

BILL:	House Bill 1261	DATE:	February 26, 2024
SUBJECT:	Commission on Access to High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Child Care for Children Three Years Old and Younger	COMMITTEE:	Ways and Means Appropriations
POSITION:	No Position		
CONTACT:	Akilah Alleyne, Ph.D. 410-767-0504 akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov		

EXPLANATION:

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is providing information for consideration regarding House Bill (HB) 1261 Commission on Access to High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Child Care for Children Three Years Old and Younger. HB 1261 requires the establishment of a Commission with various representatives across the State that must meet bi-monthly until October 1, 2025 to analyze ways to implement universal access to high-quality early childhood education and child care for children three-year-olds and younger. The Commission is required to submit a written report with specific recommendations.

Currently, there are many different forums for this work and related discussions to take place, such as the Office of Child Care (OCC) Advisory Council or the State Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). The OCC Advisory Council and the State ECAC meet quarterly with stakeholders in the child care community to share Agency updates and obtain feedback. Given the overlap of many participants within these forums and the proposed Commission, the addition of this Commission may further confuse initiatives and become duplicative in nature. Moreover, there may be other advisory groups or initiatives such as the Governor's Office for Children, which could possibly lead this effort with support and collaboration from MSDE.

With the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future underway, existing MSDE personnel currently do not have capacity to absorb the additional work as outlined in HB 1261. While MSDE understands the importance of continuing these discussions and exploring the topic of universal child care, in the absence of additional resources allocated to the Agency to support this work and manage the Commission, it would be difficult for the Department to be maximally effectual in its implementation. Additional staff would be needed for organizing the meetings, creating materials, overseeing membership (i.e. making sure all commission members are elected and monitored for participation and tenure), and driving collaboration to ensure high-quality, research-based recommendations are drafted, logged, tracked, and shared with the Governor and other stakeholders.

We respectfully request that you consider this information as you deliberate HB 1261. For further information, please contact Dr. Akilah Alleyne at 410-767-0504, or [Akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov](mailto:akilah.alleyne@maryland.gov).