



**Caring For Maryland's Most  
Important Natural Resource™**

## **Maryland State Child Care Association**

2810 Carrollton Road  
Annapolis, Md. 21403  
Phone: (410) 820-9196  
Email: [info@mscca.org](mailto:info@mscca.org)  
[www.mscca.org](http://www.mscca.org)

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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 five thousand 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 in Support of HB 561 Maryland Child Care Credential Program – Extension of Funding Submitted to: Appropriations Committee Feb. 24, 2026**

#### **Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:**

MSCCA is in strong support for HB 561, which extends funding for the Maryland Child Care Credential Program. This program is recognized as one of Maryland's most effective workforce supports for early care and education. It honors providers and educators who exceed basic licensing standards by pursuing advanced professional training and achieving higher quality benchmarks within Maryland's formal workforce structure.

#### **Why Extension Matters:**

- **Quality Incentives:** HB 561 ensures the program remains a meaningful incentive for quality improvement and workforce stability by extending foundational funding beginning in FY 2028. This is crucial, as Maryland Family Network's 2025 Demographics Report highlights the modest salaries of child care professionals, including Family Child Care Providers (\$31,040), Child Care Center Directors (\$41,131), Senior Staff/Teachers (\$26,877), and Center Aides (\$17,854). The Credential Program's training funds and bonuses significantly impact on the child care workforce, while increasing quality.
- **Professional Growth:** The Credential Program incentivizes ongoing education, offsets credential attainment costs, and provides financial recognition for successful completion of high-quality training. This is vital for a workforce that remains underpaid despite its essential role in supporting Maryland's families and economy.
- **Quality Infrastructure:** Embedded within Maryland EXCELS and Maryland Accreditation, the Credential Program is a key quality indicator. Without sustained funding, incentives weaken, compensation becomes uncertain, professional development participation declines, and quality improvement efforts stall.

#### **Economic and Equity Impact:**

Child care programs operate on thin margins, with staffing costs dominating budgets and tuition capped by family affordability. The Credential Program serves as a recruitment and retention strategy, helping attract qualified educators, retain experienced staff, reward professional advancement, and reduce costly turnover. Workforce instability increases and business sustainability declines when credential funding becomes unstable. The early childhood workforce enables parents to work and businesses to function. Investing in credentialing is both an economic development strategy and an equity commitment to a workforce primarily composed of women of color.

**Conclusion:** Allowing funding to lapse would undermine Maryland's quality infrastructure and send the wrong message to educators who continue to demonstrate resilience under significant financial pressure. For these reasons, MSCCA respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 561.