

July 9, 2012

The Honorable Earl Ray Tomblin
1900 Kanawha Blvd E
Charleston, WV Zip 25305

Dear Governor Tomblin,

I write to you today as both as a concerned West Virginian and as an advocate for the many families, children and small home based businesses Catholic Charities WV's Child Care Resource Center and Child Care Food Program serve with critical financial, educational and nutritional support. As you are aware, beginning August 1, 2012 drastic cuts and changes to the current West Virginia Child Care subsidies will be implemented. These changes will adversely affect families whose children are in child care while the parent(s) are working and just getting by or going to school.

The three areas below will have an immediate and direct impact on these families' ability to make ends meet and improve their circumstances with employment or education.

1. Fee increases for all families except those earning less than 40% of Federal Poverty Line (FPL)
2. Application Freeze for all applicants except:
 - a. WV Works Families with incomes below 150% of the FPL
 - b. Foster Parents
 - c. Child Protective Service Safety and Treatment Plan recipients
 - d. Court Ordered Care
 - e. High School and College Students
3. Effective January 1, 2013, exit level reduced from 185% to 150% of the FPL.

I am grateful the freeze was lifted on families where the parent is attending high school or college. Supporting these individuals with their child care needs is critical to their successful completion of their programs as they work to be good role models for their children on their path to self-sufficiency.

At this time, much concern surrounds these severe child care cuts:

- Higher fees will place a hardship on these families who may be forced to quit school or work.
- As families opt to not use child care, child care professionals and centers may be forced to close.
- Children will not receive quality child care, healthy meals and snacks, and a nurturing, supportive learning environment.
- Families who opt to not work will apply for TANF or other public assistance.
- Increase in the number of children being left alone


I urge you to reconsider the implementation of these cuts before they go into effect on August 1, 2012.

Please consider the following:

- Lifting the freeze on all families applying for child care
- Maintaining the exit income level of 185% of the FPL after January 1, 2013.

I appreciate your consideration in regards to this critical request on behalf of children and families in WV.

Sincerely,


Mark Sliter-Hays, MSW, LGSW
Executive Director