



**Caring For Maryland's Most  
Important Natural Resource™**

## **Maryland State Child Care Association**

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*The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is a non-profit, statewide, professional association incorporated in 1984 to promote the growth and development of child care and learning centers in Maryland. MSCCA has over 5000 members working in the field of early childhood. We believe children are our most important natural resource and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the early childhood community.*

### **Testimony: HB 185 Nonpublic Schools and Child Care Providers-Corporal Punishment-Prohibition Position: Support Ways and Means Committee February 1, 2023**

Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) supports HB 185.

MSCCA applauds Delegate Ebersole in his efforts to protect children and bring forth research, evidence-based policies that will help protect children, as well as educate schools, child care providers/programs, and parents.

MSCCA supports and advocates to uphold the extensive health and safety child care regulations in COMAR including all licensed, legal child care. Maryland is comprised of more than 7000 child care small businesses, which more than 4,800 are registered, licensed family child care professionals successfully caring for and educating more than 40,000 children and approximately 2,700 child care centers successfully educating and caring for over 90,000 Maryland children.

Maryland has some of the strictest child care regulations in the country. All child care providers, including family living in a family child care home and volunteers are required to go through and pass federal and state criminal background checks, as well as child protective services/child abuse and neglect record checks as important professional safeguards for children and peace of mind for families. Child care programs/providers are regularly inspected by licensing authority at MSDE, including unannounced inspections to be sure all regulatory measures are in place to protect children in licensed child care.

The health, safety, social and emotional well being of children is paramount to the foundation of licensed child care and important for successful outcomes for children in school and in life. Discipline/Punishment policies should be a part of the health and safety foundation for licensing of child care.

Research has long underscored the negative effects of spanking on children's social-emotional development, self-regulation, and cognitive development, but [new research](#) out of Harvard University, published this month, shows that spanking alters children's brain response in ways similar to severe maltreatment and increases perception of threats.

"The findings are one of the last pieces of evidence to make sense of the research of the last 50 years on spanking," says researcher [Jorge Cuartas](#), a Ph.D. candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, who coauthored the study with [Katie McLaughlin](#), professor at the Department of Psychology at Harvard University. "We know that spanking is not effective and can be harmful for children's development and increases the chance of mental health issues. With these new findings, we also know it can have potential impact on brain development, changing biology, and leading to lasting consequences."

Additionally, the World Health Organization article also agrees in their article, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/corporal-punishment-and-health> as they state" evidence shows corporal punishment increases children's behavioral problems over time and has no positive outcomes".

HB 185 helps Maryland enact law that is based in research and provides another layer of safety and protection for children. HB 185 also provides educators and caregivers the policies to refer to, embed and share with parents, as we all need to work together to ensure best practices and outcomes (short term and long term) of children.

This bill aligns with state regulations, national and global research and requires a specific policy related to discipline/corporal punishment be mandated by child care and other non-public entities serving, educating and caring for children.

The lack of definition of corporal punishment leaves open widespread interpretation as physical punishment is most common, mental punishment could be interpreted if not specifically defined. Although we would like to see definition, the policies created by the Board of Education will ensure definitions for corporal punishment.

MSCCA urges a favorable report.