



## Testimony Concerning SB 379–

### Education - Child Care Subsidies - Mandatory Funding Levels

Submitted to the Budget and Taxation Committee

February 14, 2018

#### Position: Support

The Maryland State Family Child Care Association (MSFCCA) is a statewide professional association of registered family child care providers that advocates for quality care for all children. We do this on behalf of Maryland's more than 6000 registered providers, many of whom participate in the Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) of Maryland.

SB 379 seeks to require the Governor to include in the annual state budget an appropriation to the CCSP to raise the reimbursement rates to at least the 30<sup>th</sup>, 45<sup>th</sup>, and 60<sup>th</sup> percentile of the current market rates in FY20, FY21 and FY22 respectively.

Family child care providers in Maryland understand the need for *all* children to be in programs that support best practices and quality child care, but continuing to pay reimbursement rates that are among the lowest in the country (one of the bottom three states) sends a signal that their efforts are not valued and that Maryland may not be serving the best interests of our vulnerable families.

Largely due to low reimbursement rates, only about ten-percent (10%) of the child care programs in Maryland participate in the CCSP. This leaves very limited access for families to find the quality child care programs they need and rely on. If they are also dependent on public transportation, it further limits their options to find quality programs in their own communities. Federal law requires that low-income families have "equal access" to the same quality programs as all other families and recommends that all states strive for subsidy rates at the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the current market rates.

These subsidy rate increases will give parents a better ability to find and pay for quality child care programs, will encourage more child care programs to accept subsidized children, and will give child care providers in low-income communities the ability to better support their own families and increase the quality of care they can offer to the children they serve.

MSFCCA strongly supports SB 379 to ensure that Maryland never again falls below a national standard for access and affordability. For these and many other reasons we respectfully urge your support of SB 379.