

Montgomery County Commission on Child Care



Annual Report

2019-2020

Montgomery County, MD

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Letter from the Chair



COMMISSION ON CHILD CARE

November 15, 2020

The Honorable Marc Elrich
Montgomery County Executive

The Honorable Sidney Katz, President
Montgomery County Council

Dr. Raymond Crowel, Director
Montgomery County Department
of Health and Human Services

Residents of Montgomery County

Dear Mr. Elrich, Mr. Katz, Dr. Crowel and Residents:

The Montgomery County Commission on Child Care is pleased to submit its 2019-2020 Annual Report.

Commissioners this year have been deeply engaged on behalf of the children and families of Montgomery County in meetings with County officials, collaborations with County agencies and workgroups, and in conversation with child care providers. The commissioners bring dedication and commitment to their work on behalf of children and families. Commissioners are made up of a variety of stakeholders and experts in the child care and early childhood education field. As a group, our collective knowledge and expertise allows the Commission to discuss, analyze, and problem solve child care issues and provide a comprehensive perspective for feedback, improvements, and solutions to County officials and residents.

The Commission began FY20 focusing its work on funding for the Working Parents Assistance Program and understanding barriers families face using the program as well as making recommendations to Council on the program could be better serve families in Montgomery County, workforce development funding and issues involving before and after school programming in Montgomery County.

The work of the Commission, like the work of so many others, came to a halt in March 2020 when the pandemic arrived in Montgomery County. However, many providers in the County never missed a beat. Their programs remained open and they continued to provide a service that is essential to children and families. The remainder of the fiscal year the Commission focused on making recommendations related to financial support for child care providers who were, and still are on, in great danger of having to permanently close their doors.

The Commission greatly appreciates your consideration of its recommendations and priorities when making policy and budget decisions.

Sincerely,



Michelle Belski

Commission Chair



The Commission on Child Care

Vision

Access to quality, affordable child care for all Montgomery County families.

Mission

To advise the County Executive and County Council on the development, implementation, and effectiveness of government policies, programs, and services that enhance community support for quality, affordable, and accessible child care.

Purpose

Section 27-62 of the Montgomery County Code provides authority for the Commission on Child Care to “advise the County Executive and County Council on the development of policies, programs, and services that enhance community support for high quality, affordable, and accessible child care.”

Meetings

The full Commission meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the Early Childhood Training Center. Beginning in May 2020, the commission began meeting virtually via Microsoft TEAMS. All meetings are open to the public. The full Commission does not meet in July and August.

A significant portion of the Commission’s work is accomplished through the Executive, Programmatic Issues, Public Policy, and Membership Committees. Volunteers from the general public are invited to assist the committees. Committee meetings take place on the fourth Wednesday of the month as a part of the full commission meeting. All meetings are open to the public. Committees do not meet in July and August.

A meeting schedule for the Commission on Child Care can be located at this [link](#). For additional information on the full commission and committee meeting schedules, please call 240-777-1716; TTY 240-777-1009.

Membership

The Commission has 17 voting members and six to eight non-voting members appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. Membership includes parents, center and family child care providers, and representatives from the business community, general public, and government agencies with interests in child care. The Commission is supported through staff effort from the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services.

Commission Year 2019-2020 Voting Members

Parent Representatives

Lindsay Allard Agnamba
Hashan Chowdhury
Edward Krauze

Child Care Representatives

Michelle Belski, *Chair*
L'Ornya Bowie
Laura Seminario-Thornton
Greg Smith

Business and General Public Representatives

William Hegwood
Sybil Philip, *Vice Chair*
Keneisha Roberts
Greg Stevens

Non-Voting Members

Dr. Barbara Andrews, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
William Polman, Montgomery County Community Use of Public Facilities
Vacant, Montgomery County Planning Board
Carl Eggleston, Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care
Yvonne Iscandari, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Verna Washington, Montgomery County Public Schools
Vacant, Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth, and Families, Inc.

Staff

Erin Stillwell, Program Manager, Commission on Child Care, Early Childhood Services
Department of Health and Human Services

Membership

Commission Year 2020-2021 Voting Members

Parent Representatives

Lindsay Allard Agnamba, *Chair*
Hashan Chowdhury
Edward Krauze

Child Care Representatives

Tracey Clay
Tara Philip
Greg Smith

Business and General Public Representatives

L'Ornya Bowie
William Hegwood
Sybil Philip

Non-Voting Members

Dr. Barbara Andrews, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Vacant, Montgomery County Planning Board
William Polman, Montgomery County, Community Use of Public Facilities
Yvonne Iscandari, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Verna Washington, Montgomery County Public Schools
Vacant, Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth, and Families, Inc.

Staff

Erin Stillwell, Program Manager, Commission on Child Care, Early Childhood Services
Department of Health and Human Services

2019-2020 Recommendations

The mission of the Commission on Child Care is to advise the County Executive and County Council on the development, implementation, and effectiveness of government policies, programs, and services that enhance community support for quality, affordable and accessible child care.

In the middle of FY20, like all Americans, the Commission had to shift its focus and priorities first to the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic repercussions but also to the dramatic unfolding of events that followed the death of George Floyd and nationwide protests. The result of shutting down the economy has catalyzed already existing inequalities and brought to the surface underlying issues centered around the delivery of child care. As a result, increasing affordability and access to child care has now become a cornerstone of rebuilding the US economy. In addition, recent calls for racial justice by an increasing number of citizens have forced those in power both in the public and private sector to question long held assumptions about racial progress. Those in charge of institutions tasked with creating and implementing policy are forced to reexamine its impact on mitigating negative racial and gender bias.

The three main recommendations of the Commission were generated from communication with its very diverse group of stakeholders:

1. **Increase Workforce:** Continued and increased funding for **professional development**. The CCC can share personal stories of child care professionals who have been elevated in their careers by utilizing professional development funds and opportunities. Access to these funds can open opportunities for childcare providers to further pursue careers in education or business ownership that bring them closer to the middle class. Introducing early care education as a profession to high school students as a viable career pathway could increase the labor pool.
2. **Increase Affordability:** Improve customer service/customer assistance to parents and caregivers who apply for **MSDE child care scholarships and local WPA** (Working Parents Assistance) while also improving support to providers who accept both. Continue funding for school age programs in some of the most vulnerable and economically stressed communities. Without assistance, children in these areas may not be eligible to attend these same programs once the health emergency is over and funding has ended.
3. **Increase Public Awareness:** Find effective ways to spread the word to the parent and provider communities about programs, funding, grants, etc. that exist in Montgomery County (specifically new programs/funding that were created in response to COVID). Also, by communicating to child care providers that are NOT currently in MCPS/CUPF space. It may be beneficial to create a digital “dashboard” where parents, providers and community members can easily access updated information that pertains to early care.

Commission Activities

Presentations and Testimony

- The chair presented the Commission on Child Care [Policy Priorities](#) to the HHS Committee of the County Council (October 2019).
- The CCC sent a [letter](#) to MSDE Office of Child Care with comments on the proposed action of regulations contained in Title 13A State Board of Education (November 2019).
- The CCC sent a [letter](#) to Council President Katz and members of the Council requesting the restoration of funding to the Professional Development Funding to support the early childhood workforce with continuing education and credentialing (December 2019).
- Members of the CCC hosted Ms. Ramona Bell Pearson Director of the Office of Community Use of Public Facilities and Ms. Essie McGuire, Executive Director of the Office of the Chief Operating Officer for Montgomery County Public Schools, as guest speakers at the January 22, 2020 full commission meeting. (January 2020).
- In an effort to help support child care providers during the Covid-19 health pandemic, the CCC sent letters to [Senators Chris Van Hollen](#) and [Benjamin Cardin](#) requesting support of H.R. 6800 The Heroes Act (June 2020).
- In response to inquiries from the child care community and community at large, the CCC sent a [letter](#) to Ms. Ramona Bell Person and Ms. Essie McGuire requesting an update on the status of child care programs located in MCPS buildings and property (June 2020).
- The CCC sent a [letter](#) to Council President Katz and members of the Council expressing concerns shared by a coalition of school aged child care providers about the lack of information being shared by MCPS about the reopening of child care programs in/on MCPS property (July 2020).
- The CCC joined community stakeholders in supporting a [letter](#) written by Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF) addressed to Senator Van Hollen requesting support of the Heroes Act and Child Care is Essential Act (July 2020).
- The CCC sent a [letter](#) to Council President Katz and members of the Council requesting the expansion of funding (WPA) to help support school aged children and their families during distance learning (August 2020).



2020-2021 Policy Priority

The Commission will advance its mission in FY 21 through a focus on the following priority:

Provide feedback to the County Council and County Executive on both the Early Care & Education Initiative (ECEI) Action Plan and Montgomery Moving Forward's "Roadmap for Developing a Public-Private ECE Coordinating Entity" in an effort to support the County's child care system response and recovery with a specific focus on equity and operational recovery.

Marc Elrich, County Executive
Dr. Raymond Crowel, Director
JoAnn Barnes, Chief
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Children, Youth and Family Services
Commission on Child Care
Early Childhood Services
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Rockville, Maryland 20852
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Language translation and alternative formats of this report can be made available upon request.

Montgomery County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in employment or in the admission or access of its programs or services.

To learn more about the Commission on Child Care, please visit:
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccs