



Testimony on House Bill 1321
“Child Care Scholarship Program – Enrollment and Copays – Alterations”
Submitted to the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment &
Budget and Taxation Committees
March 25, 2026

Position: Favorable with amendments

Maryland Family Network (MFN) supports HB 1321 with amendments that sustain General Assembly oversight of the Child Care Scholarship Program.

Maryland Family Network (MFN) has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and other vital supports for children and their families. We have been active in state and federal debates on child care policy and are strongly committed to ensuring that children and their caregivers have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

The Child Care Scholarship (CCS) program is a critical support for Maryland families. The CCS program provides financial assistance to low-income working parents so they can afford high-quality child care. Finding affordable, accessible, quality child care is a significant barrier for working families, and the CCS program is a vital resource that enables parents to remain in the workforce, build economic security, and ensure their young children are connected to early learning opportunities.

Maryland Family Network strongly believes that all families should have access to affordable child care, a goal that has been set back by the current enrollment cap and waitlist. The CCS program is a cornerstone of child care provision in Maryland, and it should be easily accessible to eligible families, fully funded, and expanded to increase access when possible. The current waitlist for CCS and capping enrollment at 40,000 children negatively impacts families, child care providers, and communities across the state. We appreciate the intent of HB 1321 is to increase revenue for the CCS program so that more families can move off of the waitlist – a joint goal we share.

Moreover, we appreciate the Administration’s assurances that MSDE would implement a progressive copayment structure that limits copays for families with the lowest incomes. At the same time, as drafted, HB 1321 does not outline the co-pay structure in statute leaving the door open for future Administrations to levy unaffordable co-pays upon families that would make the program out-of-reach for many Marylanders, or would leave child care providers scrambling to chase down co-payments families are unable to afford. **As such, we urge amendments that ensure the General Assembly retains program oversight via the Legislative Policy Committee.**

Submitted by: Beth Morrow, Director of Public Policy