



April 11, 2018 Public Policy Committee Meeting Summary

Session Wrap-up

The Director of Public Policy provided an overview of the recently concluded General Assembly Session, MFN's most successful in more than a decade in terms of both the volume and the significance of legislation enacted.

Passage of the Child Care Subsidy Rates Bill (HB 430 / SB 379) will have a lasting impact on children, families and providers, raising subsidy rates to the 60th percentile. This is a long overdue investment in a program that is vital to low-income families.

The next step is to ensure the Governor signs the bill, or allows it to become law without his signature. Please contact the Governor, thank him for his support of early childhood, and encourage him to take the next step by signing the child care subsidy bill. For instructions on how to contact the Governor and a sample letter, please see the most recent [Public Policy Alert](#).

Other successes from the 2018 Session include passage of the Ulysses Currie Act (HB 547 / SB 373), which restores state supplemental funding to the Head Start Program.

Passage of legislation based on the work of the Kirwan Commission (HB 1415) ensures that \$22.3 million of funding for the expansion of pre-kindergarten programs will remain in place even after the expiration of a federal grant.

Maryland Prenatal and Infant Care Coordination Services Grant Program Fund (Thrive by Three Fund) (SB 912) sets up a fund, which includes \$50,000 of seed money, to support care coordination services for low-income pregnant women and their babies.

Legislation to ensure access to dental care for low-income children did not pass, but the Department of Legislative Services will produce an interim report related to access to dental care for children on Medicaid. The data included in this report will help bill sponsors and advocates better address the needs of young children who lack adequate dental care next year.

And rounding out the list of significant legislation MFN championed this Session, passage of SB 859 will grant 60 days of paid parental leave to state employees.

The child and dependent care tax credit bill, which would have provided modest relief to



middle class families struggling to afford child care, sadly failed, a victim of the turmoil created by tax actions at the Federal level.

MFN will soon publish its 2018 Scorecard, which will contain a comprehensive summary of the legislation we prioritized and monitored this year.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Report

The 2017- 2018 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Report was presented by MSDE Assistant State Superintendent Steven Hicks. A copy of his presentation can be found [here](#).

MSDE has invited local early childhood stakeholders to regional sessions on the subject of KRA and additional information, including jurisdictional reports, can be found on [Ready at Five's](#) website.

Other Announcements & Future Meetings

A summary of the status of the new Federal dollars was discussed. Committee members are encouraged to thank their elected officials for this influx of federal funds into the early childhood system.

MFN announced the release of a new report [Counting Our Losses](#)-- a look at the cost of child care breakdowns to businesses and Maryland's economy. A fuller discussion of the report will take place at a future meeting.

The next meeting of the Public Policy Committee will be on May 9 at 1:00 at Maryland Family Network.