

CARRIE THORNHILL'S TESTIMONY  
BEFORE THE DISTRICT OF COLOUMBIA ZONING COMMISSION  
CASE#17-20 – CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTERS  
TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE DAYTIME CARE USE CATEGORY TO ADDRESS  
THE NEEDS OF ESTABLISHING AND EXPANDING CHILD DEVELOPMENT  
CENTERS

Thursday, February 8, 2018

6:30 p.m.

GOOD EVENING COMMISSIONERS HOOD, MILLER, SHAPIRO, TURNBALL, MAY, ZC STAFF and other representatives of the government and the community at-large. I am Carrie L. Thornhill, a life time resident of this great city, a community developer and retired nonprofit executive. I am President of the DC Early Learning Collaborative.

In a few remarks, I want to do three things. Let you know that we support the proposed text amendment proposed by the Office of Planning. I want to give you a bit of background on our organization as part of the basis of why we support the amendment. And third, I want to impress upon you the importance of your approval of this text amendment as expeditious as possible.

I am pleased to be a witness before the Zoning Commission and speak in support of Case#17-20-Child Development Centers on behalf of the DC Early Learning Collaborative. We are a multi-sector, advocacy alliance of over 100 early childhood educators and organizations who practice the craft of early care and education in traditional and public charter schools, center-based and home-based early childhood settings as well as Head Start programs. The Collaborative seeks to build public knowledge, public will and public action toward ensuring that every

child in the District of Columbia, from infancy through school entry, has access to high-quality affordable early childhood programs.

Our Collaborative is an outgrowth of the Pre-K for All DC organization, which worked closely with then City Council Chairman Vincent Gray to lead the city-wide public awareness and community mobilization campaign that resulted in the city's nationally recognized legislation: the DC Pre-kindergarten Expansion and Enhancement Act of 2008, and the subsequent amendments of 2009 and 2010.

The Collaborative's theory of change is simply that high-quality early childhood programs for children from infancy through school entry serve as the foundation and building block for the District's Pre-K-12 school reform efforts, the city's workforce development initiatives and the city's long-term economic vitality.

In our current iteration, the Collaborative serves as a guardian of the purposes and vision inherent in the Pre-K legislation and an advocate for the full implementation of the law with fidelity as well as supporting infant and toddlers.

We are at a very pivotal time in the long and successful history of early learning and early childhood development in this city. We have universal pre-k for 3 and 4 year olds in the city, an unprecedented achievement. We lead the nation. Our Mayor just announced a major investment of \$9 million new dollars to increase the supply of high quality infant and toddler slots across the city. An investment I will add that will be matched dollar for dollar by the Low Income Investment

Fund which will provide loans and Technical Assistance to our early learning providers including help with complex zoning issues. We have major legislation moving through the City Council to enhance public investments in infant and toddlers including subsidy rates for providers, and credentialing and compensation of the early learning workforce. In this context, the population of infant and toddlers is increasing at a time when we are only able to serve 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the little ones, zero to three. You play a critical role in helping us to grow our facilities so we can increase the number of high-quality early learning programs in the city to respond to the unmet need. We encourage you to utilize the Bainum Family Foundation's recently completed supply and demand study conducted by the National Reinvestment Fund to support your decisions making. We encourage you to approve this Child Development Center text amendment to support our expansion efforts as soon as possible.

We publicly want to thank Maxine Brown-Roberts of the Office of Planning for assisting some of our affected members in understanding the amendments. We want to thank you for this opportunity to speak and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.