

BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES TOGETHER.

MARYLAND FAMILY NETWORK 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



**MARYLAND
FAMILY
NETWORK**

MEN

Ensuring that all young children in Maryland have strong families, quality early learning environments, & a champion for their interests.

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LET'S BUILD A STRONGER FUTURE TOGETHER

MFN is built upon a strong foundation. Our roots may date back to World War II, but we are constantly working to find new ways to win the fight for an equitable early childhood system in Maryland. In the following pages, you will learn how we quantify our successes and hear firsthand from the families strengthened by our efforts.

You will also learn more about our work to support child care providers and the innovative approaches we've taken to strengthen the child care field. I'm also excited to report that in FY 23 we hosted our first in-person spring professional development conference since 2019! The conference theme was "Grains of Sand Building Castles Together" and was held in Ocean City. About 225 staff from our statewide network were in attendance to strengthen their skills and serve families even more effectively.

As the leading voice for early childhood in Annapolis, you will also get an update on how we are strengthening the policies, programs, and financial support for early childhood through our steadfast advocacy work. Speaking of advocates, we honored Senate President Bill Ferguson this year with MFN's coveted Nancy S. Grasmick Leadership Award in Early Care and Education.

Finally, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future continues to help guide our work and provide MFN with opportunities to reach even more families and child care providers than ever before.

Allow me to tell you about one more highlight from FY 23: When surveyed, 83% of parents in our Family Support and Early Head Start Networks said that the services they received have strengthened their relationship with their child either "Very Much" or "An Extreme Amount." Those strong relationships build strong foundations upon which hundreds of children are raised and will now go on to all kinds of successes that make Maryland a better place to live and work.

Now ask yourself, what if we had the ability to reach every child in Maryland, who needs our support?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Weathers".

Executive Director
Maryland Family Network



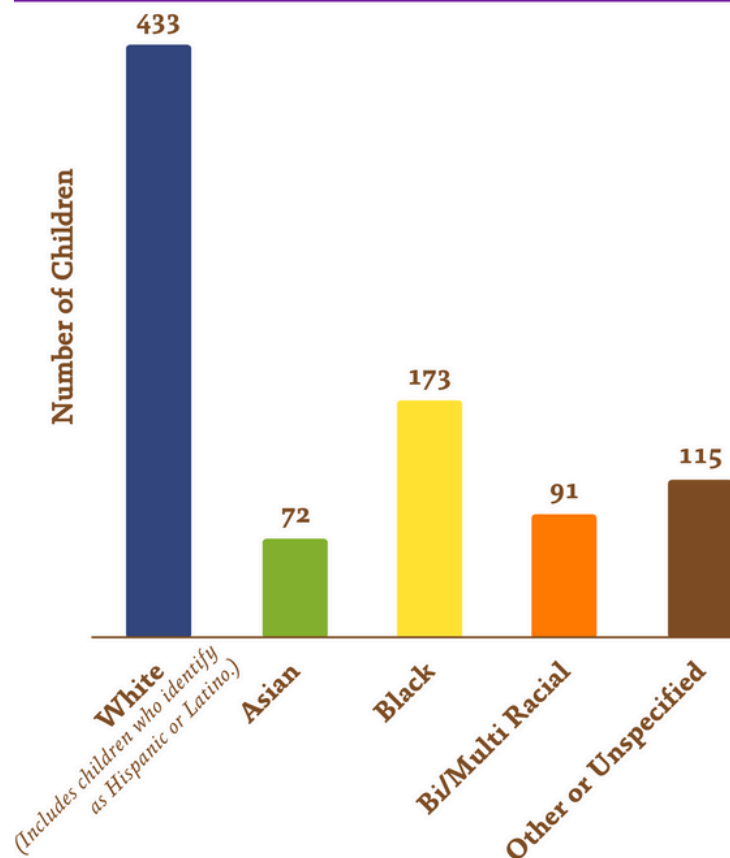
FAMILY SUPPORT

MFN's Family Support Patty Center Network offers opportunities for parents and other caregivers to deepen their knowledge of parenting and reach their goals. Meanwhile, young children have access to a quality early care and education setting. Services fall into four Distinct Categories and are aligned with Protective Factors to build strong families including Community Connections, Parent/Caregiver Capacity Building, Coordinated Family Supports, & Early Childhood Development.

In FY 23 Centers:

- Helped 770 families with Basic Needs
- Hosted 133 Community Events, reaching 4,752 Families
- Provided Community resources and information to 1,230 families
- Wrapped 463 Families in support with Case Management services
- Enriched 590 Children and caregivers participating 'Parent and Child Together' (PACT) activities

Races of Children Served my MFN's Family Support Centers



462 children identify as Hispanic or Latino.



FAMILY SUPPORT

Our Family Support Centers meet the needs of their unique communities by involving parent voices in decision-making and consistently spreading the word about services and support available to the families we serve.

100%

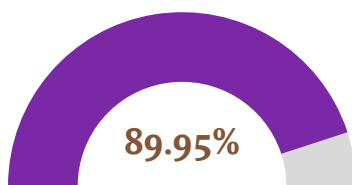
- of Center Parent Advisory groups meet regularly.
- of Centers perform public relations activities, including media outreach & coverage, fliers, newsletters, and involvement in community events.
- of Centers show evidence of an effective system of referrals to community resources and subsequent follow-up.

100%

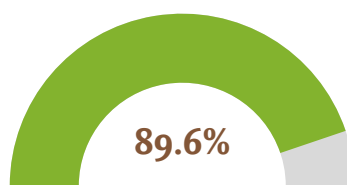
- of Centers provide developmentally appropriate activities for children.
- of Centers provide Parent Education and Parent/Child Activities.
- of Centers provide welcoming environments, with decorations reflecting cultural diversity and family support goals.
- of Centers provide Comprehensive Health Education activities.

FAMILY SUPPORT

MFN's Family Support Centers help families to identify children's unique developmental needs. The Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) screens for developmental and social-emotional delays. It helps caregivers identify a child's strengths and areas where they may need additional support. The ASQ: SE is a parent-completed assessment to identify behaviors including self-regulation, compliance, social-communication, adaptive functioning, autonomy, affect, and interactions with other people. If further screening or assistance is required, the families are referred for specialized interventions.



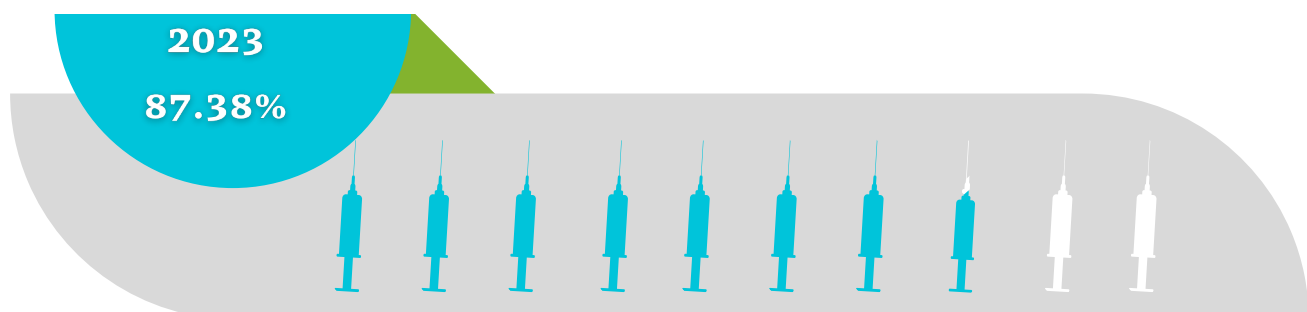
ASQ: FY 23



ASQ: SE FY 23

The percentages above represent the number of children in our Centers who were assessed for their developmental progress.

MFN's Family Support Centers also help parents ensure their children are up to date on recommended immunizations. Our Centers also educate parents about why immunizations protect children from infectious diseases so they can stay healthy and focus on the business of being a child -- playing, learning, and growing. Below are the total percentages of children participating in Family Support Center programming who were 100% current on recommended immunizations.



Total is + 2.38% from FY 22.

FAMILY SUPPORT

Caregivers – parents, grandparents, and primary guardians – work with Family Support Center staff to determine the services that are best for their families. MFN works closely with our Centers to ensure the caregivers we serve have access to high-quality learning opportunities relevant to first-time parents, language courses to improve spoken and written English skills, support to complete high school, and classes to enter and advance in the workplace.

No matter the needs of the caregivers, our Centers work with them to reach their goals and develop a network of peer support that lasts long after their time at the Family Support Center has come to an end.



PROGRAM YEAR 2023

Adult Participants	681
Services	34,431
Avg. Number of Services Per Parent	50.56

Reflects the total number of participants in all adult caregiver programs.

Services are defined as any of the offerings available to caregivers including but not limited to parenting techniques, ESL, earning GED/H.S. Equivalency, Basic Life Skills, Family Health, or Decision Making.

PROGRAM YEAR 2023

ESOL/ESL	45%
Adult Basic Education	18%
GED	25%
Alternative High School	15%

*ESOL/ESL = English as a Second Language
GED = Generalized Equivalency Diploma*

Indicates the number who participated in adult education and completed each program. Caregivers may participate in more than one adult education program.

“ Nobody judges you because you do things differently. Instead, they help you to be the best mom you can be. ”

- Makilah Smith, Kingdom Kare

EARLY HEAD START

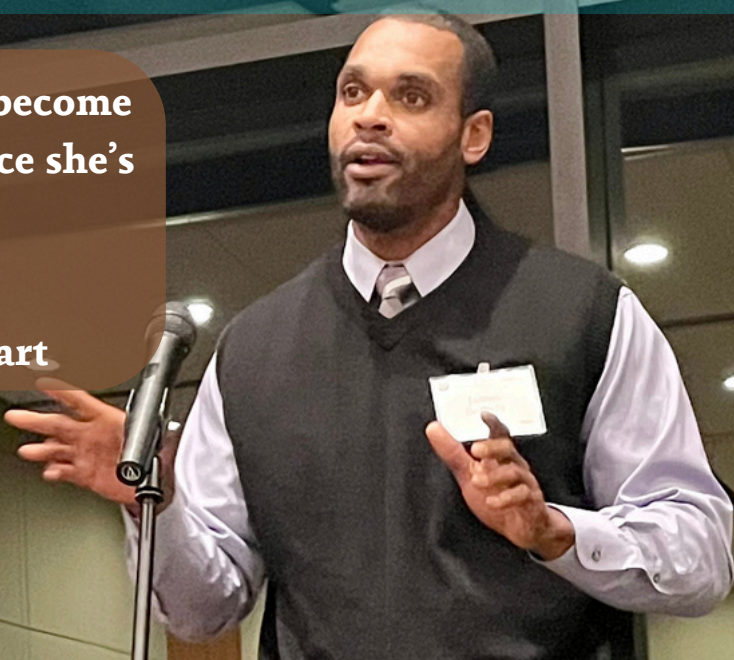
Early Head Start (EHS) gives children the strong start they need to succeed. But EHS is so much more than early learning. MFN's 19 EHS Centers provide early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive two-generational support services to low-income families with children six weeks through three years old. Children who participate in EHS programs experience better physical, social, emotional, and intellectual outcomes than children without access to these life-changing programs. At the same time, EHS supports adults' efforts to fulfill their parental roles and achieve self-sufficiency.

**During FY 23 our Early Head Start Centers served 529 children.
By the end of FY 23:**

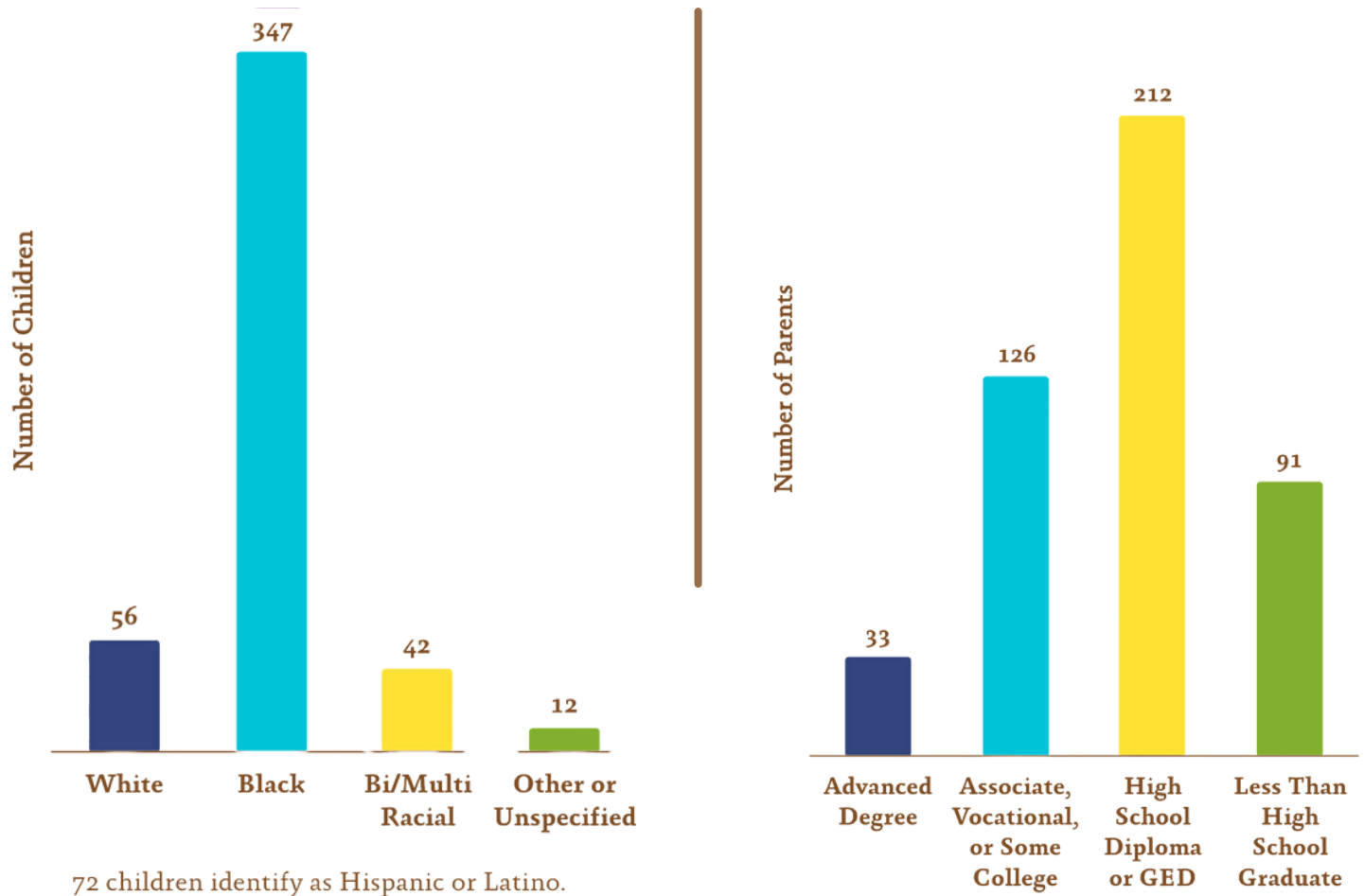
- **98.3% of children had health insurance.**
- **Almost all parents report (99.4%) that they had a primary health care provider.**
- **96.6% of children were up to day on their recommended immunizations.**
- **96.2% of children had a dental home.**
- **89.5% of children diagnosed with a chronic medical condition received medical treatment. Of these asthma was the most common diagnosed condition.**
- **17.2% of children enrolled had an IEP or IFSP.**
- **5% of children enrolled experienced homelessness during their enrollment period. Of those, 35.1% acquired housing during FY 23.**

"My daughter has grown and become more of a beautiful person since she's been here."

**-- James Beverly, Parent,
Coppin State Early Head Start**

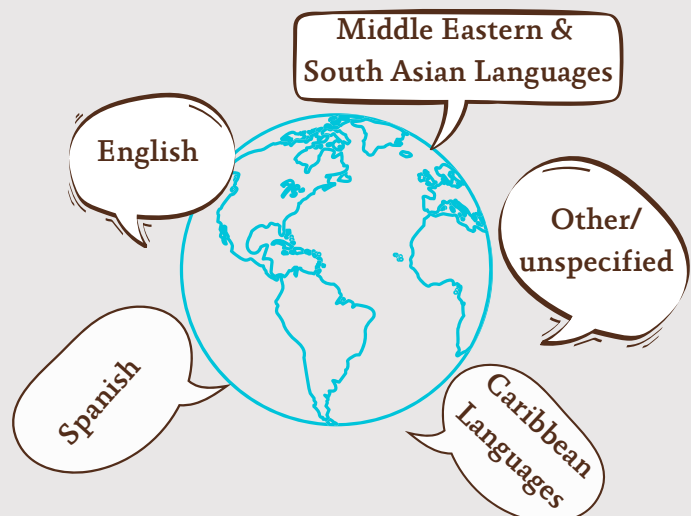


EARLY HEAD START



LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT EHS CENTERS

15% of EHS students were dual language learners.



NETWORK TRAINING

Our Network staff receive ongoing training to help build strong families every day. Training is conducted by MFN staff and external partners to ensure courses are interactive and engaging and provide the opportunity to practice new skills in a variety of settings. Trainees rave about the quality and relevance of the learning experiences.

- **1,365** staff participated in **31** trainings that were offered to Family Support Center staff across our network during program year 2023.
- **98%** of New Employee Orientation participants either Agree or Strongly Agree that ‘I recognize that how I do my job, not just what I do, is critical.’
- **95%** of New Employee Orientation participants either Agree or Strongly Agree that ‘I understand what Developmentally Appropriate Practice is and why we follow it.’
- **100%** of participants in the Early Childhood Quality Practices Training either Agree or Strongly agree that ‘I am leaving this training with an idea of some of the parenting quality practices I may want to encourage.’

I thought that every piece of information that was taught and presented, was necessary and important for doing our jobs and carrying out the program's missions.

Thank you for making this accessible to Spanish-speakers and not isolating them from the English-speakers.

The best training I have been part of. I loved the energy and passion everyone brought to the group.

STRONG FAMILIES HAVE STRONG PARENT LEADERS



The U.S. Administration for Children & Families reports that children in the first year of their life account for 15% of all child abuse victims. More than a quarter of child maltreatment is perpetrated upon children who are no more than two years old.

As the state's lead agency for Strengthening Families Maryland (aka Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention), it is MFN's role to educate the public about the risks and impact of child abuse and neglect. We also must promote healthy child development, strengthen families, and reduce the risks of child maltreatment.

To that end, in FY 23, our Strong Families department issued an RFP to fund 12 community-based agencies across the state with over \$1.8 million. Agencies receiving these awards are developing and implementing strategies to provide concrete support such as direct financial assistance

to caregivers, collaborate to support families, and develop innovative public awareness campaigns to raise the profile of positive parenting strategies. This is paired with a research agenda to try to better understand how our efforts can be most successful.

In FY 23, MFN hosted our first annual "Every Day I Stand for Children" conference for 224 parents, practitioners, and early childhood educators to help them learn tools to strengthen families and prevent domestic violence and child maltreatment.

Mildred Muhammad, global speaker, best-selling author, certified domestic violence advocate, and domestic abuse survivor, was the keynote speaker. As the ex-wife of the "D.C. Sniper", Ms. Muhammad shared the very personal details of her experiences involving fear, abuse, and victim-blaming.

STRONG PARENT LEADERS

Strong parent leaders are a key component of MFN's two-generational approach to strengthening families. Empowered parents and other caregivers raise empowered children. They also develop a capacity to become the "go-to" person in their neighborhoods and bring the voices of others into decision-making processes that affect their entire community.

MFN includes a curriculum within our Family Support Center Network to help adults develop the confidence to take on leadership roles within their families and neighborhoods and to work collaboratively with others as advocates. Our Parent Leadership Institute welcomed 33 new participants and 17 returning Advanced Parent Leaders this year.

We love stories about strong families, and our annual Parent Essay Contest is full of them. In FY 23, 52 caregivers entered the contest and we selected seven winners who represent the diversity of race, gender, geography, and experience within our Family Support and Early Head Start Networks. Here are just a few samples from the essays:

"Arriving in a new country without family and friends near you, and without speaking the local language is so hard. We immigrants left a whole life in our country, but working with the Center for Family Success helped the learning and adapting to this country for me and my family. Being at the Center has been fundamental to my personal growth and my son's development. After starting at the Center, we had our ideas renewed and gained greater focus on our goals."

-Gislaine Siqueira, The Center for Family Success

"I'm thankful for this program because I have grown to become a successful person. I'm successful because I have improved my reading and writing skills. I'm successful because I'm a good mom. I have learned parenting skills to improve routines, schedules, and behaviors. I'm successful because I have learned to love myself. With these skills I have confidence to achieve my goals to attend cosmetology school and obtain my driver's license."

-- Karen Garcia Rojas, Annapolis Family Support Center

"My overall experience with Early Head Start has not only been enriching but rewarding as well. The staff always is there to create and develop differentiated instruction tailored to each child with the understanding that every child is different and learns different. I love that they advocate for (my daughter) River to make sure she gets all the support she needs such as speech therapy, structured based learning etc. to help with her growth and development."

-- Sherice S. Stern, St. Vincent de Paul Early Head Start

LOCATE: CHILD CARE

Forget what you think you know about MFN's LOCATE: Child Care. During FY 23, we expanded our services to families, updated our technology, and made the LOCATE one of the most trailblazing child care search platforms in the country.

In FY 23, MFN invested a portion of American Rescue Plan Act funds to relaunch LOCATE: Child Care. The new platform includes dynamic statewide maps of child care which allow parents to search in a more detailed and individualized way than ever before. For child care providers, the relaunched LOCATE offers near real-time updates to their profiles and a free website for every licensed provider to market their business and increase enrollment.




The maps can also be used by advocates, local government, state officials, and community leaders to identify child care deserts as a means to improve services to their communities. This new technology is allowing MFN to think about data mining and web optimization to provide a better experience for parents, providers, and advocates in ways that far exceed anything we have done in the past.

These updates have resulted in more providers than ever using LOCATE to promote their services, while parent and other caregiver searches have exploded in popularity.



Thirteen Family Resource Specialists (FRS) helped parents navigate the Child Care Scholarship application system and find additional resources for their families.

In FY 23 the FRSs helped **1,315** families submit **400** applications for the Child Care Scholarship program. In FY 23 the FRSs also helped:

-  **1,731 families obtain medical insurance.**
-  **276 families apply for Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).**
-  **371 families accessed information about the Earned Income Tax Credit.**

LOCATE: CHILD CARE

In FY 23 we asked Marylanders what they loved about LOCATE: Child Care. Here's what they had to say:

86%

of families rated the service they received from LOCATE as "Good" or "Very Good."

91%

of families said they would use LOCATE: Child Care again.

81%

of families found the educational materials that they received from Resource Specialists to be useful. This includes information related to child care as well as additional family support resources.

“ —

I'm a nurse. I work long hours. I'm busy taking care of people's grandmothers, aunties, and mothers, so it's very frustrating when you don't have assistance...It will help me to give my daughter a better quality of life, like buying her clothes and paying my bills on time.

-- Kadiatou Kaba, Parent

— ”



MARYLAND CHILD CARE RESOURCE NETWORK

This year, the Child Care Resource Centers (CCRCs) continued to explore collaborative partnerships across their jurisdictions to strengthen resources and support so that child care providers can access help when and where they need it most. The MCCRN is also continuing to broaden its array of services and develop intentional and equity-based programs that support the multi-faceted needs of families and providers.

MFN is a leader in ensuring that our teachers and other early childhood professionals have the strongest support possible to deliver high-quality care and education. Thankfully, MFN and the Maryland Child Care Resource Network (MCCRN) are second to none when it comes to training, professional development, and supportive coaching. The MCCRN is the largest provider of these services for Maryland's child care community. MFN is committed to ensuring that the MCCRN serves that community as efficiently as it can.

During FY 23 MFN & the MCCRN provided:

4,976 training hours

1,308 training workshops

20,079 training participants

During FY 23 MFN & the MCCRN also conducted:

7,276 coaching cases

43 in-person group coaching sessions

89 virtual group coaching sessions

18,548 child care providers served via individual contacts*

**Individual Contacts are technical assistance activities provided in a single point of interaction, through phone or email, a visit to the resource center for in-person assistance, or a visit to the program.*

STRENGTHENING FAMILY CHILD CARE

The number of family child care providers is in decline in Maryland. This creates problems for families because family child care programs can have more flexible hours, be more affordable, accommodate cultural or linguistic needs, or keep siblings together. Growing Opportunities for Family Child Care (GOFCC) and the Maryland Child Care BOOST are excellent examples of innovative solutions to strengthen the supply of family child care options in Maryland.

GROWING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE (GOFCC)

GOFCC is a pilot program established by MFN 2021, which works to support the opening and sustained success of new family child care providers. GOFCC, implemented by five Child Care Resource Centers (CCRCs), showcased notable success and adaptability through its first year of implementation. Each CCRC crafted unique jurisdiction-specific routes to licensure and features learning cohorts, professional development, coaching, guidance on paperwork, access to key resources, and business administration support.

DURING FY 23:

195

family child care providers participated in GOFCC.

4-6
months

was the average time for a provider to complete GOFCC & prepare for licensure including filing paperwork, inspections, & training. This is compared to the typical 9-12 months for providers without access to GOFCC.

360

additional childcare slots were created & 52 new family child care programs were opened thanks to GOFCC.

MARYLAND CHILD CARE BOOST

MFN's Maryland Child Care BOOST program equips family child care providers with the tools they need to succeed. BOOST increases the program's financial sustainability, reduces administrative burdens, expands access to business and pedagogical expertise, and fosters a robust professional network for family child care professionals. Paramount to all of this, is making sure that Maryland's youngest learners have high-quality care and education. Currently operating in three CCRCs, BOOST launched its third cohort this year.

DURING FY 23

88

family child care providers graduated from the BOOST Program.

39

participants enrolled in BOOST during the third year of the program.

84%

of program participants demonstrated an increase in business knowledge.

“I’ve learned so much. I feel supported. And I can’t say enough about Maryland Family Network.”

-- Anabela Rodas, owner of Mi Escuelita Childcare & BOOST Participant



PUBLIC POLICY

Maryland Family Network is a strong voice for the interests of young children and their caregivers. As advocates, we ensure that lawmakers hear loud and clear, that what benefits young children, benefits us all.

When Maryland invests in early childhood policies and programs, it pays dividends that last a lifetime. Those investments ensure that children are more likely to graduate from high school, earn more as adults, own their homes, and lead healthier lives. In fact, every public dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education puts about \$7 back into Maryland's coffers. That's a better bet than the stock market or the casino.

What follows are MFN and our partner's key victories in Annapolis during the 2023 Legislative Session.

2023 KEY VICTORIES

PROTECTING INVESTMENTS IN THE CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

HB 495 / SB 350 raises the floor for Child Care Scholarship eligibility and benefits to their current, historically high levels, while providing critical safeguards against cost-cutting in the future. The value to parents, children, and child care providers will be enormous. This legislation will serve as a springboard for future advocacy to expand access to affordable child care to all Maryland families.

LOWERING BARRIERS FOR CHILD CARE PARTICIPATION IN PRE-K

The principle of “mixed delivery” is a cornerstone of pre-K expansion in Maryland, but the public-private partnerships needed for mixed delivery to work have been hamstrung by certification barriers that prevent most high-quality child care programs from participating. HB 1219 / SB 893 requires the State to establish viable alternative pathways to certification that recognize prior learning criteria and build on providers’ strengths.

IMPLEMENTING TIME TO CARE

Last year’s landmark Time to Care Act put Maryland on the path to having one of the country’s strongest and most comprehensive family and medical leave insurance programs, but that bill left important considerations to be determined. This year’s HB 988 / SB 828 codifies employer-employee cost sharing on an equal basis, among other key provisions.

STRENGTHENING FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) are the most powerful anti-poverty tools local, state, and federal governments have at their disposal. HB 547 / SB 552 will permanently strengthen Maryland’s EITC and CTC and provide additional aid to millions of Marylanders. Combined, the two tax credits could benefit more than 400,000 Maryland taxpayers, and the CTC alone could lift 40,000 children out of poverty.



Carolina Reyes, Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center, and Laura Weeldreyer, MFN's Executive Director, testifying together before a U.S. House sub-committee about looming child care cliffs and the effects it would have on families.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

MFN is fortunate to coordinate special projects from time to time which allow us to focus on strengthening resources for a particular population or region that necessitates special attention. These are a few of our special projects from FY 23.

BUILDING BETTER BEGINNINGS (B3)

MFN's B3 initiative launched the Maryland Food Access maps in FY 23 to help policymakers better understand the challenges faced by caregivers when trying to feed their families. The maps include measures of food access, food security, federal nutrition programs, health outcomes, and other social determinants of health. Check out the maps at b3maryland.org/maryland-food-maps.

B3 also conducted a statewide "Listen and Learn" tour to ask families with young children and early childhood practitioners what they want to see change within the state's Prenatal to Three systems. The tour determined what too many families already knew -- child care is too expensive, there are not enough programs to meet the demand, hours of operation are inconvenient, enrollment is difficult, and there's too little information available about the Maryland Child Care Scholarship program. All of these challenges are exacerbated by systemic and racial discrimination. The data suggests that B3 focuses its efforts in Baltimore City, Prince George's, and Somerset Counties due to their particular challenges in meeting the needs of families looking for care.

BALTIMORE CITY EARLY INTERVENTION PROJECT

MFN's Baltimore City Early Intervention project is focused on increasing access to behavioral health support for families with young children. When those children have strong attachments to even one caregiver, it buffers and helps prevent the negative impact on brain development that exposure to toxic stressors can have. Thanks in large part to MFN's advocacy, Maryland Medicaid eliminated a rule preventing behavioral health providers from giving a household individual and family therapy on the same day. Behavioral health support for young children usually involves working with parents, so this will remove a major barrier for families with young children who are seeking mental health support.

THE SACRIFICES PARENTS MAKE

"The Sacrifices Parents Make: The Urgent Need to Fix Child Care Scholarship Today & Secure Maryland's Future" highlights the extreme lengths many parents go to to pay for child care. We surveyed and interviewed thousands of caregivers across Maryland. They told us that the Child Care Scholarship program was too difficult to navigate, they were denied for minor paperwork errors, and materials were not available in languages other than English. Parents said they had to sacrifice things like healthy foods for their family, prescription medicine, medical check-ups, and even face housing insecurity to pay for care. Read the report to learn more and find out what policymakers should consider to improve the system at marylandfamilynetwork.org/news/sacrifices-parents-make.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

June 30, 2023 and June 30, 2022

ASSETS

ASSETS	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Cash & cash equivalents	\$ 3,208,848	\$ 421,693
Accounts receivable:		
Grants & contracts	10,050,812	12,299,630
Pledges receivable, net	332,076	426,422
Other	15,316	--
Prepaid expenses & other assets	<u>89,818</u>	<u>58,230</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$13,696,870</u>	<u>\$13,205,975</u>

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

LIABILITIES

Accounts payable	\$ 529,596	\$ 1,330,482
Accrued expenses	156,470	137,388
Accrued vacation	142,674	121,753
Grants payable	6,668,371	7,800,400
Deferred revenue	898,600	--
Other liabilities	<u>41,599</u>	<u>--</u>
Total liabilities	<u>\$7,628,280</u>	<u>\$9,390,023</u>

NET ASSETS

Without donor restriction	\$ 5,408,533	\$ 2,984,439
With donor restriction	<u>660,057</u>	<u>831,513</u>
Total net assets	<u>\$ 6,068,590</u>	<u>\$ 3,815,952</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	<u>\$13,696,870</u>	<u>\$13,205,975</u>

FIRST YEARS

Big Dreams Start Small

October 19, 2023

Special thanks to our generous corporate sponsors who helped make this event possible. We know you share our goal of strengthening families by creating better outcomes for young children and supporting the adults who care for them. **Thank you** for investing in our community and for making big dreams come true!

Our sponsors, auction donors, board members, table hosts, and guests helped us raise **over \$185,000** to support our mission that all Maryland children will have strong families, quality early learning environments, and a champion for their interests.

TODDLERS \$10,000



CRUISERS \$5,0000



CRAWLERS \$2,500



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM

The Botsford
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FIRST YEARS

We would like to also thank our generous local auction donors:

About Faces Day Spa & Salon
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B&O Railroad Museum
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Baltimore Coffee & Tea Company
The Benitez-Ndiyo Family
Chesapeake Shakespeare Company
Kelley & Reggie Cohen
Amanda & David Conn
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Port Discovery Children's Museum
Radcliffe Jewelers
Rams Head Group
Sagamore Spirit Distiller
Smyth Jewelers
Total Wine & More
Bryce & Nina Turner
Union Craft Brewing



CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN

Champions for Children, our multi-year giving society, is dedicated to improving the lives and opportunities of Maryland's youngest children, their families, and early care professionals across the state. Our esteemed Champions not only ensure the organization's financial sustainability for many years to come but also ensure that we remain the state's preeminent voice for the youngest, most vulnerable children regardless of the latest trends or political climate.

Become a Champion for Children by pledging to donate \$1,000 or more annually for the next five years. If you are interested in becoming a Champion for Children, please contact Development Director Jennifer Andiorio at jandiorio@marylandfamilynetwork.org.



CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN

CHAMPIONS

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