



March 1, 2024

Testimony Concerning House Bill 1455 – Public Prekindergarten and Child Care Providers – Waiver Action Plan and Assistance Hubs

The Montgomery County [Children's Opportunity Alliance](#) is a newly locally legislated Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity that brings community together to create a more equitable, accessible, high-quality, and sustainable early childhood system that narrows disparities and puts young children on a path to reach their greatest potential.

We urge you to support House Bill 1455 favorably.

The Children's Opportunity Alliance believes that a mixed-delivery Pre-K system, that involves both public schools and private community-based child care providers, is needed to make high quality early childhood education available to the 3 and 4 year olds who need it the most.

In the fall of 2023, we interviewed child care center directors about their experiences with and perceptions of the Maryland Pre-K grants. Amongst many other barriers, we commonly heard that the administrative burden to apply for and manage a state grant is preventing them from currently participating in the opportunity.

As a result, this year, we are partnering with the Maryland State Child Care Association and the Family Child Care Alliance of Maryland to deliver technical assistance and business services to up to five child care centers in Montgomery County as they apply for and manage Pre-K grants in the 2024-25 school year. We hope this will result in the creation of at least 100 new seats. Advertisement for this free grant support program started 1 week ago and we already have 11 interested applicants, though we only have the funds to support 5. We look forward to the opportunity to share more data as this pilot project progresses.

It is clear to us that the types of services that a Hub, as outlined in HB 1455, would provide are highly desired and address common barriers faced by child care providers.

Submitted on behalf of the Children's Opportunity Alliance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lara J. Smith".



Laura Jahromi, Manager, Strategic Initiatives
The Montgomery County Children's Opportunity Alliance
P.O. Box 287, Rockville, MD 20848
301-450-1871
laura@mocochildren.org