



Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children

Testimony in Support of HB 1307
“Education – Child Care Centers and Youth Development Organizations and
Programs (Support Youth Development for School–Age Children Act)”
Submitted to the House Ways and Means Committee
March 1, 2021

Position: Oppose

The Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEOYC) opposes HB 1307, which would weaken Maryland’s strong position on safety regulations, by creating an exemption for certain program providers as “emergency” legislation. This is not the emergency that needs attention.

MDAEOYC is a professional association of 1,500 early childhood educators, allied professionals, and families. We promote high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood education practice, policy, and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children. Many of our members are educators working in child care centers or family child care homes.

New research finds no correlation between state regulations and child care supply. Rather than rolling back necessary regulations, increasing public investment in child care is the key to building quality child care supply and improving affordability.¹

Regulations that are sometimes targeted as burdensome, such as staff-to-child ratios, are crucial elements of program quality and safety. Meaningful interaction between children and the adults who care for and educate them is a **central component** of early childhood development, and we know too much about the importance of children’s development in the early years - not to mention what can happen when children are left in unsafe environments - to ignore the benefits of a market with strong regulations.

However, there can be opportunities to loosen regulations in order to build supply and reduce costs with minimal downside. For example, Arlington, VA **relaxed** zoning regulations such as minimum parking requirements for child care facilities, and

¹ National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2020, February). *Our Child Care Crisis is the Result of Underinvestment, not Overregulation*.
<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/blog/childcare-underinvestment-not-overregulation>



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California passed [SB 234](#), exempting large family child care homes from restrictive local zoning ordinances that make it more difficult and expensive for individuals to operate or expand programs.

At the same time, we can also do more to help educators across settings meet licensing standards, by providing supports such as covering the expenses of attending trainings and easing paperwork requirements. The supports offered through Washington's [Early Achievers](#) program, including free training and technical assistance to providers, grants to help programs make quality improvements, and scholarships to support early educators' professional development provide one such example.

There is much that can be done to this issue, what we cannot do is create loopholes for programs to operate without a license. The public health crisis and economic crisis have presented enormous challenges, but this is not the time to roll back the full approach to licensing in Maryland. We must insist on access to affordable, reliable, licensed child care in all of our diverse child care settings in Maryland through innovative strategies. This is why we strongly urge you to commit to equity and safety for all Maryland's children and oppose HB 1307. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to talk about ideas for supporting child care in Maryland.

If you have any questions, please contact: Christina Lopez, President, at christina.lopez@mdaeyc.org or 301-751-1626.