



**Bill Number: Senate Bill 780**

**Prekindergarten – 3-Year-Olds – Private Providers 2 (Parental Choice for Prekindergarten Act)**

Submitted by: Ruby Daniels, President, Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA)

Hearing Date: February 21, 2025

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Position: Favorable**

Dear Chair Feldman Vice Chair Kagan, and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

My name is Ruby Daniels, and I am the President of the Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA), representing thousands of family child care providers across the state. Additionally, I am a second-year independent prekindergarten expansion grantee, providing high-quality early education aligned with Maryland's public school curriculum. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Maryland's family child care providers who play an essential role in delivering equitable and community-based prekindergarten services to families.

Senate Bill 780 introduces important changes to the prekindergarten landscape in Maryland, particularly regarding the enrollment of 3-year-olds in publicly funded pre-K programs. While the bill expands parental choice and strengthens private provider participation, I urge the committee to carefully consider its impact on family child care providers, who are critical to ensuring a diverse, community-centered early learning system.

**Considerations for Family Child Care Providers**

**Increased Barriers to Participation for Family Child Care Providers** – While the bill allows private providers to serve Tier I 3-year-olds, it requires an MOU with MSDE and the county board of education. Family child care providers often lack the administrative resources of larger providers, making it more challenging to navigate complex agreements and compliance requirements. Clearer **technical assistance and streamlined participation processes** are essential for equitable access.

**Funding and Equity Considerations** – The bill provides public funding to eligible private providers enrolling Tier I 3-year-olds, which is a positive step. However, funding allocations should ensure that family child care providers receive equitable support compared to larger pre-K centers. Family child care programs are uniquely positioned to provide culturally responsive, relationship-based care in home-like settings, which is particularly beneficial for younger learners.

**Ensuring Meaningful Inclusion of Family Child Care Providers in Mixed-Delivery** – The intent of Maryland's pre-K expansion is to promote a robust mixed-delivery system where both public and private providers have a role in early learning. However, without intentional outreach and



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structural support for family child care providers, there is a risk that these smaller, community-based programs could be overlooked. The state should prioritize strategies to actively integrate family child care into pre-K expansion efforts.

#### Recommendations

To fully realize the goals of Senate Bill 780 while ensuring family child care providers remain central to the mixed-delivery system, I respectfully recommend:

A streamlined process for family child care providers to enter into MOUs with MSDE and county boards, ensuring they are not burdened with disproportionate administrative requirements.

Dedicated technical assistance to help family child care providers navigate compliance, reporting, and operational challenges related to state pre-K participation.

A clear commitment to preserving and expanding family child care's role in Maryland's prekindergarten system, ensuring parents have access to small-group, home-based learning environments that offer high-quality, developmentally appropriate care.

Family child care providers offer a vital service to Maryland's families, especially in areas where public school-based programs may not be accessible. I urge the committee to consider amendments that will ensure family child care remains an integral part of the prekindergarten expansion.

I urge the committee to pass SB 780 making sure that there are technical assistance provided to family child care providers especially ones who are speakers of other languages.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions and look forward to working collaboratively to enhance Maryland's early education system.

Sincerely,

Ruby Daniels

President, Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA)  
Independent Pre-K Expansion Grantee