



**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 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 SB 467 Maryland Child Care Credential Program – Extension of Funding Submitted to: Budget and Taxation Feb. 18, 2026

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

Maryland State Child Care Association strongly supports SB 467 to extend funding for the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.

The Maryland Child Care Credential Program is one of our state's most effective workforce supports for the early care and education sector. It recognizes child care providers and educators who exceed minimum licensing requirements by achieving higher levels of professional training and quality benchmarks within Maryland's formal workforce lattice.

SB 467 ensures this program remains a meaningful incentive for quality improvement and workforce stability by extending foundational funding beginning in FY 2028.

This program works.

It incentivizes continued education and professional growth. It offsets the cost of credential attainment. Most importantly, it provides financial recognition for a workforce that remains underpaid despite the critical role it plays in supporting Maryland's families and economy.

The Credential Program is embedded within Maryland EXCELS and Maryland Accreditation as a key quality indicator. Without sustained funding:

- Incentives to exceed minimum licensing standards weaken
- Compensation tied to credential achievement becomes uncertain
- Professional development participation declines
- Quality improvement efforts stall

Child care programs operate on extremely thin margins. Most are small businesses where staffing costs dominate budgets, tuition is capped by family affordability, and profit margins are minimal. The Credential Program serves as a recruitment and retention strategy that helps:

- Attract qualified educators

- Retain experienced staff
- Reward professional advancement
- Reduce costly turnover

When credential funding becomes unstable, workforce instability increases and business sustainability declines. 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.

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, we respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 467.
