



January 29, 2025

Testimony Regarding House Bill 0325 – Adult Education – High School Diploma by Examination – Requirements and Study

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

We urge you to support HB325 – Adult Education – High School Diploma by Examination – Requirements and Study as we believe it will help remove barriers to more qualified professionals entering the early care and education workforce.

We are facing a critical shortage of educators in early care and education (ECE) programs around the state. There was a 22% decline in the number of ECE workers between 2020 and 2022, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.¹ According to Comptroller Lierman's recent report, the decline in child care providers has led to a decline in the number of licensed seats available for young children, which has contributed to a decline in Maryland's labor force participation, particularly for women aged 25-45.²

In Montgomery County, over 85% of the existing ECE workforce is female and around a quarter identifies as Hispanic, with 16% of the workforce having a primary language other than English. In order to serve our increasingly diversifying population of young children, it is imperative that our workforce is also diverse. According to the County's recent Supply & Demand Study, there are potentially as many as 33,700 children aged zero to four who are looking for non-English services, but there are currently only 4,900 licensed seats offering services to non-English speakers.³ Allowing potential early childhood educators to take the GED examination in their native Spanish language would greatly improve the ability of these individuals to then meet the qualifications for employment as a lead teacher in a licensed child care program.

Submitted on behalf of the Children's Opportunity Alliance.

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

Laura Jahromi, Manager, Strategic Initiatives
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¹ <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/a6108c6a08b6bc61732f50c2d3220f83/covid-19-child-care-industry.pdf>

² <https://marylandtaxes.gov/reports/static-files/research/childcare.pdf>

³

https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/Viewer.php?view_id=169&event_id=16318&meta_id=185918