

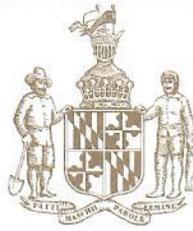
SB436 King Sponsor Testimony.pdf

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Position: FAV

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR STATEMENT

**Senate Bill 436 – Child Care Centers – Employee Qualifications –
Requirements and Applications**

February 11, 2021

Mister Chairman and Members of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

Shortages of day care providers is a serious problem in Maryland and throughout the country. Senate Bill 436 will make a small step forward in helping to recruit and retain quality day care providers.

Under current law, a candidate for teaching in a day care center must complete 90 hours of preservice training prior to being hired. A candidate who holds an Associate or a Bachelor's degree can apply to the Office of Child Care for a variance to allow them to begin teaching if they have completed 45 hours of the preservice training.

Senate Bill 436 will allow candidates with an Associate or Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or a related field to complete the 90 hours of preservice training within six months of employment. Related fields include: Elementary Education, Child Development, Home Economics, Nursing, Social Work, Special Education, or a field approved by the department.

Senate Bill 436 will also allow candidates with an Associate or Bachelor's degree in a non-related field to begin employment once they have completed 45 hours of preservice training. They would then have to complete the remaining 45 hours within six months. No variance from the Office of Child Care would be needed.

As Child Care Center Directors work to fill vacancies, this bill will help them recruit quality candidates and get them into the classroom with fewer delays, and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 436.

SB0436.pdf

Uploaded by: Mellott, Diane

Position: FAV



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February 9, 2021

Supporting SB0436 - Child Care Centers - Teacher Qualifications

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

Good Afternoon, esteemed members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. Thank you to Senator Nancy King for sponsoring this legislation and the distinguished members of this committee for allowing me this time for testimony.

I am the CEO/COO of Play Centers, Inc., which has been providing early care and education to more than 1,000 children attending our five preschool programs and 10 school-age programs located in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, and Baltimore County. Prior to the impact of COVID-19, we employed approximately 200 teachers and support team members.

We are in strong support of Senate Bill 436 because it helps to address the ongoing critical child care workforce shortages that have become even more precarious in the recent year and it does so in a way that continues to ensure high quality child care and education for Maryland's children, provided by committed, qualified, and educated teachers.

This legislation still clearly aligns with current COMAR for Child Care staff qualifications and will support Maryland families and children in the following ways:

- Provides relief through widening the workforce pool to include child care providers and teachers who come to the field through a diverse variety of college majors, to ensure that each classroom is staffed with qualified and committed candidates;
- Decreases the negative impact of teacher shortages on children and families, impacting school readiness and social-emotional well-being;
- Supports the continued health of child care businesses of all sizes by allowing for greater numbers of quality teachers to be available as classrooms continue to reopen at an even more rapid pace, in response to rapidly increasing return to school and return to work plans.

Play Centers, Inc. fully supports SB0436 and respectfully requests that you vote in favor of this bill.

Thank you.

Diana E. Mellott
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**Testimony Concerning SB 436
“Child Care Centers – Teacher Qualifications”
Submitted to the Senate Education, Health and
Environmental Affairs Committee
February 11, 2021**

Position: Favorable

Maryland Family Network (MFN) supports SB 436, which would grant a new child care center staff member extended time to complete required training, provided that the new staff member holds a specified post-secondary degree in a field related to child development.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and early childhood education, as well as other supports for children and families in Maryland. We have been active in state and federal debates on child care policy and are strongly committed to ensuring that children, along with their parents, have access to high-quality, affordable programs and educational opportunities.

Child care center directors throughout the state report difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff. SB 436 would allow child care center directors to hire staff with associate’s or bachelor’s degrees in an early childhood-related field, but who lack the required pre-service training. Staff with degrees in other field could also be hired, provided they’ve completed half of the required pre-service training. It’s important to note that all staff will still be required to take all required training, but within six months of hire, as opposed to before being hired.

The quality of a child care program is directly related to the quality of its staff. Recruiting and retaining staff with post-secondary academic degrees in child development as well as with sufficient training specific (and necessary) to the profession is a laudable goal—one that can help enhance child care quality.

MFN respectfully urges the Committee’s favorable consideration of SB 436.

MSCCA testimony SB 436 Staff Qualifications, Feb.

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Position: FAV



**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 11, 2021

Position: Supports

SB 597

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

Thanks to Chairs and the esteemed members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee for the opportunity to share testimony.

Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) fully and enthusiastically supports SB 436. MSCCA is 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. The COVID 19 pandemic has impacted the child care workforce as the risk of exposure has been too great for some teachers, therefore causing even more shortages in the field. 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. Covid 19 crisis has disproportionately fallen on the shoulders of women in the workforce due to the pandemic and child care related issues and has forced even more women to alter their work schedules due therefore possibly impacting their careers.

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 from our 147 member programs provided additional data from February 2020 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 436 creates a way to increase accessibility to quality programs while alleviating some barriers for child care businesses/programs.

SB 436 would establish probationary 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. MSDE would still receive all hiring information, including fingerprinting, medical, orientation, the college requirements addressed in this legislation and the proof of enrollment in an approved MSDE 90- hour certification training. 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 436 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 degreed teacher is engaged with the children. COMAR currently only requires the pre-service requirements (along with fingerprints, medical, orientation, ADA training) the teacher to be 19 years old, have completed the 90-hours (two weeks of training) or at least the first 45 hours of the approved training and request a variance for the remaining 45 hours. This bill raises the bar and a college graduate should be able to successfully complete the 90 hours efficiently while working in the classroom with a degree in a related field already referenced in COMAR.

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 (COMAR staff qualifications are the same for ages two through four years) 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. COMAR currently only requires the pre-service requirements (along with fingerprints, medical, orientation, ADA training) This

bill raises the bar and a college graduate should be able to successfully complete the 90 hours efficiently while working in the classroom with a degree in a related field already referenced in COMAR.

We hope the Committee recognizes SB 436 is a way to address some obstacles in qualification process by ensuring a probationary period, with accountability measures while continuing to elevate the profession. MSDE will still receive all the paperwork required including the degree info and the program will be required to submit the staff successful completion for licensing to upload into their system, as they already do continually for staff changes for positions, continued training requirements, etc.

Another significant consideration is the alignment and relationship SB 436 and expansion of prekindergarten. This bill helps career changers and those entering the field to establish the steps to meet with the Kirwan Commission recommendations/Blueprint for Maryland's Education legislation related to Prekindergarten teacher qualifications as the six months to complete the training allows for time to pursue at the college level for credit.

Finally, MSCCA's goal is to be sure children and families have access to choices for quality child care programs first and then we address the real concerns related to workforce shortages, alleviate barriers, expand qualifications and competencies in a probationary manner, 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. SB 436 is a step in the right direction to reach these goals.

MSCCA urges a favorable report.

SB 436 Support.Celebree School .pdf

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Position: FAV



SB 436

Position: Support

Ways and Means Committee

Feb. 3, 2021

Esteemed members of the Ways and Means Committee:

The goal of SB 436 is to ensure the quality care & early education of children by qualified and high-caliber teachers in light of the critical workforce shortage experienced in the childcare industry, even more critical due to the COVID 19 pandemic. As a member of the senior leadership team at Celebree who has been responsible for the recruitment and hiring of teaching and leadership positions for our schools for the last 13 years, this amendment will be a tremendous help in widening the pool of degreed candidates needed to provide quality early education to children ages 2-12 in childcare setting. This legislation which still embraces COMAR qualifications, including degrees in more majors, provided that the candidates meet the probationary standards of enrollment in an approved 90-hour certification class, will:

- Increase the ability for childcare providers to deliver **quality, early education & care to more children**, ensuring more children are prepared for school
- Expedite the process for qualifying candidates or receiving a variance for candidates to guarantee the ongoing quality education & care in every classroom for every child
- Help to alleviate the current workforce shortage by widening the candidate pool to include possible career-changers, as the City Residency Teacher Program increased teachers for Baltimore City Schools
- Diminish the adverse effects that critical workforce shortage in the field is having on the families, the children and on the businesses, both large and small
- Engage more candidates with degrees in the education field who previously had not considered this industry or discovered late that teaching was their passion
- Diversify the teacher pool to provide a more diverse learning experience for all children

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This amendment will positively impact children and the industry in so many ways! It will allow organizations like Celebree School to truly find and retain the best candidates. Having consistent teacher requirements that allow for educational diversity of the candidate pool will only benefit the children.

The Celebree School fully supports SB 436 and respectfully requests that you vote in favor of Bill SB 436. Thank you.

Emily Samuels, District Director

The Celebree School – 24 schools in 7 Maryland Counties

Approx. 1,200 employees, 3,300 children

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