

**Judge Rules Child Care Assistance is Core Function of State; Family Child Care Providers Can Continue to Provide Needed Care**

**For Immediate Release**

**Media Contact: Denise Welte, 507-269-4622**

Family child care providers are celebrating and breathing a sigh of relief today as Judge Gearin ruled the Child Care Assistance Program a core function of state government.

“Quality child care is an essential service for parents,” said Melissa Smith, a SEIU Kids First member and family child care provider in Prior Lake. “This is a great day for the families we serve and for Minnesota’s economy.”

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, SEIU Local 284 Kids First filed a Motion to Intervene in Ramsey County, which was granted, advocating that child care assistance is essential to the health and welfare of Minnesota’s children. Working with other early learning advocates, Kids First also appeared before special master Kathleen Blatz to appeal Judge Gearin’s original ruling that the entire child care assistance program was not a core function of government.

Sharon Born, a Kids First member and provider from Waseca noted, “With this ruling, I will be able to continue to provide the care and the safe, stable environment that families I work with count on. It’s a relief for me and the parents who are struggling to keep their jobs in this economy.

“We know our work to improve the quality and affordability of child care is not done. The Legislature’s proposed budget slashes support for early learning, which would leave thousands of more families on the waiting list for child care assistance. The Legislature should negotiate with Gov. Dayton to give Minnesota’s kids the support they need,” said Melissa Smith.

-----

***SEIU Local 284 Kids First unites licensed family child care providers in 37 counties to be a strong voice for quality, affordable child care and investment in Minnesota’s children.***