

HOUSE BILL 1441

F5, F1

4lr2732

By: **Delegate Atterbeary**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2024

Assigned to: Ways and Means and Appropriations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Early Childhood Education – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs –**
3 **Alterations**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing certain requirements for a teacher’s certificate in early
5 childhood education; altering the teaching credentials required for staff of qualified
6 providers for prekindergarten services for purposes of the Prekindergarten Grant
7 Program; repealing certain requirements for county boards of education to ensure
8 that a certain percentage of publicly funded prekindergarten slots are provided by
9 eligible private providers; providing for the goal of the State regarding the proportion
10 of prekindergarten slots offered in each county; altering staff qualifications in
11 eligible prekindergarten programs; requiring county boards to establish an
12 experience–based educator professional development program; requiring the State
13 Department of Education to create a model memorandum of understanding for use
14 by county boards for a certain purpose; altering the minimum criteria for a certain
15 memorandum of understanding; authorizing a county board to lease space to provide
16 prekindergarten programs; requiring the Department to establish a program to aid
17 eligible prekindergarten providers in meeting certain requirements; requiring the
18 Department to publicize and distribute a certain list of eligible private
19 prekindergarten providers; requiring certain local business agencies to assist private
20 prekindergarten providers in a certain manner; altering certain funding timelines
21 for the Child Care Incentive Grant Program and the Maryland Child Care Credential
22 Program to align with certain timelines for prekindergarten programs; and generally
23 relating to publicly funded prekindergarten programs in the State.

24 BY adding to
25 Article – Education
26 Section 6–129, 7–1A–03, 7–1A–04.1, and 7–1A–09
27 Annotated Code of Maryland
28 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

29 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 Article – Education
2 Section 7–101.2(b)(1)
3 Annotated Code of Maryland
4 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

5 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
6 Article – Education
7 Section 7–101.2(c) and (d), 7–1A–04, 7–1A–05, 7–1A–07, 7–1A–09, 9.5–903, 9.5–904,
8 and 9.5–906
9 Annotated Code of Maryland
10 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

11 BY repealing
12 Article – Education
13 Section 7–1A–03
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

16 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
17 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

18 **Article – Education**

19 **6–129.**

20 **(A) (1) A TEACHER’S CERTIFICATE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**
21 **SHALL BE OF TWO CLASSES.**

22 **(2) A FIRST–CLASS CERTIFICATE SHALL REQUIRE AN INDIVIDUAL TO**
23 **HOLD A BACHELOR’S DEGREE.**

24 **(3) A SECOND–CLASS CERTIFICATE SHALL REQUIRE AN INDIVIDUAL**
25 **TO HOLD AN ASSOCIATE’S DEGREE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION OR CHILD**
26 **DEVELOPMENT.**

27 **(B) A TEACHER WHO HOLDS A FIRST–CLASS TEACHER CERTIFICATE IN**
28 **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SHALL BE COMPENSATED AT A HIGHER RATE OF**
29 **PAY.**

30 **(C) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN § 7–1A–04 OF THIS ARTICLE, AN INDIVIDUAL**
31 **SHALL HOLD A TEACHER’S CERTIFICATE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TO**
32 **TEACH FOR AN ELIGIBLE PREKINDERGARTEN PROVIDER UNDER TITLE 7, SUBTITLE**
33 **1A OF THIS ARTICLE.**

34 7–101.2.

1 (b) (1) There is a grant program known as the Prekindergarten Expansion
2 Grant Program in the State.

3 (c) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, before approving
4 qualified providers for prekindergarten services to receive a grant under this section, a
5 qualified provider shall certify to the Department that for each classroom funded under
6 this section the provider will:

7 (i) Maintain a student-to-classroom personnel ratio of no more
8 than 10 to 1 with a maximum of 20 children per classroom;

9 (ii) Provide in each classroom at least one teacher [certified in early
10 childhood education by the State] **WHO HOLDS AT LEAST AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE IN**
11 **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION OR CHILD DEVELOPMENT** and at least one teacher's
12 aide who has at least a high school degree;

13 (iii) Operate an educational program for:

14 1. 5 days per week;

15 2. 180 days per year, in accordance with the public school
16 calendar established by the local school board; and

17 3. A. For half-day programs, at least 2.5 hours per day;
18 or

19 B. For full-day programs, at least 6.5 hours per day; and

20 (iv) To receive a grant under this section, meet the requirements of §
21 7-1A-04 of this title.

22 (2) Before approving qualified providers who are Montessori schools or
23 Montessori programs for prekindergarten services to receive a grant under this section, a
24 qualified provider shall certify to the Department that for each classroom funded under
25 this section the provider will:

26 (i) Meet the requirements under paragraph (1)(iii) of this
27 subsection;

28 (ii) Maintain a student-to-classroom personnel ratio of no more
29 than 10 to 1, with a maximum of 20 students per classroom if all of the students are under
30 the age of 5 years;

31 (iii) Maintain a student-to-classroom personnel ratio of no more
32 than 14 to 1, with a maximum of 28 students per classroom if some of the students are at
33 least 5 years old; and

- 1 (iv) Require a classroom teacher to:
- 2 1. Hold a bachelor's degree in any field; and
- 3 2. Hold a Montessori credential issued by:
- 4 A. The Association Montessori Internationale;
- 5 B. The American Montessori Society; or
- 6 C. A program accredited by the Montessori Accreditation
7 Council for Teacher Education.

8 (d) (1) (i) Beginning in fiscal year 2020 through fiscal year 2025, the
9 Governor shall annually appropriate to the Fund an amount that is at least equal to the
10 total amount of all funds received by the Program in the prior fiscal year.

11 (ii) Beginning in fiscal year **[2026] 2028**, the funds appropriated to
12 the Fund shall be consolidated into the publicly funded full-day prekindergarten program
13 established in Subtitle 1A of this title.

14 (2) The Governor may provide funds to the Department to administer the
15 Program.

16 **[7-1A-03.**

17 (a) Except as provided under subsection (b) of this section, a county board shall
18 ensure that:

19 (1) Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, prekindergarten slots
20 provided by eligible private providers shall account for at least 30% of the total
21 prekindergarten slots provided by eligible prekindergarten providers in each county;

22 (2) The proportion of eligible private provider prekindergarten slots in each
23 county increases by 5 percentage points every school year, until, in the 2026-2027 school
24 year, eligible private provider prekindergarten slots account for at least 50% of eligible
25 prekindergarten provider prekindergarten slots in each county; and

26 (3) In each year after the 2026-2027 school year, the proportion of eligible
27 private provider prekindergarten slots in each county shall continue to constitute at least
28 50% of eligible prekindergarten provider prekindergarten slots in each county.

29 (b) (1) The Department shall issue a waiver from the requirements of this
30 section to a county board if:

1 (i) All families in the county who desire to enroll their eligible
2 children with eligible prekindergarten providers are able to do so; or

3 (ii) After reasonable cross-jurisdictional or regional efforts, there
4 are too few eligible private providers to meet the minimum requirements of this section.

5 (2) The Department may exclude by annual waiver Tier I children who are
6 3 years old in a county from the calculation under subsection (a) of this section until the
7 2029–2030 school year.

8 (3) The Department may exclude by annual waiver Tier I children who are
9 4 years old in a county from the calculation under subsection (a) of this section until the
10 2026–2027 school year.

11 (4) The Department shall establish waiver application procedures to carry
12 out the provisions of this subsection.]

13 **7-1A-03.**

14 **IT IS THE GOAL OF THE STATE THAT AT LEAST 50% OF THE**
15 **PREKINDERGARTEN SLOTS PROVIDED IN EACH COUNTY BE PROVIDED BY ELIGIBLE**
16 **PRIVATE PROVIDERS BEGINNING IN THE 2027–2028 SCHOOL YEAR.**

17 **7-1A-04.**

18 (a) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, all eligible
19 prekindergarten providers shall include structural elements that are evidence-based and
20 nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality, including:

21 (i) Beginning in the [2027–2028] **2025–2026** school year:

22 1. [High staff] **STAFF** qualifications[, including teachers
23 who, at a minimum, hold:

24 A. State certification for teaching in early childhood
25 education; or

26 B. A bachelor's degree in any field and are pursuing
27 residency through the Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program, which
28 includes early childhood coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of pedagogical content
29 knowledge; and

30 2. Teaching assistants who have at least:

31 A. A Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate; or

1 B. An associate's degree] **FOR TEACHERS AND TEACHING**
2 **ASSISTANTS AS REQUIRED UNDER § 7-1A-04.1 OF THIS SUBTITLE;**

3 (ii) Professional development for all staff;

4 (iii) A student-to-classroom personnel ratio of no more than 10 to 1
5 in each class;

6 (iv) Class sizes of no more than 20 students per classroom;

7 (v) A full-day prekindergarten program;

8 (vi) Inclusion of students with disabilities to ensure access to and full
9 participation in all program opportunities;

10 (vii) For at least 1 year before a student's enrollment in kindergarten,
11 learning environments that:

12 1. Are aligned with State Early Learning and Development
13 Standards;

14 2. Use evidence-based curricula; and

15 3. Use instruction methods that are:

16 A. Developmentally appropriate; and

17 B. Culturally and linguistically responsive;

18 (viii) Individualized accommodations and supports for all students;

19 (ix) Instructional staff salaries and benefits that are comparable to
20 the salaries and benefits of instructional staff employed by the county board of the county
21 in which the early learning program is located;

22 (x) Program evaluation to ensure continuous program improvement;

23 (xi) On-site or accessible comprehensive services for students;

24 (xii) Community partnerships that promote access to comprehensive
25 services for families of students; and

26 (xiii) Evidence-based health and safety standards.

27 (2) An eligible prekindergarten provider that is a Montessori school or
28 Montessori program shall include all of the structural elements listed in paragraph (1) of
29 this subsection except the following:

1 (i) For staff qualifications, the eligible prekindergarten provider
2 shall employ teachers who:

3 1. Hold a bachelor's degree in any field; and

4 2. Hold a Montessori credential issued by:

5 A. The Association Montessori Internationale;

6 B. The American Montessori Society; or

7 C. A program accredited by the Montessori Accreditation
8 Council for Teacher Education; and

9 (ii) For the student-to-classroom personnel ratio, the
10 prekindergarten provider shall maintain a student-to-classroom personnel ratio of:

11 1. No more than 10 to 1, with a maximum of 20 students per
12 classroom if all of the students are under the age of 5 years; and

13 2. No more than 14 to 1, with a maximum of 28 students per
14 classroom if some of the students are at least 5 years old.

15 (b) In addition to the requirements listed in subsection (a) of this section, an
16 eligible prekindergarten provider shall:

17 (1) If the provider is an eligible private provider, achieve a quality rating
18 level of 3 in the Maryland EXCELS program and publish that quality rating in a publicly
19 available manner, determined by the Department;

20 (2) If the provider is an eligible public provider, achieve a quality rating
21 level of 4 in the Maryland EXCELS program and publish that quality rating in a publicly
22 available manner, determined by the Department;

23 (3) Submit to the Department a plan to achieve a quality rating level 5 in
24 the Maryland EXCELS program within 5 years after becoming an eligible prekindergarten
25 provider;

26 (4) Achieve in accordance with the plan a quality rating level 5 in the
27 Maryland EXCELS program within 5 years after becoming an eligible prekindergarten
28 provider and publish that quality rating in a publicly available manner, determined by the
29 Department; and

30 (5) Except as otherwise provided in § 7-1A-07 of this subtitle, be open for
31 pupil attendance in accordance with § 7-103 of this title.

1 (c) (1) An eligible prekindergarten provider may not engage in explicitly
2 religious activities during school hours.

3 (2) If an eligible prekindergarten provider engages in an explicitly religious
4 activity, the activity shall be:

5 (i) Separate in time and location from any instruction offered by the
6 eligible prekindergarten provider; and

7 (ii) Voluntary.

8 (3) (i) An eligible prekindergarten provider shall make reasonable
9 efforts to make the areas where prekindergarten children spend time during school hours
10 as nonsectarian as possible.

11 (ii) An eligible prekindergarten provider may not be required to
12 adopt any rule, regulation, or policy that conflicts with its religious or moral teachings.

13 (4) (i) An eligible prekindergarten provider shall comply with Title VI
14 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Title 20, Subtitle 6 of the State Government
15 Article, and not discriminate in student admissions, retention, or expulsion or otherwise
16 discriminate against any student or parent of a student on the basis of race, color, national
17 origin, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.

18 (ii) If a student has a disability, placement of the student shall be
19 based on where the student will be best served.

20 (iii) An eligible prekindergarten provider found to have violated the
21 nondiscrimination requirements under this section:

22 1. May not continue to be an eligible prekindergarten
23 provider; and

24 2. Shall reimburse the Department all public funds provided
25 under this subtitle minus any amount received from the child care scholarship program.

26 (5) Except as provided in § 7–305.1 of this title, an eligible prekindergarten
27 provider may not suspend or expel a child who is enrolled in a prekindergarten program.

28 **7–1A–04.1.**

29 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
30 INDICATED.

1 **(2) “CDA CERTIFICATE” MEANS A CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE**
2 **CERTIFICATE WITH A PRESCHOOL DESIGNATION ISSUED BY THE COUNCIL FOR**
3 **PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION.**

4 **(3) “EXPERIENCE–BASED EDUCATOR” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO:**

5 **(I) HAS DOCUMENTED EXPERIENCE ACTIVELY PROVIDING**
6 **SERVICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION; AND**

7 **(II) DOES NOT HOLD A TEACHING CREDENTIAL ISSUED BY THE**
8 **DEPARTMENT OR CREDENTIAL ISSUED BY AN APPROPRIATE ORGANIZATION.**

9 **(4) “PROGRAM” MEANS AN EXPERIENCE–BASED EDUCATOR**
10 **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.**

11 **(B) (1) TO QUALIFY AS A TEACHER IN A PREKINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM**
12 **PROVIDED BY AN ELIGIBLE PREKINDERGARTEN PROVIDER, AN INDIVIDUAL SHALL:**

13 **(I) HOLD, AT MINIMUM, AN ASSOCIATE’S DEGREE IN EARLY**
14 **CHILDHOOD EDUCATION OR CHILD DEVELOPMENT; OR**

15 **(II) 1. FROM JULY 1, 2025, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2027:**

16 **A. HAVE 9,000 HOURS OF DOCUMENTED EXPERIENCE**
17 **ACTIVELY PROVIDING SERVICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION; AND**

18 **B. ENROLL IN A PROGRAM; AND**

19 **2. DEMONSTRATE CONSISTENT PROGRESS TOWARD**
20 **COMPLETION OF A CDA CERTIFICATE WITHIN 3 YEARS AFTER ENROLLING IN A**
21 **PROGRAM.**

22 **(2) TO QUALIFY AS A TEACHING ASSISTANT IN A PREKINDERGARTEN**
23 **CLASSROOM PROVIDED BY AN ELIGIBLE PREKINDERGARTEN PROVIDER, AN**
24 **INDIVIDUAL SHALL:**

25 **(I) HOLD A CDA CERTIFICATE; OR**

26 **(II) 1. FROM JULY 1, 2025, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2027:**

27 **A. HAVE 1,500 HOURS OF DOCUMENTED EXPERIENCE**
28 **ACTIVELY PROVIDING SERVICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION; AND**

B. ENROLL IN A PROGRAM; AND

2. DEMONSTRATE CONSISTENT PROGRESS TOWARD COMPLETION OF A CDA CERTIFICATE WITHIN 3 YEARS AFTER ENROLLING IN A PROGRAM.

(C) (1) (I) EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL ESTABLISH AN EXPERIENCE-BASED EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

(II) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM UNDER THIS SUBSECTION IS TO ASSIST EXPERIENCE-BASED EDUCATORS IN OBTAINING A CDA CERTIFICATE WITHIN A 3-YEAR PERIOD.

(III) A PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION SHALL OPERATE FROM JULY 1, 2025, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2030.

(2) TO QUALIFY FOR A PROGRAM UNDER THIS SUBSECTION, AN EXPERIENCE-BASED EDUCATOR SHALL:

(I) APPLY TO THE PROGRAM BETWEEN JULY 1, 2025, AND JUNE 30, 2027, BOTH INCLUSIVE;

(II) MEET THE WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR A TEACHER OR TEACHING ASSISTANT DESCRIBED UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(1)(II)1 OR (2)(II)1 OF THIS SECTION; AND

(III) BE EMPLOYED AS A TEACHER OR TEACHING ASSISTANT BY:

1. AN ELIGIBLE PUBLIC PROVIDER; OR

2. AN ELIGIBLE PRIVATE PROVIDER LOCATED IN THE COUNTY UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE COUNTY BOARD OPERATING THE PROGRAM.

(3) A PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION SHALL, AT MINIMUM:

(I) PROVIDE A PARTICIPANT WITH INFORMATION REGARDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION;

(II) PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN WORKING TOWARD THE CDA CERTIFICATE, INCLUDING ASSISTANCE FILLING OUT FORMS, OBTAINING REQUIRED MATERIALS, AND FINDING A TRAINING LOCATION; AND

1 **(III) PAIR EACH PARTICIPANT WITH A MENTOR TEACHER.**

2 **(4) A MENTOR TEACHER WHO PARTICIPATES IN A PROGRAM UNDER**
3 **PARAGRAPH (3)(III) OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL RECEIVE COMPENSATION.**

4 7-1A-05.

5 (a) (1) Each county board shall enter into a memorandum of understanding
6 with the Department, each eligible private provider participating in publicly funded
7 prekindergarten in the county, and other applicable government agencies.

8 (2) Before executing a memorandum of understanding under this section,
9 each county board shall submit an implementation plan of the proposed memorandum of
10 understanding to the Accountability and Implementation Board in accordance with §
11 5-404 of this article.

12 **(B) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DEVELOP A MODEL MEMORANDUM OF**
13 **UNDERSTANDING FOR USE BY COUNTY BOARDS OF EDUCATION IN FULFILLING THE**
14 **REQUIREMENTS UNDER THIS SECTION.**

15 **[(b)] (C) [The] EACH memorandum of understanding shall, AT A MINIMUM,**
16 **provide for:**

17 (1) Services for children with disabilities;

18 (2) A process by which a parent is able to indicate a preference for eligible
19 prekindergarten providers;

20 (3) The manner for processing the payment of the State share, local share,
21 and family share for each child who is enrolled with an eligible prekindergarten provider;

22 (4) Any agreed upon administrative costs to be retained by an agency that
23 is party to the agreement;

24 (5) The manner in which the parties will meet the requirements of this
25 subtitle;

26 (6) A plan to address racial and socioeconomic integration in
27 prekindergarten classrooms; [and]

28 **(7) A METHOD FOR THE COUNTY BOARD TO DISTRIBUTE A LIST OF**
29 **ELIGIBLE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROVIDERS IN THE SAME AREA WITH A PARENT**
30 **INTERESTED IN ENROLLING THE PARENT'S CHILD IN A PREKINDERGARTEN**
31 **PROGRAM;**

(8) FACILITATION OF PEER-TO-PEER ELIGIBLE PREKINDERGARTEN PROVIDER MEETINGS, IN WHICH ELIGIBLE PREKINDERGARTEN PROVIDERS ARE ABLE TO SHARE BEST PRACTICES IN THE FIELD; AND

~~[(7)]~~ **(9)** Any other provisions necessary to carry out this subtitle.

~~[(c)]~~ **(D)** A memorandum of understanding under this section shall seek to avoid, to the extent practicable, a disproportionate concentration of students of the same race, ethnicity, disability status, and income within an eligible provider.

7-1A-07.

(a) (1) The Interagency Commission on School Construction shall prioritize public school construction funding requests for high quality prekindergarten classrooms.

(2) The Interagency Commission on School Construction shall consider the availability of private eligible prekindergarten providers when determining priorities under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

(b) A county board may partner with the State or the county government to address physical space constraints for eligible prekindergarten providers by utilizing existing available space at a location that is not an eligible prekindergarten provider including:

(1) Senior care facilities; or

(2) Community centers.

(C) A COUNTY BOARD MAY LEASE SPACE FROM THE COUNTY TO PROVIDE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS SUBTITLE.

7-1A-09.

(A) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH A PROGRAM TO AID ELIGIBLE PREKINDERGARTEN PROVIDERS IN MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SUBTITLE.

(2) THE PROGRAM SHALL PROVIDE TO ELIGIBLE PRIVATE PROVIDERS:

(I) INFORMATION ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS AND TEACHING ASSISTANTS;

(II) TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR MEETING REQUIREMENTS TO ENROLL IN CHILD CARE SUPPORT PROGRAMS; AND

1 (III) ASSISTANCE WITH IMPLEMENTING EARLY CHILDHOOD
2 CURRICULUM STANDARDS.

3 (B) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PUBLISH A LIST OF ELIGIBLE PRIVATE
4 PROVIDERS IN EACH LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM ON ITS WEBSITE AND DISTRIBUTE THE
5 LIST TO THE FOLLOWING ENTITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS LOCATED WITHIN THE
6 AREAS IN WHICH THE ELIGIBLE PRIVATE PROVIDERS ARE LOCATED:

7 (I) A LOCAL OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT;

8 (II) THE MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
9 CENTER;

10 (III) A LOCAL MANAGEMENT BOARD;

11 (IV) A LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD; AND

12 (V) A LOCAL OFFICE SUPPORTING MINORITY AND
13 WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES.

14 (2) AN ENTITY OR ORGANIZATION LISTED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF
15 THIS SUBSECTION SHALL, IF APPLICABLE, ASSIST A PRIVATE PREKINDERGARTEN
16 PROVIDER IN ITS JURISDICTION WITH:

17 (I) ENROLLING IN BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES FOR WHICH
18 THE PROVIDER QUALIFIES; AND

19 (II) ADOPTING A BUSINESS PLAN TO HELP THE PROVIDER MEET
20 THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SUBTITLE.

21 (C) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PUBLICIZE THE AVAILABILITY OF PUBLICLY
22 FUNDED PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS TO THE PUBLIC.

23 [7-1A-09.] 7-1A-10.

24 The Department shall adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of this subtitle.

25 9.5-903.

26 (a) There is a Child Care Incentive Grant Program.

1 (b) The Office may award funding to a child care provider through the program
2 for the purpose of improving the child care provider's quality of care through the purchase
3 of Office-approved:

4 (1) Materials;

5 (2) Equipment; or

6 (3) Supplies.

7 (c) For each of fiscal years 2022 through [2030] **2032**, funding for the program
8 shall increase by 10% over the prior fiscal year.

9 9.5-904.

10 (a) There is a Maryland Child Care Credential Program.

11 (b) An individual may apply to the Office for a staff credential, including a child
12 development associate credential, or an administrator credential under this subsection.

13 (c) If a person pursues, obtains, or already holds an Office-approved credential,
14 the Office may award to the individual:

15 (1) An achievement bonus;

16 (2) A training reimbursement; or

17 (3) A training voucher.

18 (d) (1) The Governor shall appropriate \$4,000,000 for the program for fiscal
19 year 2021.

20 (2) For each of fiscal years 2022 through [2024] **2026**, funding for the
21 program shall increase by 10% over the prior fiscal year.

22 9.5-906.

23 (a) The Office shall award a program that participates in the Maryland EXCELS
24 Program a bonus:

25 (1) On initial publication of a quality rating level 1, 2, 3, or 4;

26 (2) On each publication of a higher quality rating level after the initial
27 publication;

28 (3) On initial publication of a quality rating level 5; and

1 (4) Annually on renewal and republication of a quality rating level 5.

2 (b) (1) The Governor shall appropriate in fiscal year 2023 \$5,000,000.

3 (2) For each of fiscal years 2024 through **[2028] 2030**, funding for the
4 program shall increase by 10% over the prior fiscal year.

5 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
6 1, 2024.