

# Critchlow Adkins Children's Centers

Building Brighter Futures Since 1970



## Written Testimony in Support of SB 664 Child Care Scholarship Program — Child Care Providers Priority

Chair and Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee:

My name is Cristy Morrell, and I am the Executive Director of Critchlow Adkins Children's Centers, a nonprofit child care provider serving Talbot County families for more than 55 years. I respectfully submit this testimony in support of SB 664.

Maryland's child care affordability crisis impacts not only the families we serve, but also the providers who make care possible. When child care educators and staff cannot afford care for their own children, providers lose qualified employees. The result is reduced program capacity, closed classrooms, and fewer available spaces for Maryland families who rely on child care to work.

Because Child Care Scholarship access has been frozen, providers are increasingly absorbing these costs to retain staff. At Critchlow Adkins, we do not charge tuition for the children of our employees enrolled in our programs. This is not a benefit we can easily afford — it is a necessary workforce retention strategy that costs our organization more than \$40,000 annually. Like many providers, we operate on extremely narrow margins, and these costs directly impact our sustainability.

Prioritizing Child Care Scholarship applications for child care providers' employees is a practical and targeted solution that strengthens the entire early childhood system. When educators can access affordable care, providers retain qualified staff, children experience continuity in their classrooms, and programs avoid financial strain caused by staffing shortages.

This legislation also reduces administrative burden by streamlining access for those who are essential to maintaining Maryland's child care infrastructure. It is a common-sense administrative improvement that supports working families, stabilizes the workforce, and strengthens providers without requiring significant new spending.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 664.

Thank you for your time and your continued commitment to Maryland's children, families, and child care workforce.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cristy Morrell  
Executive Director  
Critchlow Adkins Children's Centers

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