regulations-- For example: For three-, four-, and five-year-olds, where the ratio is one to fifteen-- I don't know if you've ever been in a group of fifteen four-year-olds, but if you're only one adult who is with a group of that size, you're going to have to provide such a structured -- heavily structured -- and tightly controlled environment in order to prevent World War III--

So certainly having additional adults there will create an opportunity to be more attentive to the needs of young children, but, again, that issue of the adult volunteer who is there, if they really don't know and understand how each child works and how each child approaches the environment and how a child shares or demonstrates -- because they don't tell you "I'm exhausted, I had a really tough night the night before." And "I'm cranky, and it's not because I'm being bad or obstreperous, it's just who I am." And if you had been there for two months before that, you'd know by looking at them after five minutes when they've walked in the door.

So I guess, based on my 25 years of experience in the field and my very close read of the research -- also, particularly in the past 10 or 12 years -- volunteers have a clear place but really as supplements to the existing programs if, in fact, our baseline of concern is what we are doing with and for children.

Now, the issues of professional development, I think, are very different. In the field right now, the majority of workers have little or no training. And as we do provide training that comes through community colleges-- I mean, to be in the field, you don't have to have 500 hours of training. That might be Brookdale's model for individuals who come through that program. We do need to provide training to anyone who is working in the field, and unless we pay the wages, they're not going to stay, so you're going to lose them.

Certainly, a volunteer needs to have some training because-- Just because we can create children doesn't mean that we necessarily know how to work with them, particularly if they're not your own. And if they're in a large-group setting-- Children today really are very different than children even 20 years or 10 years ago because of the stress levels in families' lives today. As a dual-career couple or as a single parent, it doesn't take you five minutes in the grocery store at 6:30 at night after that child has been picked up to know that the stress levels for everyone are extremely high.

When we work with mental health professionals in our community-- There is one mental health professional who has worked very closely with the child care field for the 20 years that I've been there, and the average age of her new client is four. Four years old, that's the age of the new client that she is seeing. Of course, after the third visit, it's the parents that you're bringing, but it tells you that the stress levels are so enormous.

And unless you really can understand that and can embrace the fact that it doesn't mean that the child is bad or that the child is behaving inappropriately, they're behaving in a way that they're required to behave or

have to just because of what they're dealing with in their lives. And it's having the individuals there with them day in and day out, with those other wonderful people, because kids look forward to the volunteers coming in. They know when you've got someone coming in, because they're going to fight for who's going to get into that lap first. But you really need the consistency of that--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Security.

MS. ROSS: It's the consistency and the security that helps that child know that "Yes, I'm going to have a lot of these other people here, but Mary Jo is still going to always be the one. That I know she's going to know when I'm cranky, and it's not because I'm being bad or inappropriate."

So volunteers are not necessarily the solution to creating new supplies. We have to look at other ways to pool the variety of resources that we have available in our community, because the will is there. I think communities really understand what the issues are. We have to create better strategies and opportunities for them to implement, and I think I've shared a few of them with you today.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Thank you very much.

MS. ROSS: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Yes? Do we have someone else who wishes to comment?

THOMAS E. ZSIGA: (speaking from audience) I'll just be real fast. I must have missed the list.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Please come up.

MR. ZSIGA: My name is Tom Zsiga. I'm with the New Jersey School-Age Child Care Coalition. In light of missing the list and being here --

I see it never got past here (indicating) -- three and a half hours, I won't read my testimony.

The only thing that I have on mine that might be different is specifically related to school-age child care. That the TANF regulations at age six no longer provide the exemptions for parents who cannot find adequate child care, and the dangers of what might happen having children out there without that kind of care -- without appropriate care doesn't need to be explained.

The School-Age Child Care Coalition and the unified child care agencies in each county have those networks in each county to get out and be involved in the training and help the collaborations. A lot of the ideas that were discussed today need some more work, need some more nurturing. Both of those organizations are placed in the counties, know the unique needs in each county to respond to some of those, and urge that whatever steps, whatever actions happen, those two organizations are included in the discussion and in the collaborations.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Do you have testimony to hand out so we can--

MR. ZSIGA: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Oh, wonderful.

Are there any questions? (no response)

Thank you very much.

MR. ZSIGA: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ALLEN: Is there anyone else? (no response) Then our hearing is adjourned.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)