



**Testimony Concerning Senate SB 609  
Submitted to the Senate  
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee**

**March 1, 2023**

The Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA) is a Professional Association representing Registered Family Child Care and Large Family Child Care since 1983. The mission of MSFCCA is to promote and enhance the profession by advocating for all of the 989 family child care businesses through the 19 local Associations that make up our statewide membership. Registered family child care programs serve thousands of children each day enabling parents to work and support a strong Maryland Economy. Pending legislation, regulatory changes, and statewide programs and initiatives that impact these small programs is the main focus of our advocacy efforts. Maryland is recognized as a leader nationally in early care and education policy and MSFCCA is grateful for the opportunity to affect positive change to ensure equal access to early care and education for all children.

The first five years are critical in a child's development, therefore adequate funding and reasonable policy is *vital* to guarantee these small programs continue to serve Maryland families. The passage of HB1300/SB1000 (2020) "Blueprint for Maryland's Future - Implementation Maryland's School Systems, has been charged with implementing pre-k expansion programs across Maryland. Unfortunately many local school systems are facing the reality that they do not have the available space or number of teachers to fulfill this obligation.

According to the Blueprint, 30% of the Pre-K Expansion Programs must be community-based providers and a quality untapped resource for these providers is Registered family child care. Unfortunately, there are barriers that keep these qualified providers from participating in the

pre-k expansion. The most difficult being the Student-Teacher Internship that completes teacher training in MD. Registered providers who run small one-person programs are unable to fulfill the requirement to close for 5 months to complete the student teaching in public school settings.

The Child Care Career Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF) Grant in Maryland helps fund an Associates or Bachelor's Degree in Early Education for providers. However in pursuing a degree, the student must complete the student teaching component which means the family child care provider must either pay the salary of a substitute or close his/her program, neither of these options benefits the provider or the families in care. The first option would mean that the provider would have to pay the full-time salary of the substitute, which is sometimes more than the provider makes. The second option would mean closing the program and losing all enrolled children to another program, which can be difficult for the families.

Creating alternative pathways for providers to obtain their teaching certifications by including a provider's years of experience in the field as well as utilizing more creative ways to accomplish the student-teaching component in his/her program. The use of technology and/or a visiting instructor may be an option to increase Maryland's ability to offer quality pre-k program options for families.

MSFCCA fully supports SB609 as long as the alternative pathways are reasonable and sustainable for family child care providers and will enable them to participate in Maryland's Blueprint for the Future Pre-K Expansion.