



Magothy Cooperative Preschool
3705 Mountain Road
Pasadena MD 21122
410-360-0292

RE: Support HB525 Outdoor Preschool Licensing Pilot bill!

Dear Honorable Ways and Means Committee:

We are Lindsay McDermott and David Schroeder, the directors of Magothy Cooperative Preschool operating in Pasadena Maryland. We are writing to urge you to support the House Bill to establish an Outdoor Preschool Licensing pilot.

We provide a high quality, licensed preschool opportunity to over 60 families per school year. We spend the vast majority of our school day outdoors, utilizing multiple outdoor classrooms, playgrounds, and trails. Despite this, current licensing regulations focus almost exclusively on our indoor classrooms. We treat our outdoor spaces as classrooms, and maintain them to the same safety and educational standards as our indoor classrooms. However, they are not recognized as classrooms and therefore have no bearing on our licensed capacity. In short, we could run our current program without using our indoor classrooms (with the exception of hand washing and toileting) but we could not be a licensed program without them.

Outdoor education and being in nature has tremendous benefits to children and their families. We have witnessed first hand how being in nature inspires a child's curiosity, inquisition, observation and language. Being able to engage all of their senses and have hands-on learning has led to deeper connections and an intrinsic desire to learn more. We have learned that most anything we can do indoors we can also do outdoors, and often find it to be more enjoyable and less prone to sensory overload. While among the trees, sunshine, and fresh air we have observed our students have a more positive attitude towards themselves



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and their peers. While caring for the world around them our students develop empathy for all living things, even wiggly ones. When starting our days outdoors we have seen a drastic decrease in our student's separation anxiety from their grownups and an increase in their self awareness. Being outdoors means all kinds of weather, leading to sequential planning, self-help skills, resilience, and awareness of one's needs. We have also witnessed a positive effect on students' gross motor skills. Our students regularly navigate uneven surfaces, balance and climb. Their confidence in their physical abilities has soared as their use is integrated throughout most of our day.

We also believe that licensed child care brings numerous benefits to children and their families, increasing safety, teacher qualifications, and student educational standards. We urge you to support the HB525 Outdoor Preschool Licensing Pilot Bill to help join the benefits of outdoor education and licensed child care, and increase access to high-quality outdoor preschools to all families.

Sincerely,

Lindsay McDermott and David Schroeder

Directors

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