



Testimony Concerning HB 597
“Child Care Centers – Teacher Qualifications”
Submitted to the House Ways & Means Committee
February 3, 2021

Position: Favorable

Maryland Family Network (MFN) supports HB 597, which would grant a new child care center staff member extended time to complete required training, provided that the new staff member holds a specified post-secondary degree in a field related to child development.

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.

Child care center directors throughout the state report difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff. HB 597 would allow child care center directors to hire staff with associate’s or bachelor’s degrees in an early childhood-related field, but who lack the required pre-service training. Staff with degrees in other field could also be hired, provided they’ve completed half of the required pre-service training. It’s important to note that all staff will still be required to take all required training, but within six months of hire, as opposed to before being hired.

The quality of a child care program is directly related to the quality of its staff. Recruiting and retaining staff with post-secondary academic degrees in child development as well as with sufficient training specific (and necessary) to the profession is a laudable goal—one that can help enhance child care quality.

MFN respectfully urges the Committee’s favorable consideration of HB 597.