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Subject: .0713 Staff/Child Ratios for Centers

Dear Commissioners,

The Enola Group Early Head Start and Early Learning Centers would like to petition to revise child care rule .0713 Staff/Child Ratios for Centers. effective September 1, 2018. Specifically, the section addressing that children under one year age shall be care for separately from children two years of age and over will negatively impact our program.

Our program's 5-star licensed centers have been operating mixed-aged groups with children's age ranges of 6 weeks to 3 years in the same classrooms for over 10 years. The mixed-aged groupings have successfully supported continuity of care, and interaction between younger and older children. Children are cared for in a heterogeneous family grouping for several years with the same teacher and can move at their own pace. This approach also helps to support children at different developmental levels.

The new rule limiting the time that infants can be with children over age one, impacts the way in which our program operates and the children we will be able to serve. We are small centers and most likely will have to discontinue serving infants in at least three of our four centers.

While we support the decision to no longer differentiate ratios for varying capacities, the new rule effects successful practices of mixed aged groupings. We ask you to reconsideration the statement that says, "children under on year of age shall be kept separate for children two years of age and over" and perhaps consider a statement that considers the proportion of older to younger children in the same room instead.

Thank you for all you do for children, families, and early care providers and educators.

Sincerely,

Linda Wilson, Program Director
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