



February 23, 2026

Testimony in Support of House Bill 748 – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten – Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder 2 for Private Providers – Repeal of Deadlines

We respectfully urge the Ways and Means Committee to make a favorable report on HB 748 – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten – Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder for Private Providers – Repeal of Deadlines as we believe it will ensure the original intent of the legislation is honored and issues in implementation have been addressed.

Early Childhood Educator career ladders establish professional pathway that values experience, supports growth, and enhances quality across settings. While Maryland currently lacks a comprehensive birth to five career ladder, ensuring that our career ladder within Prekindergarten settings functions as it should is a good first step in moving towards a more comprehensive system.

We ask for the following amendments to HB 748:

- Page 2 line 23 Within 3 MONTHS after being hired as an early childhood teaching assistant
- Page 3 line 29 Within 6 MONTHS after qualifying as a lead teacher

When the Blueprint for Maryland's Future was passed, there was very little available data about the current early childhood workforce and the level of education and credentials held. As communities, including Montgomery County, have begun implementation over these past few years, it's become increasingly clear that we do not have sufficient educators who possess the stringent qualifications as originally prescribed, thus making it incredibly difficult to meet goals to expand Pre-k through a mixed delivery system. We appreciate the State's willingness to make adjustments to the Blueprint plan as implementation has surfaced issues that need to be addressed. We believe these changes will give programs more flexibility to meet requirements without facing punitive timelines AND without sacrificing program quality.

Submitted on behalf of the Children's Opportunity Alliance by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura Jahromi".

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The Montgomery County [Children's Opportunity Alliance](https://www.mocochildren.org) is a locally legislated Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity that connects our community to build an equitable, accessible, high-quality, and sustainable early childhood system that narrows disparities and puts young children on a path to reach their greatest potential.