

## Smith, Ashleigh, CYFD

---

**From:** Charles Brown [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 9, 2020 11:05 AM  
**To:** CYFD-ECS-PublicComment  
**Subject:** [EXT] July 14 public hearing.

Hello.

Please make sure that the sec is only able to pay a differential rate that's more not less. The wording makes it sound as if the dept SEC has the right to lower rates or higher rates or pay different rates. The wording needs to be more clear in that it doesn't give the dept sec the right to lower anyone's rate. I see from experience the dept makes decisions that aren't always for the better of the long term of the dept. so I want to make sure that the dept doesn't get the right to lower rates due to their flaws in knowing how to handle public emergencies. I worked hard for my star five accredited and I refuse to allow the dept the right to lower my rate.

Charles Nathan Brown, M.A.T.

Owner/Director/Provider/FOCUS  
Nathans Home Childcare  
5\*\*\*\*\*Star Program.  
[REDACTED]

“What lies behind you and what lies in front of you, pales in comparison to what lies inside of you.” —Ralph Waldo Emerson

\*\*\*\*\*Delete if sent in error and all attachments  
\*\*\*\*\*Please excuse any misspelled words

## [EXT] 8.15.2 NMAC Public Comment

Millie Weed [REDACTED]

Wed 6/17/2020 1:49 PM

To:CYFD-ECS-PublicComment &lt;CYFD-ECS-PublicComment@state.nm.us&gt;;

 2 attachments

Concerns for 2020 from Rural New Mexico.docx; Why immediate help is needed with CYFD state childcare contracts..docx;

Dear Committee members,

We are sure needing some help out here. As an industry, we needed help before the coronavirus came. Now, we have extra costs because of it. We are still having a hard time employing people to work in this essential environment because of not being monetarily being able to pay them more. None of this has been addressed. There is a ruling that is trying to be done by the CYFD for July 14th that does not raise any pay from our CYFD contracts one bit. We desperately needed the raise to compensate even for the raise in minimum wage increase that we have had since Jan. 1 of this year. Remember the 1.50 raise to the minimum wage? Many of us have been having to use whatever coronavirus relief that we have been getting to basically pay wages that should have already been covered by increasing the CYFD contracts before the raise in minimum wage hit. By saying that we are getting "Hazard Pay" it basically gave some relief to the workers a way to give them monetarily what they should have had Jan 1 of this year.

We are being constantly bombarded with updates that are hard to keep up with. I realize the updates are good but many of us do not have the staff to have a "dedicated person for this task" a lot of the reason is that we don't have the money needed for their wages and I am really hoping that at least some of us are reaching out to you guys as legislative people to help alleviate this problem. We really need be able to hire more people to keep up with sorting all the extra information out, conveying it to parents and helping us to stay in compliance with things the best we can. We have such a work load that increased with not even the basic staffing to care for it much of that has to do with we don't have the monies coming in to suffice getting the job done efficiently. Don't forget, the children are a vital part of our business and much of our time has to be dedicated to them or chaos reigns. We need extra monies to hire extra staffing. We need the extra monies to be able to pay these people appropriately also. Doesn't anyone hear us?

Another issue that desperately needs addressed is that we have ben told to have our substitute list ready in case some of our staff test positive on the corona virus. The trouble with that is that we have been having enough trouble just to keep ourselves staffed regularly. I must have hired 8 girls last year for the same position. Not everyone has the stamina or the want to to care for children. The substitute pool is virtually nonexistent for many of us. Also, if we have to shut down for two weeks because of the corona virus, what are we to do for income? Is our staff supposed to be paid and from what? What do we have to pay them from? We have been basically trying to pay their 9.00 an hour wage. If we don't

have money coming in for those two weeks, there isn't really anything to pay their wages with, is there? Has this need been addressed? What are we supposed to do? What about our clientele? Are they just to hop from provider to provider? Our whole clientele is at risk and at risk for virtually not coming back. That means our businesses could be forced to start from scratch. I am afraid that would mean not a lot of money coming in to even pay for wages again. All of these issues need addressed in the special session.

What if this happens a second time to us? What then. Please respond to this email when you receive it and let me know what is being done to care for these issues.

On page 6 and 7 of the proposal that has been sent forth for public comments contains old information. In there, it states stuff that was there from 2017 as regards CYFD contract amounts. It shows no raises of any sort that has taken into account that we have had inflation over the years, let alone the 20% increase in the minimum wage that happened in Jan. These CYFD contracts need to be raised immediately to off set the wage increase that has already happened. For licensed providers such as myself that have to depend on pulling 3 wages out of my business, I need at least 75.00 increase a kid in order to just stay at the place that I was Dec. 2019. Also, we need to address what will happen again Jan 1 of 2021 when we increase wages another 1.50. The contracts are going to have to go up again in order for us to maintain that rate of pay or it will potentially run us out of business. We can't always guarantee that we will be able to hold the contracts that can bear the most potential for us. We also can't always guarantee that we will remain full. To remain viable in business, we need to be able to run efficiently on 75% of our potential. This allows us for needed repairs, growth and such for the business which is basically going to be able to help our families to thrive and prosper.

Please address each and every issue that is outlined here. These issues are so important for not only our businesses but ultimately it is the children and families that we serve. If things don't add up well as they have been outlined for you, they will not add up well for our communities either.

Sincerely,

Millie Weed  
Director/Owner  
Kid Care



## Concerns for 2020 from Rural New Mexico

My name is Millie Weed. I operate a home childcare center that is Nationally Accredited. I have a total staff of 3, including myself and we care for 10 children. Recently, we have had some big changes across the state of New Mexico. There has been a 20% raise in the minimum wage Jan. 1 2020. This has had a really big impact on our childcare business. We have had our business for 15 years. For the last 13 years, we have been Nationally Accredited along with holding a NM State Accreditation since, NM has started doing accreditations. Our childcare business is largely supported by our state CYFD contracts mainly because we just can't generate the revenue in our rural area from private pay to effectively pay for things like wages and overhead costs.

We are experiencing the dual effect of State budgetary levels not keeping pace with the mandated wage increases. Even prior to the recent January 1, 2020 event, there also needs to be addressed the effect of not having state CYFD contracts rise in about 4 years to even counteract normal yearly inflation rates. That in itself, had left our budgets going in reverse. This combined effect of not keeping state CYFD contracts current in line according to the rate of inflation plus, adding the 20% wage increase on top of it, as this has been mandated statewide without the due compensation from the state, has been devastating. I suspect this effect has been widespread over New Mexico's rural areas. One of the basic principles in life that most of us learn is that when mistakes have been made that actually hurt other people, honest people stop and make adjustments quickly. They don't just look the other way or pretend that the problem doesn't exist. In this case, if you don't do something quickly to fix this problem, you would be **pretending** that the crisis that rural NM childcare industry has been thrown into simply does not exist.

There is much over head to running a childcare business. We have basic things to consider, such as, some children are rougher on things than other children. This, in itself, makes for more maintenance than even what would be necessary if all children that came in were easy on equipment and/or supplies. The utility bills alone can be enormous. More examples are that my water bill can run easily about 250 a month in the summer time because we have grounds to keep up plus, we have a lot of general water use. In other months, it still costs a pretty penny with all the toilet flushing, hand washing, running the dishwasher and laundry machine. Not many people would like to have my electric bill when it comes to the electric that it takes for the heating and cooling. X-cel Energy sends me regular reports that my house consumes up to 90 % or more electric than my surrounding neighbors. In addition, there are insurances, FICA taxes, slow paying or even at times, the customers that do not even pay their child care bill. Many times, not all of the food bill is covered and the business basically donates in that area when the children are extra hungry or they come to the daycare not fed. Maintenance needs planned for such things as having to replace big ticket items like appliances, flooring and refurbishing things like the bathroom since it sees a lot of heavy use. This list goes on and on with many things too numerous to mention here but surely you get the point.

This money all has to come from somewhere. There is no guarantee that we will be full all the time or that we will even have the most optimum contracts in place to pay bills. We care for infants through 12 years of age at our group daycare home. Our kids are reading site words when they go to kindergarten and doing simple addition and subtraction. They are able to interact in an acceptable social way because they are socially and emotionally literate. Not everybody is well served in a bigger situation. Not every family's needs are met in a larger setting. This is where quality group daycares step in. This is whether we are talking about the social emotional needs of the children or even the general pick up/drop off times. We also provide much tutoring and guidance and kids come out well-adjusted by learning how to treat younger and older ones at the same time. They do this by working with their age group part of the day and also mixing with other age groups during part of the day while being supervised. It allows for siblings to see and spend time with each other. We have found that it promotes an even stronger bond of unity within the families. Which leads to more socially and emotionally stable children.

To run my group daycare home, it takes at least 3 people and at times, other people have to be called in to do jobs for the business periodically such as for deep cleaning and book keeping. I am here for the early contracts and I am here for

## Concerns for 2020 from Rural New Mexico

the late contracts. I work some fairly long hours. My day, many times, starts at 5:30 am and even if the kids are able to leave by 5:30 pm and, at times 6:00 pm, I'm still catching things like the left-over dishes, laundry detail or paperwork. Many times, we are under pressure because we can't all the time get our paperwork done while we are actively watching children or even when the majority are sleeping at naptime. At times, there are children that have a hard time with nap time for whatever reason and we are actively tending to those needs. If this is not happening, many times that time is took up cleaning or getting things ready for them for the activities they are to have when they wake up. This happens M-F. This is why the long day gets split up between 2 assistants because no one would tolerate the long hours that I dedicate to the profession. Admittedly, these long hours. As a reprieve, I really try to have nothing left for the weekend so, my personal necessities can be tended to. Currently, since Jan. 1, 2020, I have been having to pay 450 more a month in wages. To cover that, I have had to donate "volunteer" hours in the amount of what would be worth 500 a month from my current salary base (which should be going monthly into my retirement account but now, there is nothing going there) because the money had to come from somewhere. Next Jan., it will be 1000. How long as directors/owners do you expect us to continue to have the same per hour as we bring our new inexperienced people on at because we "need to cover" their checks?? And at that rate, having the director to donate part of their hard-working hours as "volunteer?" This all done basically so **other** people can make their wage and maintenance/overhead can get paid? Isn't this actually called having NM cheat others out of not only their hours and their energy also? That is what is currently happening. Do you know what it feels like to be continually cheated out of your time and energy? Would you stand for it in your job? Can you in good conscience ask others to stand for it on theirs? What's happening now is called just standing by and watching rural NM bleed. If you are not standing by, are you then actively doing something about it? IF so, exactly what? Because what's happening now doesn't make business sense. How am I supposed to really pay for the rising cost of maintenance and supplies? I don't have a clue how that'll work Jan 1, 2021 when things raise again.

Enclosed you will find a sample of one of our 4-year old's morning work that he chooses to do during free play. He is getting the hang of spacing and how upper-case letters are a definite size and lower-case letters are a definite size. We asked him what it said and he ran his finger from left to right across the letters and smiled while he said, "It says not to sass your teachers!" We are so proud of him. We have had him since he was 8 mos. We move all our children through their milestones by giving each one individual attention and training that actually follows them from infancy all the way through our specific preschool program and beyond. Plus, it works well their individual personalities. Our other children are doing well also. This particular 4 yr. old will be the envy of any Kindergarten teacher with the skills that he has acquired while attending our group daycare.

If I retire at 62, my social security will gross [REDACTED] per year. Could you live on that? After all that I have given the industry, don't I deserve a chance to try to put some money aside for retirement? I won't be able to work forever and I know that. Are you interested in only having the quality group homes out here just barely surviving or even surviving at all? Is that going to encourage more quality homes to pick up this profession or is it even being supportive of quality homes that obviously are producing fantastic results and by the people that are obviously experienced? If you don't reach out to do something to retain these kinds of people in the childcare industry such as myself, where are you going to be shortly?

We provide excellent support to our early childhood education system. Our results with the children show this. We have done so for 15 years. If this is deficit is at all allowed to continue in such a crisis, the state will destroy our seasoned, accredited rural child care. NM cannot wait to take action in a few months down the road on this. It needs action and it needs it NOW!! When the quality childcare suffers, our NM children end up suffering right along with it. Do you want that on your conscience? What do you think this will do for the future of NM if our children don't receive the very best individualized care that meets their particular needs and their families? What kind of leaders are we truly building for NM? The urgency of this crisis just can't be minimized or swept under the rug for a period of time without devastating effects. IF you care at all, you are not in a position to sit and passively wait. You have to **get up** and ACT NOW!

When we tried to raise private pay for childcare in our rural NM area 2 years ago...

I have an accredited group home Clovis, NM. In our rural area, the parents are either on the CYFD subsidized contracts or they are just above the cutoff line to qualify for those subsidized contracts. I realize that my experience is mirrored through many rural NM communities. For us, we knew that our CYFD state childcare contracts is what really helped our business to stay afloat in our area of rural NM. As we had not heard of any forthcoming increase in the state CYFD contracts to cover the cost of inflation that we had had for the past 2 years, we decided that surely, we could get some relief from the private sector since their rates were substantially lower than what our CYFD contracts brought in. As we did this, one of our long-standing moms got so upset with us that she demanded to know exactly what the raise was for. She indicated that she was paying really just what she could afford now. She actually cornered each one of the employees, at different times and point blank asked them if they were getting a raise. This so surprised the employees. They let her know that not to their knowledge were they getting a raise. She then let them know that they should be since things were going up around here. That started to break down the moral of my employees and I eventually lost one employee on account of that incident.

That mom tried to recruit others to her cause but I was so thankful that the ones that she did end up talking to were moms that had state CYFD contracts and I eventually was able to visit more with her and told her that with anything that dealt with the business, that I would appreciate it if she would speak to me. She agreed but it wasn't even 2 weeks and she had her son to a place that didn't charge private pay like I was needing to in order to keep up with inflation.

I am telling you this to let you know that it is not simply just a matter of charging the private pay more in what really is an impoverished area. They will not stand for it. They do not really have it to give. They will go elsewhere for childcare. Where they end up going is easily to places that are not regulated and the quality just isn't there. Being an accredited group daycare home, we provide vital support to young children.

You have heard my story about with the 20% wage increase of Jan. 1 and there has been no forthcoming increase in the state CYFD contracts. In my program, this resulted in me being forced to put in "voluntary hours" plus to take the 500 a month that I was needing to go to my retirement fund because if I retire at 62, my social security will only gross [REDACTED]. That won't be enough to live on. This in itself puts qualified, experienced early childcare supports like my accredited group home in jeopardy.

Our rural NM needs to help immediately in this critical situation by increasing the state CYFD childcare subsidies to not only match the 20% increase in minimum wage but to adjust additionally for the rise in inflation of the last 4 years to the goods/services that our businesses have depended on that have not been accounted for. Please use this critical model as a stepping stone to adjust things as we go forward because we will go through the exact same thing as the wage increases to 10.50 Jan 1, 2021 and increases to 12.00 Jan1, 2022. Please don't undercut us in this area. It is imperative that we get such help without any delay.

Thank you for your help,

Millie Weed

## Smith, Ashleigh, ECECD

---

**From:** tadpoles\_daycare [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 6, 2020 9:50 PM  
**To:** CYFD-ECS-PublicComment  
**Subject:** [EXT]

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Once again Early Childhood Education is struggling. We have proved during this one that we are absolutely essential. As a community we have stepped up to ensure our most vulnerable are cared for. And once again we are asked to do more with less. We've faced the first step of the minimum wage increase, we've had families forced to withdraw, we've continued to educate our staff, drop our ratios and yet despite all this, our reimbursement rates have seen very little, if any changes over the last several years. We hear about a "well compensated work force" yet we are not given the support to do so. We cannot retain our private pay clients if we're forced to increase rates solely on our private pay clients. Please consider reexamining the subsidy rates for the providers.

Sincerely,  
Leslie Robertson  
Tadpoles Daycare

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)



924 Park Ave SW, Ste C  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
[REDACTED]  
nmpovertylaw.org

July 14, 2020

Kimberly Brown  
Children Youth, and Families Department  
Santa Fe, NM

Via Email: CYFD-ECS-publiccomment@state.nm.us

Re: 8.15.2 NMAC Public Comment

Ms. Brown:

Please accept the following comments on the proposed revisions to 8.15.2 NMAC regarding the Children, Youth, and Families Department's (the Department) child care assistance program.

The undersigned organizations have extensive experience working with New Mexico families to ensure they have access to basic services that improve the lives of children, particularly those in low-income families. We have first-hand experience assisting families in accessing child care in New Mexico. We have seen the benefits to families who are able to access affordable child care and are aware of administrative barriers that prevent eligible families from receiving assistance.

We thank the Department for taking steps to make access to child care easier during the public health crisis and for making the emergency rules permanent. We ask the Department to maintain the waiver of work and school requirements, as well as the waiver of co-payments until the public health and economic emergencies subside. If the Department does decide to end those waivers, we ask that the Department implements a gradual phase-in rather than immediately implementing these requirements. We also ask the Department to engage in an outreach and public information campaign to ensure that families are aware of these rule changes, and to ensure that families know how to access child care assistance.

### **Maintaining Access to Child Care is Critical**

Child Care Assistance is always a critical work support for families. That does not change during a pandemic. However, the current pandemic has shown that flexibility is needed to ensure that child care is accessible for families at a time when some, like those in healthcare, may be working increased hours, while others cannot continue their educations or go to work due to pandemic-related closures. Therefore, we thank the Department for waiving work and school requirements, as well as co-payments on an emergency basis. We also appreciate the Department's current rulemaking which will promulgate these changes into the New Mexico Administrative Code consistent with the State Rules Act. This will make these flexibilities permanent and give the Secretary the authority to waive these requirements more easily during public health emergencies.



## **Phase In Work and School Requirements, as well as Co-Payments to Avoid an Additional Cliff Effect**

Families often face the choice between accepting pay increases at the expense of an abrupt end to child care assistance or a large increase in co-payments. Accepting a pay increase and losing a critical work support like child care assistance creates a “cliff effect,” because this situation can cause a family to be in a financially worse situation, even though they received an increase in pay. Among public benefits in New Mexico, the child care assistance cliff effect is severe due to the high cost of child care, and high co-payments for child care assistance.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, we ask the Department to ease the burden on families by avoiding an abrupt end to the new waivers and flexibilities implemented as a response to the current pandemic. The Department can do this through a gradual phase-in of work and school requirements, as well as co-payments when the health and economic crises subside. Additionally, the Department should exclude hazard pay from income calculations, so hazard pay does not affect eligibility. The Department should also effectively communicate with families that the waivers will be phased out to give families notice and time to plan for the increased financial burden they will have when the waivers expire.

### **Make Sure Families Know How to Access Child Care Assistance**

Lastly, we ask that the Department engage in an outreach and a public information campaign to make sure that families know about the rule changes and increased flexibilities in the Child Care Assistance Program. The Department can create materials and partner with community-based organizations, child care providers, and public school districts to disseminate information on the new rules that make child care more accessible in these extraordinary times. The Department should also post this information on its website and at child care field offices across the state.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Tim Davis*  
NM Center on Law and Poverty

Matthew Henderson and Erica Gallegos  
Organizers in the Land of Enchantment “OLÉ”

James Jimenez  
New Mexico Voices for Children

---

<sup>1</sup> See Armelle Casau and Sara Hyde, *The Cliff Effect: One Step Forward and Two Steps Back*. New Mexico Voices for Children November 2018. Available at: <https://www.nmvoices.org/archives/11564>

From Felicia Juarez to Everyone: 01:10 PM

Felicia from Little Steps Learning Center in Roswell, NM. Question: Are there going to be adjustments to the reimbursement rate we are receiving in State assistance contracts due to the mandate that centers keep ratios at a FOCUS 4-Star requirement. Will contract reimbursement reflect this?