



Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children

Testimony in Support of HB 868
“Child Care Provider Stabilization Program - Established”
Submitted to the House Ways and Means Committee
March 1, 2023

Position: Support

The Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC) supports HB 868, which would establish the Child Care Stabilization Program to provide funding to help stabilize and support eligible child care providers.

MDAEYC is a professional association of 2,500 early childhood educators, allied professionals, and families. We promote high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood education practice, policy, and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children. Many of our members are educators working in child care centers or family child care homes.

The child care industry has long faced financial challenges, with providers operating with razor-thin profit margins. Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the child care industry has been under incredible strain, with a number of providers permanently closing. During the depths of the pandemic, the Federal government and Maryland have invested much-needed, but temporary, relief funds in child care providers, enabling many programs to continue operating despite the additional challenges presented by the pandemic.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), our national organization, conducted a series of surveys of the impact of the pandemic on child care providers nationally and in Maryland over the past few years.¹ These survey results document the tremendous need for ongoing child care stabilization funds like those that would be provided by HB 868, both to keep child care programs open, and to prevent tuition raises for families using child care services.

¹ National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2022, November). *Uncertainty Ahead Means Instability Now: Why Families, Children, Educators, Businesses, and States Need Congress to Fund Child Care*. <https://www.naeyc.org/pandemic-surveys>

In the most recent survey, conducted in November 2022, NAEYC surveyed thousands of programs across the country. NAEYC surveyed 109 child care providers in Maryland (with 50% from child care centers and 48% from family child care homes).

The survey findings² show that pandemic relief funds have reached most Maryland child care programs, and have helped child care providers stay open:

- 74 percent of Maryland child care program directors and 92 percent of Maryland family child care providers surveyed reported that their programs received pandemic relief grants.
- 40 percent of Maryland child care program administrators surveyed reported that their program would have closed without relief grants.
- 65 percent of Maryland child care program administrators reported that their programs will have to raise tuition when relief funds end.

HB 868 would provide critical funding to help stabilize the operations of child care programs while contributing to their sustainability. Child care programs are an essential part of Maryland's economic infrastructure that supports young children's development and parents' employment. 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.

² National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2022, November). *Uncertainty Ahead Means Instability Now: Survey of Child Care Providers Shows Why Families, Children, Educators, Businesses, and States Need Congress to Fund Child Care.* <https://bit.ly/marylandsurvey>