



**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 5500 members working in the field of child care/early childhood education. 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 1303 Child Care Centers-Teacher Qualifications- Alterations Submitted to: Ways and Means Committee**

**March 5, 2025**

Maryland State Child Care Association enthusiastically supports HB 1303.

This legislation requires the State Board of Education to set minimal experiential standards as qualifications for child care teachers teaching in a child care center as well as probationary employment qualifications for a child care teacher employed in a child care center. HB 1303 does not impact family child care.

Child Care Teachers in center-based child care are required to submit completion of a high school diploma or equivalency before they can be considered for work as a teacher. In addition to the high school diploma, 90 hours of approved coursework, approved Basic Health and Safety Training, and health and criminal background checks are required. You must have a high school diploma or GED to enter into college or to attest to completion of high school diploma to achieve the Child Development Associate credential. Without the high school diploma documentation, primarily women in the child care workforce are limited in career ladder.

One area of concern related to only one pathway to Child Care Teacher, is refugees who flee their country with no access to their educational documents. HB 1303 allows for an alternative, probationary pathway to improve compensation while completing the requirements set forth in regulation.

Maryland has precedent and inequity in the child care teacher requirements because COMAR does NOT require a high school diploma or equivalency for a family child care provider who can have up to eight children of varying age groups in care settings according to Maryland regulations. HB 1303 seek to create equity without decreasing quality.

According to the most recent State of the Economy report from Comptroller, Total number of child care providers/programs have declined from 7, 984 in February 2020 to 6,749 in October 2024 in Maryland, which is a loss of 15%. Child care continues to struggle with critical workforce shortages due to many factors including strict regulations, wages are low with benefits rarely offered, significantly more experience and training are required to become a licensed child care teacher than similarly paid positions, and in Maryland, there are more alternative jobs and career paths for prospective child care workers to pursue.

Additionally, 360,000 child care workers lost their job during the first two months of pandemic, and since this initial decline, attracting and retaining child care workforce has become a significant struggle for the industry.

Child care is a unique business which cannot be automated or delivered curbside. In order for parents to work, go to school or participate in training programs, they must have reliable, consistent, affordable, accessible child

care with a qualified workforce. Similarly to registered apprenticeships, HB 1303 will help address a pathway through competency and experience based model to build a child care workforce pipeline in a critical workforce area of need.

National research establishes a clear link between increased access to quality, affordable child care and increased Labor Rate Participation. Additionally, Counting Our Losses publication and research by Maryland Family Network looks at the overwhelming loss to the economy as a result of inadequate child care system. Maryland lost \$2.14 billion due to employee absence and turnover due to child care issues of working Maryland parents of children age five and under. Without a sustainable child care workforce, our state faces more closures and economic decline.

The Comptroller of Maryland urges in her State of the Economy recent report, As state leaders, we must do all we can to ensure that parents, especially those with young children, have affordable and accessible child care options and the opportunity to fully participate in the labor force.” <https://marylandtaxes.gov/reports/static-files/research/childcare.pdf>,

The time to act is now to support building and supporting the child care workforce through creative, alternative pathways.

MSCCA urges a favorable report.