



**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.*

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March 12, 2020

Position: Supports with **Amendments**  
SB 1018

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

Thanks to Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Committee for the opportunity to share testimony.

Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) fully supports SB1018 with amendments and we are grateful for Senator King's leadership, as well as advocacy in the area of child care. She is a true champion for children and families in Maryland.

Nationally there is a critical workforce shortage in child care which leads to insufficient access for parents to much needed child care programs. Maryland is also experiencing the workforce shortage in this critical need area. Critical workforce shortages impact parent's access to child care.

Insufficient child care negatively impacts not only parents, but employers, and taxpayers when families do not have the child care they need, parents' work productivity falls, resulting in costs to parents, their employers, and, ultimately, taxpayers. Insufficient child care also leads to increases in illegal, unlicensed child care which result in poor outcomes for children.

MSCCA is concerned for children and families as the child care/early childhood workforce is in crisis. Our members have shared frustration and fear as the pool of viable candidates that are qualified as child care teachers in Maryland continues to decline and the timeline for hiring approval process is problematic. Surveys were submitted with our written testimony to provide data that supports the need to find ways to allow businesses to efficiently hire quality child care teachers and expand, not decrease or lessen, qualifications while maintaining the integrity of the current COMAR licensing regulations. MSCCA believes SB 1018 creates a way to increase access to quality programs while alleviating some barriers for child care businesses/programs.

SB 1018 amendments would establish qualifications for Child Care Teachers in Preschool Centers and School Age Child Care Centers allowing an individual who holds a degree in early childhood education or **specified related fields of study** to qualify as a child care teacher if the individual is enrolled in the 90 hour approved preservice training and successfully completes within 6 months or less after being hired. The small, but important distinction will positively impact the ability of a program to hire quality teachers efficiently. Currently there is no timeframe for approval through Professional Qualification Evaluations from Office of Child Care. The changes would alleviate some of the need for Office of Child Care variances and would create a better pathway to expedient qualification process. SB 1018 would also increase access for families to child care because delays in approval of qualifications to hire staff sometimes results in classrooms remaining closed, potential candidates moving onto other opportunities and confusion in the hiring process. The training becomes meaningful as the teacher is engaged with the children.

Along with requirements for extensive criminal background checks, child care teachers also must complete a medical evaluation, staff orientation and Americans with Disabilities Act training before beginning employment. Currently Child Care Teachers in Preschool and School Age Child Care Centers and are not required to hold degrees, only be 19 years of age and complete the first 45 of the 90 hour approved certification training. We hope the Committee recognizes SB 1018 with amendments is a way to address some issues in qualification process while elevating the profession.

Another significant factor to consider is the alignment and relationship SB1018 begins to establish with the Kirwan Commission recommendations/Blueprint for Maryland SB 1000/HB 1300 related to teacher qualifications.

Finally, MSCCA's goal is to address the real concerns related to workforce shortages, alleviate barriers, expand qualifications and competencies, build capacity for qualified workforce and encourage career changers to enter into early childhood field, as it is a national and state area of critical need. We believe SB 1018 is a step in the right direction.

MSCCA urges a favorable report!