

**Testimony**  
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***Support Council Bill 42-21***  
**Child Care—Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity—Established**  
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The Leadership Group of Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF) is grateful for the introduction of Council Bill 42-21 Child Care—Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity—Established.

MMF learned as we deliberated—employers, educators, philanthropists, nonprofit leaders, parents, providers and more—that it truly takes a village to raise a child, drive a thriving economy and build the workforce of tomorrow.

That is why our Call to Action recommended the creation of a public private coordinating entity to harness the power of the village to change the trajectory of the lives of our children and our economy.

There is no doubt our leaders and county staff have worked tirelessly to advance access to high quality affordable early care and education (ECE) for all if only evidenced by the Early Care and Education Initiative.

Now is the time to build on that commitment.

Now is the time for all of us to sit at the table—from parents to employers—and roll up our sleeves and put the village literally to work. Yet, every well-meaning village needs a problem solving process, a plan and a system to succeed. The public private entity will do just that.

Now is the time to embrace the power of [collective impact](#)—a well-established systemic process to solve complex problems—to ensure every child from *birth to five* is ready for kindergarten, and ultimately fuels our knowledge economy.

Successful implementation of [collective impact](#) requires a common agenda, shared accountability, mutually reinforcing activities, and constant communication—across all stakeholder groups or sectors. To accomplish these tasks, we need a board of cross-sector stakeholders and a backbone organization. The public-private entity as defined in the bill will do just that.

All stakeholders must not only be at the table but also in the same boat rowing in the same direction. Today, we work in well-meaning silos—parents, employers, philanthropists, providers all struggle apart when we could work together better to achieve shared goals.

To do this, it is imperative to look across the ECE landscape with a 360-degree view and systematically identify strengths, opportunities and challenges. With this analysis and a shared understanding of the road ahead, the creation of a common agenda for collective action is the next step to build an aligned system. Such an agenda will be a shared playbook that moves ECE forward as each sector leverages it to fulfill their role in a true ECE system. The entity can do this work.

Now is the time to maximize the county's generous investments in ECE and build a real system of care—a system that leverages, maximizes and aligns the strengths and resources of all the stakeholders, both public and private, and advances access through synchronized collective action. A public private entity can do just that.

Now is the time to act. The need for the entity was clear on January 4, 2018, the date of the MMF's Early Care and Education [Call to Action](#) publication. Today, as you know, the pandemic has crushed the ECE sector, wreaked havoc on families and made workforce shortages worse. Such an entity in 2021 is even more necessary to move our county forward.

A public private entity is the tool our well-meaning village needs to rebound from the pandemic and continue to advance access to ECE so both our families and our economy can flourish.

With the use of the collective impact problem solving approach, this entity can create and lead an inclusive common agenda—a plan that bust silos, marshals the strengths, talents and resources of the entire village and speed the progress to a fully aligned ECE system.

The shared goal that will undergird the common agenda is an ECE system that will serve all children no matter their zip code, enable all workers to work knowing their child is safe and learning, and build the homegrown talent our county needs to thrive now and in the days ahead. With this entity, we can do this.

Now is the time to put the village to work to move Montgomery Forward. Please adopt Council Bill 42-21 as drafted.

Thank you again for your deep and longstanding commitment to ECE.