



## Public Policy Meeting Summary

January 11, 2017

### General Assembly Key Dates & Legislative Outlook

Clinton Macsherry

The shortfall in projected revenue for the current fiscal year will make this a very challenging session for the budget. The Governor will release his budget on January 18. By the January 25 Public Policy meeting we should know more about the impact on early childhood programs. The hearings on the Division of Early Childhood Development (DECD) budget will be Thursday, February 23 in the House and Monday, March 6 in the Senate.

We have 3 potential bills being developed from the Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families hearings. The first would require MSDE to re-evaluate and adjust child care subsidy rates every two years and report to the General Assembly on the potential fiscal and policy implications of the rate adjustment. The second would require MSDE to consider using an alternative methodology, like a cost of care model, to ensure that the subsidy rates give parents access to high-quality child care. The third would offer parents and high-quality child care providers tax credits, although the budget challenges make the introduction of this bill less likely.

We have 4 potential pre-K bills. The first is an expansion to universal pre-K with a set-aside for diverse delivery. The second would require local school systems to cost out universal pre-K, also using diverse delivery as available. The third would focus on getting all children from families at or below the eligibility level of 185% of the federal poverty guideline enrolled in pre-K. And the fourth would prohibit the suspension or expulsion of children in pre-K through second grade.

Other bills we anticipate include an expansion of the refundable earned income tax credit to workers aged 18 to 25 and worker without qualifying children; two earned paid sick leave bills, including one similar to the version passed last year by the House and an alternative from the Governor; a bill exempting baby diapers from sales tax; a bill changing procedures for the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA); and a bill to create a procedure for parents of children with special needs to resolve complaints of discrimination against child care providers.

**Next meeting: January 25 at 10:00 a.m. in Baltimore**  
**February and March meetings will be held at**  
**Arundel Child Care Connections,**  
**44 Calvert Street, Annapolis MD 21401**

February 8, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

February 22, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

March 8, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

March 22, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.