



Testimony Concerning HB 89
“State Department of Education – Child Care Stabilization Grants”
Submitted to the Senate Budget & Taxation and Education, Health, &
Environmental Affairs Committees
March 29, 2022

Position: Favorable

Maryland Family Network (MFN) supports HB 89 as amended, which would provide financial support to licensed child care providers in the State. The grants would be critical to helping the child care sector emerge from crisis and play its indispensable role in Maryland’s economic recovery.

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 providers have been called “the workforce behind the workforce.” Their mostly small businesses – which play a preeminent role in enabling parents to earn and children to learn – are struggling for their survival. Some have already closed permanently. Others remain open but face the double-barreled crisis of not only drastically reduced enrollment, but higher expenses associated with PPE, intensive sanitation, and other health protocols (averaging \$5,300 monthly per site, according to an MFN survey). Maryland providers may have managed to keep their doors open thus far, but for too many, their current level of operation is unsustainable.

The slow-motion collapse of child care will pose enormous barriers to resurrecting the economy and getting citizens back to work. Several states have launched direct efforts to sustain child care providers during this period. We commend Maryland’s similar efforts up to this point. But they have been insufficient to meet the ongoing challenge we face.

HB 89 will support and stabilize the supply of child care programs and enable child care businesses and workers to prosper.

MFN respectfully urges favorable consideration of HB 89.