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## **NC increases reimbursement rate for Certified Developmental Day Centers**

### **New state budget ends 25-year reimbursement rate stalemate**

**NORTH CAROLINA** – With North Carolina’s General Assembly passing a new state budget, Senator Michael V. Lee (R-District 7) of Wilmington/New Hanover County, in partnership with the North Carolina Association of Developmental Day Centers (NCADD), successfully led House Bill 259 to increase Developmental Day Center (DDC) rates up to \$1350.00 per child, per month. This monumental change allows children with disabilities to continue receiving DDC services focused on inclusion, while providing public school units with placement options that expand the system’s capability to meet federal special education mandates.

For more than 25 years, the stagnant \$999.00 per child, per month reimbursement rate set by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has, in part, forced community-based Developmental Day Centers (DDCs) to close or convert to regular childcare centers without the ability to provide inclusion-based programming. In the past 3 years, the number of community-based DDCs serving pre-K aged children with and without disabilities across North Carolina have dropped from 31 centers to 18, while the demand for services have increased.

Jan Baker, President of NCADD says: “The rate change extends beyond the families served, contributing to the positive change in our local community, the business sector, and our society as a whole.” Jan also serves as the Senior Director of Education Strategy and Initiatives at Learning Together, a DDC effected and only one of three developmental day programs still operating in Wake County. Students at Learning Together receive occupational, speech and physical therapies directly in super-inclusive classrooms, alongside social-emotional and developmental curricula that help students enter Kindergarten on the Standard Course of Study, and prepare for lifelong learning.

The new funding is a positive first step by legislators to strengthen affordable, community-based, high-quality early care and education in North Carolina. The early childcare sector however still requires sustained investments so that early learning programs across the state are there for all children and families – now and in the future.

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