



Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children

Testimony Concerning HB 1403
“Family Child Care Homes and Large Family Child Care Homes - Age of Children
in Care – Alterations”
Submitted to the House Ways and Means Committee
March 4, 2024

Position: Unfavorable

The Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC) opposes HB 1403, which would change the age of infants in family child care from two years old to 15 months old, under which certain adult to child ratios apply.

MDAEYC is a professional association of 2,000 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.

As an organization whose members – early childhood educators – include family child care providers, MDAEYC understands and appreciates the rationale behind HB 1403. While MDAEYC agrees with the Bill’s sponsors and supporters that there is great unmet demand for infant child care in Maryland, we do not support the lowering of the age of children needing the one-adult-to-two-children ratio in family child care homes from two years old down to 15 months old.

This Maryland child care licensing standard requiring that only two infants – defined as under age two – be in a family child care home with one adult is in place to ensure that basic health and safety needs of the infants and children in care are met. Infants – up to age two – require more intensive adult attention for their healthy development. Babies learn and grow in the environment of relationships with caring adults.¹ Most critically, infant safety is protected by this requirement: it helps to keep infants safe in case of emergencies when an adult needs to carry them, such as a building fire. Upholding these health and safety requirements embedded in our licensing standards is essential for infants’ well-being in child care homes.

For these reasons, MDAEYC respectfully requests an unfavorable report on HB 1403.

If you have any questions, please contact: Stephanie Schaefer, PhD. Program Coordinator, at stephanie.schaefer@mdaeyc.org or 240-441-3280.

¹ National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2004). *Young Children Develop in an Environment of Relationships: Working Paper No. 1*. Retrieved from <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/wp1/>