

Montgomery County Council Bill 42-21, Child Care – Early Care and Coordinating Entity

Dear Montgomery County Council:

My name is Saba Ahmed and I am a long time resident, parent of three young children and an active community member and volunteer in Montgomery County Public Schools.

Thank you Council Vice President Albornoz, and Councilmembers Navarro and Rice for taking the lead on this groundbreaking legislation, and thanks to Council President Hucker, and Councilmembers Friedson, Glass, Jawando, Katz and Riemer for their enthusiastic support.

I am writing to ask for your vote in support of Bill 42- 21 on the Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity. The Montgomery County Councils investment in creating and sustaining an early care and education system in our county will lead to long-term benefits for our economy and residents.

Research tells us that birth through age five are the most critical years in human brain development with more learning happening in this age range than at any other time in a person's life. Without access to quality early learning programs, children are losing out on a literal once in a lifetime opportunity to maximize on their brain development.

As a parent to elementary aged children, I have been fortunate enough to see first hand the positive and long lasting effects of quality early childhood education. Because of the time spent in high quality programs, my children were not only academically prepared for kindergarten, they were socially and emotionally ready. Because of the quality of the teachers in their programs, great care was given to creating supportive learning environments that support the whole child. They saw themselves as part of their learning community and their identities were represented in their classrooms. As minority children, the confidence that this gave them in their own sense of "self" is immeasurable.

As we know, there are major issues around accessibility to high quality programs across our county. When comparing areas of Montgomery County with large child-care deserts and the poverty rates for those areas, it is clear that there are inequities that must be addressed.

I am a firm believer in the saying "it takes a village". None of us are free from the responsibility of doing what is equitable and just for all children and families in our communities. It is not just our responsibility as a community, it is every child's right to have quality learning opportunities made available to them.

In conclusion, I ask that you vote in support of Bill 42-21 and support what will hopefully be a trailblazing effort across our state to provide a level playing field for ALL of our children to succeed.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Saba Ahmed  
skhan02@gmail.com  
12717 War Admiral Way  
North Potomac, MD 20878