



Testimony Concerning SB 664
“Child Care Scholarship Program - Priority for Child Care Providers”
Submitted to the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 4, 2026

Position: Support

Maryland Family Network supports SB 664, which would instruct the Department of Education to establish a framework prioritizing access to child care scholarships for children of child care providers.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and early childhood education, as well as other supports for children and families in Maryland. We have been active in state and federal debates on child care policy and are strongly committed to ensuring that young children, along with their parents, have access to high-quality, affordable programs and educational opportunities.

A stable child care workforce is critical to Maryland’s families and our economy. Low wages and lack of benefits impact a program’s ability to recruit and retain well-qualified staff. While access to the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) program is currently limited due to an enrollment cap and corresponding waitlist, prioritizing access to the program for child care workers could enable an individual to accept a position in a child care role knowing it was accompanied with a guarantee of affordable, high-quality care for their child(ren).

Other states have taken similar steps, most notably Kentucky in late 2022.¹ Since then, about a dozen states have followed and either implemented a similar policy or are actively considering it. Rhode Island began with a pilot program, which has since been extended through 2028. In the first year of their pilot, about half of centers had at least one staff member participating in the program.²

At a time when demand for the Child Care Scholarship Program is outpacing available funds, income-eligible care providers who work in licensed or registered child care programs are a natural prioritization that keeps child care infrastructure intact. While we support prioritizing child care workers for Child Care Scholarship slots, we caution against adding any other additional categories of prioritization that create a complicated web of eligibility that would deter families from applying, and potentially advantage some higher income families above lower income families. The CCS waitlist inevitably harms families and the child care industry as a whole, and while we can work to mitigate this harm, the only real solution is to work to identify funding and resources to meet the full demand for child care in our state, so that all families have access to quality, affordable care for their children.

Child care programs need to compete successfully in attracting and retaining qualified employees. Access to child care will be crucial to this effort. MFN respectfully urges a favorable report on SB 664.

Submitted by: Beth Morrow, Director of Public Policy

¹ Alliance for Early Success. 2024. In Effort to Entice Child Care Staff, More States Follow Kentucky's Lead. <https://earlysuccess.org/automatic-subsidies-for-child-care-workforce-2024/>

² Ibid.