



March 27, 2024

**SUPPORT – HB1441 - Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations**

Dear Senators:

On behalf of the Anne Arundel Early Childhood Childcare Taskforce, I am writing in support of HB1441- Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations. The Early Childhood Childcare Taskforce is a group of stakeholders who work within the early childhood education field including government agencies, childcare providers, and nonprofits. Anne Arundel County Executive Stuart Pittman signed the executive order in February 2024 to create the taskforce, showing Anne Arundel's commitment to solving issues related to the childcare industry. The state needs the child care community to successfully and efficiently implement universal pre-kindergarten and must take steps to address critical workforce shortages.

HB1441 takes vital steps to address barriers private providers are currently facing and will result in more pre-kindergarten teachers and more pre-kindergarten slots in every district in Maryland. HB1441 takes proactive steps to ensure the successful implementation of the mixed-delivery system by:

- Providing alternative pathways to certification for private pre-kindergarten providers;
- Creating support systems to help community-based prekindergarten providers successfully establish public pre-kindergarten programs while ensuring diversity, community outreach, and business support; and
- Investing in current programs that support the diverse and multicultural child care and prekindergarten workforce in our state.

The childcare business model is not sustainable without preschoolers. If the measures in HB1441 are not enacted, unintended consequences will include less access and affordability for infant and toddler care, more child care providers closing businesses, and more unlicensed/illegal child care which leads to poor outcomes for children. Providers in Anne Arundel County has expressed concern over the unintended consequences of teacher and classroom regulations for the Blueprint.

We urge you to support HB1441 - Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations to overcome barriers and inequities without sacrificing quality or closing businesses by creating alternative pathways to be inclusive of community-based providers/programs, addressing the critical workforce shortages

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P M Brown".

Pamela M. Brown, PhD  
Chair