

Wee Lad & Lassie Early Learning Center

March 7, 2025

**HB 1475: Mixed Delivery Model Viability Act
Testimony “In Favor”**

My name is Dr. Lisa Buchy, and I am writing to express my strong support of HB 1475. Since 1985 I have been an owner and director of early education and care programs in AACo. My company currently operates two locations serving over 100 children, including children with Child Care Scholarship and 8 years of experience offering community-based public prekindergarten. My experience also includes faculty appointments at Johns Hopkins University where I worked on a large-scale childcare quality research grant and at Towson University in the Department of Early Childhood Education where I taught in the educator preparation program at the undergraduate and graduate levels. I serve on the advisory committee of the Maryland State Childcare Leadership Program (MECLP) and the Anne Arundel County Early Childhood Childcare Taskforce.

Like most states in the U.S., Maryland aims to offer prekindergarten education in a robust mixed-delivery system of early childhood programs. The benefits of this approach include increased family choice, the capacity to serve more children, fiscal stability using multiple funding streams, and a thriving child care sector. However, significant challenges to implementation exist. The coordination and support of prekindergarten providers across multiple settings is highly complex and community-based organizations (CBO’s) are at a disadvantage compared to public schools in resources, teacher pay, benefits, regulations, and oversight.

HB 1475 addresses the need to investigate the current challenges to robust mixed-delivery system implementation including the need for changes to regulations, policies, and procedures to increase the efficacy of the publicly funded prekindergarten program and to make the program more equitable for providers.

The current mixed-delivery system implementation process has failed to consider the nuances of the birth to age 5 education system’s operation. One possible reason for this failure is the needed subject matter expertise is not present in the organizations currently tasked with decision making. The birth to age 5 early care and education (ECE) system functions differently than the familiar public school (K-12) system and many folks working in public education have little or no experience with it. Absent a more detailed understanding of how the ECE system works,

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unintended consequences such as diminishing the child care sector and negatively impacting Maryland's workforce are likely to ensue as decisions are made and policies are implemented with insufficient background knowledge. The passage of HB 1475 would create a mechanism for analysis, reporting, and dissemination of information that is critical to decisions around mixed-delivery system implementation at a time when the results of such an analysis are critical to its success.

To ensure a robust mixed-delivery system is implemented, I urge your support of this vitally important legislation.