



**Caring For Maryland's Most  
Important Natural Resource™**

## **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 5000 members working in the field of child care/early childhood education. We believe children are our most important natural resource and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the early childhood community.*

### **Testimony: Budget Testimony Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2024**

**February 28, 2024**

MSCCA asks you to protect and invest in the Child Care Scholarship (CCS) Program budget, and to continue the improvements as the essential program critical support for families, providers, and communities. The child care scholarship system has moved forward thanks to state leadership and the General Assembly.

We cannot afford to move backward now. Families, the child care workforce, and employers are counting on us.

**We urge legislators to Oppose the BRFA provision that would enable the administration to impose an enrollment freeze without input from the General Assembly. The General Assembly passed HB 495 last session which works to protect the Child Care Scholarship Program. We urge you to reject the BRFA language enabling the Administration to implement a freeze in Program enrollment.**

**MSCCA asks Maryland legislators to:**

1. Protect the CCSP budget,
2. Remain committed to recent policy progress - expanded family eligibility, waived family copays and increased payment rates to child care providers, and
3. Work with the field of early care and education leaders to ensure a strong and effective system of CCSP policies and practices.
4. Ensure all critical areas of the MSDE budget are funded as they are all connected to alignment with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.
  - a. Fund the Child Care and Career Professional development Fund for child care workforce to attain college degrees.
  - b. Fund the Child Care Credential Program to support bonus structure for the teachers climbing the child care career ladder to receive direct annual bonuses.
  - c. Fund the Maryland EXCELS QRIS system to support program bonuses and weighted funding for child care scholarship service providers/programs.

**Specifically, MSCCA and stakeholders urge the Education and Economic Development Subcommittee to:**

1. Support the Governor's child care allocation,
2. Sustain investments in the CCS budget,
3. Maintain current provider reimbursement levels, and
4. Oppose the BRFA provision that would enable the administration to impose an enrollment freeze without input from the General Assembly. We urge you to reject the BRFA language enabling the Administration to implement a freeze in Program enrollment.

One proposed “cost saving” change would be a return to required co-payments from families. The amount the state would collect in returning to the policy and practice of CCSP co-pays does not at all relieve the budget deficit. The hardship placed on families and providers should give you pause.

Child Care providers would be responsible for tracking down the co-pays from families.

Child Care providers unable to collect copayments may have to stop care causing hardship to parents and children or they will subsidize the subsidies and lose even more money, which they cannot afford to do.

The Scholarship amount does not always cover the full cost of care. Families are already asked to pay the difference. A co-pay would be in addition to any differential.

Proposed co-payment amounts would have a significant impact on family budgets. Possibly the difference between groceries and child care co pay.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation reports that in Maryland, nearly 12 percent of children younger than 5 live in families that during a recent year saw someone quit, change, or refuse a job because of problems with child care, and women are much more likely than men to experience negative employment consequences related to caregiving. Maryland’s Comptroller issued a report noting as the cost of child care increases, overall female employment decreases by 5%.

Child care directly and indirectly impacts everyone. Child care is necessary so that parents can confidently go to work, and children are in safe, nurturing, learning environments. Child care is an economic and equity imperative.

Please protect, invest in, and continue to improve Child Care Scholarship Program in Maryland.