



**Caring For Maryland's Most
Important Natural Resource™**

Maryland State Child Care Association

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The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is a non-profit, statewide, professional association incorporated in 1984 to promote the growth and development of child care and learning centers in Maryland. MSCCA has over 4500 members working in the field of early childhood. We believe children are our most important natural resources and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the early childhood community.

February 18, 2020

Position: Maryland State Child Care Association **supports** SB 0533

MSCCA enthusiastically supports SB 0533 and thank Senator Smith for championing this legislation.

MSCCA represents numerous private Montessori programs and highly respects the important child development and curriculum standards Montessori training provides. MSCCA is active on many councils and committees at MSDE including the State Early Childhood Advisory, Kirwan Workgroup on Universal Pre-K Report and National Governor's/Council for Chief State School Officers Maryland team focusing in alternative pathways, qualifications and competencies in early childhood workforce. The Montessori trained teacher certification should be recognized as best practice for children, especially as the praxis in Maryland is being reviewed and for early childhood, we are seeking a birth to 5 certification and support alternatives pathways to prove competencies. Montessori trained teachers ensure that all children are well served and that their philosophy and implementation of Montessori approved curriculum enriches a child's early childhood classroom experience in ways that not only prepare them for Kindergarten, but for life.

MSCCA believes that all of our schools need highly qualified teachers in our classrooms. Montessori teacher preparation entails a rigorous graduate level course of study that covers child-development, curriculum and level specific subject matter, observation and assessment, supports for learning differences and culturally responsive teaching in addition to a robust student teaching component.

This legislation is a great example of alternative pathways that would expand certification requirements to include these already highly qualified teaching professionals.

We support **SB 0533** as a vital means to ensure that Maryland children attending public Montessori programs have highly qualified teachers.

I encourage the committee to find for a favorable report.