

Brenwynne Grigg

From: Shawn Eisele, Discovery Southeast [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 10:10 AM
To: Borough Assembly; Economic Stabilization
Subject: Requesting Adjustment to Child Care Support Language

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

Assembly and Task Force Members,

Your proposal to support child care will benefit our community for decades to come. I ask however that you update the license requirements to give more flexibility. For example, in addition to licensed facilities, you could include "*established facilities in good standing that are exempt from licensing.*"

After offering programs for Juneau children for 30 years, non-profit Discovery Southeast is, I believe, **the city's largest private school-age care provider in the summer**, and the *only* program currently operating for this age group. Last summer we provided **scholarships to almost half of the children** attending.

Right now, while more families need scholarships, we face dramatically decreased revenue and higher operating costs to comply with mandates for the pandemic. At the same time, day time care has never been more important for working families.

Alaska's licensing manual states they "will not issue a license to ... exempt child care programs [including] day camps." (Child Care Licensing Policies and Procedures Manual, p.33). That appears to be true whether we offer programs for a 4 year old or a 10 year old, and is despite the fact that we follow all substantive guidelines such as fingerprint background checks, first aid training, and staffing ratios.

CBJ's current proposal would appear to support a licensed facility for a 15 year old, but not a Discovery Southeast program for a 4 year old. I assume that's not the intent. Further, I believe Juneau families need care for all ages of children not able to stay home alone. Accordingly I recommend adding language so that the ultimate administrator of this program has latitude to support CBJ families without being so constrained.

I applaud your focus on child care, specifically quality care with an emphasis on early childhood. That is exactly the infrastructure stimulus funds should support, and it will benefit our community in the short and long term. Thank you for your service to our community,

--

Shawn Eisele, Discovery Southeast
Deepening Our Connection with Nature through Education and Exploration
o: (907) 463-1500

[REDACTED]
executivedirector@discoverysoutheast.org

DiscoverySoutheast.org