



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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SB 890

DATE: February 25, 2021

SPONSOR: Senator King

ASSIGNED TO: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey (leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT

Early Childhood Education – Child Care Provider Support Grant Program (The Child Care Provider Support Act)

Senate Bill 890 establishes the Child Care Provider Support Grant Program to provide funds to eligible grantees to help support the operation of child care centers. The Department of Commerce, in consultation with the Maryland State Department of Education, must implement and administer the grant program. Beginning in fiscal 2023, the Governor must include \$25.0 million annually in the State budget for the program.

Montgomery County supports Senate Bill 890 and the much-needed fiscal relief it would bring to child care centers and family providers. Revenue loss resulting from efforts to contain the spread of the disease and the stringent requirements for reopening put the viability of child care businesses in jeopardy. The State's requirements for reopening child care include smaller group sizes and strictly established health standards necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The smaller group sizes significantly reduce tuition payments to be collected by providers, while they must continue to maintain the staffing levels and other fixed costs and increase spending for personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, and other materials needed for the safe delivery of services.

Prior to COVID restrictions, the child care industry struggled with sustainability challenges. Cost-of-care studies showed the typical child care program operating at a deficit or at best, a break-even situation. Child care is an essential service to support families as they return to work and is critical to the County's economic sustainability. Without public investment and support, licensed, quality child care in Montgomery County is not sustainable under the current conditions. Montgomery County respectfully urges the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 890.