



March 31, 2025

Testimony in Support of House Bill 1303 - Child Care Centers - Teacher Qualifications - Alterations

We respectfully urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to make a favorable report on HB 1303– Child Care Centers - Teacher Qualifications – Alterations as we believe it will help to ease the early care and education workforce shortage we are facing, while improving the diversity of our early childhood workforce. *We support the amendments made in the House.*

The early care and education workforce is critical in our community. They are the workforce behind the workforce – caring for young children so parents can participate in the labor force. We are currently facing a workforce shortage crisis. The Comptroller's recent State of the Economy Report on Child Care showed that Maryland lost 26% of our ECE workforce during the pandemic, putting the State in the top ten for sharpest decline.ⁱ And we haven't recovered. While we work towards more long-term solutions to stabilize the industry and improve access to quality early care and education for our children, we also need to take action now to bring more individuals into the profession.

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, which serves as our local Child Care Resource and Referral Center, has recently begun offering Core of Knowledge classes in Farsi, in addition to English and Spanish, and conducting outreach to the growing migrant population in our county. Outreach partners reported frequently that while many women in their networks were interested in working in child care centers, that they were unable to produce documentation of their high school equivalency, due to either not having completed their education or to not being able to get relevant paperwork from their home countries. This is particularly true for women from Afghanistan, a country which is known to devalue the education of women. These women are willing to earn their GED, but need to work now to support their families. House Bill 1303 would allow them to secure a job in a child care center, on a team with other teachers and under the supportive supervision of administration, while furthering their education.

Submitted on behalf of the Children's Opportunity Alliance by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Jahromi".

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The Montgomery County [Children's Opportunity Alliance](https://www.mocochildren.org) is a locally legislated Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity that connects our community to build an equitable, accessible, high-quality, and sustainable early childhood system that narrows disparities and puts young children on a path to reach their greatest potential.

ⁱ <https://www.marylandtaxes.gov/reports/static-files/research/childcare.pdf>