



March 9, 2026

## Testimony in Support of House Bill 1373 – State Department of Education - Independent Regulatory Framework for After School and Out of School Time Child Care Programs – Study

**We respectfully urge the Ways and Means Committee to make a favorable report on HB 1373.** After-school and out-of-school-time (OST) programs are a critical component of Maryland’s child care and youth development infrastructure, supporting working families, strengthening academic outcomes, and stabilizing the workforce. HB 1373 directs the Maryland State Department of Education to study and develop recommendations for an independent regulatory framework that reflects how OST programs operate, rather than applying rules designed for full-day child care settings. Maryland’s OST system works, but it requires right-sized policy design to expand access and sustain providers.

### Why This Matters

#### 1. Families Depend on OST Care to Work

OST programs are essential child care – not optional enrichment. Nationally, nearly 30 million children would participate in after-school programs if one were available, and parents overwhelmingly report these programs help them maintain employment.<sup>1</sup>

Without adequate OST supply:

- Families reduce work hours or leave the workforce
- Employers face productivity disruptions
- Children lose safe, enriching environments

#### 2. Current Regulations Were Not Designed for OST Programs

Many OST providers operate in school buildings and shared spaces but are regulated under frameworks designed for full-day early childhood programs. Research shows regulatory misalignment is a major barrier to program expansion and contributes to reduced supply and higher costs for families.<sup>2</sup>

#### 3. A Study Is a Responsible First Step

HB 1373 builds evidence to strengthen standards. States increasingly adopt tiered OST regulatory approaches that reflect youth development programming while preserving safety.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Afterschool Alliance. America After 3PM (2025) – <https://afterschoolalliance.org>

<sup>2</sup> National Afterschool Association; NCSL OST policy resources – <https://naaweb.org> | <https://ncsl.org>

<sup>3</sup> National Afterschool Association policy scans – <https://naaweb.org>





4. OST Supports Workforce and Small Business Stability

Child care disruptions cost the U.S. economy more than \$120 billion annually.<sup>4</sup> OST providers operate on thin margins and face staffing challenges that thoughtful policy design can address.

5. Equity and Access

Access gaps are greatest for low-income communities and children with special needs. Participation is associated with improved attendance and engagement.<sup>5</sup>

6. Aligning the Full Child Care Continuum

Structured OST and summer learning prevent academic loss and sustain gains.<sup>6</sup> A coordinated birth-through-youth system requires alignment across early childhood and OST.

**Please support HB 1373 to:**

- Study and recommend an independent regulatory framework for OST programs
- Expand access to after-school and summer care
- Reduce administrative burden
- Strengthen workforce pathways
- Support working families
- Advance a seamless child care continuum

The Montgomery County Children's Opportunity Alliance connects our community to build an equitable, accessible, high-quality, and sustainable early childhood system that narrows disparities and puts all young children on a path to reach their greatest potential.

Submitted on behalf of the Children's Opportunity Alliance by:

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<sup>4</sup> ReadyNation child care economic impact reports – <https://strongnation.org>

<sup>5</sup> Afterschool Alliance. America After 3PM (2025) – <https://afterschoolalliance.org>

<sup>6</sup> RAND Summer Learning Research – <https://rand.org/summer-learning>