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Dear IRRC,

As an active childcare advocate and a center director in Adam's County where a pilot program for the unification of childcare funding is occurring, I feel compelled to write you. My comments relate to regulation # 14-505 on child care subsidy being heard on November 30th at 10:30 am.

I am the owner and Director of Little Life Enrichment Center, a single site located at 125 Dogwood Ct. New Oxford (Adam's County). I am the person who does all the billing for our subsidized families at our center each month, and I have a working relationship with both the Adam's County CAO and the CCIS offices. As an advocate I am a Board Member of Pennsylvania Child Care Association and a member of the QUEST steering committee, therefore I am well versed in this review process, childcare subsidy, federal and state funding, and the childcare industry as a whole.

Let me start by sharing how I have been financially burned by the CAO system of funding over the past years. Despite being a vendor (vendor # C010009) and all checks being cut for me and sent to me, some case workers have sent checks to the client instead. In one case the parent signed over the check to me for the childcare that was provided, but in another case the parent got an unexpected payday for the child care that I provided and I went unpaid. In several other instances the CAO would call me when I submitted a bill at the end of the month to inform me that the client had been dropped from the program several weeks prior. This meant that I was out several weeks of childcare fees because the CAO has no procedure for informing the childcare provider of a client's termination from funding. In the worse case, we were out six week of child care payments for two children, totaling over \$1,200.00. We were informed by the CAO that, "we are sorry but you will have to get the money from the Client", which in practicality is impossible.

In Adam's County we also have a unique situation in the person of KAY KNOX. She use to work at the CAO in their system, then retired, and now works at the CCIS office in their system. We have discussed these two systems and she says that providing childcare payments at the CCIS office is so much easier and logical, and that the CAO had a terrible system for trying to pay providers. I have advocated moving all childcare payments to the CCIS office for a long time and Kay agreed with me when I asked her. Frankly, based on my working relationship with the CAO case workers, it seems that they would rather not be bothered having to provide for childcare payments at all. Their system of payment is impractical, cumbersome and difficult to use. In contrast, it is my opinion that the CCIS office has child care payments down to a science.

From the Client's perspective, we often have miscommunications between the CAO and the CCIS office for client transfers leaving the client unfunded for a period of time. This confusion should not be allowed and would be less likely to happen if only the CCIS is responsible for child care payments. Also, when the CAO stops paying for childcare, but does not inform the parent or the provider, and leaves a large unpaid balance for which their advice is to "get it from the client", causes an unfair financial

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burden to the client leaving them with the large bill. This should never happen to clients who already have financial challenges.

From my perspective, I would also like to only fill out one set of forms each month with the CCIS office. The CCIS office and their system has my confidence and I feel secure that I will be paid for the child care services that I render, but I never had this assurance with the CAO. I, for one, would be grateful if this change would happen. It makes sense for the child care provider in the vendor pay system; it makes sense for families who need child care assistance so they can work; and it makes sense from a systems perspective by better defining and strengthening the focus for CAO and CCIS.

Respectfully submitted,

Clark Agapakis
Owner and Director
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