

Marie's Life Now

Marie is a 21 year old African American single head of household. She has a two year old daughter. They live in an apartment managed by Mercy Housing. Marie likes where she lives, and plans to stay even after her housing subsidy ends. She also really likes her job at a cable company call center - a job which she got "Because ReOpp and the HS 21 program helped me get my high school degree and that is a hiring requirement." She works full time, 4 days a week, 10 hour shifts, which she said, "Is normal for call centers." She said she is lucky because she has partially TANF funded child care, and her daughter's child care program opened at 5:30am and stayed open late.

The Challenge

The problem is that her child care will only allow her to have 10 hours maximum child care a day or she will be considered "out of compliance" and the provider would be required to report her to the funder (which she said was DSHS/TANF). When asked if she tried to get an exception, she said she had asked but told that was not possible. On a good driving day, her work is located about a 35 minute drive from the child care, meaning that she would require child care for at least 11.5 hours a day, given the time for transportation. If she can't have subsidized child care she can't keep her job. She does not know anyone who could pick up her daughter earlier, and she would also have to pay them for child care. She is working hard now to earn some money and work out a different solution before her subsidy ends. For example, one of her friends was trying to get qualified to do home child care. She knew this "was a longshot solution". After the long road Marie took to find a home and job how can we let the absence of affordable child care block her success?

Marie's Life Before

Her job wasn't always "so together", as she put it. In 11th grade she dropped out of school, and attended Seattle University Middle College. She said it was a good school, noting that during her enrollment she earned eight credits. Unfortunately, money in her family was scarce and she needed to work while in school. She had problems getting to and from the school (which she said did not at that time provide transportation support) and her attendance problems "got to be too much."

Following her exit from Middle College, she became pregnant and lived for almost two years in Friends of Youth funded transitional housing, where she received parenting and housing support.

When she encountered ReOpp in 2017, she was ready to finish up her education. She was referred to a High School 21 program and soon earned her degree. She was on TANF and qualified for child care assistance until early 2018. Though some staff at one of the RTC programs tried to convince her to sign up for Year Up, which she said was a good program but could only offer her a small amount of income (she could not remember for sure, but said it was \$50.00 a week), she did not feel that she could survive on this income, noting, "That kind of program is great but probably works better for kids who live at home, or don't have kids." She admitted though that she would have liked to participate in their Business Management program.