

Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families

Senator Nancy J. King, Senate Chair
Delegate Ariana B. Kelly, House Chair

Agenda

Wednesday, September 7, 2016, 10:00 a.m.
Room 120, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland

I. Call to Order and Chairs' Opening Remarks

II. What Is Quality Child Care, Why Is It Important?

- Margaret E. Williams, Executive Director, Maryland Family Network
- Linda K. Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

III. Measuring and Promoting Quality

- Elizabeth A. Kelley, Acting Assistant State Superintendent for Early Childhood, Maryland State Department of Education
- Amanda S. Conn, Esquire, Director of Education Policy and Government Relations, Maryland State Department of Education
- Jennifer Arnaiz, Executive Director, Montgomery County Child Care Resource Center
- Linda K. Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

IV. What Are Barriers to Quality Care and How Do We Overcome Them?

- Rachel London, Esquire, Deputy Director, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council
- Linda K. Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

V. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

**Maryland General Assembly
Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families
2016 Interim Membership Roster**

**Senator Nancy J. King, Senate Chair
Delegate Ariana B. Kelly, House Chair**

Senators

Gail H. Bates
Joanne C. Benson
Joan Carter Conway
Adelaide C. Eckardt
Bill Ferguson
Michael J. Hough
Shirley Nathan-Pulliam

Delegates

Kathy Afzali
Eric Ebersole
Tawanna P. Gaines
Ana Sol Gutiérrez
Antonio L. Hayes
Meagan C. Simonaire
Geraldine Valentino-Smith
Alonzo T. Washington
Mary L. Washington

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Caroline L. B. Boice
Kaitlyn S. Shulman

Support Staff

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**Introductory Comments Concerning Child Care Quality in Maryland
From Margaret E. Williams, Executive Director, Maryland Family Network
Presented to the Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families
September 7, 2014**

Thank you, Senator King, Delegate Kelly, and members of the Committee. My name is Margaret Williams, and I am the Executive Director of Maryland Family Network.

It is a special honor for me to introduce both the topic of quality in early care and education and the special guest you have invited here today, Linda Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development at the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Quality child care depends on many elements: site and location; equipment, supplies, and materials; curriculum; the other children in the setting or classroom. And the single most important element is the adult providing the care. Especially for the very young, the qualifications and professional dedication of the care giver have the strongest correlation with the success of the child. Your agenda today focuses on the child care workforce and how to ensure a caregiver's ability to develop each and every child to his or her fullest.

As you'll hear, child care professionals are among the most poorly paid workers in our society; the average salary in Maryland for a teacher in an early education classroom is \$26,600. And even given the profession's low salaries, parents of all incomes have a hard time paying the cost care: in Montgomery County, the average cost to a family with an infant and a preschooler in child care exceeds 21 percent of family income; in Baltimore City, that figure is 29 percent. Child care is the 2nd or 3rd highest household expense for 23 jurisdictions in Maryland. So how do we guarantee quality without pushing the cost of care even higher? (Please see additional information compiled by Maryland Family Network about quality and compensation.)

Linda Smith will describe recent research on what we know about quality in the early care and education workforce and share her perspective on one of the best systems in America for child care and its approach to professional development – the military.

We'll have a presentation by MSDE's expert on child care, Liz Kelly, who will share data about the existing workforce and achievements within Maryland's quality rating and improvement system.

Maryland's network of Child Care Resource Centers — managed by Maryland Family Network under contract with the State — trains thousands of child care providers each
(over)



year to offer quality child care. The director of Montgomery County's Child Care Resource Centers, Jennifer Arnaiz, will give an overview of training and technical assistance for child care providers, the resources, the process, and the challenges.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Smith will discuss how Maryland compares to other states in a variety of areas, highlighting where we excel and where we might improve.

Some parents face particular challenges in gaining access to quality early care and education, including those who cannot afford quality, those with children who have disabilities, and those who are learning English. Panelists will describe their experiences.

The final presentation by Linda Smith will cover child care compensation issues and various strategies to bridge the gap between affordability and quality.

A quick introduction to one of the people in this field whom I most admire, Linda K. Smith. In her role as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development for the Administration for Children and Families at the US Department of Health and Human Services, she oversees policy for the Head Start/Early Head Start Program and the Child Care and Development Fund, the largest sources of public funding for child care in Maryland and most other states, too.

Linda began her career on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in her native state of Montana as a child care worker, and she eventually was hired by the US Army and the US Air Force and became one of the primary architects of the military's child care program. She was a legislative fellow and staffer for the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee under the Chairmanship of the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy, and became the head of Child Care Aware, a national organization that represents hundreds of community-based agencies across the country that are concerned with the care and education of very young children.

Welcome to a distinguished colleague and national leader in child care.



**Testimony Concerning Child Care Quality and Compensation
Presented to the Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families
September 7, 2016**

The motto of the Worthy Wage Campaign in the 1990s was: "Parents can't afford to pay. Teachers can't afford to stay. There has to be a better way." Similarly, the November 2001 report of the Judith P. Hoyer Blue Ribbon Commission on the Financing of Early Child Care and Education (msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5300/sc5339/000113/000000/000006/unrestricted/20030004e.pdf) stated: "In order to keep child care costs affordable for families, providers do not raise enough revenue to pay staff appropriately." And in 2016 we are still grappling with the same dilemma.

Maryland Family Network (MFN) has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and other supports for children and families in Maryland. Our organization is fully committed to ensuring a high quality system of child care delivery for all children, including children with special needs, and adequate compensation for child care professionals.

Child care providers are among the lowest paid workers in the country, primarily because salaries are limited by the tuition rates parents can afford to pay. In 2016 the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment reported that 40% of Maryland child care workers' families participated in one or more public assistance programs. Poverty-level wages and a lack of benefits result in employee stress and high turnover, which can have detrimental effects on the children in care. Entry level educational requirements are low, but wages do not increase to the levels earned by educators in public schools as child care providers attain comparable degrees. In fact, a bachelor's degree in early childhood education is reported to be the college major with the lowest projected lifetime earnings.

MFN's Child Care Demographics 2016 report (marylandfamilynetwork.org/resources/child-care-demographics) lists this annual wage rate information for child care providers:

Child Care Center Director	\$38,985
Center Senior Staff/Teacher	\$26,641
Center Aide	\$17,035
Family Child Care Provider	\$36,206

There is an enormous discrepancy between what a child care provider earns for a 12-month year and the average salary of \$65,477 earned by a full-time public school teacher for a ten-month year. The salary inequity appears even greater considering the fact that most child care employees also do not receive the benefits available to teachers, including health insurance, retirement benefits, paid sick leave, and other paid time off. And compensation for family child care providers may actually be much lower than we have previously reported. MFN has traditionally used a family child care provider's gross income from parent fees and subsidy payments as a proxy for income. A small survey of providers in 2014 found that providers whose average gross income was \$26,705 had a net income after business expenses that equates more closely with wages of \$15,962. Additional surveys in future years will look into this issue further.

(over)



Low compensation rates make it difficult to recruit and retain highly skilled child care workers, and the resulting lack of a highly skilled workforce limits the availability and quality of child care. Child care centers throughout the state have had difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff, and the number of regulated family child care providers has been in a steady decline since 1996. The quality of a child care program is directly related to the quality of its staff. Both nationally and in Maryland, the turnover rate of child care providers in centers hovers around 30 percent. This turnover conflicts with the goal of providing continuity of caregivers for young children, which has been shown to foster healthy development, and it frequently means that experienced center staff are replaced with novice staff, who may not have the training and education of their predecessors.

Staff turnover can be reduced by providing scholarships for higher education and additional compensation to accompany educational attainment, as is demonstrated by states using the Teacher Education And Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood Project, with its companion WAGE\$ wage supplement program. According to the 2014-2015 T.E.A.C.H. annual report (online at http://teachnationalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/TEACH_Annual_eReport_2015.pdf), T.E.A.C.H. scholarships totaling \$28.6 million were available in 24 states and the District of Columbia, with 16,071 scholarship recipients in 8,111 family child care, child care center, pre-K and Head Start programs attending two- and four-year colleges. The 63% of scholarship recipients working toward two-year, four-year and advanced degrees had average annual wage increases of 8%. The average turnover rate for participants seeking an associate degree was 6%, and for bachelor's degree participants it was 4%. Five of the T.E.A.C.H. states also participated in the WAGE\$ program, with 5,788 participants receiving an average \$952 six-month supplement and having an annual turnover rate of 11%.

Maryland has addressed the compensation issue with annual bonuses of \$600 to \$1,000 for providers who participate in the Maryland Child Care Credential at Level 4+ and higher, and a limited number of scholarships for providers to attain higher education degrees. Child care programs that participate in the Maryland EXCELS quality rating and improvement system are also eligible for tiered reimbursement from the Child Care Subsidy Program that can be used to supplement staff compensation. But as State programs encourage providers to earn degrees that meet the requirements for teaching in public schools, and as the stark salary inequality between child care and public school teachers remains in place, it becomes increasingly difficult to retain teachers in child care programs that cannot compensate them for the value of the work they do.

Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families

Wednesday, September 7, 2016

Publications related to the testimony of Linda K. Smith,
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development

Child Care: Like the Military, Is It Time for Shared Responsibility? National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, 2011. (Full document available on request)

From the Summary, page 43

“The military has demonstrated that a balanced approach to financing child care results in a more balanced system of care – one that addresses both the need for parent choice (demand) – and the quality of care provided to the child (supply). No parent should be forced to compromise the health, safety and future well-being of their children because they simply cannot afford child care that provides a sufficient level of quality.

“Just as with the evolution of the military’s child care system, we need a national approach to financing child care that provides thoughtful, intentional and sequential change in our current patchwork of programs and provides a foundation on which quality can be achieved. The national investment must reflect the lessons of the military success – funding for basic health and safety, basic inspections and oversight, and for training the child care workforce that sets programs on a pathway to higher quality early education and care.”

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Policy Statement on Early Childhood Career Pathways, 2016. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/career_pathways_policy_final.pdf

From page 1:

“The purpose of this policy statement is to support states and early childhood programs by providing recommendations from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for developing and implementing career pathways to support the professional learning, practice, and compensation of early childhood educators and program directors.”

Recommendations for State Action

- ❖ Conduct and regularly update an early childhood workforce study.
- ❖ Create a shared terminology for different roles and credentials that cross sectors, settings and auspices.
- ❖ Create a coherent sequence of credentials that represents increasing educational attainment and demonstrated competency.

- ❖ Promote credentials that are recognized across early childhood sectors and auspices.
- ❖ Strengthen professional preparation and ongoing development to be competency-based.
- ❖ Provide career and academic advising and coaching.
- ❖ Increase access to professional development and higher education.
- ❖ Encourage articulation agreements and credit for prior learning.
- ❖ Link attainment of higher credentials to improved financial incentives for retention.
- ❖ Align the Quality Rating and Improvement System with the career pathway.
- ❖ Coordinate data systems to track workforce progress and direct resources.

High-Quality Early Learning Settings Depend on a High-Quality Workforce, Low Compensation Undermines Quality, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services & U.S. Department of Education, June 2016. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece_low_compensation_undermines_quality_report_june_10_2016_508.pdf

From the Conclusion, page 14

“Because the majority of early learning programs that young children attend are funded through parent fees and most parents cannot afford to pay more, it is time to seriously look at a more effective way to fund the overall system of early learning in this country. As long as large pay disparities persist, it will be difficult to promote effective training and professional development, reduce workforce turnover, and establish sustainable high-quality early learning programs –all of which undermines the quality of early learning experiences we can offer our youngest learners.

“Education, training, and fair compensation are essential to promoting high-quality experiences for all children, across all early education settings. In order for programs to be effective, early educators across all settings must be compensated at comparable rates to their elementary school counterparts. To truly attain a high-quality workforce across all sectors, the system requires an infusion of resources and adequate funding to support higher earnings. Throughout every community, our children depend on this critical work for success in school and life. And, the mostly women who take on the difficult, yet critical job of caring for – and educating – our youngest, depend on it too.”

Of related interest:

Maryland's CCDF State Plan for 2016 – 2018

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occl/maryland_stplan_pdf_2016.pdf

Child C.A.R.E Act

S. 2539, the Child C.A.R.E. Act by Senator Casey (D-PA):

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/2539>

HR 4524, the Child C.A.R.E. Act by Representative Crowley (D-NY):

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/4524>

Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant Summary Report:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/2015apr/2015progressfinal.pdf>

From page 1:

“Through the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC), more early learning and development programs are being included in States’ Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (TQRIS); more programs are at higher quality levels; and more children with high needs are enrolled in high-quality programs.”



INVESTMENTS IN THE EARLIEST YEARS

Why Early Development is Important

Brains are built over time, from the bottom up.

- Early experiences affect the quality of brain architecture (either sturdy or fragile)

Both genes and experience shape the developing brain.

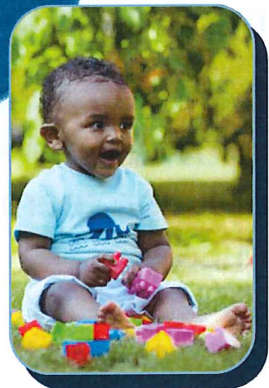
- “Serve & return” relationships between children and their parents and caregivers are critical

The brain’s capacity for change decreases with age.

- The brain is most flexible early in life from 0-3 years

Harvard University, Center on the Developing Child
<http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

During a child’s first few years, 700 - 1,000 new neural connections are formed every second.

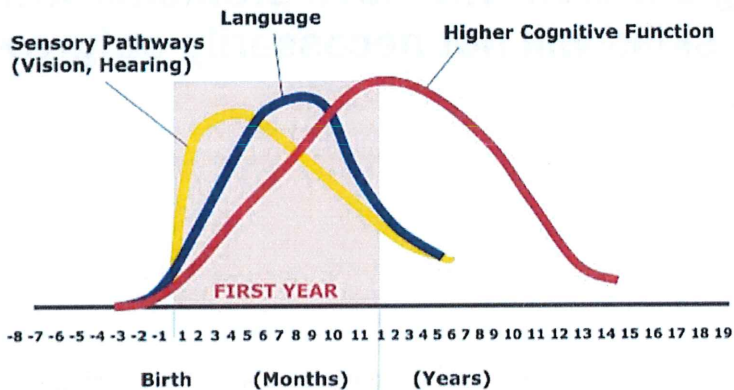


Early Development Connections

Center on the Developing Child
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Human Brain Development

Neural Connections for Different Functions Develop Sequentially



Source: C.A. Nelson (2000)

Early Vocabulary & Reading Relationship

Vocabulary use at age 3 is predictive of reading skills in grade 3

Hart, B. & Risley, T.R. “The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3” (2003, spring). American Educator, pp.4-9.
<http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/TheEarlyCatastrophe.pdf>

Foundation of Early Learning Skills

The foundation for learning is based on executive function (EF) skills:

- **Strong working memory** (retain and use new information)
- **Mental flexibility** (focus attention and shift gears when needed)
- **Self-control** (control impulses, self-regulation)

Children with stronger EF skills make greater gains in early math, language and literacy development than peers with weaker EF skills.

In practice, these skills support the process of learning (i.e., the “how”) that enables children to master content (i.e., the “what”).

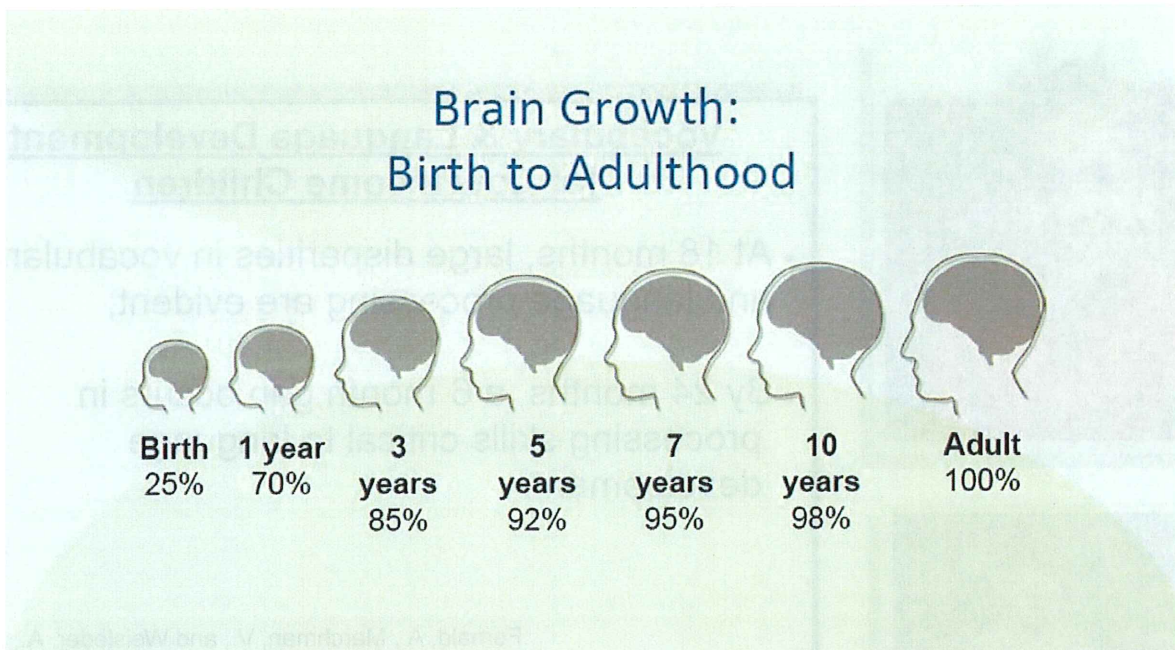
Children aren’t born with EF skills, they are born with the potential to develop them. How well they develop them impacts school readiness and school success.

Executive function skills matter for pre-school, K-12 school, higher education, and the workforce.

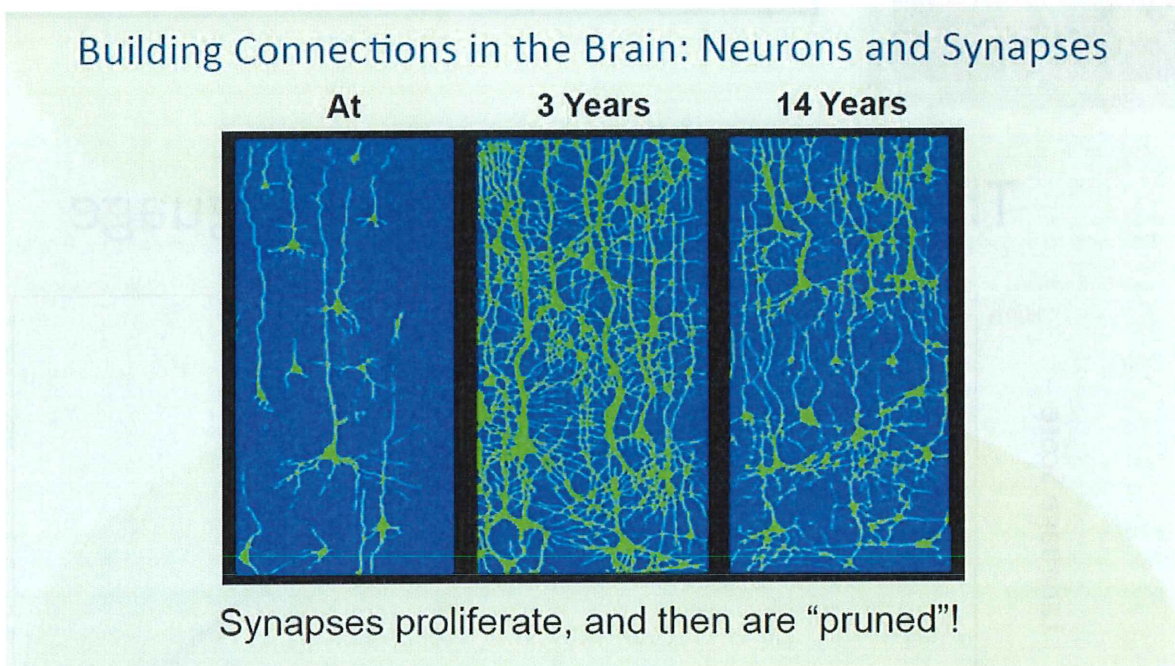
Executive Function Skills are Critical

- Learning to control impulses, pay attention, and retain information does not happen automatically as children mature.
- Young children who have problems with these skills will not necessarily outgrow them.

Early Learning Brain Development

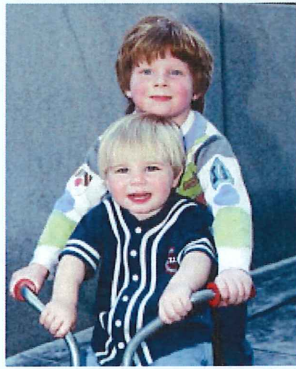


Source: Dr. Patricia Kuhl, Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences, University of Washington <http://ilabs.uw.edu/>



Source: Dr. Patricia Kuhl, Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences, University of Washington <http://ilabs.uw.edu/>

Learning Gaps at 18 months & 12 months



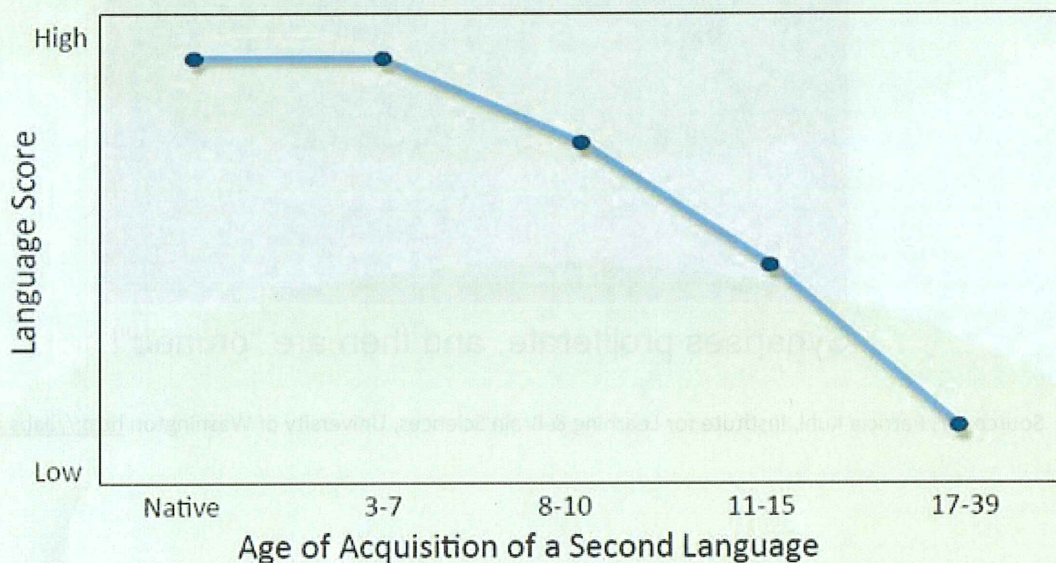
Vocabulary & Language Development for Low Income Children

- At 18 months, large disparities in vocabulary and language processing are evident;
- By 24 months, a 6-month gap occurs in processing skills critical to language development.

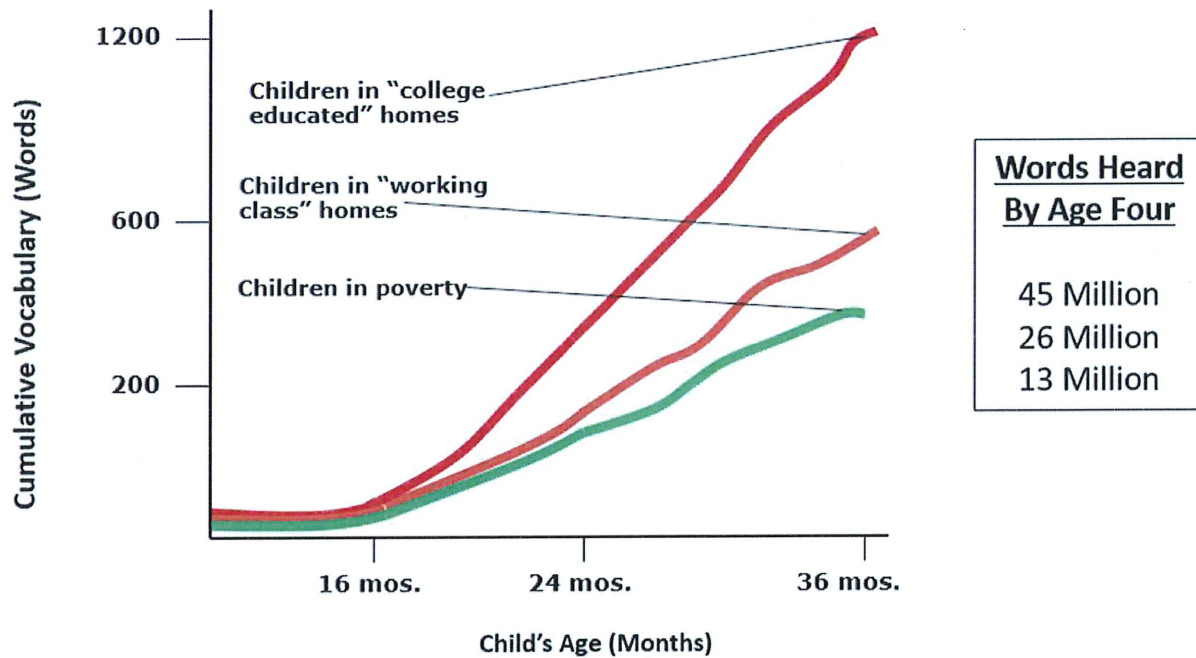
Fernald, A., Marchman, V., and Weisleder, A., (2013).
*SES differences in language processing skill and
vocabulary are evident at 18 months.*
Developmental Science, 16(2), 234-248.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3582035/pdf/nihms-411497.pdf>

The 'Critical Period' for Language

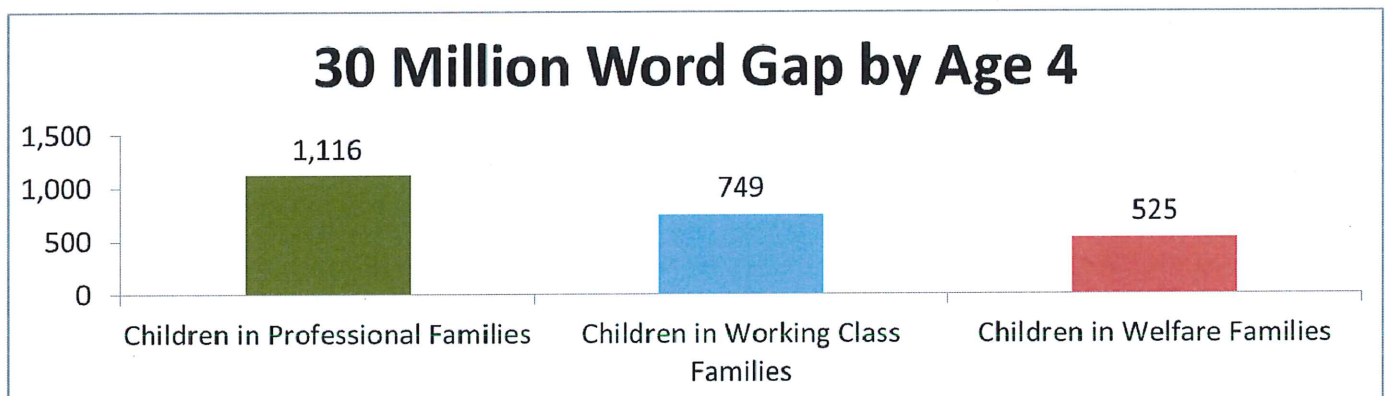


Word gap by age 3



Source: Hart & Risley (1995)

The Children's Movement
of Florida

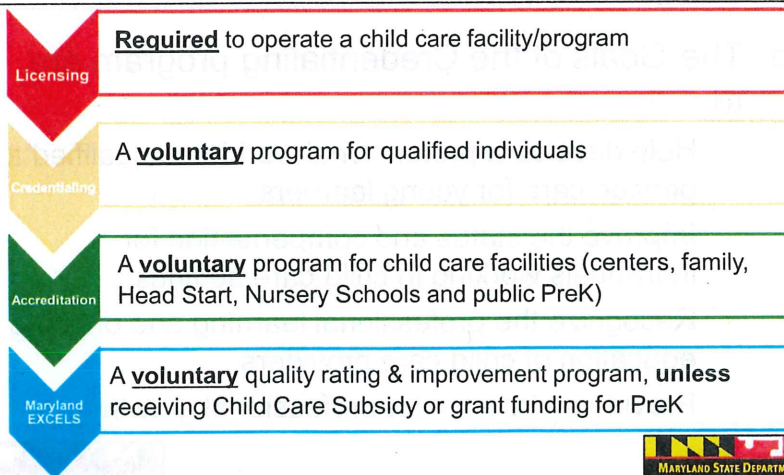


Maryland State Department of Education

Child Care Quality Initiatives

Presentation to the Joint Committee for
Children, Youth and Families
September 7, 2016

Licensing and Quality Programs





A **voluntary** program for qualified individuals

- First available in 2001
- Builds on licensing requirements
- Recognizes participants for their education, experience, and professional activities
- Transitioned to a new vendor in 2015
 - Resulted in a backlog of 4,782 applications
 - All applications in backlog have been addressed



2

Goals



A **voluntary** program for qualified individuals

- The Goals of the Credentialing program are to:
 - Help develop a professional workforce qualified to provide care for young learners
 - Improve the status and compensation for individuals working in child care settings
 - Recognize the professional learning and ongoing education of child care providers
 - Provide a structure for professional growth



3

Process



A **voluntary** program for qualified individuals

- Individuals wanting to participate submit applications and supporting documentation by fax, mail or email
- If an applicant meets the criteria a Credential is awarded
- The Credential is valid for one year and is renewable



4

Support



A **voluntary** program for qualified individuals

- Training available conducted by state and resource center staff
- Customer service representatives available to answer basic inquiries
- Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System available 24/7
- Inquiries may also be submitted by email
- Provider support groups



5

Incentives



A **voluntary** program for qualified individuals

□ Staff Credential Bonuses

Level	Bonus	Level	Bonus
1	NA	4+	\$600 (yearly)
2	\$200 (one time)	5	\$750 (yearly)
3	\$300 (one time)	6	\$1,000 (yearly)
4	\$500 (one time)		

□ Administrator Credential Bonuses

Level	Bonus	Level	Bonus
1	\$600 (one time)	3	\$1,000 (yearly)
2	\$750 (yearly)	4	\$1,500 (yearly)



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Incentives



A **voluntary** program for qualified individuals

□ At Level Two and Higher:

- Training Vouchers/Reimbursement
 - Up to \$400 per year of participation
- Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund
 - Scholarship program
 - Current number of participants – 282
 - Graduates - 149
 - Pays for tuition, fees and books

service commitment



7

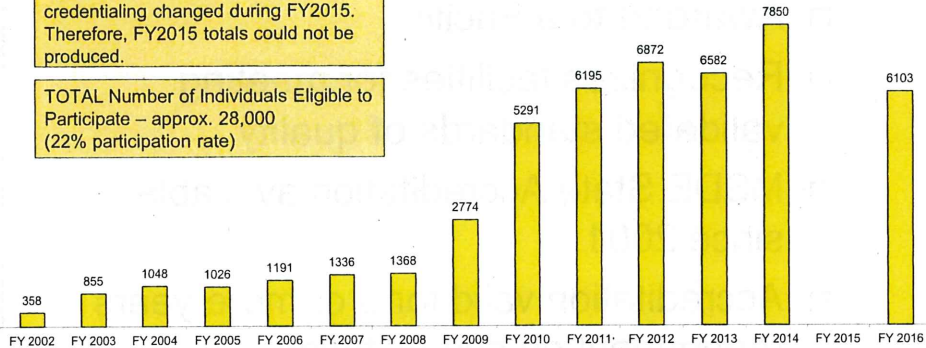
Participation



A **voluntary** program for qualified individuals

NOTE: The method for reporting credentialing changed during FY2015. Therefore, FY2015 totals could not be produced.

TOTAL Number of Individuals Eligible to Participate – approx. 28,000 (22% participation rate)



Funding



A **voluntary** program for qualified individuals

Child Care Development Fund (Federal)

Program	FY17 Budgeted Amount
Credentialing Bonuses	\$3.2 million
Training Vouchers/Reimbursement	\$120,000
Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF)	\$1.8 million

- Recipients of CCCPDF receive an average of \$2,582/per year (Community College) to \$9,771/per year (University)





A **voluntary** program for child care facilities (centers, family, Head Start, Nursery Schools and public PreK)

- Awarded to a Facility
- Recognizes facilities for meeting validated standards of quality
- MSDE State Accreditation available since 2001
- Accreditation valid for 3 or more years (dependent on accreditation organization)

annual reports & renewal



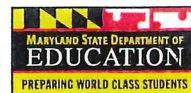
10

Process



A **voluntary** program for child care facilities (centers, family, Head Start, Nursery Schools and public PreK)

- A Program:
 - Applies to MSDE or a National Organization
 - Conducts a self-assessment using the Accreditation Standards
 - Requests a visit
 - MSDE Accreditation conducts a pre-visit to provide feedback and identify areas that need improvement
 - Accreditation is awarded, if standards are met



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Support



A **voluntary** program for child care facilities (centers, family, Head Start, Nursery Schools and public PreK)

- Monetary support is available for costs associated with:
 - Application fees for National Accreditation
 - Materials, training and equipment for MSDE Accreditation
- FY17 Budgeted Amount - \$252,000 (CCDF Federal Funds)



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Participation



A **voluntary** program for child care facilities (centers, family homes, Head Start, Nursery Schools and public PreK)

	TOTAL Number of Eligible Facilities	National Accreditation	MSDE Accreditation	TOTAL % of Total Eligible
Child Care Centers and Schools	2,693	326	270	596 (22%)
Family Child Care Homes	6,325	1,139	NA	1,139 (18%)



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A **voluntary** quality rating and improvement program, **unless** receiving Child Care Subsidy or grant funding for PreK

- ❑ Voluntary Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS)
- ❑ Required participation if accepting State or Federal funds for:
 - Child Care Subsidy
 - Grants for Judy Centers, or
 - Public PreK programs
- ❑ Ratings are valid for one year and renewable

MARYLAND EXCELS

Goals

A **voluntary** quality rating and improvement program, **unless** receiving Child Care Subsidy or grant funding for PreK

- ❑ The Goals of Maryland EXCELS are to:
 - Recognize child care and public pre-K programs for meeting higher standards of quality.
 - Encourage providers to increase the level of quality in their programs.
 - Provide parents with information and choices about quality child care.

Standards

Maryland
EXCELS

A **voluntary** quality rating and improvement program, **unless** receiving Child Care Subsidy or grant funding for PreK

□ Standards:

- ✓ Licensing and Compliance
- ✓ Staff Qualifications and Professional Development
- ✓ Accreditation and Rating Scales
- ✓ Developmentally Appropriate Practice and Learning
- ✓ Administrative Policies and Practices



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Recognition

Maryland
EXCELS

A **voluntary** quality rating and improvement program, **unless** receiving Child Care Subsidy or grant funding for PreK

Programs participating can achieve additional recognition in the areas of:

-  Asthma Friendly Program
-  Quality Business Practices
-  Health and Wellness
-  Cultural and Linguistic Competency
-  Eco Friendly Achievement



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Applying

Maryland
EXCELS

A **voluntary** quality rating and improvement program, **unless** receiving Child Care Subsidy or grant funding for PreK



- Providers create an account and log in at marylandexcels.org
- Documentation is uploaded to verify that standards have been met
- Providers that are accredited have a streamlined process and receive 'credit' for criteria already met



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Support

Maryland
EXCELS

A **voluntary** quality rating and improvement program, **unless** receiving Child Care Subsidy or grant funding for PreK

- Maryland EXCELS Quality Assurance Specialists
- Child Care Resource and Referral staff
- Johns Hopkins University – Center for Technology in Education Coordinators
- 24/7 Tech support



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Benefits

Maryland
EXCELS

A **voluntary** quality rating and improvement program, **unless** receiving Child Care Subsidy or grant funding for PreK

- Increased Child Care Subsidy reimbursements at Levels 3, 4 and 5 (10%-44% added to state reimbursement amount) For example at Level 5:

Type of Care/Age of Child	Voucher Amount	Tier Amount	Total
Center – Under 2	\$161	\$70.84	\$231.84
Center – Over 2	\$126	\$32.75	\$158.75
Family – Under 2	\$161	\$46.69	\$207.69
Family – Over 2	\$126	\$35.28	\$161.28



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Benefits

Maryland
EXCELS

A **voluntary** quality rating and improvement program, **unless** receiving Child Care Subsidy or grant funding for PreK

- Access to funds for Accreditation and the Curriculum Project
- Discounts from various vendors and organizations
- Professional Activity Units for Credentialing
- Marketing and advertising opportunities
- Targeted technical assistance, online and face-to-face



21

Participation



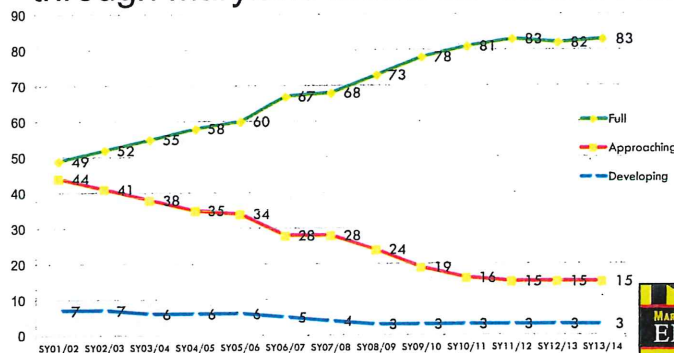
A voluntary quality rating and improvement program, unless receiving Child Care Subsidy or grant funding for PreK

Program Type	Total Number of Eligible Facilities	Published Participants	Non-Published Participants	Total Number of Participants
Center	1,947	1,202	118	1,320 (68%)
Family	6,325	1,907	542	2,449 (39%)
Public PreK	621	9	93	102 (16%)
School-Age (child care)	746	534	34	568 (76%)
Total	9,622	3,652	787	4,439 (46%)



Goal and Result

- All children are ready for school
- From 2001 – 2014 School Readiness measured through Maryland Model for School Readiness



Moving Forward

- Implementation of an Enrollment and Attendance System (Fall 2016)
- Ability to:
 - Associate a child with a specific child care program and teacher
 - Analyze readiness data to determine a correlation with the quality of the early learning experience (NOTE: This data analysis will be able to be done for those counties choosing to administer Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) to all children)



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Additional Information

- Additional Information and Resources at:

<http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org>

and

<http://marylandexcels.org>



25

MARYLAND - Office of Child Care

Licensing and Programs that Recognize and Support Quality

Licensing

- **Required** to operate a child care **facility/program**
- Requirements for licensing stated in COMAR 13A. 16 - 18 (Family Child Care Homes, Child Care Centers, Letter of Compliance Facilities, and Large Family Child Care Homes)
- Child care facilities are monitored for compliance by licensing staff in 13 Regional Offices located throughout the state
- Licensing staff respond to complaints, including anonymous complaints, concerning regulatory non-compliance
- More information available at: <http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/licensing>

Credentialing

- A **voluntary** program for **individuals** working directly with children in licensed or registered child care programs
- Participants are recognized for their education, experience and participation in professional activities
- Awarded to qualified individuals on one of seven staff or four administrator levels
- Renewable each year, if participation criteria met
- Bonuses, training reimbursements and college scholarships available to qualified participants
- More information available at: <http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/credentialing>

Accreditation

- A **voluntary** program for child care **facilities**, Head Start Programs, Nursery Schools and public PreK
- Recognizes programs for meeting standards of quality defined by the Accrediting Organization
- A list of Accrediting Organizations recognized by MSDE is available on the website.
- MSDE offers a state administered accreditation (no application fee)
- Accreditation is a process of continued quality improvement and must be renewed as required
- Funding available to help with the cost of meeting accreditation standards or national organization accreditation fees
- More information available at: <http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/maryland-excels/maryland-accreditation>

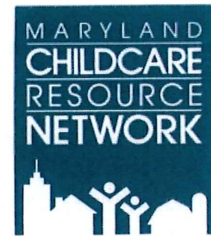
Maryland EXCELS

- A **voluntary** quality rating and improvement program, unless a **facility** accepts Child Care Subsidy reimbursements or receives grant funding for PreK
- Recognition of a child care program, on one of five levels, for meeting quality standards in:
 - Licensing Compliance
 - Staff Qualifications and Professional Development
 - Accreditation and Rating Scales
 - Developmentally Appropriate Learning and Practice
 - Administrative Policies and Practices
- More information available at: <http://www.marylandexcels.org/>



MARYLAND CHILD CARE RESOURCE NETWORK (MCCRN)

MCCRN consists of 12 statewide regional Child Care Resource Centers (CCRCs) serving child care providers within every community of Maryland. The CCRCs provide leadership and services to improve the quality, expand the availability, and address the affordability of child care across the state. Each of the CCRCs within the MCCRN provide professional development and training opportunities to improve quality and promote school readiness. Technical assistance services are provided to child care providers to ensure research-based practices, which will improve quality, are implemented in programs.



This innovative public-private partnership was initiated in 1989 and is administered by the Maryland Family Network under a contract with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

CCRCs provide high quality service to their constituencies. A summary of FY16 activities includes:

TRAINING

- 🎯 Total Workshops: 2,153
- 🎯 Total Training Hours: 7,226
- 🎯 Total Participants: 35,746

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- 🎯 Total Contacts (a single, short-term point of interaction): 4,545
- 🎯 Total Cases (a series of quality improvement activities over a period of time): 1,316

EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE – RACE TO THE TOP INITIATIVES

Activities began in FY11 and continued until funding ceased 12/31/15

- 🎯 Total Child Care Programs (center and family-based) which received the intensive model of quality improvement activities: 944*

*exceeded goal set by MSDE

MARYLAND CHILD CARE RESOURCE NETWORK (MCCRN) REGIONAL CHILD CARE RESOURCE CENTERS

Arundel Child Care Connections

Debbie Langer
410.222.1712
dlanger@arundelccc.org

Baltimore City Child Care Resource Center

Nancy Pelton
410.685.5150
npelton@bccrc.org

Child Resource Center Baltimore County at Abilities Network/ Project ACT

Sandra Graham
443.900.6458
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Child Resource Center Harford/Cecil County at Abilities Network/Project ACT

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Child Care Choices

Frederick and Carroll Counties
Patty Morison
410.751.2917
pmorison@fcmha.org

Howard County Child Care Resource Center

Debbie Yare
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Montgomery County Child Care Resource Center

Jennifer Arnaiz
240.777.3110
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Prince George's Child Resource Center

Jennifer Hoffman
301.772.8420
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Promise Resource Center

Calvert, Charles & St. Mary's Counties
Sarah Sutherland
301.290.0040
ssutherland@thepromisecenter.org

APPLES for Children

Allegany, Garrett & Washington Counties
Heather Glass
301.733.0000
hglass@applesforchildren.org

Lower Shore Child Care Resource Center

Wicomico, Somerset & Worcester Counties
Leslie Sinclair
410.543.6650
lasinclair@salisbury.edu

Chesapeake Child Care Resource Center

Caroline, Kent, Dorchester, Queen Anne's & Talbot Counties
Peg Anawalt
410.822.5400 x357
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Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

empowerment • opportunity • inclusion

Joint Committee on Children, Youth and Families

September 7, 2016

Maryland DD Councilⁱ testimony about Quality Early Care and Education

Despite much progress in policy, practice and partnership, families continue to struggle to find and keep high quality, inclusive early care and education where their children with disabilities can learn, play and grow alongside their peers without disabilities. As a result, young children with disabilities are significantly less prepared for kindergarten and families work less or not at all.

Access to high quality, inclusive child care

The quality of an early care and education program is tied to the ability of the program to create an environment that welcomes all children and provides appropriate services and supports to all children, including those with disabilities. Maryland EXCELS, Maryland quality rating and improvement system that sets standards of high quality for all early care and education settings, recognizes this and includes standards that specifically address an early care and education program's role providing opportunities for children with disabilities and their families.

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits early care and education and school-age programs from discriminating against people with disabilities.ⁱⁱ Even though programs must provide children with disabilities and their families an equal opportunity to participate in the child care program and services, many families continue face discrimination on the basis of their child's disability in both finding and keeping early care and education. Yet, Maryland does not have a process to investigate and address discrimination complaints against providers.

Federal law requires that children with disabilities have the same opportunities to meaningfully participate in these programs with their non-disabled peers.ⁱⁱⁱ In order to meaningfully participate, children may need additional services and supports – some provided by through early intervention services or preschool special education and some provided by the early care and education provider. Regardless of how the services and supports are provided, federal and state law requires that children with disabilities receive any necessary services and supports in their natural environments – a setting that is natural or normal for their same age peers without disabilities. Yet, the following barriers exist in making this happen:

- **There are no dedicated funds that child care providers can access to support them in serving children with disabilities in inclusive settings.** Such funds could be used to provide accommodations, equipment and/or more staff, for example. While most accommodations for children with disabilities are relatively inexpensive, there are occasions in which child care providers need additional resources.
- The Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program that provides children with developmental disabilities and delays with the services and supports they need has been level funded since SFY2009. **A 20% increase in the number of children eligible for services has resulted in a 16% decrease in State General Fund dollars per child.**^{iv}
- **There are no designated State or federal funds for three and four-year old children who still receive services through early intervention.**
- **There are no designated State funds for the provision of preschool special education services to preschool-age children served through an Individualized Education Program.**

-over-

The result

- **Only 19% of young children with disabilities entered kindergarten fully ready to learn compared to 47% of their peers without disabilities.^v**

The type of child care setting influences a child's preparedness for school. Children who receive child care in more formal, regulated settings such as a child care center or family child care home enter kindergarten more ready to learn than those in informal care. All children should be fully prepared for school. That means all early childhood programs should be inclusive, high quality and accessible to young children with disabilities and their families.

- **64% of all families report lost income due to a lack of child care for their child with a disability.^{vi}**

Families of children with disabilities still face obstacles to finding and maintaining high quality, inclusive early care and education as well as school-age care in Maryland. As a result, families are losing jobs, losing income and facing financial challenges in addition to not getting the support they need to ensure their children with disabilities are cared for in appropriate programs.

How can Maryland achieve high quality, inclusive child care for all children?

1. **The standards outlined in MDEXCELS should continue to include specific measures at all rating levels to ensure providers welcome children with disabilities and provide appropriate care and education adapted to their needs.** MDEXCELS is a measure of higher quality than licensing in general and represents a commitment by providers to continuous improvement.
2. **A process to investigate and address complaints of discrimination on the basis of disability should be implemented.** This will help address concerns by families that there is a need for a process to assist them in getting and keeping child care and assist providers in meeting legal requirements and getting the appropriate supports need to include children with disabilities in their programs.
3. **Funding is needed to better support young children with disabilities in their natural environments which for most children with and without disabilities is an early care and education setting.** Without adequate funding, it is difficult for Maryland to meet its obligations under state and federal law to ensure young children with disabilities receive the services and supports they need to succeed.
4. **More training and technical assistance to providers is needed so that more providers are willing and able to support children with disabilities.** Although many efforts have been made to improve and standardize training and increase requirements, including the requirement that all providers are now required to take a state developed and mandated training about the ADA and inclusive practices, more

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ⁱ The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) is an independent, public policy organization that works for the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life.

ⁱⁱ Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C. § 12101 (2009).

ⁱⁱⁱ 20 USC 1400 (IDEA, Part B, §619).

^{iv} *Moving Maryland Forward: Building a Birth to Kindergarten System of Services for Young Children with Disabilities and Their Families*, MSDE, January 2016.

^v *Readiness Matters! The 2015-2016 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Report*, MSDE, March 2016.

^{vi} *Barriers to Quality Child Care and Out of School Time Activities in Maryland*. Maryland DD Council, November 2012.



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Executive Director

Joint Committee on Children, Youth and Families
Testimony: September 7, 2016
Jennifer Hoffman, Executive Director
Prince George's Child Resource Center, Inc.

Thank you to Senator King and Delegate Kelly for your attention to the need for quality child care in the State of Maryland. You have been champions for children in our State, and on behalf of children, their families, and the child care community of Prince George's County, I deeply appreciate your continued commitment.

Prince George's Child Resource Center has been working tirelessly since 1990 to support both child care providers in their efforts to strive for quality in their child care programs, and parents as they seek child care where their children can thrive. Prince George's county has 944 family child care providers and 396 licensed group programs with a capacity to care for nearly 30,000 children. Prince George's Child Resource Center provides training to more than 1,000 of these educators and individualized technical assistance and coaching to more than one hundred programs each year; yet daily we continue to see challenges to programs' ability to achieve quality: **lack of public investment in quality child care; parents inability to afford quality care; and low compensation for child care professionals.**

Currently, we see that child care programs range from high quality programs that are accredited by national organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and that are participating in Maryland EXCELS, the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) for the State. EXCELS has raised the standards for all programs and improved outcomes for children, but at the same time has created hardships for struggling programs that do not have the funds to make the quality improvements needed. We are seeing a steady decline in numbers of regulated programs, particularly in licensed family child care programs. At the same time that regulated programs are declining, the number of unregulated programs is growing, threatening the safety of children as well as children's school readiness. For the Prince George's County's 2015-16 school year, only 38% of children entered kindergarten with the skills and behaviors necessary to succeed (Maryland State Department of Education, School Readiness Report).

Not only are children that arrive from quality early learning environments more likely to be ready for the rigors of kindergarten, but are 17% more likely to graduate high school, 20% more likely to stay out of jail, 18% more likely to stay off drugs, and 20% more likely to earn a good wage at age 40.

SERVING PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS

Creating Healthy and Nurturing Environments for Children
Website: www.childresource.org | E-Mail: pgcrc@childresource.org

Joint Committee on Children, Youth and Families
Testimony: September 7, 2016
Jennifer Hoffman, Executive Director
Prince George's Child Resource Center, Inc.
(Continued)

Child care provider's educational and professional successes in are not recognized as valuable. On average, a child care professional in Maryland earns only about \$27,000 annually, less than half of the salary earned by a public school teacher (Child Care Demographics, 2016). This is created in part by rates parents can afford to pay and inadequate or untimely access to the child care subsidy. As many as 40% of Maryland child care workers' families received public assistance themselves according to the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. As a result, we see high turnover and employee stress, which can negatively impact children in care. Child care providers that do improve their professionalism and education do not enjoy increased compensation or parity in pay to their counterparts in the public education system. In fact, a bachelor's degree in early childhood education has the lowest projected lifetime earnings.

Thank you for seeking to address these significant challenges for the sake of all Maryland's children. Prince George's Child Resource Center will continue to support the efforts of child care providers seeking to serve children and their families with excellence.





Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children
Flora Gee, Public Policy Co-Chair
Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children
Director, Greenbelt Children's Center
7600 Hanover Parkway, Suite 100
Greenbelt, MD 20770

**Testimony on Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education for the
Joint Committee on Children, Youth and Families**

Thank you, Senator King, Delegate Kelly and other members of the Joint Committee. I represent over 1500 professionals who care for and about young children in Maryland. For over 30 years I have served as an advocate for children, families and the profession of early care and education. Today we are advocating for the quality of the care and education for Maryland's young children and how that relates to the compensation of those who are doing the work in this field.

Please understand that child care "is" education-whether it is good education or bad education, matters very much to the outcomes of young children. It is truly difficult to expect high quality when the compensation of those doing the work in the field are paid such meager wages and benefits and are truly the ones who are now subsidizing the low income families who need child care. What quality is will depend on the perspective of who is looking at this trilemma of quality, access and affordability..

Access for a high income family, that has the means and the knowledge of what research says are indicators of high quality (such as the benchmarks reported in the National Institute for Early Education Research; accredited programs participating in the Maryland Quality Rating and Improvement System, Maryland EXCELS) may make it possible for that family to support the costs of those types of programs. This family has the ability to choose a safe high quality program that will meet the needs of and provide for good outcomes for the child. This is especially important for the family that has a child with a disability.

47% of Maryland families with children entering kindergarten qualify for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS). These families need access to quality, affordable and accessible child care. The average family in Maryland looks at quality only as what they can afford. They don't much care about the quality initiatives that may rank our Maryland centers because they can't afford them. There is a proliferation of illegal child care that they can afford. The illegal providers are not reporting income nor contributing to the tax base in Maryland. Even worse, this is endangering the thousands of children in this type of care because a family may believe that is their only choice. We have more to do in this area.

The cost of child care is very high mostly due to the fact that child care is a *labor intensive* industry. It is important that children have the time and attention of a competent educated professional based on established ratios that have been determined as baseline for minimum standards of health and safety. This is our definition of licensed care in Maryland. Going above and beyond that is what the quality initiatives that research says are important to child outcomes being excellent and what it takes to reduce the achievement gap between children from economically disadvantaged families and prepare children for future success in college and career.

Making child care more affordable is not in the power of those working in the field. Programs may not take in extra children to reduce the rates parents pay because they are bound by ratios and capacities that they may not exceed, and for very good reasons.

There is a huge workforce problem in our field. For every dollar that our center receives from families, about 80% goes back out in wages and compensation. This compensation includes hourly wages, employer taxes, substitutes, health insurance, sick and vacation leave, trainings, retirement plans, flexible spending accounts, health reimbursement accounts and more. The cost for the required pre-service training, background checks and pre-employment medical exams are a barrier

to attracting new candidates to enter the field. There are now a lot of requirements before you are qualified to earn your first paycheck in a field that pays less than parking lot attendants.

Then the new staff are required to take more training so that they can move up to what the higher levels of credentialed child care staff that are needed for high quality programs, as rated in the MD EXCELS system. Our teachers range from those with four year degrees and certification, to those with Associate Degrees working toward a Bachelors to those who hold a Child Development Associate Credential. The salary range is \$12-22.00 per hour, not very much above the proposed rates for a \$15.00 minimum wage. Attracting and retaining competent experienced teachers in our programs is daunting. Yet after compensation, the rest of the program's income still must pay for overhead including mortgage or lease, utilities, food, insurance, supplies, professional services, maintenance/upkeep and equipment.

Colleagues at Maryland Colleges will tell you that the numbers of students choosing early childhood education is dwindling. The cost of the education is not supported by paychecks from an occupation in this field.

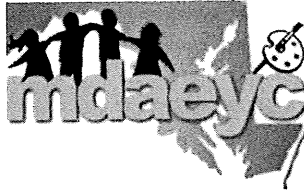
I have witnessed the closing of at least 6 programs in my county in the last two years. State records show that Family Child Care providers are leaving the field in ever increasing numbers.

It is time for our legislators in Maryland take the steps required to improve the affordable access to high quality child care for all families in Maryland. Let's do the right thing to prepare Maryland's children for success in school and life and erase the achievement gap.

Maryland needs to follow the model of the investment of the Department of Defense in raising and supporting the quality of early childhood education. Efforts need to be made to use whatever means necessary to support the family's ability to pay for the cost of high quality care. Use the casino funds to dedicate 5% to increase the child care subsidy fund and increase the value of the subsidy for each eligible family. Maryland could have loan forgiveness for each Maryland degreed teacher working in child care. The Heckman report will show that for every dollar invested in Early Childhood Education, our state could save \$8.00 later in societal costs. This is worth your attention and time.

Please take the steps required to help all of Maryland's families afford and have access to choose quality for the care and education of their child.

Sincerely,
Flora L. Gee, M.Ed.



Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children

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Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families
September 7, 2016

Testimony on Child Care Quality and Compensation

Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MAEYC) is a professional organization of over 1,500 Marylanders who educate and care for young children in all jurisdictions of the State, and is the Maryland affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. (NAEYC)

NAEYC is a nationally respected association leading the country in standards of early care and education as well as influencing public policy at a federal level.

The committee members have a tough job and MDAEYC appreciates the work you are doing. We thank you for attention to child care issues during these important series of hearings to focus on specific topics and determine how to affect positive change. The committee members often have excellent questions during the oral testimony phase of hearings and child care providers would have welcomed the opportunity to be a part of the oral presentation panel. We welcome the opportunity to clarify or answer questions about quality and compensation from the very real perspective of a Maryland, tax paying, licensed child care provider who actually are tasked with delivering quality daily to deserving children and make child care affordable for families, as well as find and pay a qualified/quality staff in order to stay in business in Maryland.

Many associations (MDAEYC, MSCCA, MSACCA, MSFCCA, MHSA, SEIU Local 500, and Baltimore City Child Care Coalition) partnered to discuss quality and compensation in Maryland. We focused on defining quality, achieving quality, evaluating quality, rewarding quality, and barriers to quality. You will receive written testimony reflecting our collaborative efforts to shed light on all of these important areas.

What is Quality Child Care?

NAEYC, the MDAEYC governing body defines the 10 benchmarks for quality

- Relationships
- Curriculum
- Teaching

- Assessment of Child's Progress
- Health
- Teachers
- Families
- Community Relationships
- Physical Environment
- Leadership and Management

From US Department of Health and Human Services *Policy Statement on Early Childhood Career Pathways*: "A strong body of research ties the knowledge, competencies, stability, diversity and retention of teachers and program directors directly to the quality of children's development and learning in out-of-home programs."

According to the MSDE Workgroup on Equity and Access, quality means all children are welcome, must be able to learn, play and grow, reach their full potential and meaningfully participate in the community.

MSDE, Office of Child Care, child care providers and parents may all have different definitions of quality child care, and their values impact their definitions. Relationships between provider and children, provider and parents, and among children are essential to quality.

Coming up with a single definition of Quality Child Care is difficult because of the subjective definitions of stakeholders with different values.

Quality is NOT ONE SIZE FITS ALL!

How do we achieve quality in Maryland?

Recognizing that obtaining and maintaining a MSDE licensed program and strive for full compliance of all regulations is a quality achievement.

Provide Training and Technical Assistance-Professional Development for teachers in our industry.

Provide opportunities for higher education and training through Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF)

Provide Curriculum Grants to offset costs of licensed programs and aligns with quality initiatives

Share Child Care Membership Association Support for providers throughout the state to assist with training, technical support, advocacy, communication and grants for program improvements.

How do we measure and incentivize Quality Child Care?

MSDE's programs to measure quality include:

Maryland Child Care Credential (bonuses and training vouchers/reimbursement)- continue to fund this program and recommend increasing the bonus structure to allow annual bonuses at all levels and increase compensation should providers choose to climb the credentialing ladder of success. MSDE has an excellent training voucher program and also supports Associations with financial stipends for training conferences to offset costs for providers.

Maryland EXCELS – Quality Rating Improvement Scale in our state. We recommend to continue as a voluntary effort for program but you would have more buy in and renewal from provider community if funds were allocated for bonuses at each level 2 and higher. We recommend that Level 1 be licensing,

the foundation of quality as stated by MSDE and child care community without any onerous or administrative paperwork that already come with being licensed in Maryland. The original Race to the Top funding for this quality initiative was based on Level 1 being licensed programs. In order to receive child care subsidy dollars, providers must opt in and participate at Level 1 and work towards continuous improvement according to the standards.

NAEYC accreditation (MSDE accreditation; accreditation support fund for national accreditation)

Child care programs distribute parent surveys to measure and evaluate program and engage in daily conversations with parents to meet their specific needs for quality care.

MSDE Tiered Reimbursement program is an incentive for additional monies for child care programs. We recommend structuring the bonuses to include Level 2 Excels to gain more participants and continue to raise the incentives as providers move through ratings.

What are the major barriers to achieving Quality Child Care?

Lack of sufficient funding for achieving and incentivizing the MSDE quality initiatives.

Dismally low provider compensation.

Dismally low subsidy reimbursement rates, eligibility rates and subsidy levels not open to all who need assistance including middle class. We hope legislators will address this important lack of resources to assist working families.

Insufficient inclusive care for children with disabilities and dual language learners. Child care programs need to be prepared to serve children with special needs and the culturally diverse population of children entering our child care programs. The pre-service and ongoing training for child care providers must address these issues.

45.5% of children entering Kindergarten in Maryland are eligible for free and reduced lunch

Almost 15%, according to Child Care Aware of child care providers live below the poverty line and a third have incomes that are twice the poverty line. Despite tremendous responsibility, the average wages of a full time child care provider is about \$10.00 an hour and most do not have any benefit packages.

Quality child care benefits everyone. It promotes positive developmental outcome for children and allows parents to pursue their own education and career goals which contributes to the economy. We must work together to find solutions for parents to access affordable, high quality child care and to find a way to compensate the child care providers who are essential to the workforce.

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TESTIMONY ON QUALITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION
for the
JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES
September 7, 2016

Thank you, Senator King, Delegate Kelly, and other members of the Joint Committee. As an advocate I have been working for the last quarter-century to improve the quality of child care and education, especially for disadvantaged children for whom the outcomes of improved quality are particularly dramatic. Quality has improved somewhat, especially through the Judy Hoyer program, but there's much remaining to be done before we can bring the research results on outcomes of quality improvement to scale in Maryland.

Most of the most glaring needs for quality improvement depend on substantial increases in government investments at all levels. One of the candidates for President would offer approaches to what's needed at the Federal level, but Maryland continues to lag behind many other States because of inadequate State Operating Budget assistance. Here are 3 areas in which much more Maryland fiscal effort is needed now, to bring lasting improvement:

A. Staffing in MSDE's Early Childhood Development Division.

MSDE/ECD, with Federal help, has set up an elaborate system of incentives, assessments, and controls for quality for Maryland's child care providers. The trouble is that the Early Childhood Development Division has had its staff resources cut repeatedly in State Operating Budgets and senior staff departures, so that now the child care regulations cannot be fully enforced; the quality incentives are not fully forthcoming to the centers, teachers, directors, and family care providers who have worked hard to get them; and the subsidized training and education is very limited. Please push hard on the Governor and the State Board of Education to ensure that MSDE/ECD gets enough staff to do its job.

B. Pay for child care and education professionals.

A recent college graduate in Montgomery County with a teaching certificate for early childhood education can get a job with its public schools for almost twice the salary, and much more in benefits, than the same person beginning a career in a child care center. But teachers of this quality and education are much more needed in child care, especially if they work with disadvantaged children, than in the public schools. Most parents of young children can't afford to pay the existing costs of child care, let alone the added costs that would bring them the quality that their children need and deserve. Many family and center child care teachers can't even afford much of the training and education that the State's quality standards and regulations require. Maryland should follow the Federal Government child care centers, especially those under the Defense Department,

in paying for the costs needed to make child care teachers' pay fully comparable to those with equal qualifications in the public schools.

C. Reimbursement rates for child care subsidies.

Currently child care providers are paid at around the tenth percentile of the market for the children in their care who are subsidized by the State. The Federal Government says that these payments should be at least at the 75th percentile of the market. Quality does cost money. As you may know, subsidized children are among those who would benefit most in terms of school readiness from higher quality in their child care. Many providers provide the difference from their own pockets, but of course that threatens their own economic survival. These subsidies need to follow the Federal guidelines if you want disadvantaged children to experience high quality child care and education.

Relatively Low-Cost Quality Enhancement Efforts:

There are some areas in which quality might be enhanced without much financial investment.

- A. Maryland Excels, the State's Quality Rating and Improvement System, is now up and running, but very few parents know about it or use its rating system to decide about who will care for and educate their young children. Widespread publicity, especially on public transit and airwaves, is needed now.
- B. The elaborate system of assessments, regulations, credentialing, accreditation, Excels, training, professional development, and record keeping that has developed in recent years, accelerated by the Federal Race to the Top money, has imposed a huge and growing burden on Directors, teachers and providers that has taken away their time and attention that should be devoted to building positive relationships with other teachers and young children in their programs. MSDE/ECD needs to review its clerical demands on providers, and simplify, eliminate, and modify those requirements so that they can do their jobs.
- C. Maryland has become substantially more multicultural since the turn of the Century, and the child care and education profession even more so. Having an experienced child care professional with good translating abilities to translate common training materials into Spanish, at least, would be of major help in improving the professional quality of many of our providers.
- D. Finally, ever since computers have come to child care administration in Maryland, the State has experienced huge delays, breakdowns, and inefficiencies in the computer applications used at MSDE/ECD and in the field. Instead of relying on integrated, complex systems that work poorly if at all, efforts should be made to look into simpler Web-based commercial platforms to perform the same tasks much more efficiently.

Pursuing higher quality needs to be a continuing effort. Thank you for any help you can give to us in this regard.



Maryland State Child Care Association

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**Caring For Maryland's Most
Important Natural Resource™**

The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is a non-profit, statewide, professional association incorporated in 1984 to promote the growth and development of child care and learning centers in Maryland. We have 10 Chapters in Maryland and represent membership in Baltimore City, as well as 23 counties. MSCCA has over 2500 members and our members provide care and learning for more than 12,000 children therefore assisting over 20,000 working parents. We believe children are our most important natural resource and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the child care provider community.

Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families
September 7, 2016
Testimony on Child Care Quality and Compensation

Many thanks to Senator King, Delegate Kelly and Esteemed Members this committee for their hard work on child care related issues in Maryland. The child care community sincerely appreciates the opportunity to share information with legislators.

You will hear oral testimony and read written testimony about child care quality today, but you will not hear oral testimony from a child care provider's perspective about compensation. Many associations (MSCCA, MDAEYC, MSACCA, MSFCCA, MHSA, SEIU Local 500, and Baltimore City Child Care Coalition) partnered to analyze how quality relates to compensation in Maryland. We focused on defining quality, achieving quality, evaluating quality, rewarding quality, and barriers to quality. MSCCA sent surveys to our members inquiring about their experience with the quality initiative and compensation. The results are included in this testimony. You will receive written testimony reflecting our collaborative efforts to shed light on all of these important areas, and all will lead back to compensation. MSCCA's testimony will focus on barriers to quality and compensation.

Providers weren't asked to provide oral testimony which feeds into our perception that **quality initiatives have been something imposed on us by people who don't actually understand the realities of the early child care and education world at the ground level**. The child care providers are the small business carrying out the quality to children daily and are also trying to set tuition rates that working parents can afford which will in turn pay the staff who deliver the quality as well as, business expenses including taxes. The committee members often have excellent questions and we welcome the opportunity to clarify or answer questions.

You can't talk about child care quality without talking about compensation. Quality looks different from different perspectives, but most importantly, **quality is relative to affordability**.

An analogy would be a person who has to take the bus for transportation, then works enough to purchase a used car that has one windshield wiper and is reliable enough to start in cold weather. The person wishes she could afford a higher level of quality such as a fancier car with blue tooth, navigational system and back up camera, but she purchases the level of quality she can afford. The reliable car still gets her where she needs to go and improves the quality of her transportation. The level of quality in this scenario is measured by many as perfectly acceptable; others who measure quality may not agree.

The overall barrier to quality child care is inadequate funding and allocation of resources.

Here is a list of barriers:

- Lack of support for providers caring for children with disabilities or wanting to enroll children with disabilities;
- Qualified workforce shortage;
- Lack of technical assistance resources;

- Lack of access to training for child care providers in rural areas;
- Limited online training; and
- Unfunded mandates.

MSDE, child care providers and parents may all have different definitions of quality child care, and their values impact their definitions, but it's more than basic health and safety. Maryland's regulations go beyond basic health and safety and provide a higher level of quality than most states' licensing regulations. The additional expenses, time, current limitations of trained child care workforce and unfunded mandates from MSDE limit and frustrate many providers in achieving higher quality in their programs.

Maryland has an excellent set of regulatory standards for licensing child care programs. COMAR regulations address strict teacher to child ratios, specific qualifications for staff required before hiring and becoming licensed, annual additional training requirements for all levels of staffing, written daily schedules for children with time allotted for developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor activities, documentation of food and snack menus, building and safety standards, emergency preparedness, medication administration and the list goes on for about 50 pages. Most child care professionals would call licensing the foundational level of quality. Attaining and maintaining licensure costs money.

The additional quality initiatives available to child care professionals for continuous and higher levels of quality in Maryland is also excellent. The numerous initiatives include MSDE Accreditation and support for national accreditation, Credentialing and Maryland EXCELS (Quality Rating Improvement System). They all cost money to achieve.

The child care provider community at large agrees with the need for strict, quality licensing standards and many agree that the quality initiatives available to raise the bar even higher for quality are wonderful aspirations. The issues revolve around how we pay for quality.

- The average cost of center-based child care in the United States is **\$11,666 a year (\$972 a month)**, but prices range from **\$3,582 to \$18,773 a year (\$300 to \$1,564 a month)**, according to Child Care Aware of America.
- The average cost of center-based care in Maryland according to Maryland Family Network is \$14,768 per year (\$1,231 monthly) for an infant, and \$10,400 a year (\$867 a month) for a preschooler.

Child care providers nurture, educate and look after children in a variety of locations including parents' homes, their own homes, child care centers and after-school programs. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), childcare workers earned an average annual wage of \$21,710 as of May 2014 (www.bls.gov). According to Maryland Family Network child care teachers in Maryland earn \$25,186 on average in April 2016.

Included in this packet of testimony is a full and realistic breakdown of costs to run child care programs from owners (members of our Association) of programs in Anne Arundel County and Montgomery County. We have included a non-profit and a for profit programs in order to share a realistic picture of small child care business in Maryland.

~How do we pay higher wages and benefits to high quality staff? In order to increase staff pay we have to increase what parents are able to afford.

~How do we pay for 12 hours of annual continued education? (which would be part of the job requirement therefore employer would pay for the actual training itself and the hourly wage of the staff to take the training) and then on top of that pay for another 12 hours for staff to attain the higher quality initiatives of Credentialing quality initiative which aligns with higher levels of Maryland EXCELS and Accreditation). Some required training including First Aid and CPR certifications do not even count towards a staff person's training. This important, life- saving, unfunded mandate is a requirement for providers, but is not allowed to be used as part of the required continued training annually.

~How do we pay for Developmental Screening tools and tool specific training to insure providers screen professionally?

Child care providers in small businesses throughout Maryland have to pass on costs of higher salaries and mandated training and requirements to parents. Many parents are opting for illegal, dangerous child care due to lack of affordable quality options.
CHILDREN DESERVE BETTER!

Child care providers and associations have been told that these requirements are the "cost of doing business," but the child care industry is unique. We cannot cut staff due to strict ratios or cut back on qualifications or we would be out of compliance with our license. We cannot use automated systems to teach our children because screen time is limited in regulations. We cannot make the adjustments that other low wage industries can even though we are to provide the highest quality to children and families. We agree that we need the regulatory system to set us apart in our profession, and we agree they are necessary for health, safety and foundational quality. We also agree that the additional quality initiatives are what we all strive for, but how do we pay for them and how do we compensate staff once they achieve them?

The most at risk children from families who are eligible for child care subsidies cannot afford the cost of care at the higher quality child care centers or family child care homes. Many providers accept less than their cost of providing care from parents who struggle to pay their assigned co-pay and are unable to pay the differential. MSDE has not been able to open Levels I and J for many years due to lack of funding, so a family of three earning \$23,676 is not eligible for a child care subsidy voucher.

Many child care providers are eligible for subsidy vouchers because the programs' budgets cannot afford to pay them higher salaries, and yet the child care programs are the ones subsidizing child care by accepting only what families can afford to pay, instead of what it costs them to provide high quality care.

Licensed, affordable child care sustains the workforce in Maryland. Our members are sharing that some colleagues have to close their doors, and some staff are moving to a different industry to be able to earn a living wage with benefits.

Statistics from Maryland Family Network show over $\frac{3}{4}$ of families with children under the age of 6 need child care because their parents are working.

MSDE Kindergarten Readiness Data from 2015 shows 45.5 % of children entering Kindergarten in Maryland are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

Research shows the value of investing in early childhood. Nobel Prize-winning University of Chicago economics professor James Heckman's research demonstrates that for every dollar invested in early childhood, there is a return on investment of \$8.00 (dimes now for dollars later). Ninety percent of a child's brain growth takes place from birth to 5 years of age, and yet child care is underfunded.

Parents don't start working when children are age 5 and can get free public education. Parents need quality care and education for their children while they are working beginning with infants up to age 5. Parents also need before and after school care.

The military prioritized and overhauled its child care system to meet the needs of the service men and women in order for them to perform at the highest level. It is time to review models that are working and prioritize child care for working families.

It is incumbent upon legislators and MSDE to change Maryland's child care priorities and make funding available, and resource allocation appropriate, to the new understanding of the importance of the first 5 years, not only because children thrive in high-quality settings, but also for the basic need that parents have to work and contribute to Maryland's economy.

The message: **Quality is relative to affordability.** We cannot continue to drive up child care costs with initiatives purported to create higher quality when many of our families are already unable to afford the foundational level of quality we have through our current licensing standards. We cannot expect early childhood professionals to get higher degrees and more training, or to even enter the field, when early child care and education is one of the lowest paid professions by far. **We cannot talk quality until we can talk money.**

Early child care and education needs to be one of our highest funding priorities. **It is not a nice thing to have** if we can afford it. **It is a necessity** so that parents can work and so our children are in stimulating environments at the most critical time of their brain development. Once we accept this fact and ensure that licensed child care (the foundation of quality) is affordable for families, then and only then, can we work to ratchet up to higher and higher levels of quality.

Here is a list of recommendations:

Help Parents with Affordability:

Child Care Aware annual report for 2014 shares under the Child Care and Family Budget statistics that average expenses for child care can rival expenses for housing, transportation and even college tuitions. Across all 50 states, the cost of center based infant care averaged over 40% of the state median income for single mothers. (I've included in my packet of testimony the report published by Montgomery County Commission for Women (CFW) Single Mothers and Poverty Agenda for Action for your review)

1. Increase tax credits for child care to all families (to include middle and middle income earners) and make them refundable for low-income earners.
2. Increase the amount of Pre-Tax Dependent Care.
3. Simplify the process for families to qualify for various tax incentives

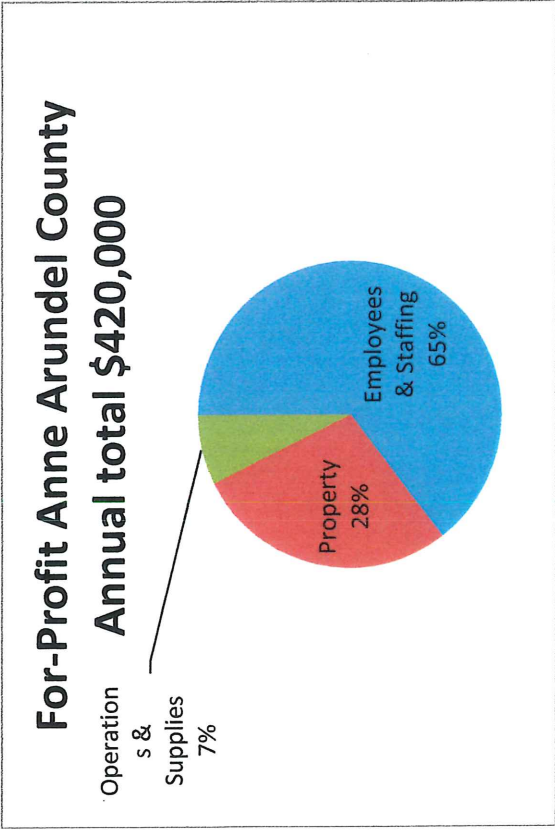
4. Allow parents who are enrolled in and attend college part time or full time permission eligibility to take advantage of the Dependent Care Tax Credit
5. Reduce barriers to the child care subsidy system by allocating necessary and appropriate increases to the child care subsidy system to include raising income eligibility, increase to 100% of market rates and consider serving fewer children, but at a subsidy higher rate to insure better quality level.

Help Providers with Affordability:

1. Allocate necessary and appropriate increases to the child care subsidy system to include raising income eligibility, decreasing parent co-payments, and increasing reimbursement rates, if necessary, by serving fewer children but at a higher rate to fund a better quality level.
2. Make mandatory child care trainings accessible and affordable in all areas of the State, including rural areas.
3. Add flexibility to training protocols and approve more online trainings.
4. Change the Maryland EXCELS Level 1 standard back to original Race to the Top requirement that Level 1 is the foundation of quality, which is licensed/registered child care with no other requirements added. This will allow for more providers to want to participate and renew. All levels are tied to subsidy children and this reversion back to the original standard does not compromise quality.
5. Establish a Loan Forgiveness Program from Maryland colleges and universities for graduates working in the field of child development and early childhood education.
6. Allocate funds for MSDE Office of Child Care for resources for better technology to align, upgrade and increase capability and capacity in their computerized systems.
7. Change MSDE bonuses for Tiered reimbursement for providers meeting EXCELS Level 2 and 3 and split bonuses to 5% each level or incentivize at 5% for Level 2 Excels and keep 10% for Level 3 Excels to compensate more providers participating.
8. Provide collaborative and combined state training for preschool teachers and child care teachers. (MSDE public preschool teachers receive professional development annually free of charge; include the child care preschool age teachers to alleviate some costs to providers.) If provided a calendar of training well in advance, child care teachers may be able to get substitutes or close for a Professional day.
9. Provide resources for providers serving children with disabilities.
10. Allocate resources for pre-employment requirements (fingerprinting, health inventory).

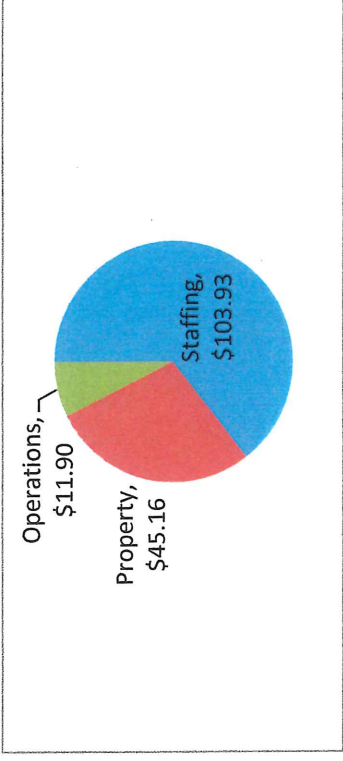
For-Profit Infant to School-age Care Anne Arundel County
 (Owner occupied building, licensed for 63 children, MDExcels Level 1)

Employees & Staffing	270900	64.55%
Property	117720	28.05%
Operations & Supplies	31030	7.39%
Total	419650	



Average Teacher Salary	\$11.25/hr
Average Tuition Rate	\$161.28 / week
Infants	\$310 / week
Preschool	\$185 / week
Before / After school	\$135 / week

Tuition Breakdown of Average \$161 per week
 Staffing \$ 103.93
 Property \$ 45.16
 Operations \$ 11.90

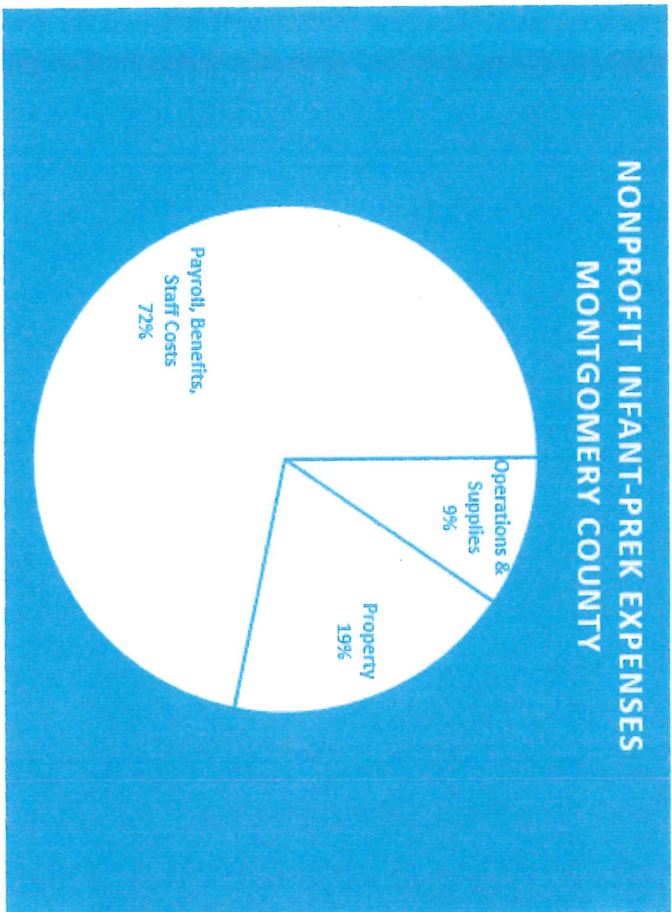


Breakdown of Employees & Staffing

		% of total budget
Payroll	205000	48.85%
Officer compensation	40000	9.53%
Payroll processing	1950	0.46%
Retirement	3900	0.93%
Health Insurance	7250	1.73%
Disability/supplemental	6800	1.62%
Misc Benefits	2000	0.48%
Staff hiring / retention / training	4000	0.95%

NonProfit Infant-Prek Expenses Montgomery County

Operations & Supplies	\$ 340,025	10.6%
Property	\$ 662,311	20.7%
Payroll, Benefits, Staff Cost	\$ 2,540,459	79.3%
TOTAL	\$ 3,542,795	

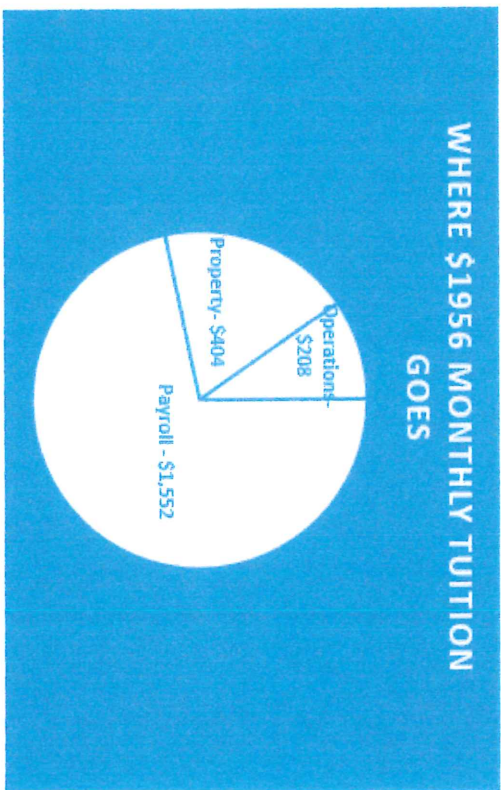


Average Teacher Pay \$14.75/hr (less than \$30k per year)

Average Tuition	\$1956/mo
Infants	\$2215/mo
Fours	\$1725/mo

Tuition Breakdown

Payroll	\$ 1,552
Property	\$ 404
Operations	\$ 208



What challenges & issues can MSCCA best represent to the MD legislature for you?

The need for financial support for children with special needs in our center settings. Jennifer Dorsey-A World of Friends Learning Center

8/30/2016 7:20 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Hold msde accountable for their management of the initiatives. Treat us with respect and understanding. Inform us ahead of time of changes. Give us the chance to do the right thing. We can only jump so high! Good centers are closing. Qualified staff are moving away from the field. Msde is not doing their job to support the population. They need to have realistic expectations of a private small business budget. We are not public schools

8/30/2016 5:59 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Cindy Newsome

8/30/2016 5:45 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

This legislation help me to give a best care for the children and teach positively about all their environment.

8/30/2016 4:26 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Lisa Dickinson

8/29/2016 7:11 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Impose the same requirements of operating licensed child care to home child care centers. Some sort of middle ground on realistic expectations of qualified teachers so that we can keep our teachers in our programs. Inspection results on the website need to be more fair and explained better, since families can read them.

8/29/2016 4:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

A requirement that changes in regulations, forms (especially OCC forms), and quality standards be communicated to all centers a minimum of 30 days prior to effective date. Required new training needs to have at least a year to phase in. There should be a monetary award associated with achieving Check Level 5 and/or accreditation to offset the additional costs associated with participation. Finally, the MD Legislature needs to understand the mandates we have regarding quality staff without the money to pay them. We have to have a price structure that parents can afford to stay competitive. But this price structure does not allow us to pay staff a livable wage. It's about time the child care providers of Maryland stop subsidizing the true cost of child care by accepting low wages.

8/29/2016 2:17 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

To not raise the minimum wage any higher. When the minimum wage increases is it is passed on to the parents. For the last increase we raised our rates as did most of our suppliers so it becomes a vicious cycle. Toni Healey

8/29/2016 12:32 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Kristen Walsh

8/29/2016 11:57 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

there needs to be serious consideration given to helping ensure that high quality child care is accessible to middle class families, through tax breaks or other initiatives. teachers' salaries need to be reviewed throughout the state and strategies to address the persistent low pay need to be explored.

8/29/2016 9:50 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I will / have shared in the workgroup... Ruthi Claytor

8/23/2016 12:07 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Substitute pool, less preserving requirements. It would be nice if licensing worked with us to make our centers better rather than picking us apart and looking for stuff to write up. Different counties read the regs differently- t would be nice if there were more electronic records instead of me having to continually resubmit stuff to licensing. Or when someone has been in the system previously under another school- it would make since that there qualifications should t have to be resubmitted.

8/24/2016 9:27 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Cheryl Nelson. Cost and amount of training is not in line with salaries. Cost of curriculum is beyond the budgets of most centers. Training on curriculum is too expensive and very limited. The training done by publishers is too expensive and infrequent and the hours don't count towards our clock hours. Training for senior staff in rural areas is difficult to find except at the local community college which is too expensive for staff making minimum wage.

8/24/2016 9:10 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Requirements for staff to begin work are so excessive that they cannot afford to start a job in childcare.

8/24/2016 8:01 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Support quality professional development for early childhood educators. Support the alignment and professionalism of office of childcare -too many different answers or expectations nothing is consistent. Expect competent performance from your inspectors as well as credentialing staff. The state needs to pour in resources for training to implement the expectations of accreditation. All of the new initiatives require effective training and follow up support. Clarify comar and make the process a support for directors-not a scare tactic. We should all be working together to improve!

8/24/2016 7:30 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Pre-school teachers are not paid enough.....my name is Tomika Allen.....

8/24/2016 7:20 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

having more diverse people representing Child Care Centers so they get equal representation I'm not interested in going to conferences

8/24/2016 7:09 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Perhaps gave a panel of actual providers to advise about ways to implement ideas for new regulations rather than implementing and then changing expectations numerous times. Also, find a way to communicate new regs to ALL licensed programs rather than expecting us to discover them by chance. Even a page on the web that lists updates on a monthly basis.

8/24/2016 5:50 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

MSDE needs to restructure its organization and communication. More support is needed for our current work force of child care providers. Legislators and MSDE should stop telling us that our people aren't good enough unless they have degrees.

8/24/2016 3:43 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Salary compensation for quality Early Childhood teachers. You can spend all the money you want giving children access to quality childcare centers, but if childcare centers cannot pay and find quality teachers it will not work.

8/24/2016 3:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

MSDE's push down approach with little resources and support. No one ever answers the phone. I have called my licensing specialist 6 times in the past two months with NO return call. If I continue to call, she shows up with an attitude. It seems that everyone there is angry and disgruntled. No one seems pleasant to talk to. It's as if we are interrupting them by asking them for help and support. Assess the duplication of efforts required of Program Directors.

8/24/2016 2:28 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Quality childcare workers need to be validated and paid accordingly.

8/24/2016 2:14 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The new vendors for credentialing and POC both have been a huge issue for some time now. Both have caused a lot of loss and money and frustration among staff.

8/24/2016 10:28 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Are you able to find and retain quality child care professionals?

• Answered: 25

• Skipped: 2

- The new requirements Ada and infant feeding make it even harder to get new staff on board. You can't get staff who are qualified to work for what a business can afford to pay. Centers need subsidy from msde to retain qualified staff
- 8/30/2016 5:59 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Low pay, lack of benefits, required training costs, lack of respect for this critical profession lead to little interest/passion
- 8/30/2016 5:45 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- I have difent curses, for example 90 hours, CPR, Effective communication, ADA, others more
- 8/30/2016 4:26 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- We can afford the salaries of the teachers that MSDE would require us to have in our program. Also, the teachers who do decide to stay on board in our program leave because the amount of paperwork and training that they need to do at the salary that they are given is not conducive to them, so they leave to find a job that isn't as paperwork oriented for either the same amount of money or more. When minimum wage goes up, I see us losing more qualified teachers/aides leave us to work in retail.
- 8/29/2016 4:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Refer to MSDE's recent Careers in ECE booklet. There is no encouragement from MSDE (or the major universities, for that matter) for ECE majors to work in child care centers. When the school system routinely entices the best teachers away with more money, I feel as though I am the farm team. We train them and then they leave.
- 8/29/2016 2:17 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- We usually hire and then train.
- 8/29/2016 12:32 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- I put out an employment ad and only had three people respond. That is average. The pool of teachers is shrinking. The good ones want more money so go to public schools.
- 8/29/2016 11:57 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- We pay well above the market rate and offer benefits to everyone who works 20 hours a week or more. That said, we often have a hard time finding senior staff who meet our expectations. We put a lot into training our staff and pay for 26 hours of continued training for each teacher every year.
- 8/29/2016 9:50 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- I say yes, but I don't think I have ever "found" quality staff. I have found good people who are willing to learn. I create an environment they enjoy working in, so once they get educated and become quality staff, they stay.
- 8/25/2016 12:07 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Recently it's been very difficult to find quality staff and with the stringent requirements I often find myself jumping at Anyone who meets the certification requirements even if they are not that great... Because there are slim options. Too many requirements and not enough pay are contributing Factors I believe.
- 8/24/2016 9:27 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- It is the most challenging part of being a director. The amount of pre service and constant new training make it very difficult to hire and retain employees. The turn over rate is extremely high. In order to pay the salary that the best qualified candidates deserve we would have to raise tuition to amounts that families cannot afford to pay. We have to have centers that service our lower and middle income families. These families deserve quality care but the system is set up so that is not always what they receive. More subsidies to centers, employees and families would help fix this.
- 8/24/2016 9:10 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Still can't pay people what they are worth with the increased guidelines and trainings required
- 8/24/2016 8:01 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Can't pay teachers holding Ba in education. Less that 10% of my staff have formal training in education-other that 90 hours.
- 8/24/2016 7:30 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- because we can't afford to pay them enough
- 8/24/2016 7:09 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Because the wages are low and the credentialling requirements are high.
- 8/24/2016 4:03 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

- However, they are high quality as defined by our observations, not as defined by MSDE. We have not been able to find or retain high quality teachers with early childhood degrees.
- 8/24/2016 3:43 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- We have had a horrible time finding qualified, degreed, Early Childhood teachers. In order to maintain our MSDE accreditation, we must find degreed teachers, with 2 years experience so they can be a level 5 credential. We are not able to pay a salary that applicants with a 4 year college degree and 2 years of experience find acceptable.
- 8/24/2016 3:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- There are few Teachers that qualify for for level 6 credential that wants to work for less money than they an make in a public school. This requirement is ridiculous!
- 8/24/2016 2:28 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- The pay is so low that many good, qualified staff can't afford to stay in the field.
- 8/24/2016 2:14 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Retain yes however find no.
- 8/24/2016 10:28 AM [View respondent's answers](#)



What are some of the more challenging experiences you've had with these programs?

- Answered: 16
- Skipped: 11

- MSDE turn around time. You need immediate feedback in this industry.
- 8/30/2016 7:20 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- All of the Msde programs are so broken amd mismanaged. No one can trust the systems are reliable. Accreditation is a joke. The validators are so not in alignment with each other. Our technical support visit was a waste of time. She looked for basic licensing standards. Nothing of quality improvement
- 8/30/2016 5:59 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Credentialing backlogs and inaccurate evaluations Mine was returned "not within 30 day window and training expired" because they did not get to it for weeks after I sent it in the second time. But I sent it with tracking and could prove when someone in Credentialing signed for it.
- 8/30/2016 5:45 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- None, because now I don't have information about that.
- 8/30/2016 4:26 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Getting the teacher credentials approved to advance in Excels levels.
- 8/29/2016 7:11 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Consistency and follow through when they are trying to problem solve issues at hand.
- 8/29/2016 4:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- The time and cost of participating are overwhelming and the return is negligible. I anticipate that I will need to work overtime (unpaid) to get all of our accreditation files uploaded and into EXCELS. In the past year, I estimate that I spent at least 60 hours trying to work through credentialing issues. I am required to have lead teachers with the same preparation as public school teachers but get no assistance in paying them a livable wage.
- 8/29/2016 2:17 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Lack of information on changes, inconsistency of Accreditation validators, CREDENTIALING!, Whgat is MSDE Accreditation support system?
- 8/29/2016 12:32 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Finding good, non repetitive training for credentialing.
- 8/29/2016 11:57 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- delays with credentialing
- 8/29/2016 9:50 AM [View respondent's answers](#)
- EXCELS--the requirements changed just a few months after I had published. When I went to renew, I had to upload different documents. Also, as we increase in the levels, there are requirements but no examples...sometimes I don't know what, exactly, they are looking for.
- 8/25/2016 12:07 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Credentialing - processing time frame and mixed responses when trying to work through the issues.
- 8/24/2016 10:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Our local specialist for MD Excels has been very helpful. However all of these programs that have great intentions emd up costing employees, owners and centers money. It is very difficult for employees to see the benefit when the bonus amounts are so minimal for the expense put into obtaining the higher levels.
- 8/24/2016 9:10 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- EXCELS expects documents in a timely fashion and credentialing is so delaye and disorganized that staff don't want to participate
- 8/24/2016 8:01 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Credentialing-late responses, different responses to similar packets, requiring additional ridiculous documentation. Everyone is very frustrated. Expectation of staff returning to school to acquire a Ba to be lead teacher- not realistic and pay doesn't support. EXCELS- too different from accreditation in terms of documentation but almost the same program. Should be combined into one. Way too time consuming.
- 8/24/2016 7:30 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- The different levels and maintaining them..
- 8/24/2016 7:20 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- the system takes too long
- 8/24/2016 7:09 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

- Baltimore! I love how we have to have our paperwork in by a certain date, but Baltimore can take their time!! It's unexcusable, even during the contract change over. All I've heard is complaints from other providers who's paperwork was lost. I asked for names and kept a log.
- 8/24/2016 7:02 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- We find that we are spending immense amounts of time on paperwork in both Excels and Credentialing rather than actually providing the quality programs.
- 8/24/2016 5:50 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Credentialing: money to pay for classes, the standards were changed making it hard for staff to become more qualified and work up in levels.
- 8/24/2016 4:03 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Credentialing - The biggest challenge has been lack of communication on the part of MSDE on specific requirements for PAU's. Xerox gives inaccurate information or cannot answer our questions. Also, when changes are made it is not communicated to us. We call multiple times and get different answers. The most frustrating challenge has been the new rule that only the staff person can call about a problem with a credential packet. As the director I am responsible to make sure each staff member maintains their required credential level in order to keep our MSDE accreditation and Maryland EXCELS check level 5. I have access to all their training, employment records and PAU's but due to "privacy" issues I can not talk to or email credentialing about problems with their packets. They are teachers and spend their days caring for children and don't have time to make and answer multiple calls to resolve a problem or get information.
- 8/24/2016 3:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- No one at MSDE talks to each other! Why are credentialing packets denied because the employee doesn't have a CCATS id. Why isnt there a system to deal with this without denying packets. Why am I told I cannot republish my excels without staff credentials. Yet more than 1/2 of my staff credentials are expired do to the delayed process. We were told 30 days. It has taken 60-90 days for each one. MSDE needs do engage in strategic planning and assess their communication plan. It is sorely lacking.
- 8/24/2016 2:28 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- Childcare Credential-The processing of applications is frustratingly slow. They are not consistent with PAU's being approved one year and not the next. It is easier to email, and cc others, when corresponding to get a faster response. I finally got credentialed (level 6), after numerous emails back and forth, for the previously 2 years this summer.
- 8/24/2016 2:14 PM [View respondent's answers](#)
- The lack of communication between the vendor and employees. Not getting back on credentialing. Because of issues with MSD and switching vendors many people lost bonuses. With exams we missed out on a large bonus due to the fact that credentialing could not get their stuff together so it took over 6 months for excels to decide that they can't Mark us down for staff members that don't have their credentialing back
- 8/24/2016 10:28 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Q8

Export

Has participating in the EXCELS program benefited or improved the quality of your program?

- Answered: 27
- Skipped: 0

Takes away time from regular program operations. Feels like a repeat of accreditation requirements

8/30/2016 5:59 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

More work. No ROI in revenue or program quality. No client had ever inquired about the rating. Detracts from program individuality and uniqueness.

8/30/2016 5:45 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

None

8/30/2016 4:26 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

It has helped with getting quality teachers.

8/29/2016 4:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

We started in EXCELS as we were also prepping for accreditation so it's hard to tell which program drove which improvements. The biggest change was documentation of things we were already doing. I was able to provide a little extra money for our lead teachers (since they are 4-year degreed and state certified to teach) but the bonus was taken away. Consequently, we lost very qualified staff to the public school system.

8/29/2016 2:17 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

It has raised our professionalism and to given us the tools to upgrade/improve our paperwork ie: handbooks

8/29/2016 12:32 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Since we are accredited by NAEYC, the quality of our programs has already been demonstrated. Completing the paperwork for EXCELS is double work and takes administrative time. I don't believe our parents look to the EXCELS rating when deciding whether or not to enroll.

8/29/2016 9:50 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

We were already doing most of the requirements. EXCELS helped us to refine some things.

8/25/2016 12:07 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Initially we were able to publish and use the money for staff training. We have not yet republished due to moving facilities and completing the NAEYC reaccreditation process.

8/24/2016 10:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

We had so much trouble aligning information with accreditation that we stopped working on it and focused on accreditation. It was a nightmare.

8/24/2016 7:30 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The Excels program gives us yet another level of quality to strive for, and a standard with which to measure our program..

8/24/2016 7:20 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Parents have never asked

8/24/2016 7:02 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

We spend a great deal of time on paperwork instead of director and owner being in the classroom where we can truly influence the quality of the program.

8/24/2016 5:50 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Love being able to have detailed indicators and examples of how to improve our program.

8/24/2016 4:05 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Just more paperwork and more frustrations dealing with MSDE

8/24/2016 3:43 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Since we were already MSDE Accredited, we may small but minor changes.

8/24/2016 3:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

To be a level 6 you must be accredited. Therefore, you already meeting exceeding excels standards. Its a duplicated effort.

8/24/2016 2:28 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Too much paperwork involved...the director has so many other things to do throughout the day to keep our center running smoothly.

8/24/2016 2:14 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Has participating in the MSDE Accreditation, or MSDE's accreditation support program benefited or improved the quality of your program?

- Answered: 22
- Skipped: 5

It's good to have a self evaluation periodically. The validators need more inter-relator reliability. It's not consistent at all
8/30/2016 5:59 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

None.

8/30/2016 4:26 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Potential families are impressed when they see that our program is Accredited. Some families come to us because we are Accredited.

8/29/2016 4:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

It's a benefit to say we are accredited; parents do pay attention to the designation. However, we had to make very few changes to become accredited, with the exception of loads of paperwork. Our practices didn't really change.

8/29/2016 2:17 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The new online system is very different and we received a Decision 3 on our first attempt using the new system. We had been accredited before so it was very disappointing. We re-evaluated and decided to give it another try and have made a lot of improvements to our program.

8/29/2016 12:32 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

We do not participate.

8/29/2016 9:50 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Have not started the accreditation process. There are some of the requirements that we might never meet, so it is intimidating. It seems like a daunting task.

8/25/2016 12:07 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

We are NAEYC accredited only

8/24/2016 10:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Our center has never attempted to participate in these programs. The owner sees it as too expensive to hire staff that would be qualified and to purchase materials and furniture to meet qualifications. She believes we would have to raise tuition too much and we would lose families.

8/24/2016 9:10 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

As time consuming and exhausting as that process was, we definitely benefitted from it. Each step helped us identify our weaknesses and work together to plan to improve. The challenge was all the documentation, unclear expectations and uploading!!! Hours spent uploading. I have gone through school improvement for years and nothing compares to the unclear expectations and time spent uploading and collecting documentation. Then after all that preparation the evaluators came for less than 2 hours and didn't even visit each class. We were all let down. No feedback or commendations.

8/24/2016 7:30 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

We are enrolled in Excels, but honestly do not know if we participate in any support programs

8/24/2016 7:20 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

N/A

8/24/2016 7:02 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Don't use this as it would be yet another frustrating experience with MSDE

8/24/2016 3:43 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

We have been accredited for many years. It has improved the quality of our program.

8/24/2016 3:19 PM [View respondent](#)

What are some specific aspects of EXCELS have you found to be most productive?

- Answered: 14
- Skipped: 13

The basic guidelines to then create your own personal procedures.

8/30/2016 7:20 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Nothing. It requires similar documentation as accreditation. Duplication of efforts takes away time from the program operation

8/30/2016 5:59 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Self-reflection

8/30/2016 5:45 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I don't have this.

8/30/2016 4:26 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Everything being able to be uploaded in our own portal is a lot more convenient.

8/29/2016 4:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Not productive. The process is time-consuming and overlapped with accreditation standards and sometimes contradicted accreditation standards.

8/29/2016 2:17 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Working with our QAS Sara Martin Ott

8/29/2016 12:32 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I do think there is benefit to making sure that the language used in policies are aligned with licensing requirements.

8/29/2016 9:50 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I like that everything is electronic...no paperwork to keep in a binder or to file.

8/25/2016 12:07 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Unifying our locations with same expectations in written format

8/24/2016 8:01 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Being able to achieve the levels of Excels..

8/24/2016 7:20 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Incentives to be a better quality Child Care Center

8/24/2016 7:09 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Updated my handbook

8/24/2016 7:02 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Providing checklists of things to make sure we have done or provide for the program. Having to tweak particular words or sentences for a handbook is NOT productive.

8/24/2016 5:50 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Seems to have a higher degree of communication and organization than other MSDE divisions.

8/24/2016 3:43 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Nothing really. Without the funded bonuses, its really a question of will we continue to support this. Parents recognize accreditation more than excels. We do not really need excels.

8/24/2016 2:28 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I work for a center that is trying to go through the EXCELS program.

8/24/2016 2:14 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

What are some specific aspects of Credentialing have you found to be most productive?

- Answered: 17
- Skipped: 10

It motivates me to continue my education and push my staff to continue as well.

8/30/2016 7:20 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Nothing. It has so much potential but the system is so broken no one can trust in it anymore

8/30/2016 5:59 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Payment for training Bonus money

8/30/2016 5:45 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

None, I am not participate in this program. I would like.

8/30/2016 4:26 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Id rather not comment right now since Credentialing is trying to get their act together. I'll comment after XEROX has had more time to run the program.

8/29/2016 4:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Everything about Credentialing is time-consuming and difficult. For years, the program has been behind on processing, the staff are not well-trained, there are too many mistakes, and customer service has been uneven. Once upon a time, we had Agneatha to help us, but now there's just a big void.

8/29/2016 2:17 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Credentialing has been a nightmare but it seems to be getting better.

8/29/2016 12:32 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

More training for staff

8/29/2016 11:57 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The initial support provided to our staff by the folks in the credentialing office was very helpful.

8/29/2016 9:50 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The bonus is a big motivator to get people started and to continue. Also, the training funds are extremely helpful to our staff to maintain their credential. As a small business owner, it keeps us within budget when the staff can pay for their own training beyond what we offer.

8/25/2016 12:07 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Ability of staff to apply for College Grant funds linked to the credential program. Have teachers completing degree who otherwise would not have pursued it

8/24/2016 10:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Staff held accountable for training

8/24/2016 8:01 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Requiring additional training

8/24/2016 7:30 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Helping me either my continued training. Also performing education activities outside the classroom...

8/24/2016 7:20 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

the bonus program and being able to go back to school

8/24/2016 7:09 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Nothing

8/24/2016 7:02 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Same as above. Checklists for staff to be sure staff are keeping up with training, etc

8/24/2016 5:50 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Monetary motivation for staff to take more classes.

8/24/2016 4:03 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

It has not been very productive but at least it seems to be improving.

8/24/2016 3:43 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

For many years it was a wonderful program. Teachers were excited to take classes and find ways to earn PAU's and loved being rewarded with a bonus. Now due to the many delays, lack of communication and changes it has become nothing but a burden to staff and administration.

8/24/2016 3:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Having a framework for PD.

8/24/2016 2:28 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

It has been one of the most frustrating things to get my CC credential application processed over the past 2 years.

8/24/2016 2:14 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

What are some specific aspects of MSDE Accreditation have you found to be most productive? .

- Answered: 10
- Skipped: 17

Technical support

8/30/2016 7:20 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

It's good to self evaluate your program and its affirming to get a decision I

8/30/2016 5:59 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Because I don't have information about this program.

8/30/2016 4:26 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Self study

8/29/2016 7:11 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

There are a lot of online tools that can be used. No longer needing to use a binder to store the information is a plus, as long as our uploads are not lost in the Internet.

8/29/2016 4:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The new system of uploading everything into EXCELS is very time-consuming. There is nothing productive about loads of paperwork. It takes time away from running a program.

8/29/2016 2:17 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

The instruments have been very helpful as we work through the accreditation process.

8/29/2016 12:32 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

N/A

8/29/2016 9:50 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The self eval with all stakeholders. ECERS although extremely time consuming and can be a year worth of work on its own.

Raising the expectations for lesson planning.

8/24/2016 7:30 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Achieving accreditation to show we have a good program.

8/24/2016 7:20 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

working to achieve higher standards and having better quality teachers

8/24/2016 7:09 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

N/A

8/24/2016 7:02 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Improving our program quality but reassessing classroom teaching structures and curriculums.

8/24/2016 4:03 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Standards help focus on some areas of quality that need to be worked on

8/24/2016 3:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)



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PAGE 1: Please Share Your Experiences (Surveys Must be completed by August 31st)

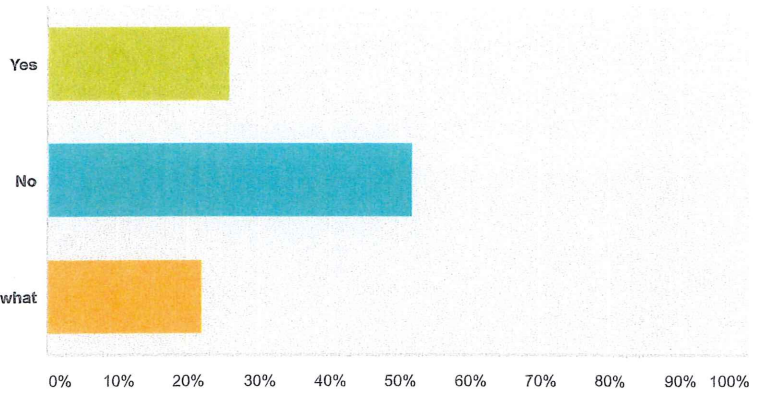
Q1

Customize

Export

Has participating in the EXCELS program benefited or improved the quality of your program?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	25.93% 7
No	51.85% 14
Somewhat	22.22% 6
Total	27

[Comments \(18\)](#)

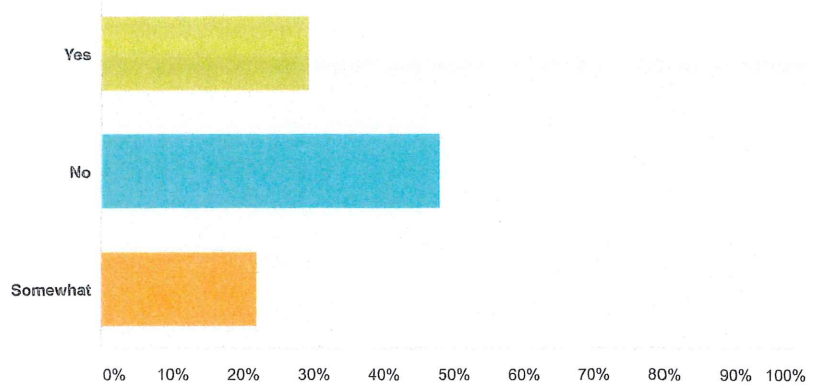
Q2

Customize

Export

Has participating in the Credentialing benefited or improved the quality of your program?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	29.63% 8
No	48.15% 13
Somewhat	22.22% 6
Total	27

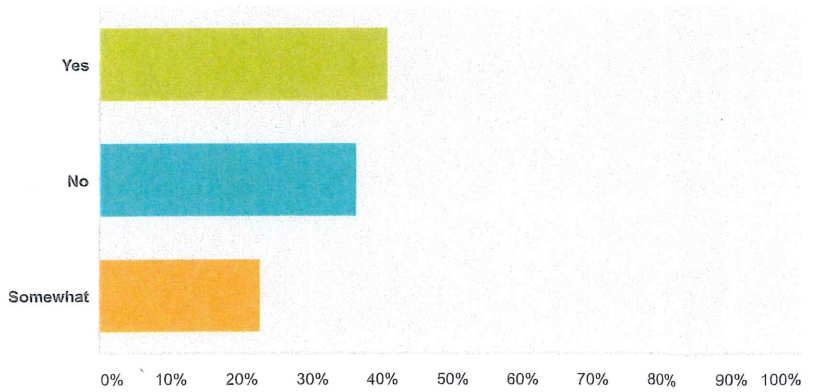
[Comments \(20\)](#)

Q3

[Customize](#) [Export](#)

Has participating in the MSDE Accreditation, or MSDE's accreditation support program benefited or improved the quality of your program?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 5



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	40.91% 9
No	36.36% 8
Somewhat	22.73% 5
Total	22

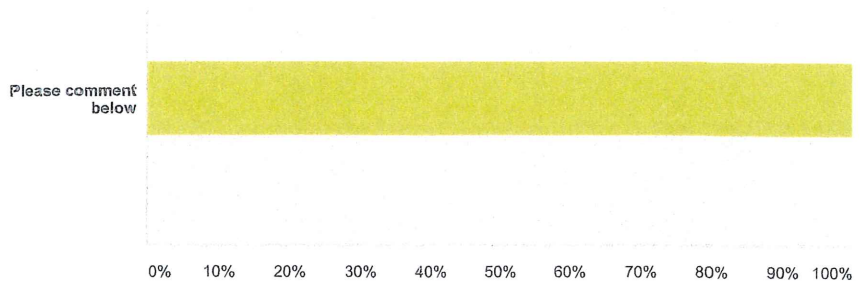
[Comments \(14\)](#)

Q4

[Customize](#) [Export](#)

What are some specific aspects of EXCELS have you found to be most productive?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 13



Answer Choices	Responses
Please comment below	100.00% 14
Total	14

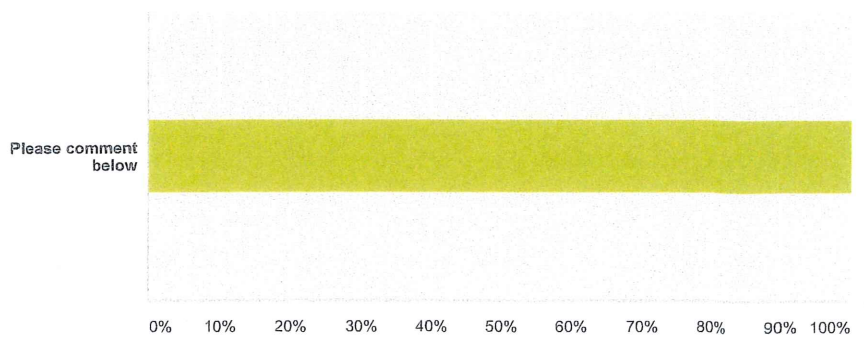
[Comments \(17\)](#)

Q5

[Customize](#) [Export](#)

What are some specific aspects of Credentialling have you found to be most productive?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 10



Answer Choices	Responses
Please comment below	100.00% 17
Total	17

[Comments \(22\)](#)

Q6

[Customize](#) [Export](#)

What are some specific aspects of MSDE Accreditation have you found to be most productive? .

Answered: 10 Skipped: 17

Please comment below.



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Answer Choices	Responses
Please comment below.	100.00% 10
Total	10

[Comments \(14\)](#)

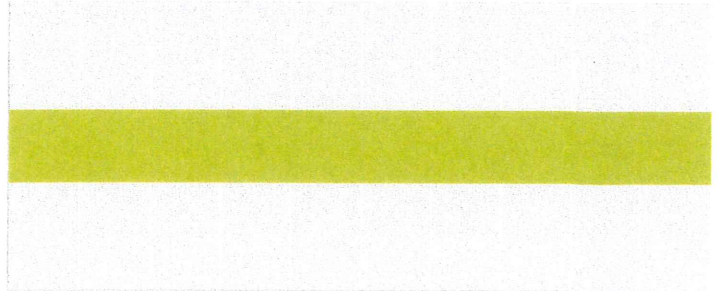
Q7

[Customize](#) [Export](#)

What are some of the more challenging experiences you've had with these programs?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 11

Please Comment Below and...



0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Answer Choices	Responses
Please Comment Below and identify which program you are commenting on: EXCELS, Credentialing, MSDE Accreditation, orMSDE's accreditation support program.	100.00% 16
Total	16

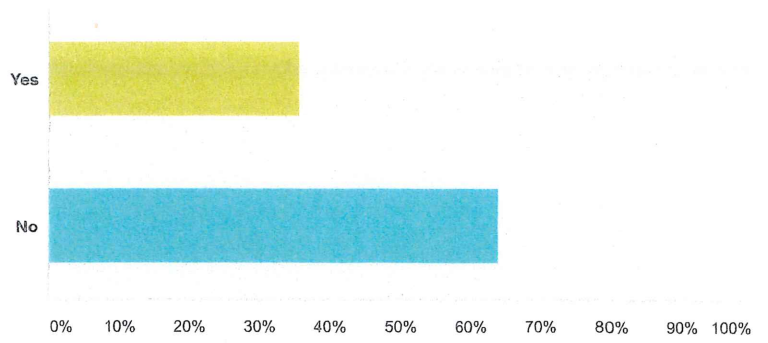
[Comments \(24\)](#)

Q8

[Customize](#) [Export](#)

Are you able to find and retain quality child care professionals?

Answered: 25 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	36.00% 9
No	64.00% 16
Total	25

[Comments \(20\)](#)

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Joint Committee on Children Youth and Families
Senator Nancy J. King and Delegate Ariana B. Kelly, Chairs
General Assembly of Maryland
223 James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

September 5, 2016

Dear Joint Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to discuss the important topic of early childhood care and education (ECCE) for the children and families in our State. We have already begun to see improvements as a result of your hearing in July focusing on ECCE regulations. I am optimistic that your hearing on Wednesday relating to ECCE quality will be just as beneficial. I'm a former litigator and public school teacher who for the past 8 years has been the president of a nonprofit, full time child care and preschool for 176 children, infants through Pre-K. I've been studying these issues for the past 6 years on the Montgomery County Commission on Child Care and I am the Chair of the Montgomery County Chapter of the Maryland State Child Care Association serve on the Board of the Montgomery County Organization of Child Care Directors.

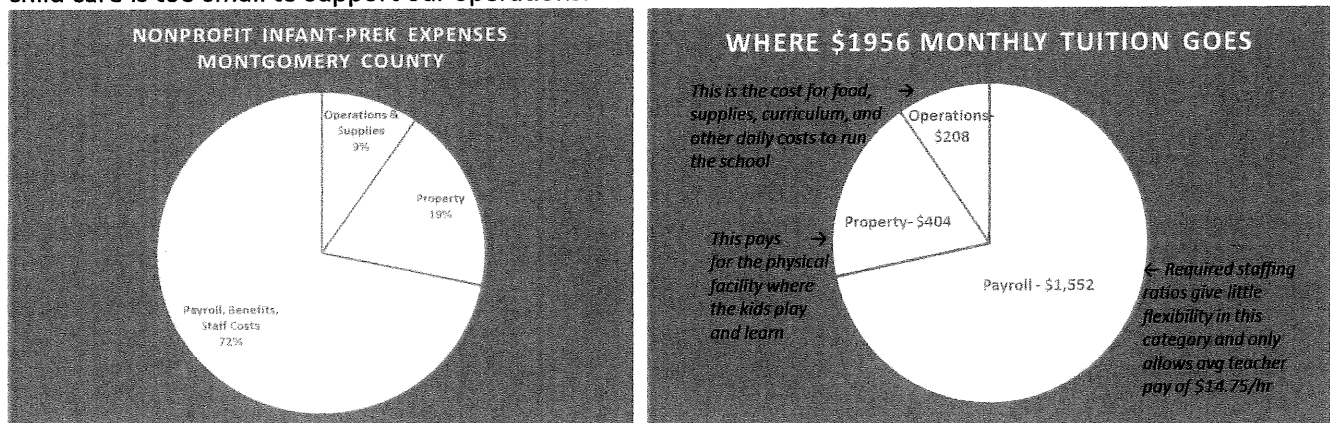
As you consider the quality issue, please keep in mind is that **Quality is relative to affordability**. In determining the levels of quality we can reasonably expect our ECCE system to achieve, we must look at what our families can afford. **Lower quality is often a symptom of a system plagued by a lack of resources**. Simply mandating that quality be higher doesn't work as it increases costs without increasing resources and makes it harder for parents to afford care and for programs to stay in business. There is a strong sentiment among the State's child care providers that we are drowning and about to go under, and the State and Federal governments keeps piling on with more and more unfunded mandates, hastening our demise.

Another thing to keep in mind is that **our ECCE system serves more than one purpose and a broad range of children**. Programs provide a safe place for children, help parents go to work, and create rich environments for kids that stimulate learning. Not only are we nurturing our future work force at a time when the vast majority of their brain development is occurring, we are also supporting our current work force by giving parents a reliable support and augmentation of their families. **ECCE includes infants, toddlers and twos and these children are overlooked when we talk about funding "universal pre-K."** It also includes school age children who need care before and after school.

Sometimes when we are making decisions about ECCE quality, **we picture one type of child care setting and impose "one size fits all" requirements that are only achievable in that setting**. Maryland has an extremely diverse system of child care programs that is needed to serve the varied needs of our families. There are programs that fall into one or more categories of "in home" programs, small centers, large centers, multisite centers, programs with infants, toddlers and two year olds, programs with only three and four year olds, Montessori programs, nursery schools, programs on military and government facilities, for profits, nonprofits, informal care, part time care, full-day care, publicly funded programs, employer funded programs, before and after school programs, national, regional and local chains, standalone operations, and more. In addition, these programs operate in areas with a broad range of income levels across the state with significant differences of what parents can afford. Other factors vary such as weather and traffic, parent work schedules, mass transit, and school start and end times.

All of these factors impact operational decisions such as tuition rates, staff salaries, numbers of staff, opening and closing times, teacher schedules, and school calendar. “One size fits all” mandates from a centralized entity like MSDE are even more problematic in ECCE than they are in the realm of K-12 education where the public schools are all operated and staffed by employees of the school system. And even in the K-12 context, regional variations are accounted for through local control of schools by County School Boards. Rather than mandates, our focus on quality should be a focus on increasing funding along with other resources such as information, training, and achievable ideas for how to improve quality. **Once we increase the resources, we need to allow providers to determine how best to incorporate quality enhancements into their programs for the specific populations they serve.**

As we think about the resources that are needed, it’s important to understand the financial side of the ECCE business. The vast majority of our expenses come from paying for staff. Unlike in other industries, **child care programs do not have a lot of flexibility to trim their expenses or increase their revenue as the number of staff and the number of children are mandated by the regulations.** Additionally, because we are pushing the limits of what our parents can afford, we operate on extremely tight margins. This year, our budget was \$3,542,795 in expenses on \$3,558,255 of projected revenue. This left us a margin of \$15,460 which is less than one half one one percent. If our enrollment projections are off by just 1 child a month, we will end up losing money. There is no cushion to absorb more costs. The only significant variable is to increase tuition. But if we go up too much, our enrollment goes down and we lose money. It is a precarious dynamic. When we do our long term planning, rather than discussing expansion or purchasing property to build financial security, we are estimating how long we can hold out and how we will wrap things up if the number of families who can afford child care is too small to support our operations.



For our families, **we need to remember that contained in the word affordability is the word “ability.”** For many families, it is not a choice whether to spend more on child care. It is that they do not have the financial ABILITY to spend more. We have to remember that many families who need child care are our younger families, just entering the work force, and at the lower end of their earning potential. The Federal recommended earnings percentage is 10% on child care. That means that a family with two young children in care would need to be making \$200,000-\$500,000 per year (depending on which part of the state they live) in order to be able to afford child care. This does not describe most families and points to the fact that financial assistance is greatly needed. We have to understand that our current inadequate child care subsidy system is only available for our poorest families. We need financial investments in our middle income families as well.

Another issue is that **when we talk about quality, we often conflate our minimum standards of high quality with our aspirational goals.** Maryland’s licensing regulations have some of the highest standards in the Country. They go beyond basic health and safety issues. The regulations have requirements for educational levels and initial training as well as continuing training for child care teachers and aides. They require handbooks, contracts and other types of communications with parents. They require certain screen time policies, discipline policies,

food and beverage policies, and policies about the daily schedules of the children. Along with the health and safety regulations, the group sizes and teacher ratios, the regulations help ensure that licensed programs have a minimum level of high quality, but they also have a cost. Many of our families cannot afford licensed child care. Yet for some reason, we have required that those programs who accept child care subsidies, and serve our poorest families, have to go beyond our minimum standards of high quality and participate in aspirational initiatives that further increase costs.

In addition to the requirements of licensing, there are other systems in place to further improve quality. Accreditation has sets of standards and evaluation tools that providers can use to reach higher levels of quality and to be recognized for their accomplishment. Credentialing encourages ECCE professionals to further their training and education and offers bonuses based on their progress. On top of this we added EXCELS¹, a rating system that for the most part assumes that high quality equates to the number of child care professionals that have higher levels of education, especially early childhood degrees. However, EXCELS is not scalable and sets up standards that are not possible to achieve. **If all programs attempted to get to the highest level of EXCELS tomorrow, it would be impossible because**

- 1) **our workforce has nowhere near the number of people with early childhood degrees and**
- 2) **even if we had enough people with degrees, those programs would go out of business because we do not have enough families that could afford the increased costs.**

Why are we promoting a system that incentivizes disastrous results? When EXCELS was first introduced, I pointed out to MSDE that its requirements would increase our costs and asked how we were expected to handle that. MSDE's response was that we would have to pass the costs along in our tuition rates. How is it benefitting the families of our state if we are increasing costs that force more families out of licensed child care?

I can appreciate the argument that if an ECCE teacher had a background in the theories of childhood development and understood the physiological and psychological changes that children experience in the early years, that this could better inform their work and improve their outcomes. However, **having an early childhood degree is NOT a necessity to being a high quality ECCE professional.** In fact, in the 2015 report *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* by the National Academies, a report that is generally cited for supporting the idea that we need ECCE professionals to have educational degrees, it was acknowledged that "empirical evidence about the effects of bachelor's degree is inconclusive." However, they promote the idea of degrees as a way to unify the field and elevate ECCE professionals to the level of respect of their K-12 counterparts. In other words, **it is not a prerequisite, but an aspirational goal** that they believe could help improve the profession. Other studies that have argued for ECCE teachers to have degrees have focused on older children in Pre-K classrooms rather than on infants and toddlers. These studies also had controlled conditions with teachers who stayed throughout the entire study.

Our experience has been that teachers with degrees have much higher turnover and have little interest working with infants and toddlers. In the past three years, responding to the pressures of EXCELS, we hired four new teachers with early childhood or education related degrees. All four have left to do other things. Meanwhile, we have 40 teachers who have been with us for five years or longer. High quality for children and families is about consistency and stability. We have highly experienced teachers who understand children, love what they do, and who have engaging, stimulating classrooms where children are free to explore and learn through play. We support our teachers with free training and pay for coursework towards degrees, but many have their own families and do not have the time or the desire to pursue further education. These teachers have

¹ EXCELS is in the process of completing a "validation study" that MSDE told us does not look at causation, only correlation. To assume this study will show that EXCELS **causes** higher quality is the same as assuming that fire trucks cause fire damage because the more fire trucks there are at fire, the greater the damage. Programs may have already been high quality before they participated in EXCELS. Anecdotal evidence suggests EXCELS detracts from quality as providers reported simply spending more time assembling and uploading documentation and dealing with validators which took away from time spent coaching teachers, working with children, and communicating with parents. We need baseline data to compare before and after EXCELS and real time data comparing programs of similar quality who did and who didn't participate in EXCELS. It is possible that we took Federal money, with its many strings attached, and actually damaged our State's system of child care and early education rather than helped it.

been the backbone of our program and have provided the highest quality care for both of my kids and thousands of other children in our community over the past twenty five years. Why are we sending them the message that they are no longer good enough?

There's a serious disconnect these quality initiatives have with what those of us at the ground level are experiencing as we try to run our programs and serve the needs of our families. Initiatives from MSDE seem to be oblivious to the real world. While we understand the theoretical improvements we could make, it seems so far off and out of touch with our practical reality. We are not against more discussion and building understanding between theory and practice, but until there is a massive increase in economic resources, we are just trying to survive.

Instead of adding more and more initiatives and unfunded mandates, we should be giving parents the ability to afford child care through increases to subsidies and tax credits. We should be putting our resources at MSDE towards licensing specialists so we can get them better trained and reduce their caseload so they have more time to be a resource and work in partnership with providers. Like the Department of Defense did when they realized that ECCE was essential to the success of their workforce, our state needs to make early childhood one of the highest funding priorities.

I very much appreciate the opportunity to provide information to the Joint Committee. Attached are notes that I collected from providers relating to the quality topics the Joint Committee will be examining. Please let me know if I can provide any further information. Sincerely,

Shaun M. Rose



President, Rock Spring Children's Center

Notes on Defining, Achieving, Evaluating, and Rewarding Quality, Plus Barriers and Solutions

Defining Quality:

- Quality is difficult to define and is based on many factors that are not quantifiable. It can also be subjective. A “high quality” program that meets the needs of some families may not be suitable for other families. Location, philosophy, rigidity, diversity, hours, location and cost also all play into it. In addition to the generally accepted indicators of quality, these intangibles and the subjective needs of parents and their kids need to fit into it.
- Teacher quality – years of experience, understanding of child development and best practices, dedication, evaluations (knowledge, engagement with children and parents), education
- Low turnover – teachers who stay in the same program from year to year
- Staff ratios – meeting licensing minimums, having additional staff to go beyond minimums and minimize disruption to classrooms when there is turnover
- Physical environment – safe location, indoor and outdoor play space, toys and equipment for children geared to engage gross motor, fine motor and social skills as well as learn curriculum objectives through play
- Parent/Community engagement – staffing resources to dialogue with and educate parents on a daily basis; communication using multiple means, multiple methods; becoming viewed as a necessity by the community served
- Organizational structure – whether for profit or non-profit, are there enough resources and is there a commitment to invest surplus resources back into the staff and the program

Achieving Quality:

- Training and technical assistance along with funding to make training free and easily available and accessible.
- Changing the economic structure of our current system of child care by giving parents more dollars to spend so that programs can raise quality by:
 - offering higher pay to staff, improving staff ratios above minimum standards, retaining quality staff,
 - giving staff more professional development opportunities in the regular work day along with planning time and time to communicate with parents
 - increasing the demand for training so that there are more high quality options,
 - improving their facilities and getting more and higher quality play equipment, toys and other educational supports
 - retaining dedicated directors/managers/owners who, along with the teachers, are able to make a fair wage or profit commensurate with other industries

Evaluating Quality:

- Licensing- especially in MD which has some of the highest licensing requirements in the Country, if we properly resource licensing specialists, a child care program licensed by MSDE should be seen as the achieving the initial level of high quality.
- Credentialing- incentivizing teachers with monetary bonuses to pursue higher education
- Accreditation- gives methods for pushing to even higher levels of quality and having those efforts recognized by an outside entity
- EXCELS- pushes accreditation and more education, but increases costs with little economic support; takes time from administrators working with their teachers and families

- Reputation of programs / parent feedback- while it is understandable that government entities would like to see objective measures of quality like EXCELS, there are many intangible facets of high quality programs and ECCE workers that are not easily measured by objective criteria.

Rewarding Quality:

- Government rewards- Bonuses and tiered reimbursements from EXCELS and credentialing;
- Free Market rewards- Higher pay for staff with higher credentials/education; Better reputation for programs with higher quality; Higher profits/ higher demand for enrollment

Barriers to Quality:

- Current quality initiatives are not proven to be valid and/or are not perceived as true incentives (examples – credentialing bonuses requiring complex paperwork, long wait times, high % of denials, EXCELS bonuses that are much lower than the costs of participating, providers being forced into participating in quality initiatives rather than choosing to seek them out, significant increase in administrative hours to do paperwork and to interface with MSDE which takes away from time supporting teachers and working on relationships with families).
- Need more high quality and affordable training options; training needs to be offered online so low wage workers can easily access them (during work day where they work, immediately before or after work, or at their homes), travel and timing of trainings is a problem
- Cost – programs are strapped, teachers are low paid, parents can't afford more so the free market forces are not providing solutions – some level of government intervention is needed. Can be minimal – boosting subsidies, giving tax deductions and credits for child care costs to empower parents to afford quality care in a free market system. Or can be more involved – providing government funding only if programs submit to centralized control of government. Or most involved – extending public schooling down to 3 and 4 year olds, possibly with infant and toddler programs also included. We should be advocating for the minimal model of intervention which allows the people with the most education and experience (providers) and the ones with the most at stake (parents) to be the primary forces impacting the system.
- Need more “carrots” – such as economic and expert support for providers trying to serve families with children with special needs, support to pay child care staff more
- Communication – government entities and child care community are not engaging in dialogue and a top down approach is being implemented without provider buy in and without regard to the economic realities
- Direction – Often, the decision makers are not taking into account our current system of care and how initiatives impact current providers and our work force. Solutions seem more focused on government mandates rather than supporting our current system by adding economic resources. For example, if all of the four year olds were to be taken out of the current system and put into universal pre-k tied to the elementary schools, the costs for infants to three years olds would skyrocket, causing more families to not be able to afford care and many programs to go out of business. Maryland has shown commitment to incorporating current programs into a diverse delivery system for pre-k, but we need to make sure that the reimbursements and financial supports boost our system of child care for all ages and not just four year olds.

Solutions:

- A greater investment in early childhood education and care is needed.

- Universal Pre-K is not, in itself, the answer as it only focuses on one year in a child's life. Working parents need child care from the time their child is born until they turn five and then before and after school during working hours.
- We need to be drastically increasing funding for child care subsidies to help empower parents to obtain quality child care that meets their needs. The amount of the subsidies need to be significantly increased and the income qualification levels need to be raised. Right now, only the poorest of the poor can qualify and the amount of the award is not sufficient to obtain full time, consistent, quality care.
- If we cannot support middle income families through subsidies as well, we need to be looking at options such as tax credits and other financial supports so that they can also afford quality care for their children.
- By putting more dollars into the hands of the parents, we can also help increase teacher pay and benefits so that we get and retain high quality teachers.
- Initiatives like EXCELS and credentialing need to be streamlined so that they do not require as much administrative time and frustration. They should be voluntary so that participation will be a true indication of their effectiveness. If they truly increase quality and are not fraught with disincentives such as cost and administrative burdens, providers will participate.
- Communication and accountability fixes like we suggested in the last session relating to licensing regulations need to be put into place.
- Make level 1 of EXCELS simply being a licensed program.
- While it may take some time for a larger financial investment in early childhood care and education, find smaller incremental supports that could be put into place:
 - Create an environment at MSDE that is more friendly and supportive to trainers and encourages more trainers. Training regulations change more quickly than trainers can keep up with and the office that deals with training is often confused about what is required and when.
 - Subsidize trainers so that there are more trainings offered, especially new trainings like ADA training which is now required for all preschool teachers but is difficult to find
 - Remove or reduce unemployment liability for child care providers. It can be a significant expense and a disincentive to dismiss low quality teachers.
 - Subsidize benefits for child care professionals such as health/disability/life insurance and retirement plans, or offer some type of group plan that would be cheaper than what each program could get on its own.

INDEED...Average Child Care Provider salaries for job postings nationwide are 11% lower than average salaries for all job postings nationwide

Child Care Teacher Aide in Maryland	\$21,000
Kool Smiles Dentist in Maryland	\$211,000
Caring Person in Maryland	\$18,000
Child Care Provider in Maryland	\$22,000
Nurse Practitioner Obgyn in Maryland	\$110,000
Center Director in Maryland	\$41,000
NP PA Primary Care in Maryland	\$88,000
Mobile Therapist in Maryland	\$54,000
Child Care Teacher in Maryland	\$23,000
Child Care Director in Maryland	\$43,000
Infant Teacher in Maryland	\$23,000
Student Support Specialist in Maryland	\$29,000
Direct Care Professional in Maryland	\$19,000
Toddler Teacher in Maryland	\$23,000

TESTIMONY ON QUALITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

SEPTEMBER 7, 2016

Senator King, Delegate Kelly and members of the Joint Committee, the Maryland Head Start Association is deeply grateful to be able to share our testimony regarding quality and compensation in early childhood care and education. We are grateful for all that the Joint Committee is doing to address the concerns of the child care community.

Over the past 35 years in my tenure as a Head Director, social worker and advocate I have seen firsthand how low compensation has a negative impact on quality in child care settings. Linda Smith, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families affirms this by saying, "The quality of any early care and learning setting is directly related to the quality of the staff, their education and training and understanding of child development and the ability to translate that understanding through effective practice. Wage parity across settings is critical to attracting and retaining a high-quality work force, essential for a high-quality program."

A June 2016 Fact Sheet issued by the US Department of Education illustrates the troubling pay gap for early childhood teachers. "According to the U.S. Department of Education's report, "High Quality Early Learning Settings Depend on a High Quality Workforce", early childhood teachers are paid less than mail order clerks, tree trimmers and pest control workers. In fact, most early childhood educators earn so little that they qualify for public benefits." A recent survey

conducted in Maryland underscores this alarming fact. 45% of child care workers in Maryland are receiving food stamps.

The annual median wage of child care workers in Maryland is \$22,120 and Head Start teachers receive \$34,074. Most child care and Head Start employees work 52 weeks a year. In contrast, the starting salary for a preschool teacher in the Baltimore City Public School System is \$43,000. In the past, our Head Start program has experienced very low teacher turnover, with one or two teachers leaving per year. However, in the past six weeks we have lost nine teachers and one assistant teacher, all of whom left for better pay. Seven of the ten have gone to the public school system where they are making anywhere from \$9,000 - \$22,000 a year more while working eight fewer weeks than they do in Head Start. Another Baltimore City Head Start program currently has 17 staff vacancies. Head Start and child care programs are all losing staff to the public school system, and competing for the scarce number of individuals who are choosing to enter the field of early childhood education.

Low compensation undermines quality and fair compensation is essential to promoting a safe and high quality education program for all children. We must find a way to compensate our early childhood educators at rates that are comparable to their preschool and elementary counterparts. Until we do, we will continue to struggle with providing high quality early childhood education and care which will have an adverse effect on our children's ability to succeed in elementary school and beyond.

Mary M. Gunning, MSW, Director
Catholic Charities Head Start of Baltimore City

Co-Chair, Maryland Head Start Association Public Policy Committee



**Comments Concerning Quality, Training, Compensation and Technical Assistance
in Maryland's Child Care Delivery System
From the Maryland State Family Child Care Association
Presented to the Joint Committee on Children, Youth and Families
September 7, 2016**

The *Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA)* is the professional non-profit organization that represents thousands of Registered family child care providers across Maryland. We are a volunteer organization made up local associations in regions across Maryland and work on behalf of our members to give them a voice on regulatory and policy issues in the child care profession. We thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of our members about the Quality, Training, Compensation and Technical Assistance that is delivered in the current Child Care Delivery System and how it may be improved.

What is Quality Child Care?

As family child care providers in the state of Maryland, we view child care as “meeting the physical, emotional, social, and educational needs of every child.” This is the objective we strive to deliver on a daily basis, and one we view as our responsibility to the children and families we serve. In meeting these needs of the children, they develop a sense of competency and confidence that gives them the ability to cope with everyday challenges as well as the desire and ability to succeed in a formal classroom environment when they leave our programs.

The children in our programs know us and trust us to meet their emotional needs because we develop that one on one relationship in our small group settings. The children have no doubt from our actions that we care about what matters to them, they know this because we attend to their needs promptly and appropriately. In the absence of their parents, we are the adults who will listen, talk, read, and sing to them as well as provide comforting hugs when needed. Our family child care homes are their “homes away from home”, a place that is warm and nurturing, much like their own home. In addition, there is a wonderful opportunity for continuity of care, that is unlike any other form of child care. Children can realistically bond with one provider in infancy and remain with that same person through school. This consistency in care provides a wealth of benefits to children, families and caregivers. For children it gives them a consistent supportive relationship on which they can build a foundation of trust. Family Child Care allows us to get to know our child care children and their families in ways that can bring added stability and support to their daily lives.

In our programs, the children have the benefit of a mixed age environment with the valuable gift of learning from those older and younger than themselves. They learn to share, care for, and help each other. There is a sense of community and each child has a vested interest in the classroom toys, supplies, equipment, etc. Our rooms are furnished with developmentally appropriate materials that each age group can identify with and also strive to have their social, physical, emotional and educational needs met. The children learn to socialize and resolve conflict through observing and modeling. Younger ones who may not have language to express themselves are given help with words and actions as needed.

In addition to the wealth of classroom manipulatives, puzzles, board games, books, writing utensils, playground equipment, etc., the children in family child care have an added benefit of using everyday household items to learn valuable skills and independence. Math, science, and literacy are learned by taking part in cooking, gardening and everyday household chores. If you would research a definition for “quality” child care, you would find that what is being offered in family child care homes across Maryland consistently demonstrates that quality. We are warm, responsive, and skilled workers that offer small groups and low child/provider ratios and our setting is language rich with age-appropriate and stimulating materials in a safe and secure environment.

How do we Achieve Quality Child Care?

In order to achieve quality in family child care homes, we believe there must be regulations and procedures that each program abides by. However, given the unique structure of family child care and all that it provides to children, it is arbitrary for MSDE to expect family child care providers to conform to standards and/or practices that define “quality” in the more traditional child care settings. The goal of quality for family child care focuses on developing well-rounded children who are entering school ready to learn and meeting the unique needs of each child and family. But this unique setting also requires a sensitivity to being operated in an environment that is also a home.

What are the Barriers to Achieving Quality Child Care?

The barriers to achieving quality in family child care are likely attributed to a lack of respect, resources and support from MSDE and its representatives. Many family child care providers feel that MSDE lacks respect for the work that they do and does not understand the unique circumstances that apply to working in your home. MSDE’s framework for high quality requires excessive documentation and paperwork. This process requires providers to align their own diverse/individualized program to the standards of settings much different than their own.

How do we Measure and Incentivize Quality Child Care?

While we agree with the concept of a rating system to measure quality to ensure that children are receiving quality care, the process should be conducive to family child care providers and the various levels of education and experience that they may have. Also, parents should have the right to opt their child out of any process if they choose. Providers should have the right to insist that a professional such as the child’s doctor complete the screening or have the right to decline from doing it when a parent fails to get the physician to do so.

There are a few incentive programs for providers in the child care system. One of them is the Maryland Credential which is a *voluntary* program that offers recognition of achievement based on a provider's professional development/education, years of experience, and professional activities. The other is the Maryland EXCELS program which is a quality rating and improvement system that awards ratings to child care programs based on nationally recognized standards and best practices. The EXCELS program is *required* for purchase of care providers. The success of incentive programs that promote quality is dependent on MSDE first respecting the family childcare provider community and the uniqueness of their programs as well as the limitations they have being a sole business owner. Forcing providers, who are private business owners, to be a part of any program over and above the licensing requirement in order to receive subsidy payments, creates resentment. It produces undue stress on providers and their families with the added responsibilities, paperwork and deadlines. It also hurts Purchase of Care families that are looking for care as they are limited to only the providers who participate in EXCELS. This creates a huge problem for families and is compounded in regions where there are many purchase of care families and not many EXCELS participating providers.

Both of these programs have problems with inefficiency. Family child care providers feel that before MSDE starts any programs, especially ones that require participation there should be no "glitches". The process must be completely developed, addressing all problems before it is rolled out. This should also apply to the existing programs that have throughout the years been known for their inefficiency. No program should be made mandatory until they operate with complete transparency and efficiency. Once this is achieved, if providers already participate in one program and a new program is developed (EXCELS), there should be a streamlined process for them to join the new program when the process and/or paperwork are similar. It is not necessary to keep re-inventing the wheel to the detriment of the family provider whose resources and time are already extended. As well, the program must already be sustainable with funding, providers should not be told after joining that they can no longer receive the benefits that inspired them to join. Finally, there should be *accountability* on the part of MSDE and/or the company contracted to oversee the program, it is just as important as anything asked of the participating provider.

MSFCCA asked members for comments and/or concerns regarding the Maryland Child Care Credential and Maryland EXCELS. The following information was gathered:

Maryland Child Care Credential –

- Very few providers have not had issues with promptness and completion of the process in a timely manner. Providers are expected to adhere to the deadline for renewals, why can't MSDE complete the process in a reasonable amount of time as well?
- The backlog for renewals last year was very frustrating. Providers waited more than a year for the system to get caught up. Because providers were not receiving their certificates in a timely manner, they didn't qualify for Excels so they could not take Purchase of Care children. This inefficient system caused many children to be left out because there were not enough qualified providers to care for them.

- MSDE employees are not always knowledgeable. It is almost impossible to get a human on the phone to answer questions. When you do, you still cannot get an answer to your question because they are not educated in the Credential process.
- There is not enough access to trainings for many regions in Maryland. Some providers have a difficult time finding the required training for Registration and Credentialing renewals. The cost of training is also an issue for some regions. There are parts of Maryland where providers have a very difficult time maintaining enrollment so therefore the cost of having to pay for the required training is difficult.
- There needs to be more variety in the training that is available. This may be achieved by relaxing the qualifications for trainers and allowing more providers with experience to train their peers using their own experiences and knowledge. Why is it necessary for a trainer to have a Bachelor's Degree? Many family child care providers could offer wonderful training. Why not reduce the requirement to an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood with a certain level of experience? Many child care associations in Maryland also have a difficult time getting trainers at a reasonable cost. This change could result in many more trainers for local associations and providers alike.

Maryland EXCELS –

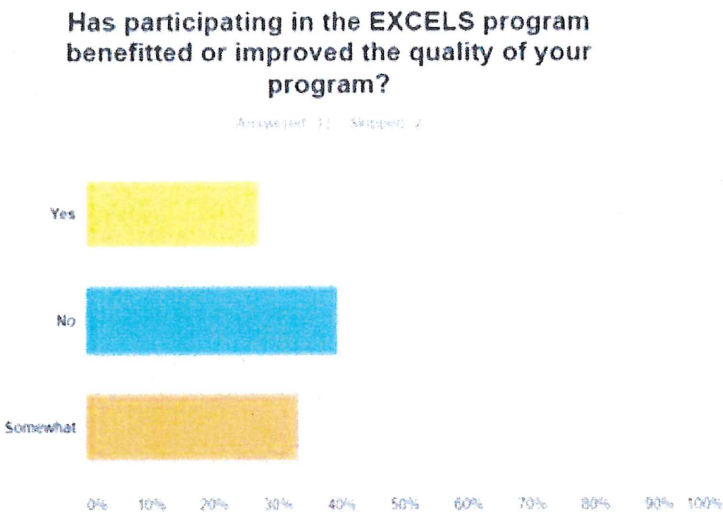
- The EXCELS process is not provider friendly. It is difficult for many providers to understand the requirements, and also maneuver the web site.
- The EXCELS Coordinators are habitually not clear in what they are asking from the providers. Providers end up frustrated with the process after uploading many documents, most of which are not accepted the first few times. MSDE needs to give better direction on what they desire from providers and be more generic in the wording required for the documents. Providers who have not had college level education may not have the language that coordinators are looking for in their documents, but this does not mean they are not doing what is being asked.
- It appears that MSDE wants all providers to operate their small businesses using a set of policies and contracts that are identical. The requirements do not encourage individualized or customized programs which is the core of what family child care offers. Many providers take exception to this, being a small business. Each should be able to set their own policies and write their own contracts. Guidance is much different than demand, each of our small business policies should reflect the values and visions of our own individual business.
- When the program began there was monetary benefits for participating providers. As of last year the monetary benefits ended with the "Race to the Top" dollars. Why was a program started using funding that MSDE knew was going to end?

- Annual Bonuses for family childcare providers should be reinstated and changed to include providers at level 3 in Excels and a level 3 in Credentialing. Level three in these programs together illustrates a commitment to maintaining a quality program.

Technical Assistance –

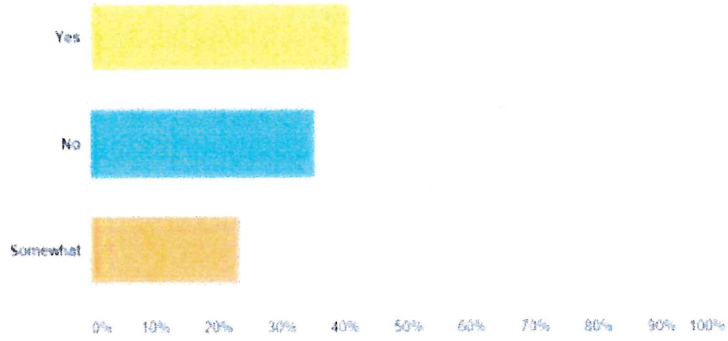
Technical assistance is available to providers from the local resource networks on a variety of issues, one being assistance for providers moving through the levels of Credentialing and EXCELS. This assistance is greatly needed all over the state to help curb some of the frustration that providers have with these systems. There is also technical assistance that is available for behavioral and developmental needs of children enrolled in child care programs. These services are of vital importance in the child care delivery system and must continue or be expanded.

Below are the results of a short survey taken of our members a short time before this letter was prepared.



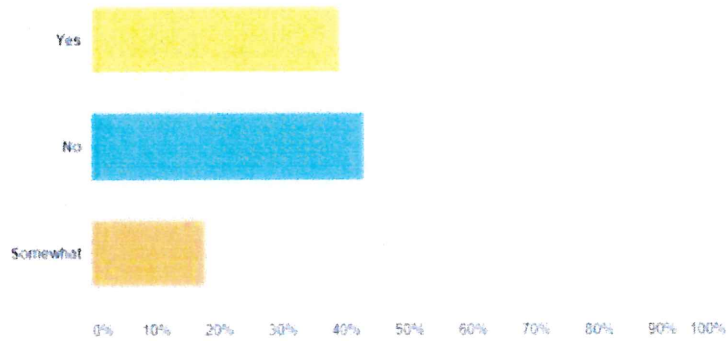
Has participating in the Credentialing benefitted or improved the quality of your program?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 1



Has participating in NAFCC Accreditation benefitted or improved the quality of your program?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 7



Arlene F. Ennis
9731 Williamsburg Drive
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
301-868-6918

Good Afternoon Members of the Committee

My name is Arlene Ennis and I have been a family child care professional in Prince George's County for over 20 years. I hold a degree in Early Childhood Education, a current CDA (Child Development Associate), Maryland Voluntary Credential level 5(6 being the highest) which means I receive a yearly bonus. I also operate a Nationally Accredited program.

I am currently serving as the Membership Council Delegate for National Association for Family Child Care and I am the President of my Local Association.

The JCCYF is seeking the meaning of Quality Child Care. My meaning of quality child care is an environment where the early childhood professional is in tune to the children in care. The environment is safe and clean. The parents are involved with the program and offers support in the program. Children are given developmentally appropriate activities in areas of:

1. Sense of Self
2. Creative Representation
3. Social Relations
4. Movement
5. Music
6. Communication and Language
7. Exploring Objects
8. Early Quantity and Number
9. Space and Time

These categories must be included in a quality childcare environment and facilitated by, a trained individual in early childhood education which will result in quality care.

When these categories are facilitated properly children will be able to enter school ready for success in years to come. I think they are already successful!

I believe that quality childcare can be achieved by an early childhood professional (childcare provider) has to help children acquire knowledge and understanding by drawing from within themselves and relations and connections between facts, observations, and ideas regardless of the child's age. I feel that MSDE lacks these qualities in their present trainers. Strong statement but true!

I will not comment on the programs that MSDE incentivize as quality childcare. There are so many broke facets to these programs that it's hard to comment on them without taking up too much of your time.

The barriers, to achieving quality childcare are starting new programs without fixing the old ones. Wanting early educators to become cookie cutters in their programs that have been successful for years and children leaving ready for more success has started to become a barrier. We have been overregulated in our programs.

When I was told that becoming an accredited provider would make my program a high quality one and then being told that EXCELS makes it a high quality program. What does that mean?

Thank you for your time.

Hearing Testimony September 7, 2016
Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families
Written Testimony
Service Employees International Union, Local 500, CTW, CLC

Service Employees International Union, Local 500 is the collective bargaining representative of home based family child care providers who participate in the Maryland State Child Care Subsidy program. SEIU Local 500 is committed to quality in child care. We believe that every child, no matter their family's income or zip code, deserves a high quality child care program. We also believe that providers who invest in their own education and provide innovative care for children that assists them in becoming school-ready merit recognition and should be held up as examples. However, to focus on Child Care quality at this time is a bit like planting flowers in the front yard when your house is on fire. Child Care in the United States and in Maryland is in a crisis.

Child Care is unaffordable for parents to purchase and it is not a career that supports child care providers or their families. The statistics on the current state of child care are clear. Annual costs at a child care center in Maryland average \$23,032 for an infant and a 4-year-old, which is 26 percent of the median income for families with children. For low-income families, the average cost of child care would constitute the majority of family income in most cases. On average, the Child Care and Development Block Grant, or CCDBG, serves only 8 percent of federally eligible children in Maryland.ⁱ

Despite the high cost of care, many child care providers are living in poverty or barely scraping by. In the United States, roughly 2 million adults make a living by caring for and educating more than 12 million children (infants to 5-year-olds.) Last year, 46 percent of child-care workers were part of families enrolled in at least one public safety net program, compared with 26 percent of those in the broader workforce.ⁱⁱ "The low pay not only impacts primarily women and women of color but there are also major disparities for women of color in the early learning industry. A recent report by the Center for America Progress suggest that poor compensation and benefits are felt most acutely by African American women in the early childhood workforce. On average, African American female teachers working full time make 84 cents for every \$1 earned by their white counterparts.ⁱⁱⁱ And, Child Care providers' income is going down, not going up. In 2015, the median wage for child care workers was \$10.64, a 5% decrease since 2010.^{iv}

And on top of these difficult circumstances for providers and families, the state of Maryland, and the Federal Government, are asking more from providers without a substantial increase in compensation. MSDE does provide many excellent scholarship programs for providers as well as provides some compensation for providers who take extra steps. However, in a time when providers are struggling for every dollar; small bonuses, reimbursements or other programs that provide some benefits for providers are too small, often delayed and create a massive headache in terms of reporting and paperwork. And unfortunately, due to these requirements, some of the quality measures lead to less time for providers with the children in their care. In particular, the EXCELS programs, designed to increase quality care for low income children, has unfortunately given Maryland's neediest families less options on finding care that fits their needs—often greatly impacted by transportation, location and non-standard hours.

SEIU Local 500 surveyed family child care providers in the State of Maryland, 26% said that the EXCELS program made them less likely to serve subsidy families, and 18% said the requirement made the drop out of the subsidy program all together. When asked about their experience, 26% of providers like the EXCELS program and 22% of providers thought that a rating system was a good idea, however, EXCELS was deeply flawed. Finally, 51% of providers felt that parents should be the primary decision makers on what make quality child care.

Hearing Testimony September 7, 2016
Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families
Written Testimony
Service Employees International Union, Local 500, CTW, CLC

In relation to the credentialing program, 42% of providers reported that it took them over a year to receive their bonuses from the date of application. 26% report receiving no response from MSDE when they submit their paperwork. 15% report that they receive their application back multiple times for correction or 10% received their paperwork back with no explanation why it was being returned.

For the providers who participate in EXCELS and/or credentialing, there are a number of barriers that keep them from moving up in levels. 20% of providers say the high costs of trainings are major obstacle. 14% say that they cannot afford to wait for reimbursements from MSDE and 9% cannot find the classes they need to fulfill the requirements. 18% said that the process is so frustrating that despite trying to be in the program in the past, they have given up. Finally, 23% found that parents do not care about the EXCELS rating, and therefore the effort does not make the investment worth their time.

SEIU Local 500 believes that there are some solutions to increasing quality child care in the state of Maryland.

1. First and foremost, Child Care providers must be paid a living wage. Until Family Child Care providers can feed their own children they will be unable to stay in this industry for the long term. Providers should be paid using a "Quality Care Model." This model created by advocates pays Child Care providers for the actual cost of providing quality care; not in relation to a child care market cost survey. Until this step is met, the majority of other quality programs are destined to fail.
2. In order to encourage child care providers to participate in training programs, classes must be free or low cost. The state of Maryland should partner with local school districts, community colleges and other educational entities to provide trainings.
3. Rural family child care programs often have no access to classes at all. Free online classes and/or classes given in conjunction with a local school district are vital for these providers.
4. Quality rating systems cannot be complicated, rigid, or confusing if MSDE wants Child Care providers to participate. The programs need to be greatly simplified and providers need flexibility for them to deal with a variety of families with different cultural and academic needs.
5. Finally, if a quality rating system leads to a drop in providers available to low income families, MSDE must react quickly to change or alter the program to ensure that these families and children are not lost to the system.

ⁱ Center for American Progress Overview of Early Learning in the State of Maryland

https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/13123258/EC-factsheets_MD.pdf

ⁱⁱ The Washington Post - <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/07/11/the-people-taking-care-of-our-kids-live-in-poverty/>

ⁱⁱⁱ There are also major disparities for women of color in the Child Care Community.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/report/2016/08/26/141738/underpaid-and-unequal/>

^{iv} Early Childhood Workforce Index 2016 MARYLAND <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/files/2016/Index-2016-Maryland.pdf>

CASA de Maryland a Not Profit organization for over 10 years has been providing Vocational Training program to the Immigrant community in Partnership with Montgomery College and Prince George's Community College we provide numerous construction related trainings but at the same time we provide trainings related to Pre School environment.

We provide trainings as:

1. Child Growth and Development
2. Planning Curricula for Child Care
3. Infant and Toddler Development and Curriculum Planning
4. Preparation for the credential of child development
5. Medication Administration
6. Integration of disable children.

People that have taken our different classes have done it with the intention of working in a day care center or family day care environment and many of them with the idea of someday have their own family day care and provide this type of service within their own community.

In regards of owning their own family day care we had many of our students come back to us to let us know how difficult the process to get a license is, because of lack of information for the community and because the information given of the process is not an any other language but English.

The process to obtain a license is complicated enough and having to do this entire process without fully understanding of all the documents given to them makes it almost impossible for them to continue with the process and the language barrier could make people change their mind or sometimes they do not even attempt to follow the process.

To better serve the immigrant community that interested in obtain their education to be a good child care provider and be able to get their license and provide a good service, there is the need to have more information on how to get a license to be a child care provider, accessible and easy to find and for the process to obtain a license to be simpler and have the information of the process in other Language to give access to the immigrant community who desperately are looking to have the opportunity to one day own their family day care.

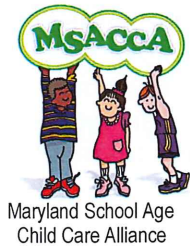
If you have any question please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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Testimony on Quality Child Care and Compensation September 7, 2016

Maryland School Age Child Care Alliance would like to thank the Committee for the careful attention paid to the variety of challenging child care issues facing parents, providers, regulators, law makers, and a wide array of other interested parties in the State of Maryland at this time. It is our hope that we can bring to you the viewpoint of the school-age program providers in the State and also the viewpoint of our school-age program participants and their parents. Although the successes, challenges, and concerns of Maryland's school-age community may be measured by a slightly different yard stick than those of our preschool "cousins", they are fundamentally the same. High quality school-age programs as well as summer full-day programs are a critical part of the Maryland quality child care equation and we appreciate being given the opportunity to share our thoughts with you during this important conversation.

What is quality out of school time care?

According to the National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment, "Quality school-age programs have strong staff-management practices, use best practices in program management, and facilitate communication between schools, communities and homes". While that definition is good, we would add that it is the *people* involved in implementing the best practices and sound management that are the core of a quality program.

Over recent years, the added value of afterschool programs has enjoyed increasing recognition. Emphasis on children's need for additional hands-on education in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), the arts, and life skills puts pressure on public schools to "do more" every year. High quality afterschool programs have proven to be an excellent delivery system for these types of educational experiences, leaving public schools free to focus on other priorities. Before/Afterschool programs, and programs that provide summer opportunities, work in partnership with schools and communities to define local needs and to find creative ways to meet those needs.

Children often attend the same afterschool or summer enrichment program year after year. In many cases, families are limited to just one or two options per school due to availability and transportation issues. With limited choice and the potential impact of long term attendance, it becomes even more important to ensure that ALL afterschool and summer programs are of high quality; implementing best practices, and continuously seeking to achieve higher standards.

The State of Maryland has several programs in place that provide pathways to quality for both programs and professionals. The Maryland School-Age Child Care Alliance is pleased with the fact that the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care has consistently taken the unique needs of school-age programs into consideration when developing each of these quality initiatives. We are also happy to have been included in important discussions and decisions during the development of these programs.

While we have the pathways and measurement tools available, there are communities who remain underserved and there are still a significant number of afterschool programs in operation who are not meeting these standards. We hope that the attention brought about by these hearings, and our association's continued efforts to provide education, information and professional development, will be the spark needed for continuous quality improvement to take root and grow in all of Maryland's afterschool programs.

How do we achieve quality out of school time care?

The most crucial ingredient to quality programming will always be the people. Programs work diligently to recruit, develop and maintain a well-trained and highly qualified staff of managers and teachers and support personnel. Then those people need to cultivate strong relationships with the colleagues, families, and the community. Workforce development is key. Putting systems in place to retain that highly qualified workforce is at once critical *and* one of the biggest challenges for the industry.

How do we measure and incentivize quality out of school time care?

Maryland's quality rating system and accreditation standards for afterschool programs are rooted in the guidelines set forth by the Council on Accreditation and the National AfterSchool Association that are proven to reflect best practices and quality on a national level. MSACCA agrees that these are acceptable standards with which to measure quality, although the costs associated with these tools may be cost-prohibitive to many providers. Although it is still in its infancy, we are encouraged by the development of the MSDE Accreditation Standards for Implementing Quality School-Age Child Care Programs in Maryland.

We are pleased to note that a large percentage of afterschool programs are already participating in Maryland EXCELS. While this is primarily due to the fact that participation is required in order to receive child care subsidy payments, there are a number of programs which are currently working to achieve the higher levels simply because they want to document the quality programming they are providing for the children and families in their care.

There is a significant cost for programs to achieve the higher levels of quality. MSACCA requests that bonuses for achieving and maintaining higher quality ratings in Maryland EXCELS be reinstated. Bonus monies are typically used to purchase additional materials and equipment, provide professional development, and otherwise continue to make quality improvements within a program, all of which contribute to quality.

The Maryland Child Care Credential program, which recognizes individual employee's achievements in education, experience and professional activities is, in theory, a sound measure of a person's qualifications. However, there are long standing issues with the state's capacity to manage and administer this program, issues that have left the provider community profoundly frustrated and the value of the credential greatly diminished.

We are assured by MSDE that there are new systems in place to better manage the credential program and that the trouble we have experienced in the past with long processing delays, lost paperwork, and inaccuracies in evaluation should be quickly diminished and, at some point, even eradicated. While this may be true, our organization is at best cautiously optimistic. Despite these growing frustrations, we will continue to monitor the progress of this initiative, promote participation among our members, and provide support to those who encounter difficulties as we await these promised changes.

MSACCA agrees with the other State associations that the Maryland Child Care Credential program is one of the logical places for the State to be able to assist with increasing workforce compensation. The bonus amount has not been raised since the start of the program in 2001. When you factor in the difference in the cost of living, the \$1000 top level bonus established in 2001 is worth less than \$750 in today's dollars. In order to continue to be an incentive to current and potential, the bonus must continue to be of real value.

What are the barriers to achieving quality out of school time care?

No matter where you are or what you are trying to do, a little more money would help.

The typical job in an afterschool program is a part-time job filled by high school or college students, retirees, or recent graduates who take the job to hold them over until they find a teaching position or other work in their chosen field. Full-time career opportunities in the Afterschool field are rare. Staff turnover happens seasonally, semester to semester, and sometimes day to day. Quality staff hired in August are often gone by mid-September to fill public school teaching positions with much more attractive salaries and benefits. It is not unusual for staff to leave our field for jobs in the foodservice or hospitality industry because they can make better wages without the need for continued education and professional development.

As with all child care businesses, afterschool programs are primarily dependent on parent fees for income. If we were to charge fees high enough to pay a competitive hourly wage, families would not be able to afford our service. We cannot reduce the number of employees at a site, or take in more clients to add revenue, we cannot automate our service, or outsource tasks as in other fields. We are asking educated, skilled, dedicated people to instruct, support, and enrich the lives of children at minimal hourly rates.

There is no easy solution to this issue, but we have a few suggestions that the State of Maryland might take into consideration that would help our efforts.

- Increase the size and scope of the existing child care subsidy program to include families at higher percentage above the poverty level and raise the overall rate paid to providers.
- Increase the Child Care Credential bonus to reflect the rise in the cost of living since 2001.
- Reinstate bonuses for earning Maryland EXCELS ratings.
- Continue to fund and promote the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund.
- Provide incentives to employers who subsidize employee child care costs.
- Provide reductions to, or exemption from, state business taxes for child care companies.
- Reduce or eliminate the cost of fingerprinting and background checks for child care employees.
- Exempt child care business from the matching requirements for employee health insurance under the Affordable Care Act.
- Reduce rates for Liability, Worker's Compensation, and other business related insurances for child care companies.
- Continue to provide tax credits to families through the earned income tax credit, tax exemptions for child care expenses, and flexible spending benefits.
- Fund training entities so they may offer required training at low or no cost to the employee or employer.

MSACCA member concerns and suggestions regarding specific quality initiatives:

Maryland Program Accreditation (Standards for Implementing Quality School Age Child Care Programs)

- Recruit train and support assessors with at least an intermediate level of experience managing/directing school-age programs who will be assigned to assess school age programs.
- Hold assessors to a rigorous expectation for consistency and reliability through continued support, leadership and periodic formal evaluation.
- Promote the availability of the program to providers regularly.

Maryland Child Care Credential

- Achieve and maintain capacity to process applications accurately and within 30 days of receipt.
- Monitor customer service and satisfaction regularly and respond to issues quickly.
- Promote to the public the value of choosing an afterschool provider who is credentialed by the state.

Maryland EXCELS

- Consider reducing staff qualification requirements in the School Age Only Standards, to take into consideration the part-time and transient nature of afterschool staff.
- Reinstate achievement bonuses.