



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR TESTIMONY
Senate Bill 857
CHILD CARE PREKINDERGARTEN EXPANSION AND EQUITY ACT OF 2025

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kegan, and Committee Members

For the record, I am Senator Shaneka Helson from the 30th Legislative District of Anne Arundel County, MD. and I thank you for the opportunity to present this Bill.

SB 857 - The Child Care PreKindergarten Expansion and Equity ACT is a result of state constituents bringing to our attention a critical gap existing in the decision-making process for the enrollment of children in pre-K programs in Maryland.

Specifically, this bill intends to remove existing barriers currently preventing private childcare providers, particularly smaller and multilingual, from accessing MSDE's pre-K expansion grants and helping to achieve the goals of the program. It aligns the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Grant Process with that of Enrollment Planning. Currently, providers often receive funding decisions late in the enrollment cycle, limiting their ability to expand pre-K capacity.

This bill accomplishes five important actions.

1. It changes the timing of the Pre-K expansion grant process so that the notice of grant awards is distributed by March 1st and aligns it with the enrollment process for providers.
2. It adjusts the mechanism of the MSDE Pre-K expansion grant from a reimbursement model to 100% funding upfront. Most private childcare providers are small businesses and need upfront funding to prepare their programs.
3. It amends MSDE Pre-K expansion grant to be a multi-year award instead of a one-year award – providing greater financial stability for childcare providers, allowing them to plan and budget more effectively.
4. It emphasizes that Pre-K expansion should be used to expand access for families who cannot afford high quality early care and education and not come at the cost of decreasing access for the younger age groups.
5. It ensures full implementation of the hub model such that they are directed to provide technical assistance for multilingual, family childcare providers, and small centers to apply for

and administer the Pre-K Expansion grant and ensure the successful implementation of a hub model of supports for community-based Pre-K providers.

After hearing from our advocates today, I urge you to give favorable support to this bill.

Today's Advocates include:

Laura Jahromi, Montgomery County Children's Opportunity Alliance.

Charo Torres, Latino Early Care and Education Coalition.

Pilar Olmedo and Tanushree Isaacman, AIM.