



Haverford Township

Department of Parks & Recreation

Director of Parks & Recreation: Brian Barrett
Facilities Coordinator: Eileen Mottola
Operations Supervisor: Larry Woods
Recreation Supervisor: Kirsten Taylor
Recreation Supervisor: Jesse Hart
Fitness Coordinator: Jackie O'Doherty
Park Maintenance: Jason O'Brien

Life. Be In It..

October 21, 2019

PA House of Representatives

Attn: Children & Youth Committee

Harrisburg, PA 17120

Subject: Impact of Pre-School Legislation

Dear Committee,

My name is Brian Barrett, I am a community recreation professional working in Haverford Township, Pa for the last 30 years. I am writing in reference to the Preschool Recreation hearing w/ House Children & Youth Committee on October 29. My reason for providing testimony relates to the effect on community recreation programs and compliance with the current DHS guidelines for organizations offering preschool programming.

The purpose of the preschool guidelines; to keep children safe and to have standards in place for staff are important. Those of us in Parks and Recreation share those goals and take steps to ensure that the children in our activities are safe and have educated, capable staff leading them. We require staff to comply with all background clearances and mandated reporter training. We also make sure staff are trained to effectively lead the children under their care. Haverford Township has been offering recreation programs for preschoolers for over 50 years. Our programs are located in a variety of locations including school district classrooms and neighborhood parks. The new guidelines for preschool offerings have led us to reevaluate long standing programs because they couldn't meet the new facility guidelines. Compliance for the DHS guidelines were designed for year round profit making businesses, not community recreation programs that are offered seasonally.

Our ability to meet facility compliance in locations that we rent, typically school facilities, and in our parks would be impossible because we don't own the facilities and some are offered in a park setting. The guidelines would prevent us from being able to offer these programs and leave our residents with no alternatives. We typically enroll hundreds of participants in our preschool programs. These programs provide enrichment and socialization opportunities to preschoolers in Haverford Township. Parents and their children have relied on these programs to learn social skills, build friendships and develop school readiness skills. These programs also provide learning opportunities for young educators and college

students. When these guidelines were put in place they were meant to protect children not eliminate community programs like ours, but the effect is the same.

I respectfully request that the committee consider our petition for community recreation departments to be granted an exemption from the preschool guidelines. This will not affect the safety and well-being of the children under our care and allow community recreation organizations to continue to serve our residents as we have for years.

Thank you.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian Barrett".

Brian Barrett

Director of Parks and Recreation