
From: Rep. K. Mark Takai on behalf of takai2 - Kristine
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2011 10:18 AM
To: HUSTestimony
Cc: takai2 - Kristine
Subject: 01-27-11 9AM, TESTIMONY for HB26
Attachments: kathy Ishihara testimony.docx

Aloha,

Please find attached testimony in SUPPORT of HB26 for tomorrow's hearing I am sending the Committee on behalf of a concerned individual. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 586-8455.

Mahalo,
Kristine

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COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
HEARING: January 27, 2011, 9AM Room 329

TO: Chair Mizuno and the Committee on Human Services
RE: Testimony in SUPPORT for HB26 RELATING TO INFANT AND TODDLER CHILD CARE CENTERS

Thank you for allowing me to testify in favor of this bill.

I am a mother of two children, both of which had gone to the same preschool agency at different locations. One child had no problems during his preschool years. My other child attended the same preschool agency but at another location. At the start of the preschool, my son seemed happy.

However, as time went by personal items such as my son's soiled clothing, slippers, and security blanket was missing. I did alert the staff. Some items were found, others was lost.

Other observations made were that an instructor was falling asleep while on duty, the school confirmed that and apologized. Instructors were also observed not tending to the children or greeting parents timely. The instructors were observed being preoccupied with other issues such as reading their college textbook, on cell phones, coming to work late, on a laptop computer, and ordering/eating breakfast.

I did report this to the director, and had an agreement that she would provide early morning oversight to the instructors. Weeks went by and I did not see the director in the early morning to provide any oversight over the instructors.

Then one day, my son came home with a rash like abrasion on his left posterior and lateral armpit area. When I questioned my son, he said he got this from school. His statements were somewhat confusing coming from a three year old, but said it was from school. My son was basically okay and I know that injuries happen at school however I wanted an injury report from the school. I called and left a message with the school director and asked that a report be made. I was not able to get someone to write a report until three days later.

There was an issue with which we felt that my son was being discriminated against since he had a security blanket. An instructor stated that my son at his age should not have a blanket, and there were other observations made to validate this issue. I brought this issue up and met with the regional director, site director and two instructors. They did not agree on the discrimination issue, however agreed to pursue site educational trainings on developmental education to the staff. The curriculum was to be shared with us. That did not happen.

One day, my son came home from preschool and threw down his blanket on the ground and said that the instructor told him not to bring his blanket to school (this was observed by myself and my husband). Up to the point, I was relatively tolerant of the observations and issues above, but when this happened, I proceeded to file a formal complaint.

I then went back to the preschool and asked the site director for their policy and procedure for a formal complaint, she told me to call the owner to make a complaint. I then called in the complaint and received no calls until four days later. I notified him of the complaint. I did tell him that I met with the site director, the regional director, and two instructors and for him to get that report. Evidently no report was made. One month had passed since we filed a formal complaint. We waited for a response for the owner regarding the complaint. Since it was a month later, I called him. Evidently, he forgot about the complaint.

Now, during the time we waited for a response, we receive retaliation from the instructors in forms of inappropriate incident reports (two reports in a two week period). The owner validated these reports submitted on my son as "inappropriate". Also a letter from the instructor was written to me, which was very, very, very inappropriate. I immediately called the owner and faxed over the letter. The owner immediately reprimanded the instructor, stating, "Do you think you are a child psychiatrist?". We then immediately had a meeting. There was an agreement that a response would be given to us within thirty days. The response wasn't received within thirty days. When I called the owner, he said that the response was done two days after the meeting. Approximately 50 days later, I did receive the response.

I basically was satisfied with the response from the owner of the agency, but was very upset about the formal complaint process. We had to go through meetings with no notes taken, actions stated, but not followed, retaliation, and most of all untimely resolution. After going through this process, I don't feel that these providers are held accountable on the seriousness of public complaints. I don't feel that a parent or any public entity should have gone through what I went through. I then spoke to DHS, and discussed these issues pertaining to the complaint/grievance process. DHS said that the administrative rules in 17-895-6(17), statement of operation policies, only states that an agency must have a "statement of grievance procedures". There is also no law currently on reporting complaints/grievance procedures for these providers. I thought this was very inappropriate and that's why the provider was so lax.

I proceeded to obtain assistance from Representative Takai to introduce legislation that there be standardize directive and have the providers provide public information on the State's infant and childcare center complaint/grievance process. Childhood care providers need to know that nay complaint or grievance is a priority and not something to just forget about. The providers need to be held to written intake of complaints and timely attempts at resolution without fear of retaliation. The State as overseers of this entity needs to know if complaints are also being addressed. At this time, the department has no required reports on complaints that have filed or the seriousness of the complaints.

Children are a vulnerable population of individuals who must have additional support and directives in the complaints and grievance processes to not only protect the children, but to foster better accountability and service quality from our providers.

Thank you for allowing me to provide this testimony. Please approve this bill for it contains valuable directives to protect our children.

Sincerely,
Signed KI

Kathleen Ishihara, Mom