

Hummingbird Hill Nature Preschool

February 2, 2022

Ways and Means Committee

RE: Support for HB 376: Outdoor Preschool Licensing Pilot

My name is Heather Quinn and I am a licensed family child care educator who supports this bill.

I am writing to ask that you vote in favor of HB376 to establish an Outdoor Preschool Licensing pilot. Here are a few of the reasons why I urge you to support the bill:

- Children from low-income communities and those with special needs do not have equitable access to State scholarships or special education services and are cut off from the benefits of nature-based early childhood education because immersive outdoor preschools currently cannot be licensed;
- A staggering number of child care programs in Maryland have closed during the covid-19 pandemic leaving a shortage of options for families. Outdoor preschools offer an alternative form of child care at a time when many families seek the physical and mental health benefits of being outdoors; and
- Outdoor preschools promote the skills and values that lead to environmental literacy, which supports goals of the Maryland Partnership For Children In Nature and the K-12 Environmental Literacy Standards required for graduation in Maryland.

I beg you to vote on this issue and please let me know that I can count on your support. My program fully encompasses the seasons as a curriculum and we spend as much time outside as we can. The children love it and crave it...asking to go outside in even the coldest of days. We need it and more of it. Please pass this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration of HB376. We hope that you will support this important effort and vote in favor of HB376!

Sincerely,

Heather Quinn

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Hummingbirdhill.org