

The following comments were received in the CCDFStatePlan in-box (61 total). Directly after these are the comments shared by the public at the two Public Hearings held in Phoenix on July 26, 2018 and in Tucson on July 31, 2018.

Date Received	Submitted By	Comments [from CCDFStatePlan in-box – thru 7/31/18]
7/8/18	J. Raskob	<p>I see that the State Plan has been posted to your web site. The Plan mentions the 2018 Market Rate Survey and provides a link to it: https://des.az.gov/documents-center?qt-content-tab=1&cshs_field_dl_category_tid_reports=195</p> <p>However, this link does not work. Could you please provide a working link to the document?</p>
7/8/18	J. Raskob	<p>The draft state plan states in section 4.2.5 c) states that, "Providers and members of the Child Care Advisory Committee were notified regarding completion of the 2018 Market Rate Survey and where they could view it, and it was posted on the DES website at https://des.az.gov/documents-center?qt-content-tab=1&cshs_field_dl_category_tid_reports=195</p> <p>When I attempt to view the document, I see an error message that, "An illegal choice has been detected. Please contact the site administrator." When I search reports on your web site, I can access previous market rate surveys, but not the current version.</p> <p>Section 2.4.5 b) states that the Market Rate Survey was made "widely available" on July 7, 2018. That appears to be factually incorrect. Could you please provide a working link to the document?</p>
7/12/18	J. Raskob	<p>The dates and locations of upcoming public hearings are unclear. Section 132 a) of the draft plan states that the dates of the public hearings are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 25, 2018, and • July 2026, 2018. <p>The second date is not a date. Section 132 d) states that the hearings will be held in Phoenix and Tucson, but does not specify a date for either city.</p> <p>Section 132 c) states that the the notice of public hearings was posted on the DES web site. However, it has not been posted to date.</p> <p>May I suggest that CCA posts the notice of public hearings on the DES web site so as to clarify the details?</p>
7/17/18	J. Gabrey	<p>After reviewing the Child Care and Development Fund Plan (CCDF) for the State of Arizona, FFY 2019-2021, I have some concerns as to the market</p>

		<p>rate survey which was done. The rates of our facility are very comparable with the vast majority of the centers in our area. Other areas of Tucson and Phoenix are significantly higher.</p> <p>The Statewide Market Rates show an average infant rate of \$35 at the 25th percentile and \$48.00 at the 75th percentile. Our daily rate for an infant is \$47.00 for all. Another example is our preschool rates. Your survey shows \$28 at the 25th percentile and \$38.60 at the 75th percentile. Our daily rate is \$44.00 for all percentiles. This is a huge discrepancy which results in either a company such as ours being asked to write off \$27 to \$80 per week, or the family being required to pay that difference. Most families cannot afford the difference if they are qualifying for public assistance.</p> <p>I would ask that the Market Rate survey be re-evaluated. This has been an ongoing issue in our state with the large dependency between provider rates and what the state is reimbursing. This places a burden on the businesses and the families who are already at risk.</p>
7/18/18	B. Berk	<p>As someone who has been privy to the ongoing work on the plan I want to thank you for the ongoing opportunities to impact the state plan. Not an easy job and I appreciate your openness over the past 2 years as we have worked together to improve our ECE system.</p> <p>While I may have questions and differences with other parts of the plan, I only want to comment on the rates paid. I want to limit my comments to this because this is far and away the most important part of the plan for our early childhood community. The rates impact everyone involved in our ECE system, but disproportionately impact families living in poverty who are more and more being shut out of high quality early childhood programs.</p> <p>I am the director of an accredited, Quality First 5 Star preschool. We educate children from infants through school age. About 75% of our families live in poverty and approximately 40% of our families are currently, or once were, involved with DCS.</p> <p>The average reimbursement we are paid to care for an infant at Outer Limits is approximately \$100 a week. While we only enroll children on a full time basis, children rarely attend 5 full days. They may get sick, or leave for a parent visit, or have a scheduled doctor's appointment. The list of reasons is long, but infants especially rarely attend the 5 full days they are scheduled for. Our private pay rate for infants is \$220 per week. Families pay this regardless of attendance. The difference between a \$100 reimbursement from DES and our \$220 private pay rate is significant.</p> <p>Until January 2017 we were able to only charge families the required DES co-pay. We received extra funding from a local non-profit to cover some of the difference until June 2016 and then we simply ate the difference as a service to the community until January 2017. As you are aware, the</p>

		<p>minimum wage increased significantly in 2017 and while we didn't have anyone earning the minimum wage prior to January 2017, we now have the majority of our teaching staff earning the minimum wage or just above. We implemented an additional co-pay of \$50 per week for infant care above someone's assigned co-pay. Since we did this only 2 infants paid by DES have enrolled. Both currently have balances due close to \$1000 each and we have decided to look the other way for now because we really want children living in poverty to have access to our high quality infant program. This, however, is not sustainable.</p> <p>The cost of labor will continue to go up as the minimum wage continues to increase and we strive to employ degreed, experienced teachers. We are unwilling to warehouse children. We could put 11 children in our infant room without much increase in labor, but that is not high quality care. So, instead, we enroll private pay families who can pay the cost of care.</p> <p>I wanted to share this because this is a concrete example of how the DES rates do not allow families equal access to high quality care.</p> <p>I appreciate the recent increase in funding through tiered reimbursement. It certainly helps but it is not enough. We must invest in our youngest children. The federal regulations require rates that make care affordable and accessible. Arizona needs to make immediate changes in the program to ensure all children get a strong start in life.</p> <p>Please feel free to contact me if you require additional information.</p>
7/19/18	B. Williams	<p>Attached are a few comments related to health and nutrition in ECE settings. Please consider them and let me know if you have any questions or would like further comment on related issues in the plan. Thanks for the opportunity to provide input!</p> <p>Comments – 2018 CCDF State Plan</p>
7/19/18	N. Haeussler	<p>My name is Nicki and I am the director of Kidz Kampus preschool, and have been since 2008. I have been here since the crisis happened and all families lost their subsidies in 2008. Since then, we, like many others, have struggled to keep our doors open and have been scared many times. Minimum wage has increased, and going to continue to increase until 2020 up to \$12.00 per hour. That is nearly twice as much as the minimum wage was in 2008 when I first started at \$7.05 per hour. However, the DES reimbursement rates have not changed the entire time! How are we supposed to find quality teachers that want to work for even minimum wage, when they can go to McDonalds down the street and make the same amount. Since 2008, more quality standards have been pushed on us, in addition to requiring daycare teachers to go to college to stay in the field. But no money to do so? Yes, thankfully we have programs like AZ Workforce who provides scholarships for some teachers. But what about the ones who don't qualify for a scholarship because of their spouses income?</p>

		They quit. They cant afford college on their own. These children need stability! There is a stigma to minimum wage. It's usually for those with no education. My teachers are educated. They are valued. And they are worth more than minimum wage. Please keep this in mind when deciding where to spend the \$56 million in unspent federal funds. Put it where it makes sense. Put it towards our future. The children.
7/19/18	R. Ustoev	Hello my name is Revital Ustoev, I work at a daycare in Phoenix and I am writing you today on behalf of daycares all around us and for the one I currently work for. I urge you to use the funding to increase the DES rates. We service a low income community where we do not charge tuition difference, and although this helps the families it doesn't help the business grow. Having more funding in our program will benefit not only the child in the long run but the teacher as well. We put our funding back into our children because they are the future. It would alleviate some financial stressors as a daycare facilitator as well. Please consider putting some funding in, increasing DES rates.
7/19/18	D. Berk	Families need quality child care to leave their children at so they can work. Child care facilities provide education at the most influential time in a child's life and you are currently paying centers 75% of the rate for the year 2000. You expect centers to attract highly qualified employees when you are paying the same rates from a time when the minimum wage was \$5.15. Arizona's current minimum wage is more than twice that. How do you expect centers to provide safe quality care when you are not willing to pay for it. Raise what providers are paid.
7/19/18	J. Paye	Please increase the rates so I can give raises to my teachers. Every dollar of increase will go directly to the employees.
7/20/18	W. & M.S. Watson	I would like to share with you some improvements that are needed and would be made if providers had the market rate reimbursement I believe at the top- increased staff wages :)))) This will help with longevity of staff and make us more competitive with the market place, thus increasing quality of programs. Always a benefit for children. Staff deserve all we can give them. Security and safety measures Classroom improvements: equipment and supplies Playground improvements: equipment and awnings Building improvements: bathroom, kitchen and classroom improvements Technical improvement for children, families, teaching staff, and management
7/20/18	E. Hoskins	This is to inform you that I am in agreement that DES rates need to be raised!!!! Child Care centers are long overdue for an increase. We have had to increase our rates to cover our costs with the minimum wage and other expenses increasing in the last few years. That means the difference

		<p>between what DES pays us and what we charge has increased therefore it puts more of a hardship on our families the make up the difference.</p> <p>If there is money sitting in the state fund that is not being spent, this would be a good place to spend it. Put a little more money in our families pockets and help the economy.</p> <p>You need to consider funding DES in order for a rate increase to help families that need child care have less of a burden.</p>
7/23/18	M. Werber	<p>Thank you for taking public comments and input relative to the state's Child Care Block Grant Funding. By way of introduction, my name is Mark Werber and I currently own and operate two busy, high quality preschool/child care centers in Glendale, Arizona for the past 19 years called Tots Unlimited Preschool and Childcare Center. Both of these centers serve a significant percentage of low income DES parents. At one of our centers, over 70% of the children attending are covered through DES child care. Also, by way of introduction, I have served on the board of the Arizona Early Childhood Education Association for over 12 years. Finally, both of our centers have been active participants in First Things First - Quality First program and both centers are nationally accredited through National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA).</p> <p>My first center opened in February 1999. The DES reimbursement rates are the same today as they were then. As an example, the allowable DES reimbursement rate for a 3 year old was \$23.80 a day or \$119.00 a week. Today, the allowable DES reimbursement rate is exactly the same. Its basic common sense that a business cannot operate today receiving the same reimbursement/revenue per child that it received almost 20 years ago. So one may ask how we keep our doors open today considering this reimbursement. Twenty years ago, DES parents strictly paid their copay from DES per child and that was sufficient for our business to operate. Today, because DES rates have been frozen for such a long period of time, in addition to the daily copay, DES parents are now required to pay a significant portion of the difference between the DES reimbursement and the centers stated rates. In some centers, that can be as much as an additional \$100 per week per child above and beyond their weekly copay. With the DES reimbursement rates so low, families face a tremendous financial burden and cannot afford high quality early learning environments even though they have DES child care. This is forcing parents to leave their children in unsafe environments, becoming "latch key" kids after school, leaving them in the care of family or friends where there may be no opportunity to receive developmentally appropriate learning relative to their social, emotional, and cognitive development. Also, according to First Things First, research has shown a child's brain development grows to 80% of adult size by age 3 and 90% (nearly full grown) by age 5.</p>

Arizona is one of two states with no funding from its General Fund going to support DES child care. The matching funds required to receive the federal grant are almost entirely provided by an "in-kind" contribution from First Things First. Another important factor to highlight the unfair and unreasonable current DES reimbursement level has to do with the fact that Arizona DES rates are between the 5th and the 10th percentile of the most recent market rate survey. The federal goal is to be at the 75th percentile. The federal goal mandates that states pay a "reasonable rate" for childcare services. It is my understanding that the states "waiver" for paying a reasonable rate has expired and at the current level, it is totally unreasonable.

As a result of the lack of funding provided by the state of Arizona, a waiting list has been in effect for almost 10 years. This means parents with children who qualify for DES child care are not able to receive services. This so-called "waiting list" is really a "denial list." Many parents reported to us that when they went to the DES Child Care office to apply, they were discouraged from applying and told not to waste their time since they would be added to the waiting list anyway. As a result, many parents are forced to leave the labor force as they have no one to care for their children and cannot afford childcare under the current reimbursement formula. Under this scenario, many parents are being forced (even though they qualify for DES child care) to quit the labor force where they are currently productive and contributing members of our state including tax paying citizens. Instead, they will be relying on state safety net programs including welfare, food stamps, section 8 housing therefore further burdening the state's budget. This also sets a bad precedence for their children repeating the cycle of dependency their parents are forced to rely on.

Now I would like to speak about the DES reimbursement rate as it relates to running a business. Nineteen years, when I lost an Executive Managerial position in the hospital industry, I decided to take a rather significant entrepreneurial risk and start my own preschool/child care center. Over the last 20 years or so, I have built from ground up, two free standing preschool, childcare centers in Glendale, Arizona. The total budget for my most recent center, was approximately \$2.3 million dollars including Glendale permit and development fees, architectural costs, construction costs which included creation of jobs, and fully equipping the center. In addition to personally contributing a significant portion of this amount from my personal funds, I obtained loans from local banks. Every year as an employer, I contribute to our economy by employing over 60 people, paying associated payroll taxes, providing mandated health insurance to my staff, paying all county property taxes, paying sales tax on all purchases, paying federal and state income taxes, etc. The staff rely on my business to be a financially viable entity along with all the families we serve to allow their children to receive quality child care while they go to work and contribute to society.

		<p>I could list a plethora of reasons how the current DES reimbursement negatively impacts my business as well as so many in the community that really depend on our services. But maybe to list just two reasons that have the most impact are salaries and wages along with health insurance. In January 2015, the minimum wage \$8.05/hr. In January 2019, the minimum wage will increase to \$11.00/hr and in January 2020, the minimum wage will increase to \$12.00/hr. Therefore, from 2015 to 2020, the state minimum wage increase equates to increase of 49%. As a business, not only does the increased minimum wage relate to newly hired employees and bringing current low level employees up to the new wage increase, it has a rippling effect on experienced and tenured employees that will not settle for a wage comparable to inexperienced employees. Salaries and wages, employer payroll taxes and health insurance premiums (which has been rising by over 20% each year) account for over 70% of the total expenses of the business. It is impossible for any business to keep its doors open and operate with the expense inflation noted above and rely on existing DES reimbursement rates. These continuing expense increases will eventually force business that take DES children to go out of business in addition to more and more parents that qualify for DES not being able to afford child care.</p> <p>Given all the facts and the compelling arguments that I've made, it is critical that DES increase its reimbursement in order to provide high quality child care to DES eligible families. Existing DES reimbursement levels are not acceptable and even more not acceptable when the state has \$56 million dollars of unspent federal funds to utilize.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to allow me to provide input on this important subject. I am available to testify and answer any questions your committee may have or I can be reached by telephone by any members of your committee or staff at 480-570-8687.</p>
7/24/18	D. G. Crawford	<p>It is long past time for Arizona to update its childcare assistance plan for low-income working families. Our reimbursement rates are 18 years out-of-date! Parents have few options for safe, quality, and affordable early learning for their children.</p> <p>With a \$56 million increase in federal funds to our state for child care, we expect Arizona to update reimbursement rates.</p> <p>Arizona is the ONLY State whose rates are 18 years out-of-date! Children are paying the price!</p> <p>There is absolutely NO reason for Arizona to leave child care rates this far behind!</p> <p>Please update your plan to correct this situation!</p>
7/24/18	M.A. & M. Martin	<p>Doesn't it bother anyone that we are continually last in taking care of our most vulnerable. Do you realize that if we offered quality day care that parents could work, support their families, and get off welfare. It would save</p>

		AZ money!!! I have seen some of those daycares that will take our kids. You would not send your children to them. Do you think these parents would want less for their children. Come on do the right thing people!!!! For a change!!!
7/24/18	P. VanMaanen	<p>It is great news to see Arizona receive additional federal funding in the amount of \$56 million to use toward early learning and quality child care. As a health care provider and one that has been involved with activities supported by First Things First I am well aware of our states need for quality, affordable and trusted child care.</p> <p>A key issue to keep in mind while planning to implement use of the \$56 million is to update child care reimbursement rates. Our rates are outdated, having not been updated in nearly 20 years. With the efforts our state has put forward to improve quality early learning, this pay gap leaves quality efforts behind and slow to gain steam. Our state is putting children at risk for poor outcomes if it does not do something about these outdated rates. Worse, it puts any quality child care out of reach as it becomes unaffordable to most parents required to pay out of pocket. The influx of new funding is a perfect time to bring the rates up to date and to set the stage for reimbursement that can demand and expect excellent quality outcomes as a result.</p>
7/24/18	D. Benton	<p>Pleade use our Federal dollars to fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a \$56 million increase in federal funds to our state for child care, we expect Arizona to update child care reimbursement rates. • Arizona stands alone with rates that are 18 years out of date and children are paying the price by being shut out of quality early learning. • There is no reason for Arizona to have a child care plan that leaves rates this far behind. <p>Mya I remind you that you are obligated by State Statutes to fund public education and make it affordable to all. Please do your job!</p>
7/24/18	M. H. Molloy	I want to see Arizona progress and to do so young children REQUIRE quality early care and education. Arizona MUST increase the rates it pays child care providers!!
7/24/18	J. Mason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I urge the State to bring reimbursement rates up to date; with a \$56 million increase in federal funds to our state for child care, I expect Arizona to update child care reimbursement rates. • Arizona rates are 18 years out of date, and children are paying the price by being shut out of quality early learning. • Our state has the obligation to ensure that child care facilities have the funding they need to provide quality child care.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We all know that early childhood education is the basis for success in school and life. The future of a healthy society depends on healthy, well-educated children.
7/24/18	D. Post	<p>Please use the federal money to update child care rates that are 20 years out of date. We need to support single parents and working families. We claim to be pro-family but everything we do is to hurt people. Let's help for a change.</p> <p>Hell hath no fury like 175 million women scorned. Sign at women's march 2018</p>
7/24/18	T. Martin	<p>As a 42 year AZ resident, voter, and single mother, this state is way overdue in paying child care providers fair reimbursement for caring for children whose parents work and whom you want to keep working.</p> <p>If this state really cares about children and families and our future - start to act consistent with those alleged values. Please help families pay for quality child care.</p>
7/24/18	P. J. Vincent	<p>I am commenting on the draft plan for using federal child care funds. I have read that the rates for reimbursement to childcare centers is f8 years out of date causing less childcare to be available to low income parents. It seems there is the possibility of increasing that reimbursement with money from a \$56 million increase in federal funds. DES should use these funds to improve the availability of quality childcare for those who find it difficult to get work that pays a living wage.</p>
7/24/18	E. Shapiro	<p>I am writing with concern about the Arizona draft education plan. With a \$56 million increase in federal funds to our state for child care, we expect Arizona to update child care reimbursement rates. Arizona stands alone with rates that are 18 years out of date and children are paying the price by being shut out of quality early learning. There is no reason for Arizona to have a child care plan that leaves rates this far behind.</p> <p>Please amend the plan to increase funding for child care.</p>
7/24/18	P. Always	<p>I am writing about the federal child care funds. They need to consider these elements in their plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a \$56 million increase in federal funds to our state for child care, we expect Arizona to update child care reimbursement rates. Arizona stands alone with rates that are 18 years out of date and children are paying the price by being shut out of quality early learning. <p>There is no reason for Arizona to have a child care plan that leaves rates this far behind.</p>
7/24/18	T. Scheletsky	<p>I am writing to offer my thoughts on the increased federal childcare funds that that Arizona will be receiving. We know that the early childhood years are crucial to development. Investing in quality childcare is an investment in the future of Arizona. With a \$56 million increase in federal funds to our state for child care, we expect Arizona to update child care reimbursement</p>

		rates, as Arizona stands alone with rates that are 18 years out of date and children are paying the price by being shut out of quality early learning. There is no reason for Arizona to have a child care plan that leaves rates this far behind. Please make an investment in children.
7/24/18	J. Geil	I understand the State, as part of the new federal budget, is to receive an influx of some \$56 million to support childcare. A significant portion of these funds should support low income families. For this to happen, Arizona needs to increase the childcare reimbursement rates to make it financially feasible for childcare businesses to serve families using assistance or families unable to afford high cost co-pays.
7/24/18	G. Spesard	Reimbursing using 18 year old rates is obscene!!!! Get up to date and help ALL Arizona kids get a good headstart !!!!!!!!!!!!!,,
7/24/18	E. Delaney	<p>With Arizona being one of the state's separating refuge kids from their moms, I'm surprised we have to urge the state to fund chikld care programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a \$56 million increase in federal funds to our state for child care, we expect you to update child care reimbursement rates. • Arizona stands alone with rates that are 18 years out of date and children are paying the price by being shut out of quality early learning. • There is no reason for Arizona to have a child care plan that leaves rates this far behind. <p>Don't you want new businesses to move here? Then support working people and their kids</p>
7/24/18	B. Cheatham	<p>I'm contacting you in regards to early education opportunities for young children in the state of AZ. These children deserve to have the option of learning things that are necessary for them to thrive be ready for life. We adults are responsible for seeing that youngsters get what they need to be able to start a good life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a \$56 million increase in federal funds to our state for child care, we expect Arizona to update child care reimbursement rates. • Arizona stands alone with rates that are 18 years out of date and children are paying the price by being shut out of quality early learning. <p>There is no reason for Arizona to have a child care plan that leaves rates this far behind. Let's make changes for the betterment of Arizona' young children</p>
7/24/18	L. Stinson	If you want providers to offer high quality child care, then reimbursement rates need to be increased.
7/25/18	R. Haas	This plan should greatly increase the amount of reimbursement to child care providers and centers. You received millions and millions of additional funding from the federal government and you are many years behind in your reimbursements. This is a great burden on the people who use the

		child care system. Please step up and make child care more affordable to those that need it most.
7/25/18	D. Newsom	<p>UMOM provides quality child care to the most vulnerable children since the late 1990's. We operate the largest homeless shelter for families and provides a variety of services to end homelessness. Child Care is a key component allowing our families to finish their education, search for job, and secure housing. With the \$56 million increase in federal funds to our state for child care, we expect Arizona to increase child care reimbursements rates. Rates have not been increased for 18 years and children are paying the price by being shut out of quality early learning. UMOM's average cost per child is \$60.67 per day and the average State reimbursement is \$29.30 per day, roughly pays for 50 percent of the cost of care. In order to continue operating UMOM's Child Care we shift private dollars to cover the full costs, sacrificing expanding shelter beds to safely house 141 homeless families on our wait list.</p> <p>We must stand up and invest in our children and do the right thing and increase child care rates.</p>
7/25/18	A. Marrero	<p>As a citizen, taxpayer and voter from Arizona, I am requesting that your state agency take the opportunity to stand up for investing in quality early learning. I have been in the field of Early Childhood for over 25 years. Coming from the Midwest to Arizona 20 years ago became challenging to work in the field of Early Childhood due to the very little and slow process of belief in philosophy and growth in this field. As a certified educator and professional, I have been persistent in supporting and working in our low income communities. Your state agency represents children who are in families that are in crisis, are from low income working families, or children who have been placed in foster care. Arizona families put their personal pride away in order to do what is best for their children. This state will be receiving federal funds that can support families by providing child care funds. Arizona's draft plan leaves major gaps for children and families in our state. Federal law requires states to reimburse child care centers and homes based <u>on the current market prices for child care</u>. But Arizona's reimbursement rates are about 18 years out of date and far below the cost of meeting federal requirements. As a result, some child care businesses shut their doors to children using assistance and others charge parents unaffordable co-payments. Either way, parents have very few options for safe, quality and affordable early learning. Currently, Arizona and the Department of Economic Security have an opportunity to make a tremendous impact on families by supporting them with current child care rates at centers of quality. This strategy alone will have many powerful impacts on Arizona. Some of the impacts will include reducing foster care placement, by providing families appropriate child care rates. This in turn supports the state through economic growth, by families having funds to now pay the light bill, buy food or needed clothing essentials or paying rent. An not having to choose which one this month, and what do we need to do</p>

		<p>next month. Always being on paycheck away from being homeless. An to have an even better understanding, try to live their lives for a month, literally. By delivering to our families, Arizona and your department will become a model for other states to follow. What Arizona citizen will not support you. I will retire soon, and I do not support the continued growth of our prison system, people who have no skill sets or people who can work and are receiving public assistance in Arizona. Let's invest in the future of our children and their families.</p> <p>Please consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a \$56 million increase in federal funds to our state for child care, we expect Arizona to update child care reimbursement rates. • Arizona stands alone with rates that are 18 years out of date and children are paying the price by being shut out of quality early learning. <p>There is no reason for Arizona to have a child care plan that leaves rates this far behind.</p>
7/26/18	K. Zakerwski	As an Early Childhood Educator and Director I am extremely concerned that the proposed plan does not include an increase in reimbursement rates. I urge the state of Arizona to use federal funds to increase this rate so the neediest of families can access high quality services.
7/26/18	C. Vega	I would like to advocate for increasing funding for young children and their families to access high quality early child care programs please.
7/26/18	K. Steele	It's time for Arizona to admit that a childcare plan based on a financial strategy that is 18 years out of date is not what we need. It's time to update the childcare reimbursement rates.
7/26/18	T. Reynolds	<p>While I cannot attend the meeting scheduled for 7/31 in Tucson, I would like to note that I would like my comments to be reviewed. Unfortunately, as you all know, Arizona is ranked in the bottom percent for subsidy rates in the most recent market rate survey. Happy Trails School offers quality preschool for a very competitive price. We pay our teachers (who all hold degrees and some are certified) at a wage that allows them to remain at our center. Unfortunately, in order to take DES children we have to charge an additional amount on top of the families copay which often times, discourages families from enrolling at our center forcing them to go to another site that may not be offering the quality level of an accredited five star program.</p> <p>One way to allow quality sites to offer DES families enrollment for only the assigned DES copay is to use the \$56 million of unspent federal funds to increase reimbursement rates! We held out increasing families required additional copay for DES until August 2017. The reason for the increase at that time was because our regular paying families were having to have rate increases to offset the amount I was losing from DES families. The parents</p>

		<p>on our board did not feel this was fair and voted to add an additional \$25 per week per child to copay DES assigns. Since that move, we have lost a substantial amount of DES families and ultimately, they have chosen a center that does not offer the level of teaching found at Happy Trails. Rarely will a DES family enroll at our center now after touring because they can go around the corner and only pay the \$1,\$2 or \$3 per day copay. I would love to give the children DES serves the opportunity to attend for only the copay amounts again, if the reimbursement rate would reflect our weekly tuition of \$155 per week and \$170 per week for 1's and 2's.</p> <p>Please allocate monies to increase the reimbursement rate from the \$56 million UNSPENT funds!!</p>
7/26/18	A.D.McPherson	<p>I would like to advocate for an increase in rates to ensure all children have access to, and all families can afford, high quality early childhood education. The federal government provided \$56 Million in new child care funding for Arizona. Please ask Arizona to draw down this money and earmark it to an increase in rates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> With a \$56 million increase in federal funds to our state for child care, we expect Arizona to update child care reimbursement rates. <input type="checkbox"/> Arizona stands alone with rates that are 18 years out of date and children are paying the price by being shut out of quality early learning. <input type="checkbox"/> There is no reason for Arizona to have a child care plan that leaves rates this far behind.
7/26/18	D. Hill	<p>The state of Arizona continues to develop our system of care and education for young children. The foundational work of organization such as the Southern Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children and it's partner in Phoenix, as well as the work of First Things First has created a system for our state to build upon.</p> <p>We can increase access to high quality child care only if we increase the reimbursement rates. ECE Centers can hire educated teachers if they are reimbursed at a higher rate. Parents want to send their children to quality early education, not simply day care for children. With a \$56 million increase in federal funds to our state for child care, we expect Arizona to update child care reimbursement rates.</p> <p>Arizona stands alone with rates that are 18 years out of date and children are paying the price by being shut out of quality early learning. There is no reason for Arizona to have a child care plan that leaves rates this far behind. If we begin a child's education with high quality, parents will become involved and help improve our education from the youngest up through high school.</p>

		This is funding the federal government has made available to us. We must request it.
7/26/18	K. Gabbard	<p>I would like to voice my opinion as a quality child care owner/operator for over 10 years in Phoenix South Region (according to Quality First). We are one of the only child care centers in our entire area that has both a 4 STAR RATING with Quality First and are also NATIONALLY ACCREDITED. Many of the child care centers in my demographics are having to close doors due to the fact that they rely on only your reimbursement rate.</p> <p>I can tell you that paying providers at a rate that is 18 years outdated is completely unacceptable to be able to provide high quality care to your families.</p> <p>CCDBG requires so much more training and expertise and my professional staff is expected to do that with no rate increase.</p> <p>We are honored to be able to care for many vulnerable children and want to provide the best care they need. Some are traumatized and come from DCS and paying teachers minimum wage won't work anymore.</p> <p>Also, with the increase of minimum wage and it will continue to go up for 2 more years - without an increase child care will become even more unaffordable for those that need it.</p> <p>Quality child care is a win win for families so Parents can go to work and as we provide quality care.</p> <p>Why doesn't AZ want to invest in ECE?</p>
7/26/18	J. McGrew	<p>i have a center in Tempe surrounded by lower income homes and apartments. About 85% of our children are on the subsidy program. over 90% of our children are eligible for free meals under CACFP. These parents are unable to pay above their co-pay requirements to meet our full tuition rates; the rates we need to run a quality center.</p> <p>The recent large increase in minimum wage for our teacher aides has caused even greater hardship on our center.</p> <p>The funds available (56 million in unspent federal funds) need to be made available to DES centers so that higher quality can be achieved and maintained. The rates paid now to fund these programs is just unacceptable.</p>
7/26/18	J. Saletan	There are many great components to this plan that do wonderful things for children; however, <i>the plan keeps the reimbursement rate at a rate that is 18 years behind.</i> It is challenging for our community to provide high quality early education with rates that are so far behind the times.

		<p>I encourage an increase in rates to ensure all children have access to, and all families can afford, high quality early childhood education. The federal government provided \$56 Million in new child care funding for Arizona.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a \$56 million increase in federal funds to our state for child care, we expect Arizona to update child care reimbursement rates. • Arizona stands alone with rates that are 18 years out of date and children are paying the price by being shut out of quality early learning. • There is no reason for Arizona to have a child care plan that leaves rates this far behind. <p>Please do the right thing and increase reimbursement rates for childcare.</p>
7/26/18	J. Murello	<p>I did not read the whole CCDF State Plan but wanted to make sure that 2 main points are discussed at the hearing.</p> <p>Families Gross Monthly Income Eligibility needs to increase – Since the change in minimum wage many families monthly income has increased but they are still living in poverty due to all companies raising prices to pay their employees. Many families have difficulties getting care for their child because they just miss the cut off to be eligible. This causes more families to lose jobs and children to bounce around from care to care.</p> <p>DES Rates need to increase – DES rates are very low. Our Arizona schools infant room weekly rate is an average from \$230 - \$280. An average of \$50 a day for infants which is \$20 a day less than DES pays or \$13.50 a day for our accredited schools. These rates are made to ensure we cover labor, curriculum, lease of location, food, maintenance and anything else that falls in the category in order to provide a highly qualified child care center for families. With this rate our schools have to discount out the difference or close to the difference of our private pay families just in order for the children to have a place to come. <u>The schools that have a higher percentage of DES families do not profit and this limits what the school and director can provide. They can't afford to get updated furniture, toys, curriculum based activities or increase hourly rate teacher's salary to ensure qualified teachers in the classrooms. Parents on DES should have a choice for their children to be able to attend a high quality preschool / child care center and not just a home based school due to the weekly costs.</u></p>
7/26/18	B. Geiler	<p>This is in regards to raising DES rates. DES rates have not been raised in almost a decade. We are one of the oldest facilities here in Arizona and have been in business for 68 years. We have had to continue to raise our rates in order to support our families, our staff, and our center. Our main priority here at A Kiddie's Kingdom is to provide a quality education for ages birth through twelve in a safe, loving environment. A raise in the DES rates would help us TREMENDOUSLY!</p>

7/26/18	S. Jones	<p>KinderCare Education is pleased to provide the attached written comments in response to the state's draft CCDF plan for 2019-2021. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.</p> <p>KinderCare AZ CCDF 2019 Comments</p>
7/26/18	J. Raskob	<p>Attached please find comments of the draft CCDF State Plan for Arizona.</p> <p>Input on Draft Arizona CCDF State Plan</p>
7/26/18	T. Johnson	<p>The Women's Foundation of Southern Arizona is submitting for public comment the following statement regarding the Department of Economic Security's plan for using federal child care funds and providing child care assistance for children in low income working families and in foster care.</p> <p>The Child Care and Development Fund Plan should expand childcare availability and increase rates to more appropriate levels. By addressing both accessibility and rates, this combined approach will allow more families to enroll in quality childcare, which adds more workers to Arizona's labor force. The cost of center-based childcare for a toddler is \$836 per month, which is more than the average apartment in Arizona. For many low-income workers, the high cost of childcare is the barrier that keeps them out of the workforce or obtaining the necessary skills to qualify for higher paying jobs. Access to affordable, quality childcare is one solution to Arizona's labor shortage and the plan should address these needs.</p>
7/26/18	M. Brinkerhoff	<p>Attached please find feedback on the CCDF State Plan.</p> <p>CCDF feedback SAZA EYC</p>
7/26/18	K. Murphy	CCDF Draft State Plan Comments 2018
7/26/18	K. Murphy	CCDF Spending Letter 2018
7/26/18	J. Argyros	<p>As a resident of Arizona I would like to see our state legislatures invest in quality early learning. Please update the current reimbursement rates for childcare to meet federal requirements. Failure to fund childcare costs at the current rate hurts children and families in Arizona and additionally does not help private childcare businesses be able to offer quality care.</p>
7/26/18	K. Murphy	Market Rate Survey Comments 2018
7/26/18	E. Raden	<p>Please accept this email and attachment as the official comments of the Arizona Early Childhood Education Association on the Arizona 2019-2021 CCDF State Plan.</p> <p>While more detailed comments are made in the attached document, our main concerns regard provider rates. Arizona's rate is 18 years old and far below the cost of meeting quality standards. Because quality of child care is heavily influenced by the amount of investment in teachers, group size, and ratio—all expensive to implement, the federal regulations require states to reimburse child care businesses at the 75th percentile of the CURRENT market rate. Arizona is currently reimbursing at approximately 5-10th percentile of that rate.</p>

		<p>This rate does not support equal access for families and places a huge burden on centers to implement the new CCDF requirements as an unfunded mandate. When child care businesses get such low reimbursement rates, many simply close their doors to low income families. Others charge families a large co-pay to make up the cost differential, and struggle with large class sizes, high turnover among teachers, and a workforce with little training or experience.</p> <p>The federal Office of Child Care has stated that they will no longer be granting waivers to states that don't meet the rate requirements, and Arizona should not be granted one! Governor Ducey and DES can solve this problem by spending the \$56 million in additional federal funds on an immediate and meaningful rate increase to ensure equal access for all families.</p> <p>2019 State Plan Comments</p>
7/26/18	J. Harrington	<p>As a resident, voter and expectant mother in Arizona, I encourage consideration given to updating the child care reimbursement rates to align with actual and current market rate costs. With an anticipated \$56 million increase in federal funds to Arizona for child care, I urge Arizona to update child care reimbursement rates. Arizona's rates are nearly two decades out of date. Our children are enduring the repercussions by being shut out of quality early learning as well as our early learning programs cannot sustain on the close to nil level reimbursement rates. Young children, their families and the early childhood workforce deserve better and this is a terrific opportunity to demonstrate Arizona's priority on supporting early education, the workforce and family values by aligning reimbursement rates with reality.</p>
7/27/18	L. Kovacs	<p>I am an owner of 3 child care centers. Our low-income parents are being priced right out of the market. With the constant increases from the minimum wage going up we have to raise our rates or go out of business. It is reaching a critical point where our DES clients are being asked to pay so much that it won't be worth it to work if they have multiple children or they won't be able to put food on the table. With the unemployment rate so low we are feeling a lot of pressure to increase salaries to retain good teachers. Please give us the funds to do this so we can have a good quality program and provide well for our children. An increase in provider rates is long overdue!</p>
7/29/18	D. Naimark	<p>Naimark letter on draft CCDF plan 7-18</p>
7/30/18	E. E. Schindler	<p>On behalf of Child and Family Resources, an organization whose mission is to ensure that children reach their full potential, I offer a few comments. CFR has spent decades striving to improve the quality of Early Childhood Education, and our staff and programs, as you know, work diligently in this field. We appreciate the work you all are doing to write a good plan.</p> <p>I know you have received numerous and lengthy suggestions and feedback, so I will instead try to be brief. More than anything else, our system will not</p>

		survive; much less thrive, unless we get provider rate increases. It is absolutely insane, and heartbreaking, that we are using year 2000 data to determine payment rates. Please prioritize using the \$56 in Federal funds to raise rates – it is that simple.
7/31/18	G. Sandweg	State Plan Draft FTF Feedback 7-31-2018
7/31/18	Representative Kelli Butler	Attached please find my comments concerning the Child Care and Development Fund Plan (CCDF) for the State of Arizona, FFY 2019-2021. CCDFStatePlanComment
7/31/18	T. Maxwell	Please accept the attached file as our input to the CCDF State Plan. 180731-SALC Input to CCDF Draft State Plan
7/31/18	C. Cutshaw	<p>July 31, 2018</p> <p>Mr. Michael Traylor Director AZ Department of Economic Security 1789 W. Jefferson S/C 101A Phoenix, AZ 85007</p> <p>Mr. Traylor and staff of the Department of Economic Security,</p> <p>On behalf of the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona, I would like to comment on Arizona’s 2019-2021 Child Care Development Fund draft plan. At the UWTSA we believe strongly that access to high quality childcare is essential to our mission – which is an educated, healthy and thriving community.</p> <p>Specifically, we have three comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We note the reference in the plan to the passage of HB2449, requiring that 33% of the quality portion of the CCDF be spent on tiered reimbursement based on quality of care. We believe these kinds of incentives will help increase access to better quality of child care across the state and are fully consistent with the intent of the CCDF. 2. We are concerned that the current plan does not include important information in multiple areas. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. One example is the completed Market Rate Survey that was referenced in 4.2. While mentioned in the report, the actual information from the survey was not included in the draft on reimbursement rates. The link posted in 4.2.5c to the actual report was broken.

		<p>b. A second example is that there is no response to the question in section 4.4.1c: “Describe how base payment rates enable providers to meet health, safety, quality, and staffing requirements under CCDF.” This is an important question that merits an answer.</p> <p>3. Finally, given the current payment rates remain at the 75th percentile of the year <u>2000</u>’s Market Rate Survey, it is unclear why there is no mention of a plan to address such low provider reimbursement. The rationale for not including resources, such as the \$56 million allocated to the state from the Child Care Development Block Grant, is unclear.</p> <p>The purpose of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is to provide low-income parents with access to child care while they work or become educated or trained to support their families. This care should be of sufficient quality to promote their children’s learning and development. We believe our comments support the intent of the CCDF and ask that you consider them carefully as you refine our state plan.</p> <p>Thank you for your efforts and please let us know if we can be helpful in any way.</p>
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Submitted By	Comments [from Phoenix Public Hearing – July 26, 2018]
N. Loehr	In April, 40% hard working families increased the market rate; strongly support high rates; increase funds; base rate is at 75% of 2018; disappointed in market rate survey to use 2014, 2015 rates in the 10-15 percentile
J. Emch	Can’t do what we need to do; hurting families
E. Raden	Due to the lack of detail the public and the Feds have no idea what is actually happening; the Child Care Advisory Committee (CCAC) had no knowledge of the posting of the Plan or the dates of the Public Hearings for comments; the “Community Engagement” section in the first paragraph is not happening; we did not receive notification of the posting 20 days before; disappointed about the rates by ages; we are at below the 10 th percentile; the people we serve cannot afford this; there is a disparity between 2014 and 2018; it is unacceptable how far off we are; we are 18 years out of date; CCAC wasn’t given the opportunity to work on the Plan; Centers are forced to ask for additional fees so DES and DCS children pulling out being driven to lower quality providers; 75% are DES but few infants; at risk kids are going to lower quality providers so there is no equal access; maybe 5 years later there will be more robust co-pays; need to ask questions over the next 3 years; we have an opportunity to make it a richer document
K. Murphy	Additional charges (gaps) are not addressed

J. Emch	The South Phoenix market [40 th Street & Southern] can't handle the co-pays; I am paying teachers \$12.50/hour; I haven't made any money in 5 years, in fact I've taken a loss; I can't get 3 stars because can't reach the education standard – most of my teachers walk or take the bus to work; clearly we do not meet the rates; are we sending a waiver? probably will close next year
K. Murphy	There are no standards for rates; no plan to address it; how does a waiver work?
B. Herrera	Answer: the Plan is submitted; the Feds either approve or waiver
M. S. Watson	Owns Children's Campus (35 th Street & Thomas) since 1971; 85% DES in Maryvale; we are there because there is a need; we know children go hungry; we are a dying breed for low income families; large corporate centers don't go into our areas; Director and Assistant Directors take the staff to college; we don't have the money for all these regulations; if we increase pay for providers, it will pay off in dividend. The Ivory Tower does not understand what is going on with our kids, they only have more new demands and regulations to meet. Need to stress how important it is to increase rates. We are going to place security locked front doors because there have been 2 murders in the alley and 1 dad is wanted for murder!
W. Watson	First Things First (FTF) #1 issue is scholarship for teacher assistance; diminished every year regardless of parent priorities; 45 years as a provider and quality is without affordability to parents; net result is independent child care people out of business; we are the only stable thing in that child's life; cost of doing quality business has not been met since 2000; the shrinkage is intolerable; basic health & safety is an iron door; \$56million are not being used; pretty soon those of us who really care will be gone; keep the affordability to the parents; making sure that the basic needs of the child are met is getting harder every year to provide
K. Gabbard	Forced to lower ratios to provide quality; 60 kids on the center waitlist; excited about the 20% increase; 4 Star and accredited; but still lost 20% of the DES kids; lease is up in 1.5 years, not sure if we can make it. Teachers are being solicited by large corporate centers that can pay up to \$4 more an hour. DES rates are dragging down your ability to provide quality care
E. Raden	So many work hours, money, and other investments into quality and DES rates drag; us the \$56million today!
D. Naimark	Complements to improved management, the priority waitlist releases, and working toward tiered reimbursement; inadequate draft of the Plan; don't submit as Arizona is not reflected; where is impact of data?; there is no sense of urgency; not one word about how we are going to change it; much more needs to be put into this draft; fill in the blanks; it is not fair to children or parents of this state to submit this Plan; what are the Governor and State Leaders committed to?; the Plan is not on our behalf; it is so far below requirements; those who were babies 18 years ago are 18 years old now and we have the same rates; amend it before you turn it in; indicate what percentile we are at and what you are going to do about it
E. Raden	Quality set aside expenditure not clear; explain and justify why only for DES providers; CCR& R website: Expulsion Policy not there, no draft has been seen, when will it be implemented? would appreciate a 1:1 meeting, how & when will the draft be finalized? states it is on CCR&R website but it is not; Disaster Preparedness Plan: there has been a subcommittee since the last State Plan, 3 years ago, where is the draft? There needs to be better clarity; on the record, rates are the biggest concern; lots of things we could do

	better and should do better; people are ready to do the work; not fully within the scope that your bosses know; what AZ is proposing for rates is not acceptable
K. Murphy	Background checks: 4 things for pre-requisite – what kind of background checks are not doing that; If not meeting pre-requisite, what have you done? Ask for a waiver?
B. Herrera	We are asking for a Waiver for background checks
E. Raden	The waiver on provisional employment – how long is the waiver for? CCAC has not had an explanation; Feds require 165 FPL for 12-month re-dets and 3-month extensions– need to relook
D. Naimark	Need to have a sense of urgency; children are in unsafe situations; reflect that in the Plan and what actions will be taken so that we are not 18 years behind; if in 2000, 18 year old baby, maybe we are really 30 years behind.
B. Herrera	Comments will be posted on line by the end of next week.
M. Wisheart	Thank you for coming and sharing your passion; we are working together to make it better together.

Submitted By	Comments [from Tucson Public Hearing – July 31, 2018]
B. Berk	Thank you for the inclusiveness in the process of writing this Plan. Rates need to be closer to ensure all children have access to quality child care; rates are 2 decades behind; access to quality child care should consider all demographics; force the Governor and the Legislature to do what is right; AZ needs to draw down the funds and raise the rates. Feds should not approve the Plan and give a waiver.
T. Zabicki	Raise the rates; they deny equal access to quality care and you can't hire quality staff; important to have the quality child care so reimburse quality providers; waiver income eligibility for homeless shelters and domestic violence victims; DES quality requirements have resulted in loss of hundreds of providers.
B. Berk	Have lost 100's of providers; can no longer handle DES; can't meet quality requests
J. Raskob	Provider rates need to be improved; too low; a basic problem; questions in the Draft need to be answered.
T. Zabicki	Market Rate Survey: were the percentile/rates weighted by children in care? Rate increase was not addressed in the survey; if participant answered "we charge what DES pays", did they enter DES rates? Will there be subsequent data provided or additional analysis made on the survey?
B. Herrera	Unknown: if weighted by children in care; yes: DES rates entered; no, there will be no subsequent data provided or additional analysis; the survey that is posted is what we have.
T. Zabicki	In the past, the response rate included all attempts as well, even if not available, hence the response rate was high; congratulations you are doing what the Feds want by not including those; but, if anyone asks why this response rate is only 66%, that is why.
M. Crow	Special Note: M. Crow read from a 2-page document which she turned in at the end of the Hearing and that is inserted at the end of her statements here. Reimbursement rates are woefully low and a barrier to equal access for AZ families – 2000 rates; in 2000 the minimum wage was \$5.15/hour; use the additional \$56million to ensure quality health & safety, not the market rate from 2 decades ago; we are behind the Federal benchmark; Draft Plan does not address the issue; there is a lack of urgency; barriers to raise

	standards; State Plan should layout how it will be addressed; out of touch with reality of low income families and what providers need to keep doors open; significant, but needless barrier: provider monies vs state monies; parents paying the difference doesn't work for them. <u>Comments from Michelle Crow - 7-31-2018</u>
T. Johnson	Increase women's income and assets; expand child care availability; increase rates; research showed that it costs \$836/month for child care which is higher than their rent; education and higher paying jobs will increase the labor force.
T. Zabicki	Will the Children's Action Alliance be conducting any more Wage/Salary/Benefits surveys and analysis?
S. Kubiak	Last comprehensive Wage/Salary/Benefits survey was one in 2007 by FTF Building Bridges Program – Governor's office, Children's Action Alliance and the Market Rate Survey Contractor at the time.
B. Berk	Need to narrow the gap; educated teachers are being paid the same as those that are not education therefore they are going out of the field.
T. Zabicki	Is First Things First still reporting on their usage of funding for scholarships? The unanimous answer from the floor was: yes.
B. Berk	There is statewide FTF funding for infants & toddlers but depends on region such as Pima North.
M. Crow	What are the next steps before a decision is made on the Plan?
B. Herrera	8/17/18 – 8/31/18: it is submitted to the Feds; Feds make review/comment; finalized by end of September, 2018.
T. Zabicki	Is the Tribal Council still part of the program and receiving funding? Are the Feds still emphasizing the coordination with Tribes?
B. Herrera	Yes to both of T. Zabicki's questions. The same agreements are in place; Tribal Plan due 1 year later.
T. Zabicki	Important to remember that you can tell DES all you want about what and when, it is still the Legislature that decides what is done.