

Berry Patch Early Learning Center, LLC

4510 Lower Beckleysville Road, Suite O

Hampstead, Maryland 21074

410.374.3501

MSDE OCC License # 154426

February 14, 2020

Chairs Kaiser, McIntosh, Guzzone and Pinsky and distinguished committee members:

My name is Holly Berry and I am the owner and operator of Berry Patch Early Learning Center, LLC in Hampstead, Maryland. As a small business owner in your district I want you to know how the Kirwan Commission's recommendations for universal Pre-Kindergarten for all four-year year-old children and low income three-year-old children will impact/devastate my childcare/early learning center and surrounding centers. My center is located off the traffic circle of Lower Beckleysville Road and Black Rock Road, in commuter central for all jobs in Baltimore City, Baltimore and Harford Counties, and heading south off the bypass and 795 to Howard and Anne Arundel Counties. This location provides us a population of middle class to upper middle-class families and few low-income families. Berry Patch ELC is open Monday through Friday from 6:30am to 6:pm. We are currently licensed for 98 children and have 18 full time staff and 2 part time staff. Our population is:

Infant 1 classroom, 6 weeks -7/8 months	6 babies
Infant 2, 7/8 months – 15/18 months	6 babies
Toddler Room, 15/18 months – 24 months	9 toddlers
Two Year Old Room,	11 children
Three Year Old Room,	10 children
Transitional Four's Room	9 children
Pre-Kindergarten Room	12 children – this room is licensed for 17, we chose to have 12 this year as it is a new room.
Before/After Care Elementary School Room	30 children

Teacher demographics:

- 5 Staff with bachelor's degrees in Education or Psychology
- 3 Staff with AA degree in Early Childhood Education or Social Work
- 6 Staff working on AA degrees, 2 graduating in May 2020
- 3 Staff who do not have college but hold MSDE Credentials at a level 3 or higher
- 2 Staff who are assistants and hold the basic trainings

Cost breakdowns per MSDE Office of Child Care required ratios:

Infant and Toddler Rooms (ages 6 weeks to 24 months) Ratio 1:3 We have a total of 18 children some are 4 days. \$255 for 5 days and \$240 for 4 days. Average income if all rooms are full \$4515 payroll is \$4500 leaving a profit of \$15. This is a payroll of \$14.50 per hour for 7 fulltime teachers and 1 \$11.00 fulltime assistant. Yes, this is correct \$15 is our profit. Most childcare centers do not make money on this younger population due to the 1:3 teacher to child ratio.

Our two, three's, transitional fours, Prek and elementary school carry the burden of financing the infant and toddler rooms. The benefit of having these rooms is the ability to ensure enrollment of two-year old's and to keep families together in one location, one community. If we lost our two four-year-old classrooms and part of our three year old class Berry Patch would need to drastically downsize our staff and double our infant and toddler rates to maintain our lease agreement, fixed and variable daily, weekly, monthly, and annual costs. In short, Berry Patch ELC will need an exit plan to close its doors.

Berry Patch has been undergoing MSDE Accreditation in hopes that our early learning center would be eligible to become a universal Pre-Kindergarten classroom, but I am uneasy with any promises from MSDE and feel that MSDE and our local school system will shut us out. Berry Patch is not eligible for any state funds or grants due to our lack of low-income children; we have a large population of average middle-class families hard working families. We do not meet the criteria for the PreK Expansion Grant or the new Variations and Implementations of Quality Interventions (VIQI) since we do not have a population of 40-50% of low-income students. We do meet the criteria in every other aspect. Our local

population, despite local schoolboards numbers does not understand our community and that is growing by leaps and bounds and that there are not enough infant and toddler openings, and with Kirwan pushing our little ones into large public schools infant and toddler rates will double as we renovate our classrooms to hold more babies and toddlers.

Another concern is the lack of requirements for the public school system and its employees versus early childhood education centers. An early childhood teacher must be fingerprinted, and background checked, complete a Release of Information form every two years, complete a medical screening and tuberculosis test before starting employment and then repeated every five years at the employer or employees cost, maintain 12-24 hours of annual continuing education, again at the employer or employees expense (no MSDE reimbursement like for CCPS), Basic Health and Safety course with annual refresher, Americans with Disability training before employment, and most importantly the staff must have early childhood child development and curriculum training. To be MSDE Accredited or NAEYC accredited the lead staff must be a credential level 5 or 6; preferably holding college degrees in early childhood education. At the elementary school level will the staff be required to follow the Office of Child Care's employment regulations? If not, why? If the answer is they don't need to do this, again why? What makes the public-school system elite from these regulations that are in place to protect our young children?

MSDE Office of Child Care has burdened the early childhood industry with more training, higher education demands, more policies, regulations, forms (which we now have to print), and mandates. Why is this all-in place? It's in place so that early childhood educators can provide the best early childhood services to their families; yes families, not just the child but the mother, father, guardian, grandparents, siblings, and other extended family and non-family. We are well trained, well educated, and overly prepared for our jobs. Why did Maryland spend all this time and energy on us to begin to sweep us away and tell us that our roles in society are now not needed? My understanding is that Maryland created these standards to help children and families become better prepared for elementary school, to have the

educational and social and emotional experiences to be success lifelong learners. We are and have been doing this, so why quit now? What we need is a support system that fosters financially healthy families, like the sliding scale for Maryland Child Care Scholarship Fund. More money needs to go into this fund and less on studies and less on new programs and most certainly less on coming up with more things that the early childhood industry needs to do like developmental screenings (let's leave that to the physicians).

My next and most important concern is the impact that this Commission has failed to address; the disruption to the families, their environment, their before and after school childcare needs, splitting their young children between two locations with different starting times, riding a big school without seatbelts but we continue to encourage care seat and booster seat use until late elementary/ early middle school, and taking away the community that has been built between he families and us. I started my early learning center to foster the not only the intellectual growth of a child, but their social and emotional growth as well. We also nurture the whole child and their parents; parenting is hard and as early childhood educators we are well educated on how to assist parents and the family as a whole. Our families appreciate our communication throughout the day. They love our family friendly classrooms, our family events, the fieldtrips and celebration parties. They love feeling that they belong.

My families have my personal cell phone number and they know they call me if they have a question. I answer emails up to 10 pm, because if it was important for the parent to send at 8 pm, then it is important for me to reply. My office door is always open, I am physically at work everyday, yes everyday just like a principal. I call myself the "plan B" teacher, if I am needed for a messy project, an ill teacher, or an additional person is needed, I am there. My work is my life, it is what makes me happy, I have now watched children graduate from high school, past children are not seeking jobs or volunteer service hours with us. I bump into former families and years later they still miss us. We are imbedded in our community, we do not want to be pushed out because a group of adults who do not sit on the floor every day and have pretend tea, or race cars, play with puzzles, make beautiful messy art, go on walking adventures, and much more have decided that we are unimportant, invaluable, and not qualified to

educate our youngest of learners. In May 2020 at the age of 52 I am graduating with an Early Childhood Education degree. I have pursued this degree to ensure that my business, the amazing teachers, and our community have a solid, safe, nurturing, and educational environment for their families. I sacrificed my personal time, my family's time, and my work time so that business would be successful for many generations to come.

I am begging the Kirwan Commission to not take all this away from 98 children, 196 active parents, 156 active grandparents, 20 teachers and staff and their families, and 14 assisted living residents that we visit. Please don't shut us out of our community, we volunteer, we hold food drives, we donate to needy programs, we make food for the men's shelter, we host stem, literacy, and math nights, we are part of our community and we need the Kirwan Commission to understand the value our private early childhood education centers contribute to health and wellbeing of the child, their family, and the community.

Sincerely,

Holly Berry

Owner/Operator

**Impact of losing 3 and 4 year old's on Community Providers
Survey of 140 Small Businesses**

How would losing 3-4 year old's to the public schools impact your business?

Our program would suffer greatly with most likely prospect of closing.

We would loose more than half of our enrollment and more than likely have to close our doors. Our 2s program isn't big enough to sustain us. 90% of my staff would be out of a job.

We would close! That age group is our primary target. Other age groups do not financially support the program.

Losing 3 and 4 year olds would place a great strain on our program as it would make it difficult for parents who have younger children to manage having children enrolled in different programs. It would require me to increase the cost of my care for children younger than 3 & 4 years old in order to maintain the quality of care that we provide. Additionally, In an industry where we are already struggling to find quality employees; it would require me to hire twice the amount of staff than what I'm already required to have since the ratios for my remaining age groups are higher.

That age group makes up a large percentage of my enrollment. If I were to lose that, it would significantly impact my business and the jobs I have for my teachers. It would affect the siblings that attend my center as well. I would have to lay-off employees even though everyone is hard working and deserves to be here. Additionally, losing those age groups would affect me financially because they are the largest ratio groups. My center has many sibling sets and families appreciate their children being in the same center. We also would be limited with the number of students we could she which directly affects finances and employment.

Our child care business depends on our 3 and 4 year old classes to stay solvent financially. If we lose our preschool children to the public school system, and we will if this bill passes our business will fail and multitudes of infants, toddlers and two's will not be able to find quality care. We employ over 200 staff who would be left jobless. If we truly want to offer a preschool experience for all preschool children the government should offer vouchers to the families of preschool children who attend quality, accredited child care centers. Research already shows that these centers prepare children for school better than the public school system.

I'd lose significant profit. Infants and toddlers are a loss, but an investment to make a profit when they're older. Losing them means considering closing and taking away quality care for my area.

It would create a huge gap in my program. We currently have a 3 year old room and a 4 year old room. I have already felt the impacts on my 4 year old classroom. Losing a 3-4 year old classrooms would put 6 people out of a job, and here on the eastern shore, it's already a struggle to find quality, qualified staff.

We would loose over half of our families, putting at least six teachers out of jobs as well.

I would not be able to sustain my business.

I would lose about half of my capacity at my school.

It would completely shut it down! We are a christian program solely for 3 and 4 year old children! We have been open for 38 years and have ministered to over 4000 families! The passing of this bill would be devastating!!

We are an MSDE accredited private, nonprofit preschool. We've worked hard over the years to provide high-quality early childhood education to child ages 3-5 in our community, and we've sought out and trained a dedicated staff to do so. Each year our program reaches full capacity and has a waitlist. However, our entire program is comprised of children ages 3-5. If we lost those children to public schools, it would end our business and put our entire staff out of work.

We would not be able to stay open. We only have children from 2-4 in the program.

Our daycare/preschool currently houses 130 students. Roughly half of that is our 3's, 4's and late birthday 5's. Due to demand, we will open a third fours class this fall.

We would lose half of our students if this plan went into action. The loss of jobs would be tremendous to our staff. Some of our teachers have taught with us for 15 and 20+ years. These are dedicated teachers to early education.

For smaller centers this will mean they will have to evaluate if they can afford to stay even remain open.

Even if we decided to open more infant rooms or twos rooms there would be an expense. We would all be forced to turn a preschool room to an infant room and that comes with addition expenses that are costly. It should also be noted the income is higher in a room of 17 preschoolers then in a class of 6 infants. The teacher to child ratios are very different. So changing them over would not in any way help us even break even.

It would be catastrophic to our business financially. We would be forced to make drastic changes to consolidate portions of our program and eliminate staff. As we consolidate classes where possible, it wii i you'd be likely that we would need raise tuition for remaining children in order to meet that salaries of our staff as we work to stay ahead of the minimum wage increase.

That age group is our livelihood! It would shut us down!

We would lose about 80% of the children at our school/center

We would be forced to close our doors after providing quality child care to the Greenbelt, MD community for almost 20 years. We are licensed for 43 children and if we lose 20 children to public programs we couldn't operate. The community would also lose valuable infant child care spaces with the closing of our doors. Is it really in the best interest of 3 and 4 year olds to attend large public proram?

Would eliminate business as revenue would decrease and would have empty classrooms that could not be filled with 0-2 years old but would still need to pay rent on those rooms

It would put us out of business!!

Yes

Our small program ONLY serves 3 and year old children. We are an Accredited program with an EXCELS level 5. This is a quality program that families seek out for their young children based on our flexible schedules- full time (7am-6pm) and part time as well as the highly trained and dedicated staff. We would not be able operate if 3 and 4 year olds were shifted to public schools.

We'll be closed down since we can't solely operate with infants and toddlers

We would lose over half of our capacity of children, revenue and lose 6 staff members

Out of my licensed space of 55 kids, 3-4 year olds make up 30 spaces which are always full. That's more than 1/2 of my enrolled children at any given time. Losing them to a public setting would close my business.

Preschool programs will close and tuition for infants and toddlers will have to increase. We will have to implement layoffs.

We will have to close. Our model serving infants, toddlers and twos barely works now. Losing 3 & 4 year olds means we will not be able to have a sustainable business.

We would loose half our center and most likely have to close down.

We are an MSDE approved non-public preschool and also provide before and after care for school-age children. Currently, there are 20 school-age enrolled and over 40 preschoolers ranging from 2 to 5 years of age. We often have more teachers on site than required because we believe in quality rather than making that extra buck.

If 3 and 4 year olds began attending public schools only, then we would have to close down. Several teachers would have to find an alternate career and at their age, it would be extremely difficult. As it is now, they come to work because they love what they do and where they do it.

The children thrive with us. We keep our ratios just right so we can fully meet their needs. Instead of taking them out of programs that are qualified, maybe consider investing in them. Instead of adding more classrooms at schools and more teachers, maybe consider using classrooms and teachers that are already available and qualified.

I'm a small center of 60 children. 33 spots are just my 3&4 class. I would have to change to an infant toddler center only.

My program is for children from age 2-school age. If we lost 2 and 3 year olds it would greatly impact my program. The building where we are doesn't have access to water in two classrooms so it would be a great expense to get water to that area in order to accommodate infants and toddlers. My licensing specialist has already told me that they will not allow a portable water table to be used, so I need to incur tens of thousands of dollars of construction work in order to have younger children. I was in the process of preparing to not have 4 year olds, but to now also not have 3 year olds impacts the program even more significantly.

Our school serves students from 2 years old through eighth grade. If we lost 3 and 4 year olds to the public school system, it would lead to collapse of the K-8 program. Our kindergarten class is filled 75-95% with students moving up from our preschool program. As it is, we have families register for our program and then leave when they get a spot in the public schools. We then have difficulty filling the empty slot because other families have found other programs.

I work in a small center in Baltimore County. If we were to lose 3-4 year olds to the public school system it would shut our center down. If we shut down what happens to the children that need care because parents have to work. You can't keep taking children and putting them in the school system younger and younger. The schools are already overcrowded. We have watched local schools combine pre k programs because enrollment in them was low or they did not have the space for the children. The entrance birth date keeps getting adjusted so they can enter kindergarten earlier. WHY? What purpose will this serve except to increase the unemployment rate among the child care industry. We have regulations and standards that we have to meet, but the school system does not. We have yearly inspections that the school system does not.

We already compete with the schools for our 4-5 year old children. Our school age program has diminished as well. We struggle with full time enrollment as we have lost children entering the half day pre k program. Some of those children might enroll half day with us because parents still need child care, but not many. Having children enrolled for half day care means we have to employ additional staff to be able to meet bus schedules, however we lose money because of reduced tuition. It is difficult enough having to find qualified staff, but losing these children reduces our income thus struggling to meet our daily expenses. We lose qualified staff because we can't pay them enough.

We have 4 classrooms, 2 of those classrooms are currently 3-4 year olds. The teachers work very hard to prepare them for the school system. They are not just a babysitter, they prepare lessons and age appropriate activities to engage the children, they have mandatory trainings to take, forever changing regulations to keep up with. Each staff member has a been to college, they have years of experience among them. The staff is sometimes overworked but have a love for these children, the teachers have been with for us over 30 years. It would have a tremendous impact on those staff as they would no longer have a job - we are a non profit center so they are also not eligible for unemployment.

It would impact not only jobs for staff but a lost in a great portion of childcare income. 3-4 make up a huge part of the program because those rooms are larger capacity and usually are full. Parents hesitate to enroll children in children while they are young. 3-4 years old is the age that parents are comfortable enrolling their kids because they can communicate better if mom n dad had concerns. I also think that at this young age children will need a smaller setting and less stringent routine. Childcare helps small children prepare for the school years ahead. Throwing them into such a quick pace regimen will more than likely have them showing resistance. Our teacher provide that one on one care and nurture our 3-4 years old need during those tender years of age. We hire and continue to education our staff on providing this care for these children . Our business would take a hard hit hard by this bill and greatly impacted negatively.

Yes we would close

We would not be able to afford to run, our infant and toddler programs. These classes financially support the high ratios required for infants and toddlers.

It would close my center.

It would close my center.

Would greatly impact our business and our staffing. Would lose 50% of business income

Removing 3 and 4 year olds from child care would have a major negative impact on every child care center. The ratios allow for child care centers to have a good profit. It would also have a negative impact on the children.

Losing 3-4 year old to public schools would cut my business in half. We would have to dramatically reorganize our business, curriculum and staff or close our doors.

If 3 & 4 year olds were absorbed into the public school system, we would have 5 teachers & 2 aides unemployed. In addition, tuition for an infant would need to increase to over \$500/week or \$26,000 a year for our program to simply break even and maintain a high quality program.

In addition to the economics, parents will be forced to seek after school care for their 3&4 yo which becomes a transportation concern with these young babies on buses with 12 year olds. Since public bus service isn't available to private schools, we would need to purchase a suitable vehicle which may not be feasible due to the lack of funds being received with an aftercare only program; in addition hiring staff is challenging for a full-time program, one can only imagine the nightmare of hiring staff for a part-time split program. There aren't many employees interested in a 6 hour break each day!

Parents also must then pick up their young children from different locations regardless of weather - snow, sleet, rain... needing to drag one young child in the cold, wet weather while picking up another or forcing them to violate laws and leave a young child in the vehicle while retrieving the other.

Our program would ultimately close due to the lack of enrollment due to the exorbitant pricing necessary to pay staff even at Maryland's minimum wage; and should staff receive higher credentials as recommended by Kirwan we certainly wouldn't be able to pay commiserate with their education.

We urge you to partner with community programs for early childhood education who are already providing quality education with proven results.

We would lose 75 percent of our enrollment - and our degree teachers. Operating an infants, toddlers and twos program is too cost prohibitive. No doubt about it: the program, which has been in continuous operation for 65 years, would close.

Lose the profitable age group

our center offers care for children 18 months and up. The loss of 3-4 yo would shut down two-thirds of our business and eventually force the close of our school.

My enrollment is already low due to full day pre-k programs started this year. This has made me have to increase tuition even more in order to cover salaries for minimum wage increases. If numbers continue to drop we may be forced to close despite offering a high quality program that has successfully prepared children for kindergarten. There are some parents that will choose to stay with us but for other families we can't compete with free.

My business would have a significant loss of income. Even more devastating, teachers who love what they do would lose their jobs.

We would no longer be able to remain in business. Almost no profit is obtained from infants and toddlers, and there wouldn't be funds left to run the school/pay employees, etc.

We would be impacted significantly for the lower income group families

Do to the loss of income, my Center would have to close, putting nine people out of work.

I have a preschool with children ages 2-5. If i lose 3-4 year olds, i would have to lay off employees and possibly close the school.

As a Baltimore city provider in the inner city ,I already lose my 4 year olds to pre-k every September.My preschool room (3's and 4's) is only half full during a good enrollment period. Losing my 3 year olds

would leave me with a center for infants/toddlers and 2's. Although I'm licensed for 40 children my center has hovered around 30 enrolled for many years due to almost no 4 year olds.

I may have to rethink staying in the childcare business as it is difficult to budget with only infants and 2 year olds. Staff child ratios are higher for these age groups and Baltimore city voucher payments don't keep up with my tuition rates. Adding on extra fees for my parents to try to make up the difference presents a hardship on my parents and when I do this I lose even more children and families.

We would have to close down. Our profits come from the older children. We could not afford to staff open. We have been open for 50 years.

Huge impact. Currently we serve more than 80 two, three and four year olds in midtown Baltimore City. If universal pre-K for 3s and 4s is coming, we would be interested in a public plan that would partner with private centers in serving 3s and 4s, allowing us to stay in business while also serving the public need for more spots for the age group. If the only option under consideration is sending all 3s and 4s to public schools, we could go out of business since we'd lose 2/3 of our students to the free option. Our center is in an historic building that cannot be retro-fitted to serve infants and toddlers.

My center is based in a small community that employs eight full time teachers. If three and four year olds are placed in public schools - this will dramatically decrease our business to the point that we will have to close our doors. This will make us nonexistent in our community and will not only be detrimental to my family but to our community as a whole. Public school officials and other legislators need to stop trying to rush children and stop trying to put us childcare providers out of business.

3 and 4 years olds make up half of my enrollment. If I lost that enrollment, I would lose my business and have no way to provide for my family.

We will lose a lot of staff and income from families. Also, children need more play time not school environment.

I shudder to think of the impact this will have on three year olds! What is the plan for the three year old who is still working on potty training? Will there be age appropriate curriculum, materials, and activities? Or will they be required to sit at desks doing paperwork and testing? Our public schools are having a hard time getting it right for the children and families they presently serve. How can they add 3 year olds and promise families they'll do better than our childcare center and family based programs?

I would lose 50% of my enrollment and revenue. Thus having to fire an excellent group of educators in one location and possibly having to close my other location

It would be devastating!!!! We would have to shut down.

Losing our 3 and 4 year olds would be financially detrimental for our business, as their enrollment makes up the majority of our programs and it is the tuition vs. expense ratio of this part of the program that offsets the much higher expenses of offering care to the infants and toddlers. Without the preschoolers (3 and 4 yr) our expense/ budget ratio would be effected dramatically making it impossible to continue as a business; which would result in a loss of infant and toddler spaces that are already difficult to find and desperately needed by parents in order to be able to work. Losing the preschool part of the program has an impact far greater than just our capacity they are a huge part of our revenue that makes offering services for the other age groups possible. Families need more than 9-3 care for children of all ages and that simply will become increasingly difficult to find for any age if we lose our preschoolers as financially it will be extremely difficult for our centers survive. It would force us to have to increase the cost of care for other areas of the program in order to try and compensate and we all know that parents struggle to budget for the high costs of care as it is. Many infant and toddler parents are already paying the equivalent of monthly housing costs or more in tuition and are struggling to find reliable, high quality, licensed care because of the costs. Through conversations with parents it is clear tuition increases for the school age children in many cases would also put families in a situation of having to choose if quality care for their school age children is worth the cost and will result in many more children going home unattended afterschool as opposed to being in a licensed after school care program. This impacts the community as the lack of supervision and structure has been shown in the actions and choices that groups of unsupervised children make when it comes to the use of their time before their guardians come home. It also results in parents being less productive at work because it is incredibly difficult to focus

when you are worried about your child, policing home cameras and social media or feeling the need to constantly check on your child to ensure their safety in an increasingly dangerous world. There is no doubt that transitioning these ages to the school system have impacts for all parts of the community and would leave a number of hard working caring individuals out of work. These teachers have worked hard to continually meet and exceed the education and training requirements that MSDE continues to put in front of them. They have built an amazing yet specific skill set and are not typically qualified to accept teaching positions with equivalent pay and benefits in the public school system. These teachers would quickly be out of work and without the high cost of returning to college complete a degree would be left with an incredible skill set that is of no use to them and would be starting over in a new field. All those years of financial expenses to stay educated and qualified for nothing, just having to start a square one in a new industry. I feel that MSDE has not given enough thought to the the over arching effects that transitioning the preschool aged children to public school programs would have on the communities at large. I hope that the legislature takes time to truly look at how this type of change would affect parents, providers, care givers, business owners (of all types) and families in the community before embarking on this process as I feel that the impact will be far greater than they have predicted or considered.

We would lose over half of our income!!!

Our business would have to close due to loss of profits

It would impact our center in such a negative way. The 3's and 4's make up majority of our enrollment. The teacher would be out of jobs resulting in a potential closure of the center.

My business would loss revenue of 468,000 a year. Also, many of my teachers and assistants would be out of a job. These teachers have invested years of money and education to work in childcare. The state should look it to investing in quality childcare centers instead and funding 3/4 year programs through childcare centers. It would be easier and less expensive for the state to invest in centers.

GREATLY! 3 and 4 year olds make up roughly 50% of our enrollment. Without 3 and 4 year olds, my program would not be able to keep the doors open...

Due to teacher to child ratios, our older classrooms are the only ones that make enough profit to be able to supply learning materials, classroom improvements, teacher incentives and continuing education funds, etc. Younger age groups, such as infants and toddlers, need at least one full time Lead qualified teacher for every 3 children. Unless our rates increase to \$600+ per week for infants and toddlers, it is not sustainable. If we did increase our rates to \$600+ per week, there would be very few parents who could afford care. Look to what is happening in Washington DC where public Pre-K has taken effect. Early learning centers have closed in drives for these reasons and they are now scrambling to find centers so parents with infants and toddlers can actually work. So this will also effect the job market and local economy.

We would close our doors as our 3's and 4's are 99% of our business! We are the only small, church run center in our area. Many families rely on us to provide an education as well as an opportunity to know Jesus.

We would have to close!!

We are a church sponsored Pre-school, which serves 3 & 4 yr. olds. As the county has already started to offer more pre-k spots in our area, our enrollment this year is down. Last year, we offered 1 Tot class and 2 Pre-k classes. This year we have 1 of each. We understand what the Kirwan Bill is trying to accomplish, and we do support it, but the impact on private childcare providers will be substantial. We are already discussing what changes we need to make in the near future in order to continue our Church based Ministry of reaching children and families for Christ. Those whose livelihood depends on this age group will struggle or possibly be forced to close. Is there a way for Kirwan to work with providers, since they are a resource of facility, staff, and children already in operation?

Very likely it would shut us down. We can't survive on infant and toddlers alone due to the licensing regulations with ratios. And not only my own place where I work, but this would also affect quality education over all and limit school choice!

we would either have to close or become an all infant center

It would greatly impact our center, we would lose many children, causing "before and after" problems for parents, children then are pushed into the system too early, not giving children a chance to be children, we need 3-4 year olds in our center to continue to stay alive, to continue to thrive, to continue to grow in the community

It would greatly impact our center, we would lose many children, causing "before and after" problems for parents, children then are pushed into the system too early, not giving children a chance to be children, we need 3-4 year olds in our center to continue to stay alive, to continue to thrive, to continue to grow in the community

My business (3- and 4- year-old preschool) would close.

My business (3- and 4- year-old preschool) would close.

While it would be bad for my business, I am not against it, because I support universal Pre-K in Maryland. As an early childhood educator, I believe that all children in our state, regardless of income, deserve access to high quality early childhood education.

It would destroy our schools and put us out of business

In a world where 3s and 4s only need before and after school care, I would still need to charge the same rate I charge for a full day of care. Because, while I would be cutting employees hours and laying teachers off, I would need to purchase another bus, or two, to meet this need. If there even is a need. And if there is not a need, that is great for parents of a 4 year old. Until they have a baby. Because now, I have laid off teachers and closed classrooms, but in order to pay my mortgage and employee benefits, I have almost doubled my infant tuition to \$700 per week, and my 2s tuition would be \$600 per week. Parents are not going to pay this. One parent will stop working, decreasing revenue from income taxes for the state and federal government. And then my doors will close, adding to the deficit of income taxes, and raising the unemployment rate.

In a world where parents are given the choice to keep their children in my care for a full day, nothing changes for my business, or my expanding families.

Minimum wage has increased and we didn't have to raise our tuition. However, if we lost the greatest source of revenue, our 3s and 4s then our tuition would have to increase substantially to be able to pay our teachers a living wage. Our parents already pay over \$2,000 a month for infant care. We are an accredited school and have a long wait list. It is already a huge investment to pay that much but I shouldn't have to ask them to pay more. And I can't just turn my three year old rooms into infant rooms. Three year old rooms can hold up to 20 children, 4s can hold 24. Infants can hold 6..... see the difference in revenue.... My teachers have their bachelor's degrees, and CDAs. They are highly qualified and should be paid as such. Our programming is high among the nation and we have very high health and safety standards, better than public schools (I came from a long career in public schools).

This would take a lot of our income away from us. Staffing would become an issue. We would need to have before and after care for them and make room on days off of school and summer. We would not be able to fill those rooms with 2s or infants considering we would still need to make room for them.

Our numbers are already low due to most children in my area attending the full day Pre-k. We would have to end up closing down another classroom. It would be difficult to transport due to the added cost of extra staff member on van and purchasing extra car seats

It has always been part of culture and environment. It would be a disappointment to our childcare systems. I do not like it

Significantly- that is 75% of my business

This would be a huge impact on my program we house 80 preschoolers daily.

Significantly- that is 75% of my business

Public PreK can't even meet the accreditation standards that we private centers do, it is completely inappropriate to extend that to 3's as well.

It would likely put us out of business as that makes up the bulk of our preschool program.

Our school would be seriously impacted if we lost 3-4 year olds to the public schools. We have been in business for 47 years. We added a 2 year old program to help serve the community as people were looking for 2 year preschool. If we lost our 3-4's we would not only lose the families we treasure but we would also have to cut our staff and lose 6 of our 8 staff members.

Providing 3-4's schooling in a public school setting would put our school out of business.

75% of our school is 3-4's. Losing this group impact us financially and we wouldn't be able to stay open. We would also have to let go 6 staff members.

It would force us to close our business. The only profit margin we have in small business is with our 3-4 year olds. Programs would not be able to stay open to serve children two and under due to the ratios. The whole child care business in Maryland would be in crisis. Tuition costs for children two and under would sky rocket to adjust for the loss.

absolutely devastating 80% of my enrollment is the 3 and 4 year old classes

It would put us out of business.

At this time it would drastically change our enrollment, as this is the largest class group we have, therefore causing a loss in revenue

It would completely put myself and my 32 employees out of work—many who have worked for me from 15-28 years!

This is NOT small business friendly!

It would do more than just impact it would close my business public Prek is destroying center based learning all over the state

Losing 3 and 4 year olds would kill my business. It is already a struggle to maintain the enrollment to survive with schools taking Pre-K 3's and 4's.

Would require to double tuition on infant , toddlers, twos. And in rural eastern shore would probably lead to closing down because economy can't hand \$1500 month for even quality child care.

Have to sell off half of business. Couldn't support the full building and losing 10% of income

We would have shut our business down. Since we are licensed for 135. And only have 24 infant and under 2 year old. This law would crush my business. I would have to shut my center down. We have 19 teachers. 6 are in the infant and toddler rooms. The remaining 13 would lose their jobs. This would devastate the entire child care system. Why would the state want to do this? It doesn't add up.

Will probably shut it down

I will have to close my center because those 3-4 year olds are the ones that are keeping me still standing. Definitely the worst public schools will take away from us. If this bill materializes then there's no point for me to keep on going.

Our church based preschool would be in serious jeopardy if we lost 3 and 4 year olds to public schools. We are for ages 2-5, so we would need to restructure our entire program. We would likely end up closing our school if public schools included those ages.

It would close our doors, right now our 3 and 4 year olds are one of our largest groups.

We'd likely have to close our school if almost 200 students in Rockville, Md if we lost our 3s and 4s. Infant/toddler ratios make the service so expensive that it's hard to sustain a program without spreading the cost across older children with higher child/staff ratios. It would be devastating to our school and community if our program was unable to sustain the school.

We would have to close. We only have children 2-Prek.

We would have to let most of the staff go, change our program to only IT &SA, or go out of business.

That is most of my center. I only take children ages 2-5 yrs. I would just close my doors and go into a new profession. I love what I do and have owned my center for 18 years but this would destroy me and my business and put 15 people out of a job.

We would have to close 5 of our 15 classrooms and 12 people would be out of work.

I would go out of business

We are a small center where over half of our enrollment is 3 and 4 year olds. If we lost our 3's and 4's it would cause a rate increase in our infants and toddlers making their care far less affordable possibly affecting many more families.

We would be seriously impacted financially if our enrollment dropped in these ages.

My business would not be able to survive making a huge impact on infant tuition. Infant tuition would skyrocket, because that would be the main income source for childcare providers and child care centers.

We would have to close our early childhood program.

It would decimate it

I would lose 40 students in one program and 80 in the other. I would not be able to pay rent, pay staff payroll and health insurance and would have to close. I can't survive on infants alone. The demand for 2s is not as high as 3 and 4 year olds. So my 2s can't increase in my business to cover the loss for 3s and 4s. I also can't understand what before and after care will be provided for 3s and 4s in public school. Open Door puts 100 kids in the cafeteria for before and after. How will that work with 3 and 4 year olds, ratios, safety and potty training? 3s and 4s can't use bathrooms alone. They are not mature enough yet. I worry for the safety of these young kids in public school.

Leasing or empty space that would only be for before and after preschool would be costly if not difficult to find. Fees which are already on the parents would need to be raised in order to entice people to work a split shift. I can not imagine many people will continue in this field, yet alone decide to start a career where you work a split shift day for a preschool program. It is difficult to hire staff in school age programs now, I can not imagine it for preschool. Also, the requirements for preschool staff are already making it difficult to hire in this field. People with 2 and 4 year degrees are not going to apply for split shift jobs. Cost of infant and toddler programs would need to increase to offset the loss of income from the preschool programs. Another burden on parents who will look for cheaper options which are usually unlicensed programs.

We would no longer be able to stay in business if our only families were infants and two year olds

Leasing or empty space that would only be for before and after preschool would be costly if not difficult to find. Fees which are already on the parents would need to be raised in order to entice people to work a split shift. I can not imagine many people will continue in this field, yet alone decide to start a career where you work a split shift day for a preschool program. It is difficult to hire staff in school age programs now, I can not imagine it for preschool. Also, the requirements for preschool staff are already making it difficult to hire in this field. People with 2 and 4 year degrees are not going to apply for split shift jobs. Cost of infant and toddler programs would need to increase to offset the loss of income from the preschool programs. Another burden on parents who will look for cheaper options which are usually unlicensed programs.

Leasing or empty space that would only be for before and after preschool would be costly if not difficult to find. Fees which are already on the parents would need to be raised in order to entice people to work a split shift. I can not imagine many people will continue in this field, yet alone decide to start a career where you work a split shift day for a preschool program. It is difficult to hire staff in school age programs now, I can not imagine it for preschool. Also, the requirements for preschool staff are already making it difficult to hire in this field. People with 2 and 4 year degrees are not going to apply for split shift jobs. Cost of infant and toddler programs would need to increase to offset the loss of income from the preschool programs. Another burden on parents who will look for cheaper options which are usually unlicensed programs.

Losing 3- and 4-year-olds would likely put us out of business. We are a part-time church preschool that is licensed as child care, accredited by MSDE, and EXCELS Level 5. However, the bill as it stands would require us to eliminate all religious aspects of program for 6.5 hours a day, 5 days a week, 180 days a year (which is longer than we currently operate) in order to participate as a community provider, which we already know our church governing body does not support doing. Yes, there may still be people who would be interested in paying for a parochial school experience, but those numbers are going to shrink when the competition is free/low cost and provides more hours than traditional preschool. Lots of church preschools will end up out of business, especially since many only serve 3- and 4-year-olds.

It would cause our center to shut down classrooms and have to dismiss staff for lack of students.

Losing 3 and 4 year olds from our program would create the loss in jobs and income. It would force us to try to enroll more infants and toddlers at a very high tuition rate which is no guarantee that families could afford such high rates. It also could force us to close.

We would close. No one can run a center with just infants and toddlers. It not financially feasible.

We would close. No one can run a center with just infants and toddlers. It not financially feasible.

3-4 year olds are the bulk of our business. We are licensed for 2-5 only but only 12 of our 80 spaces are 2 year olds. Without 3-4 year olds, there is no question we will be out of business. Even if we restructure, we are limited to how many infants and toddlers we can have and we won't survive.

3-4 year olds are the bulk of our business. We are licensed for 2-5 only but only 12 of our 80 spaces are 2 year olds. Without 3-4 year olds, there is no question we will be out of business. Even if we restructure, we are limited to how many infants and toddlers we can have and we won't survive.

We would be out of business. Our beautiful, intentional work with children and families would be lost.

This is so very sad. Childcare administration have us daycare providers doing all these different classes to be qualified working with children. For the removal of the children to be placed in school. Headstart was removing children from daycare. Now it's the school system. This is going to have a very big impact on childcare.

It would devastate our business.

Our program would close. We are not in a space that could be converted to infants and ty he expensive of operating infant care would be prohibitive. 20 early childhood professionals would lose their jobs. So would our maintenance, music teacher, Spanish teacher, yoga teacher and tech support person, all contractors. The community center where I pay for my lease would be vacant. 60 families would not have the option of our NAEYC accredited, Level 5 in EXCELS, highest quality program. Putting little three and four year olds in the institutional setting at a public school would be developmentally inappropriate.

We might have to close our dialysis accredited program.

We might have to close our dialysis accredited program.

It would virtually shut down our business as that is the majority of the children we have.

If we lost all of our 3 and 4 yr olds to the public schools that would be over half of our enrollment. Not to mention if we replaced those children with 2yr olds the numbers wouldnt add up because you can only have 12 2yr olds in a room.

We are licensed for 109 children. 3& 4 year olds comprise 72 children of our 109. That is roughly 2/3 of our business. That leaves the 37 infants and toddlers who we care for with out care because we would close. Additionally, we employ 30 people. Closing our doors will put 30 working people into the unemployment line.

I would no longer have a business. I am not exaggerating, I would be forced to close my doors. If I am left with infants with ratios of one teacher to three students and two year olds with one teacher to six students, I would not be able to pay my rent, teachers, insurances, educational materials, building maintenance, outdoor grounds maintenance, training, cleaning service etc. This would be devastating to ALL child care centers!

And if we are unable to pay our bills because we do not have the three and four-year-olds that have a ratio of 1 to 10 and allow us to make some income to pay our expenses, we will no longer be able to provide care for infants and toddlers so there will be a void in specialized care for the youngest children as well. How are the public schools going to take care of infants and toddlers when those trained to care for them and who have a true passion for caring for them are no longer available?

We are equipped and trained to provide the best care and education to children 0 to 5 and this would be a disservice to the children and the families of our community..

We will close and our community will lose infant & toddler care

This age group is 50% of my enrollment. If I loose half of my students I would be forced to close my doors.

I will not be able to continue to embrace the diverse multilingual families. Having a bilingual program has allowed me to promote the importance of bilingual education and appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism along with having a quality center. And not having enough children to cover cost of rent and salaries, I will have to close the center.