



**Testimony Concerning the State FY 2019 Budget for  
the Maryland State Department of Education –  
Division of Early Childhood Development  
Submitted to the House Appropriations Committee  
Education and Economic Development**

**February 12, 2018**

The Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA) is a statewide professional member association of registered family child care providers organized in 1983. MSFCCA is comprised of 17 local family child care associations. The mission of MSFCCA is to promote and enhance our profession by advocating for family child care providers, and collaborating with local associations for quality care for all children. We do this on behalf of Maryland's more than 6,000 registered providers and the children and families for whom we provide care. We keep local associations informed about pending legislation and regulations, support association leadership, offer professional development training, and present an annual statewide training and networking conference. We also educate parents about and promote quality regulated child care. All the association officers and directors are volunteers and work, or have worked, as child care providers in their own homes.

MSFCCA recognizes and appreciates the Division of Early Childhood Developments' long standing focus on improving access to quality early care and education opportunities for Maryland's youngest children, with programs such as the Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP), Maryland EXCELS, the Maryland Child Care Credential, and the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund. Maryland is recognized as a national leader in early care and education policy. However, the reality is that even though Maryland has been a leader in creating a system of programs and governance to address the need for high quality early care and educational experiences, just being a policy leader is not enough to reach all families who need access to quality child care. In FY 2017 only 12.6% of eligible families received subsidies, the top two income eligibility levels were frozen from 2011 until this month, and CCSP subsidy rates the dubious distinction of being among the very lowest in the country.

The federal government urges states to set their child care subsidy rates at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the current market rates, meaning that a child care subsidy voucher will pay the cost of care in 75% of the programs in the market area. In recent years Maryland's rates have been so low that they have given parents access to only 10% of programs. With rates so extremely low, most low-income parents are forced to choose between paying the assigned co-payment plus the difference between the subsidy rate and the market rate for 90% of providers, or finding cheaper, unlicensed child care arrangements.

The Governor's budget proposes to "increase" CCSP funding by \$11.5 million to end the waiting list and increase the subsidy rate by 8%, but the "increase" is funded by the rollover of unspent funds from prior fiscal years. The FY 2019 allocation of \$90.7 million is essentially a reduction from the FY 2018 allocation of \$100.7 million. An increase is certainly necessary, and the subsidy rates must be increased to a level that makes high quality programs accessible to all families. The plan to increase the rates outlined in SB 379/HB 430 will put us on a path to access for more families.

The path to increased quality must also include a well-educated early care and education workforce. MSFCCA appreciates the many programs that support this increase, such as the Child Care Credentialing Program, Maryland EXCELS, and the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund. The fact remains that these programs are operating on malnourished budgets. It is imperative that funds continue to increase for these programs for them to operate in a timely and accurate manner. This would not only increase participation but also increase quality and accessibility for many families. MSFCCA strongly urges the legislature to not only fully fund the FY 2019 DECD proposed budget, but to consider increases whenever possible.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact Jacqueline Grant at [jacqueline.n.grant@gmail.com](mailto:jacqueline.n.grant@gmail.com) or (240)994-0292.