

**ZONING COMMISSION FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

TIME AND PLACE: **Monday, November 2, 2015, @ 6:30 p.m.**
Jerrily R. Kress Memorial Hearing Room
441 4th Street, N.W., Suite 220-South
Washington, D.C. 20001

FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSIDERING THE FOLLOWING:

CASE NO. 15-17 (Text Amendments to 11 DCMR (Zoning) Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 31 – Child Development Homes).

I, Yael Kiken, am speaking on behalf of Mary's Center's Child Care Licensing Program in support of the text amendment to allow Expanded Child Development Homes for up to 12 children. Our program has worked for over 13 years assisting child care providers in starting their own Child Development Homes and Centers. We started this program in 2002 as a culturally-competent approach to expanding quality child care. By providing our clients with step-by-step guidance, we are able to expand the availability of quality child care options that reflect the diversity of our city's population. We currently provide technical assistance to over 50 Child Development Home providers in every ward of the city.

We support this text amendment for many reasons:

The need for Infant and Toddler care: We know that there is an urgent need for more slots in licensed Child Development Homes and Centers in order to meet the childcare needs of DC families. According to DC Action for Children, "although DC provides universal pre-K to 3- & 4-year olds, access to early learning opportunities and child care for infants and toddlers remains a substantial obstacle for our city. Currently, there are approximately 26,000 children under age three in the District of Columbia. However, the most recent child care capacity data indicates there are a little over 6,500 slots available for infants and toddlers." This means that there are not enough slots for 75% of the need for zero to three-year-olds! And we know that care and education during a child's early years are crucial, since the first five years of a child's life are more formative than at any other stage, creating either a sturdy or a fragile foundation. Seventy-five percent of brain growth and 85% of intellectual, personality, and social skills develop before age 5 (Wills, 1993 and Purfes, 1988). To make the most of these early years, children need consistent and nurturing care, safe and stimulating environments, nutritious food and attention to their physical needs, and opportunities to engage in positive interactions with adults and other children. Expanding Child Development Home's capacity to care for infants and toddlers will help DC move closer to providing the care needed for our families by creating more infant and toddler slots in existing Child Development Facilities.

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Now, to speak to the specifics of Child Development Home care: Child Development Homes are an important piece of the child care landscape in DC – they offer child care options in residential communities, and their status as the primary residence of the provider facilitates a warm, comforting, home-like environment, which promotes a smooth transition for infants entering care for the first time. Each child enrolling in a Child Development Home can be assured a primary provider as well as continuity-of-care, meaning that from the time the child enrolls until they depart from the Child Development Home, they will be under the care of the same provider. These components ensure the secure attachment and bonding that is essential to quality infant and toddler care. (At Child Development Centers, children often move between different classroom, frequently changing teachers and environments.) By expanding the number of children that Child Development Home providers can enroll in their programs, it allows more families to have the option of enrolling their children in Child Development Homes. It will also increase the probability that parents can put their children in the same child care facility (instead of having to seek multiple facilities for multiple children).

We also support allowing Expanded Child Development Homes because it will promote the financial viability of early childhood educators who run their own businesses: Expanding will allow providers—those who have the space and staff capacity—to increase their revenue, helping them become more financially stable, and use their profits to hire additional staff (which will create jobs) and acquire additional training or materials to ensure that they are incorporating best practices in child development. Additionally, increased revenue will make it more financially possible for Home Providers to participate in the child care subsidy program. Many currently do not participate in the subsidy program because the reimbursement rates are so low, and since their programs are currently so small, with 6 or fewer children, they are unable to create a workable balance between subsidy-payment and private payment.

For all of these reason, I am in strong support of this text amendment. If you have any questions, or if I can assist with this effort, please let me know. Thank you for your consideration.