



**Testimony of Julia D'Angelo**  
***Program Manager of School Strategies***  
**Children's National Hospital**  
***Co-Lead for the Early Childhood Education Work Group***  
**before**  
**House Ways and Means Committee**  
**IN SUPPORT OF**  
**HB 395: Prince George's County – Early Childhood Education Program and High School Child Care Centers – Established PG 504-24**

**January 31, 2024**

Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in favor of House Bill 395. My name is Julia D'Angelo, and I am a Program Manager of School Strategies and a co-lead for the Early Childhood Education (ECE) workgroup at Children's National Hospital. Children's National has been serving the nation's children since 1870. Nearly 60% of our patients are residents of Maryland, and we maintain a network of community-based pediatric practices, surgery centers and regional outpatient centers in Maryland.

Formed in 2023, our ECE workgroup is advocating for high quality, affordable early childhood centers and stronger connections between early childhood centers and hospitals as part of our 2022-2025 Community Health Improvement Plan. Federal law requires nonprofit hospitals to assess the health needs of the community and develop a plan to address those needs. The Children's National 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) utilized systematic, comprehensive data collection to help us understand and address the needs of the community we serve. Our analysis identified 12 key neighborhoods with the lowest Childhood Opportunity Index (COI) scores, including eight in Prince George's County, Maryland, that have been the focus for our ECE advocacy and programmatic initiatives.<sup>1</sup> Children's National and the ECE workgroup strongly support HB 395, with the stated intent of providing career and technical education training for early childhood education and establishing high quality and accessible childcare centers in certain public high schools in Prince George's County.

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<sup>1</sup> Children's National and HSC Health Care System's Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan can be found here: <https://www.childrensnational.org/in-the-community/child-health-advocacy-institute/community-affairs/improving-community-health>



According to a recent report from the Maryland Family Network, almost 1/3 of the childcare workforce left their positions in 2021.<sup>2</sup> Given the large shortage of skilled ECE providers in Prince George's County and beyond, we believe it is critical to prioritize strong and sustainable ECE workforce initiatives to ensure we can meet the needs of young children and their families. Benefits of the career and technical education program in this bill include addressing large workforce gaps across the County and State; equipping the future generation of ECE providers to serve children with diverse healthcare needs; and expanding career development for high school students from under-resourced backgrounds and providing post-school employment opportunities.<sup>3</sup> Children's National and the ECE workgroup strongly believe that this element of the proposed legislation is imperative for sustaining the ECE workforce in Maryland and ensuring children and the families have continued access to high quality early learning environments.

Children's National also supports the allocation of funding towards forming new childcare centers in Prince George's County high schools that have upwards of a 1% teen birth rate among students. Our workgroup is committed to advocating for high quality childcare centers for *all* families, including teen parents and their children. Early childhood programs, such as HeadStart, have been proven to increase positive developmental outcomes among infants and young children, and increase the likelihood that teen parents will continue their high school education through graduation.<sup>4</sup> We feel strongly that this legislation takes that idea one step further by establishing a place-based ECE environment in the same setting as a high school, allowing teens to continue their education while ensuring their child's needs are met in a high-quality ECE setting.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this groundbreaking piece of legislation. Children's National applauds the Prince George's County Delegation for its continued investment in the

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<sup>2</sup> Maryland Child Care Resource Network. (2022). Trends in Child Care - 2022. In *Maryland Family Network*. <https://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Trends%20in%20Child%20Care%202022.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> US Department of Education & US Department of Health & Human Services. (2023). POLICY STATEMENT ON INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS. In *EDblogs*. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/policy-statement-on-inclusion-11-28-2023.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Center for Law and Social Policy. (2007). Early Head Start and Teen Parent Families: Partnerships for Success. Department of Education. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED495930.pdf>



education and development of our state's youngest residents. I request a favorable report on HB 395 and welcome any questions or collaboration opportunities you may have.