

Important considerations regarding the proposed child care union

Right now there is a movement underway in MN to unionize Licensed Family Child Care Providers. This brochure addresses the most frequently asked questions we have received at childcareunioninfo.com regarding the possible benefits and/or negative implications of unionizing our profession.

Under the current proposed plan, who would be unionized? Isn't it voluntary to join the union?

Should the union get a majority of ballots returned in their favor, the union would cover all providers who have a child on CCAP. Union membership is voluntary, however, under this plan, union representation is not voluntary. ALL licensed family child care providers who have a child on CCAP would be exclusively represented by the union and would be covered by a negotiated contract. This includes those who choose not to join as a member. According to the Executive Order, the union can meet and confer on issues such as quality rating systems, quality standards, the monitoring and evaluating of family child care providers, and the way the state provides early childhood education services. These are issues that will affect all 11,000 licensed family child care providers. Both Governor Dayton and union representatives have stated that this is a small starting point and can be expanded in the future to cover all 11,000 child care providers.

How much will dues/fair share fees be?

Dues will not be determined until after a contract is negotiated. The final amount will be voted on by union membership but a minimum due is dictated by the union. In other states, the minimum is about \$25 per month. Note that a portion of the due must be sent to the international union, then the bills for the local union are paid (union employee salaries and benefits, office supplies, organizing costs, etc.) and then, whatever is left over can be used for child care provider issues in Minnesota. In the Executive order, #10 addresses the involuntary payment of dues. Both Governor Dayton and the unions have said this will prohibit fair share fees. Unfortunately, the way the order is written, there are still ways to charge even non members fees. For example, they could require you to agree to the deduction of dues/fees when you register for CCAP payments. This would make them voluntary and would be within the boundaries set by the Executive order.

Can the union negotiate higher pay for providers through subsidy rates?

The union has been able to negotiate increases in subsidy rates and funding in some states. Is this a raise for child care providers though? In September, about 25% of the child care providers in MN had a child on the subsidy program. Keep in mind; THIS IS A FAMILY BENEFIT - NOT A PROVIDER BENEFIT. Child care providers, including those that care for children on the subsidy program determine their business rate. If the family's subsidy check does not meet the provider's business rate, the provider has the right to assess the parents a co-pay to make up the difference. As owners of a child care business, each provider can determine if their business rate is appropriate for the services offered. If you need a raise, give yourself one!

What about Health Insurance?

In a few other states, the union has negotiated limited health care funds to cover a small percentage of providers. In most states, no health care option has been negotiated. Anything the union is able to negotiate for providers in a contract is subject to funding through the legislative process. At a time when state employees are seeing their benefit packages cut, it is unrealistic to think funding will be available to cover child care providers who are not employees of the state, with health care insurance.

The union says it will improve training.

The Minnesota Center for Professional Development (MNCPD) is the state approved training registry for child care training. It is a provider's connection to CCR&R trainings, grants, on-line trainings and other opportunities. MNCPD offers learning and career guidance for all early childhood practitioners. Also, all the trainings and trainers that will support the upcoming Building Quality initiative and expansion of Parent Aware (QRIS) must be approved through MNCPD. These same approved, quality trainers also provide additional trainings at local and state child care associations and other local and regional trainings venues. Providers can easily get more than their required training for under \$100 per year....in fact, many county associations offer FREE training for members. It simply does not make good business sense to pay hundreds of dollars more per year in union dues when there are many low cost training opportunities.

How can the Governor unionize all child care providers?

The Governor's authority to order a vote was challenged in a court by childcare providers on December 5, 2011. The judge issued a temporary restraining order suspending the vote. A summary judgment hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, February 22, 2012. Governor Dayton is contesting the ruling.

How will this vote work, who is eligible to vote?

The current plan: Ballots will be mailed to only those providers who are licensed, registered to receive subsidy payments and have accepted at least one subsidy payment in the last year. This means only about 1/3 of licensed providers in the state get to vote. It is imperative that you return your ballot immediately if you want your vote to be counted. The unions only need to get a majority of ballots returned in their favor to win. So, if only 100 providers send their ballots in, and 51 of them vote yes for the union, all providers who have a child on the subsidy program will be represented by the union, and the union will meet and confer on issues that impact all 11,000+ providers.

If we don't like the union, can't we just vote them out?

No. Family child care providers are not public or private employees; therefore, are not covered under any state labor board, or by any labor laws. This means child care providers will not be afforded the basic rights all other union members in Minnesota have. We don't have a labor board to file complaints to and we can't decertify or break free from the union once it has been recognized.

What can we do to stop this? How can I help?

- Contact Governor Dayton and your legislators
- Write a letter to the editor expressing your opposition.
- Spread the word! Many providers still do not have clear information about what's taking place and many don't know how this will affect their child care business.
- Consider taking part in a calling tree to notify others that they are eligible to vote and to urge them to turn in their ballots in time.

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Licensed Family Child Care Small Business Owners



Union FAQ

Sponsored by:

Coalition of Family Child Care Providers

Our purpose is to educate providers, legislators, and community members about the impact of the proposed unions on Licensed Family Child Care Professionals who are independent small business owners.

Questions? Need more information?

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Happy to be Union Free"