



February 21, 2025

Testimony in Support of House Bill 862 Child Care Affordability Commission - Establishment

We respectfully urge the Ways and Means Committee to make a favorable report on HB 862– Child Care Affordability Commission – Establishment as we believe it’s time for Maryland to take action to address the child care affordability crisis.

According to Maryland Family Network, the average cost of child care in Montgomery County equates to 27.1% of a family's income (if making median income).ⁱ The national recommendation is that families spend no more than 7% of their income on child care.

As we conducted community engagement over the last 6 months to build a common agenda for early childhood system change in Montgomery County, we spoke with hundreds of families and whether they were speaking English, Spanish, Amharic, or Dari, no matter their level of income or the needs of their children – they overwhelmingly said that parents with young children need more affordable access to child care so that parents can work and their young children can be in stable, safe, and caring educational environments. One parent said, “one job isn’t enough anymore, supporting 3 kids is too hard even with both of us working. I’m working night shifts or my kids stay with neighbors, I don’t know what else to do.”

This problem is not unique to Maryland. The child care industry is a fundamentally flawed business model in the United States, and the only way to address it is with public intervention. Many other states are beginning to take action, testing innovative strategies to ease the burden for working families and to improve the fiscal sustainability of child care small businesses and the hard working early childhood educators. It’s time for Maryland to decide what strategies are right for our communities; the Child Care Affordability Commission will consider the options and make the right recommendations on how to move forward, so that parents can return to the labor force and children can start out on the path to prosperity.

Submitted on behalf of the Children’s Opportunity Alliance by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Jahromi".

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The Montgomery County [Children’s Opportunity Alliance](#) is a locally legislated Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity that connects our community to build an equitable, accessible, high-quality, and sustainable early childhood system that narrows disparities and puts young children on a path to reach their greatest potential.

ⁱ <https://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/Maryland%202.0.pdf>