



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

Maryland State Child Care Association

2810 Carrollton Road
Annapolis, Md. 21403
Phone: (410) 820-9196
Email: info@mscca.org
www.mscca.org

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 working in the field of early childhood. 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.

November 28, 2021

Bill 42-21

Position: Favorable

The Maryland State Child Care Association fully supports Bill 42-21 to create the independent public-private coordinating entity which will help identify real needs and resources in the community. The entity will also work to build a better system of early care and education with an emphasis on a sustainable economic recovery.

Why is this legislation necessary?

The COVID pandemic has reinforced the essential role of child care and early learning for children, working families, and the economy. Millions of emergency federal relief funds have provided critical support for stabilizing child care programs and preventing more widespread permanent program closures, but they do not address the systemic challenges that have plagued the child care market, parents and providers alike for decades. In the best of times, Maryland's Child Care industry operates on razor thin margins.

Due to COVID 19 Pandemic , providers face devastating losses and challenges. 44% of programs that have reopened are operating under 50 % capacity of the children they served prior to pandemic. Yet the fixed costs remain and other expenses have skyrocketed. MSDE reports over 700 child care programs have closed since March 2020. Maryland is suffering critical workforce shortages in child care and early childhood education. Even before the pandemic, many providers struggled to [meet basic needs](#). Child care workers make, on average, [less than \\$14 an hour](#), according to the Economic Policy Institute, far less than they can earn working at Target, Starbucks or in many fast food restaurants. Workers also tend to [lack benefits](#) like health insurance.

We need a sustainable child care system to ensure affordable options for families and long-term survival for businesses. Many providers are women of color, struggling with the additional burdens imposed by the pandemic. Many women are being forced out of the workforce due to lack of consistent, quality child care choices.

This coordinated entity ensures stakeholders and experts will work to address the many issues through a lens of equity, efficiency and advocacy for stronger early care and education system that benefits children, families, providers and businesses.

Bill 41-21 is the beginning of what is needed to recover and rebuild better using accountability and transparency for efficient and effective systems using collaboration and coordination. MSCCA appreciates the necessary inclusion of important authentic voices on the governing board.

MSCCA asks for support for Bill 42-21 as this bill supports children, families and essential child care/early childhood programs.