

New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children

POSITION STATEMENT

The New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children has learned of alleged exploitation of state funds to pay exorbitant salaries for administrators, specifically preschool program directors. We find this act to be deplorable.

Principally, competent preschool center directors strive to provide quality programming for the children of their programs. The position requires a colossal amount of time and is multifarious. In addition to supervising staff, ensuring adequate materials to promote learning, overseeing the nutrition program, ensuring a safe and healthy environment, and supporting families, directors manage a number of budgets.

In the state funded preschool paradigm, funds are received from the Department of Education (DOE), however, 26.12% of those expenses rely on funding from the NJ Department of Human Services (DHS). In addition to those non-covered DOE expenses for the preschool day, DHS funds cover expenses for the before-and-after school program, including salaries, supplies, and facility costs. The DHS funds are inadequate to support quality programming. Directors are driven to seek other sources of income to maintain quality.

For a program to exceptionally compensate its director funds from DOE would be unavailable, categorically; DHS funds would be insufficient. DHS funds are already too stressed to cover the un-funded 26.12% for the DOE six-hour day. Add the full cost of the wrap-around hours to the equation and funds are scarce. Extravagant director compensation would decimate the quality of the six-hour state funded preschool day. Centers who have earned national accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) would simply not be able to maintain prescribed quality without full use of DHS funds.

Ostentatious personal wealth celebrated off the backs of children is not the norm in the field. Rather, conscientious directors dedicate their careers to creating quality experiences for children and families by managing and training staff who share their passion. Unfortunately, a few will disgrace the whole by acting irresponsibly.

Sadly, the conventional moral and ethical practices honored by the majority who are committed to quality early childhood education and run admirable programs will be acutely impacted by the greed and malicious malpractice of one. NJAEYC condemns the practice of opportunistic misappropriation of public funds for self-aggrandizement off the backs of young children.