



**Written Testimony – HB 748
Publicly Funded Prekindergarten – Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder for Private
Providers
Ways and Means Committee
February 25, 2026**

Position: Favorable

Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Ruby Daniels, President of the Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA), representing nearly 4,000 family childcare providers across Maryland. I am also a publicly funded Prekindergarten Expansion grantee in Howard County and have operated a licensed family childcare program for over 30 years.

I respectfully submit this testimony in support of House Bill 748.

The Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder was designed to elevate the early childhood profession, attract talented individuals into the field, and retain experienced educators by creating a pathway for increased responsibility and compensation. As a provider and advocate, I strongly support these goals. Our profession deserves recognition, structure, and opportunity for advancement.

However, the fixed calendar deadlines currently embedded in statute create unintended barriers for private providers and community-based educators. These deadlines do not account for when an educator is hired, when they enter the Prekindergarten system, or the varied personal and professional circumstances that affect their educational journey.

HB 748 does not lower standards. Instead, it replaces rigid statewide deadlines with reasonable, employment-based timelines. Teaching assistants would earn a CDA or associate degree within three years of being hired. Lead teachers qualifying through documented experience would have six years after qualifying to earn an associate degree. This approach maintains accountability while providing flexibility that reflects real workforce conditions.

Family childcare providers are small business owners who often operate with limited staffing while serving mixed-age groups for extended hours. Many educators are pursuing higher education while continuing to serve children and families full time. Some are multilingual professionals navigating foreign credential evaluations and higher education systems for the first time. Fixed statutory dates can unintentionally discourage experienced, high-quality educators from participating in publicly funded Prekindergarten programs.

Maryland's mixed delivery model depends on private providers to meet access goals under the Blueprint. If we want to expand high quality Prekindergarten opportunities particularly in



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underserved communities, we must ensure that policies support retention while preserving high standards.

HB 748 strikes that balance. It upholds the integrity of the career ladder while making the pathway realistic, sustainable, and equitable for Maryland's early childhood workforce.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on House Bill 748.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to Maryland's children, families, and early childhood educators.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruby Daniels
President, Maryland State Family Child Care Association
Prekindergarten Expansion Grantee, Howard County