

June 12, 2009

Dear Maryland Family Child Care Provider,

SEIU Local 500 family child care providers have come to tentative agreement on a historic first contract with the Maryland State Department of Education and the Governor's Office of the State of Maryland. We have been in negotiations for the past 14 months in the state's worst fiscal climate in memory.

***Despite the grim economic picture, with this contract, providers will gain an unprecedented increase in Child Care Subsidy rates, averaging 2.9% across the state.***

The contract also brings many major non-economic gains. They include:

- SEIU providers will have access to important decision-making committees in the child care system, including a seat on the Child Care Advisory Council.
- The state and SEIU will work together to create a new Training Committee, comprised of state officials and child care providers, that will explore all aspects of the current training system and advocate for recommended improvements.
- SEIU will hold the state accountable for any late payments.
- The state will not increase parent co-pays as a result of this agreement.
- The State and SEIU will jointly create a new committee to explore options for health care coverage for family child care providers.

You may read about these and other **Contract Highlights** on the reverse page.

As your bargaining team, we stand proudly behind this agreement and believe that it is the best possible contract we could win at this time. This is a significant first step toward our vision of change for our profession.

***Stand with us and VOTE YES on our contract by returning the enclosed ballot***

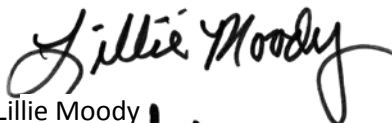
In Solidarity, your Bargaining Team,



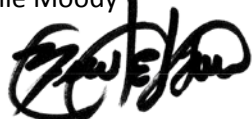
Annette Scurry



Denise Disney



Lillie Moody



Nuri Funes



Crystal Barksdale



Gloria Knight



Madie Green

For a copy of the entire contract, visit [www.kidsfirstmaryland.org](http://www.kidsfirstmaryland.org) or call 1-866-623-5707.

For questions about the ballot or the voting process, please call 1-866-623-5707.

# Contract Highlights



## ***Child Care Subsidy Rates – Increases and Protections***

- ✓ The state will use funds from the federal government's stimulus package to increase Child Care Subsidy rates in all jurisdictions for an average 2.9% increase.
- ✓ The state will be obligated to negotiate with SEIU providers when new funding becomes available for Child Care Subsidies.

## ***Increased Access for Parents***

- ✓ Parental co-pays will not increase as a result of the agreement.

***Training Funds and Bonuses:*** The state will continue to fund training bonuses and vouchers through the Credentialing Program.

## ***Timely and Accurate Payments***

- ✓ The state will issue payments on time, accurately and through direct deposit.
- ✓ Emergency advances will be available in cases of demonstrated hardship.
- ✓ The state will keep providers informed of parental eligibility, and providers will not have to pay for mistakes made by the state.

***A Seat at the Table:*** Providers who care for subsidy kids, represented by SEIU, will now be part of the decision-making committees of the child care system, including the Office of Child Care Advisory Council, which makes recommendations to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) on child care regulations and procedures.

***A New Independent Voice with the Department of Education:*** A joint committee of representatives from the state and SEIU providers only will be created to work on big-picture issues providers have with the child care system.

## ***Improved Professional Development and Training Opportunities***

- ✓ A joint committee of representatives from the state and SEIU providers only will be set up to work to expand opportunities for child care provider training and further education.
- ✓ SEIU providers will work with the state to review training proposals.
- ✓ SEIU providers and the state will work together to improve provider access to and participation in state programs and grants for child care providers and low-income families.

## ***Informal Providers***

- ✓ The subsidy rates for informal providers will also increase by an average of 2.9%.
- ✓ The state and SEIU will explore opportunities for informal providers to be eligible to participate in the Food Program.
- ✓ The state and SEIU will work together to support informal providers to become registered.

***Termination Notifications:*** Providers will be given five working-days notice if a child is removed from care.

***Healthcare Study Group:*** The state will work with SEIU providers to put together options for health care coverage, so that when the economy turns around we can work to enact the healthcare options.

## ***An Environment to Grow Our Union***

- ✓ The state will remain neutral on the subject of union membership and is barred from using state funds to conduct anti-union activities.
- ✓ Third parties contracting with the state will remain neutral on union membership and are barred from making anti-union statements or distributing anti-union information.
- ✓ If legislation is passed that expands the rights of the child care providers union, additional proposals may be added to the contract that are consistent with the expanded rights.

## ***Scope of Contract***

- ✓ The contract will be in effect until June 30, 2011.
- ✓ At the request of either party the contract can be reopened in order to negotiate improved economic terms.