

February 19, 2021

Subject: REETAIN Award for Child Care (HF 260)

To Whom It May Concern,

The REETAIN (Retaining Early Educators Through Attaining Incentives) provides a competitive bonus system to incentivize educated and experienced childcare professionals to stay in the workforce, creating more consistent and excellent care for children over time.

Since 2003, over 2050 grants were awarded to degreed or credentialed early childhood and school-age care professionals, keeping them in the field teaching our youngest Minnesotans. According to a recent survey, more than half of the grant recipients felt that the grant strongly or very strongly influenced their decision to remain in the field by helping them pay bills and other expenses so they could focus better on their work.

Unfortunately, over half of qualified family childcare professionals who apply for REETAIN are turned down due to lack of funding.

I applied for REETAIN several years before receiving the grant. I have been a childcare professional for over 20 years, I have a BS in business, Child Development Associates degree, and I take over 30 hours of training per year in order to provide excellent care to my young clients and their families. In addition, my program is rated as a Four Star program through Parent Aware.

I am competing against other very highly qualified professionals for this limited grant and half of us do not receive it due to lack of funding. This should not be! All qualified and experienced childcare professionals should receive this grant for the sake of the youngest Minnesotans and their future. Quality care by experienced and credentialed professionals must be encouraged.

For the sake of our youngest Minnesotans, please consider adding state funding for REETAIN through HF 260.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Videhi Larson

Family Child Care Provider