



Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children

Testimony in Support of HB 995
“Early Childhood Development – Child Care Scholarship Program – Alterations”
Submitted to the House Ways and Means Committee
March 4, 2022

Support

The Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC) supports HB 995, which would improve the Child Care Scholarship Program by making it simpler and faster for parents to apply for and receive scholarship payments.

MDAEYC is a professional association of 1,900 early childhood educators, allied professionals, and families. We believe that all children deserve high-quality early childhood education, no matter the income level of their parents. The Child Care Scholarship Program enables families with low or moderate incomes to receive a child care subsidy to cover a large part of their child care costs, promoting equitable access to early childhood education.

In recent years, Maryland raised the subsidy rates and expanded eligibility, serving more families with a more substantial child care subsidy amount. These improvements have enabled the State to help more families afford the high cost of child care. Despite these important improvements, families and child care providers still face challenges in accessing the scholarship program in a timely manner.

HB 995 would help expedite families’ access to child care scholarships by creating a system of presumptive eligibility and proxy eligibility for the scholarships. Determining that families are eligible sooner will enable parents to secure child care and enter or remain in the workforce. HB 995 also helps child care providers receive scholarship payments in a timely manner. As small businesses, child care centers and family child care homes face financial struggles when they are forced to wait many weeks to receive scholarship payments from the State.

HB 995 would help families access quality child care for their children through prompt scholarship eligibility determination, and would help child care programs operate effectively with more timely payments for the valuable early childhood education services they provide. We urge your support of this legislation.

If you have any questions, please contact: Stephanie Schaefer, Program Coordinator, at stephanie.schaefer@mdaeyc.org or 240-441-3280.