

March 20, 2023

Education, Energy, and The Environment Committee

RE: Support HB525 Outdoor Preschool Licensing Pilot bill!

Dear Honorable Education, Energy, and The Environment Committee:

My name is Angela Mudd Rahmani, and I am parent who resides in Annapolis, Maryland.

I am writing to urge you to support the House Bill to establish an Outdoor Preschool Licensing pilot. This bill has 13 co-sponsors and tremendous support in counties across Maryland! We need lawmakers to act by passing legislation to expand safe, equitable access to outdoor preschools as another form of high-quality early childhood education.

There are many urgent reasons why we need to pass the Outdoor Preschool Licensing Pilot bill:

- All children deserve safe, equitable access and the ability to choose outdoor preschool as an option for high-quality early childhood education;
- Children from low-income communities and those with special needs do not have equitable access to the Child Care Scholarship. Licensing is required for these families to use State scholarship funds to attend outdoor preschool. This is an environmental justice issue and unfair barrier that disproportionately impacts low-resourced families;
- Outdoor preschools offer an alternative that can help expand high-quality early childhood education options. Hundreds of child care programs closed during the pandemic leaving a shortage of child care across Maryland;
- Teachers and programs should be vetted for early childhood credentials, including specific training in health and safety, to operate. Without licensing, there is no oversight of existing outdoor preschools in Maryland; and
- Outdoor preschools promote skills and values that lead to environmental literacy, which supports goals of the *Maryland Partnership For Children In Nature* and the *K-12 Environmental Literacy Standards* required for graduation in Maryland.

Schooling with a foundation in nature and a significant amount of time outdoors is something all kids deserve and what we were privileged to offer our oldest through Tree of Life preschool. It supports curiosity, a respect for the natural world around us, and true learning through the best lens possible- the outdoors. My only regret is that we could not find a way — as two working parents — to continue this type of schooling for her when it was time to enter elementary school

(public school is a far cry from her preschool experience). I am thankful our youngest will soon begin preschool and get to embark on this same magical experience that all kids deserve.”

Please help us champion an outdoor preschool licensing pilot by supporting the Outdoor Preschool Licensing Pilot bill and urging your fellow lawmakers to do the same!

Sincerely,

Angela Mudd Rahmani

Chris Rahmani

Parents of Eve Rahmani '21 and Felix Rahmani (future student)

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