



Testimony Concerning HB 1441
“Early Childhood Education - Publicly Funded Prekindergarten Programs - Alterations”
Submitted to the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 27, 2024

Position: Favorable

Maryland Family Network (MFN) strongly supports HB 1441, which would alter the pre-kindergarten teacher credentials required under the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future and put necessary supports in place—such as professional development and coordinating hubs—to enhance the effective and successful expansion of public pre-kindergarten.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and early childhood education as well as other supports for children and families in Maryland. We have been active in state and federal debates on child care policy and are strongly committed to ensuring that children, along with their parents, have access to high-quality, affordable programs and educational opportunities.

A longstanding goal of MFN and its allies, incorporated into the Blueprint for Maryland’s future—seeks to ensure that pre-K is offered through a system of “mixed delivery”—the principle that publicly funded pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds should be offered not solely in public schools. High-quality providers already established in their communities, such as child care programs, can receive public funds to educate pre-K students, provided that the quality of the education is the equivalent of what those pupils would receive in a public school classroom.

MFN appreciates steps taken to make certain that the establishment of competency-based certification criteria does not diminish quality standards, but rather gives providers and the State new and necessary flexibility in determining that the standards are met. Doing so will help create a more diverse workforce and help achieve quality programming for all children. The establishment of an early childhood career ladder will vouchsafe quality while reducing barriers to private providers participation in the delivery of public pre-K.

We strongly urge a favorable report for HB 1441.

