

February 16, 2024

Marquita Jackson
STIMS Little Learners Daycare
269 Clyde Avenue
Halethorpe, MD 21227
stims.learn@gmail.com

To whom it may concern,

Hello my name is Marquita Jackson and I am a proud graduate of the GOFCC Program. I completed my cohort in August of 2023 and that is also the month I obtained my state registration for family childcare. When I started my journey of opening as a family care provider, I was so relieved that this program was available to me and others that wanted to do the same but needed guidance, direction, and support. The GOFCC program is a unique program that has provided myself and so many others with all the necessary tools to open as a family provider and remains a resource so that family providers have continuous support and professional development as they grow their program. Through this program, each cohort creates a community of family care providers who encourage and support one another, including the instructors. It was not too long ago that providers did not have such an opportunity, and dealt with the stress of building their programs alone. Since graduating, I have referred others to the program and I plan on becoming a mentor in the program for future participants. With GOFCC, active change happens and concrete bridges are built. If there is any way the program can carry on, please allow this administration to do so. This program helped change my life when I was ready to give up on working in childcare altogether and with the level of support that they provide I'm sure many others will say that their lives have changed for the better as well.

Sincerely,
Marquita Jackson



SEEING ABILITIES NOT DISABILITIES.

8503 LaSalle Road • Towson, Maryland 21286 • 410.828.7700

Abilities Network began providing services under GOFCC (Growing Opportunities for Family Child Care) in the fall of 2022. Since its inception, there has been tremendous growth and success with providing a comprehensive training and professional development program that helps participants overcome barriers and maximize the positive impacts of this program on local economies, communities, and families. When aspiring family child care providers become enrolled in GOFCC, they are given access to a support system and community that can take years to find when done on an individual basis. In this program, they receive high quality training and professional development that focuses on how to provide inclusive care. Once they become licensed by the state, they can begin having an immediate impact on the community and families they serve.

There are key differences that occur when someone attempts to become a licensed family child care (FCC) provider on their own, versus participating in Abilities network's GOFCC program:

1. A deeper understanding of both the rewards and challenges of being an FCC with guidance from our Professional Development Specialists, Early Childhood Coaches, and experienced mentors.
2. High-quality training is given in a cohort model that nurtures a community to provide vital networking and support systems that can last for many years.
3. Enhanced communication with local governing entities (Office of Child Care, fire marshals, MSDE, etc.) to ensure that participants are fully aware of state sponsored quality enhancement programs, including the Child Care Scholarship, MD EXCELS and Credentialing.
4. Business training and coaching to provide a solid foundation for successful business practices, leading to a ripple effect of positive economic outcomes for the provider, the families they serve and the surrounding community.

In summary, a family child care incubator program is essential for enhancing the quality of care, promoting professional development, ensuring regulatory compliance, building parental confidence, mitigating barriers, and supporting continuous improvement within family child care programs. By investing in training and professional development opportunities that support small business development, stakeholders can maximize the positive impacts of these programs on local economies, communities, and families.



Eastern Shore Child Care
Resource Center
at Salisbury University

Impact Statement GOFCC

The economy of our state lies in the hands of the child care provider - parents need child care so they can work. Funding the Growing Opportunities for Family Child Care (GOFCC) project has allowed the Eastern Shore Child Care Resource Center (ESCCRC) to support 31 new home-based programs in the eight counties of the Eastern Shore. That means there are now at least 248 new slots for children in Maryland.

These slots support families of all cultures in the rural Eastern Shore. A nurturing learning environment where children interact with a mixed age group and follow a schedule similar to home is secure. When children feel comfortable, they can focus on learning and building social skills that result in a successful transition to a public-school structure. These child care programs are new small businesses that add to the prosperity and diversity of each community.

The GOFCC program at the ESCCRC provides an individualized plan and system of support for new home-based programs which creates a strong sense of entrepreneurship. Advertising and other recruitment strategies such as openchildcaretoday.com attract interested individuals to the ESCCRC. The GOFCC Coordinator connects with all candidates first to explain the program and then to make a business plan based on their goals, timeline and their home environment's suitability for a child care program. Training requirements are met through a consortium of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies across the state working together to ensure all candidates have access to the classes they need. The GOFCC Coordinator motivates each candidate and supports their efforts to meet the State of Maryland requirements to establish a child care program in their home.

Candidate recruitment along with the encouragement, planning and support for new home-based child care programs have increased the availability of child care in the eight counties of the Eastern Shore. By the end of August 2024, twenty-one (21) more programs are poised to open which will result in a total of 416 new slots for the youngest citizens of Maryland.

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February 15, 2024

Karen Eisenhuth
Maryland Family Network
1800 Washington Blvd, Ste 445
Baltimore, Maryland 21230-2344

Dear Karen,

As the GOFCC Coordinator for Child Care Choices, I have seen a tremendous response from potential Family Child Care business owners, families searching for childcare and stakeholders in the childcare industry. Our program started October 3, 2022, when I came onboard to take the grant that was received and bring the goals and action plans to fruition. Within two weeks we had secured prestigious spots in our communities to market the Growing Opportunities for Family Child Care initiative. With cooperation from local Board of Education offices, Judy Center programs and Head Start programs, we flooded our communities with brochures explaining our program and the recruitment process. In just three months, we had on-boarded 35 participants (i.e. providers and co-providers). Although our goal for the first year was to help 25 individuals open their FCC businesses, the overwhelming response necessitated that we assist a 2nd Cohort of 21 participants during our first program year. Our goals for our second program year, which began September 1, 2023, were equally ambitious. Our 3rd Cohort had 20 participants and we just started our 4th Cohort of 34 participants. Our hope is to have funding to offer a 5th Cohort of 15-20 participants in late spring/early summer 2024. To date, 40 individuals across our five county region have successfully obtained their Family Child Care Registration, with 44 participants still in progress to open their own business or support someone opening their business as a co-provider.

But numbers only tell part of the story. The GOFCC program has helped to improve the licensing process, shortened the amount of time it would normally take a person to become registered, and helped other agencies identify and improve their processes which support Family Child Care. The program has also increased the number of individuals following through on their goal to open their FCC homes. Our CCRC has the pleasure of working with three Regional Licensing offices with 12 different Licensing Specialists. We have the unique opportunity to evaluate how each LS and RM interprets the regulations and enforces the requirements to become licensed. This has allowed us to work with OCC to clarify and standardize many of the requirements so that there is more consistency and less confusion regarding the interpretation of COMAR. In collaboration with OCC, we designed our program with specific Milestones for each of the four-months in our process. This streamlines the multiple agency approvals and outside clearances that must be obtained. By starting the different processes simultaneously and early in the licensing process, issues can be identified and resolved while other objectives are being met. If our program is followed to the letter and no major obstacles develop, participants can open within 4 months of starting our program compared to 6-12 months without our program.





In addition to improvements in the licensing process. Our program has also worked with Zoning offices within our five counties and countless municipalities. Many of our participants expressed that they would have given up the process if it were not for our coaching and support. Many of our participants are not native English speakers and many are not familiar with the regulatory process for our state. Helping them to find the resources and complete zoning applications, attend zoning hearings, giving them letters of support for their HOAs, speaking with the State Fire Marshal's office to clarify expectations, and sitting with them during meetings with OCC has empowered them to achieve their goal of opening a FCC home. Our participants gain confidence as we work alongside them to make those phone calls, have those meetings, and stand up for their right to have a Family Child Care in the communities in which they live.

There is still much work to be done. Family Child Care homes are still closing at an alarming rate. Funding for GOFCC not only helps to open new programs, but it gives participants the knowledge, confidence and skills to remain in business, to overcome obstacles and to provide a higher quality of care to children in their care. This program has the potential to not only recruit and retain new educators, but to support existing programs to remain in business. Opportunities still exist to create new collaborative FCC programs to meet requirements of the Blueprint, to expand the number of available slots for Birth to 3, and to allow educators to invest in their professional development and their professional impact. Continued funding will allow us to continue to open new programs as well as explore areas of opportunity and develop new initiatives to strengthen the child care industry so vital to the economic development of the communities in which we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Dawna Rodeheaver'.

Dawna Rodeheaver, GOFCC Program Coordinator

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Sarah Martin'.

Sarah Martin, Child Care Choices a program of the Mental Health Association Program Director





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February 19, 2024

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to provide testimony regarding the significant impact of the Growing Opportunities for Family Child Care (GOFCC) program on our community, the child care industry, and the economy as a whole. As GOFCC coaches, we have witnessed firsthand the transformative effects of this program on individuals aspiring to become family child care providers in Baltimore City.

The GOFCC program, which offers free technical assistance and training to individuals navigating the licensing process to establish family child care services, has been instrumental in addressing critical needs within our community. Below are some of the key impacts of the program for Baltimore City:

- 1. Community Empowerment:** GOFCC empowers individuals within our community by providing them with the necessary resources, knowledge, and support to pursue careers in family child care. By offering free technical assistance and training, the program removes barriers to entry and fosters entrepreneurship among residents of Baltimore City. Additionally, GOFCC goes above and beyond by providing essential furniture, toys, and supplies to participants, ensuring that they have the physical resources needed to meet licensing requirements and establish their family child care homes. This comprehensive support empowers individuals to overcome financial obstacles and pursue their dreams of becoming child care providers.
- 2. Quality Child Care Services:** The program plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of child care services available in our community. By equipping individuals with the skills and expertise needed to meet licensing requirements, GOFCC ensures that family child care providers offer safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environments for children. This focus on quality care, coupled with the provision of necessary furniture and supplies, contributes to the creation of enriching and stimulating environments where children can learn and thrive.
- 3. Economic Stimulus:** GOFCC serves as a catalyst for economic stimulus by promoting small business development and job creation in the child care industry. As individuals complete the program and establish licensed family child care homes, they contribute to the expansion of the local economy through their entrepreneurial endeavors. Moreover, the availability of high-quality child care services enables parents to participate more fully in the workforce, leading to increased productivity and economic stability within our community.



4. Long-Term Benefits: The impact of GOFCC extends beyond immediate outcomes, generating long-term benefits for our community, the child care industry, and the economy. By investing in the professional development of aspiring family child care providers, the program cultivates a skilled workforce capable of meeting the evolving needs of families and children. Additionally, the provision of quality child care services supports early childhood development, education, and school readiness, which are essential components of a thriving society.

In conclusion, the Growing Opportunities for Family Child Care (GOFCC) program is a valuable asset to our community, the child care industry, and the economy as a whole. Through its commitment to empowering individuals, promoting quality care, stimulating economic growth, and fostering long-term benefits, GOFCC embodies the spirit of innovation and collaboration necessary for building a brighter future for all. We urge you to continue supporting and investing in this vital program, ensuring its continued success and impact on generations to come.

Sincerely,
Courtney Ross, Dazhane Clark & Whitney Meador
Baltimore City GOFCC Coaches