

February 4, 2022

The Honorable Marlon Amprey, Frank M. Conaway, Jr., and Melissa Wells
Maryland General Assembly (District 40)
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support for HB 376: Outdoor Preschool Licensing Pilot

Dear Delegates Amprey, Conaway, Wells and Ways and Means Committee Members:

Our names are M. Jane Taylor and Autumn Breaud, and as community members and parents who reside in your district, we ask that you vote in favor of HB376 to establish an Outdoor Preschool Licensing pilot. Here are a few reasons why:

- 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 Maryland childcare programs have closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving a shortage of options for families. Outdoor preschools offer an alternative form of childcare 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, as well as the K-12 Environmental Literacy Standards required for graduation in Maryland.

The outdoor preschool program that our son Angus attends at the Irvine Nature Center in Baltimore County has been invaluable to our family during this time, and the existence of this type of early education option factors heavily into our consideration of whether we might remain in our current home or seek to relocate in the coming years.

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

Sincerely,



M. Jane Taylor



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