



**Caring For Maryland's Most
Important Natural Resource^T...**

Maryland State Child Care Association

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The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is a non-profit, statewide, professional association incorporated in 1984 to promote the growth and development of child care and learning centers in Maryland. MSCCA has over 4500 members and our members provide care and education for Maryland children and support working families. We believe children are our most important natural resources and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the early childhood community.

Testimony Concerning HB 776: State Board of Education- Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project Study and Report

**Submitted to Ways and Means Committees
February 10, 2021
Position: Support**

MSCCA supports HB 776 and applauds the efforts of Delegate Ebersole in sponsoring this legislation to require the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to examine the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project support services, evaluate critical services and provide a report to best address whether and at what level the early childhood mental health needs are being met in our State.

There is no question this initiative has been a resounding success over the years and has made a significant difference in the lives of children, families and partners caring for and educating young children. The critical demand for mental health and consultation services has continued to rise, even without the impact of a global pandemic, yet resources have not kept pace.

As a member of the Advisory Board of the Abilities Network/Project Act, an excellent organization providing some of these important services, I see firsthand how they have successfully benefitted child care/early childhood education programs. They incur waitlists regularly and this legislation will help identify areas in the State where services are insufficient.

HB 776 also includes the alignment and integration possibilities for services and provide analysis of costs to ensure and expand mental health support services that are life changing when addressed early. It is crucial now to move forward with HB 776 as standards have been updated and we will continue to realize the impact of the pandemic on children and families.

MSCCA urges a favorable committee report.