

Montgomery County Commission on Child Care



Annual Report

2020-2021

Montgomery County, MD

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Letter from the Chair



COMMISSION ON CHILD CARE

November 1, 2021

The Honorable Marc Elrich
Montgomery County Executive

The Honorable Tom Hucker, President
Montgomery County Council

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

Residents of Montgomery County

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

The Montgomery County Commission on Child Care is pleased to submit its 2020-2021 Annual Report.

In the past year, the Commissioners, whose experiences, in many cases, mirror the regions families and workforce, have been impacted by the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and the struggle for racial justice in our community and nation. Our Commission went virtual, and our meetings and agendas were forced to consider the extremely fragile situation being faced by the County's families and early education workforce. During this period, the Commission determined our top priorities would be to support and advise, where possible, on the recovery efforts led by County agencies overseeing early care and education.

The Commission began FY21 focusing its work on this recovery, staying abreast of the work to distribute PPE, ensure reopening of placements in child care programs throughout the county, and keeping an eye towards the children and families who may be most vulnerable during a pandemic. Throughout the year, we refined our priorities to reflect those that will best serve the current needs of children, families, and the child care workforce of Montgomery County. Through monitoring and supporting the actions of the County agencies and providing input and solutions to County officials and residents, we hope that our year, while different than most, has made some impact. And the work must continue.

On behalf of all of the Commissioners, we appreciate the opportunity to listen to our community, to serve, and most importantly, to support the responses with the ultimate goal of an equitable early childhood system in Montgomery County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Lindsey Allard Agnamba".

Lindsey Allard Agnamba
Chair, Commission on Child Care

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 pm. The CCC takes a summer recess during the months of July and August and reconvenes in September. All meetings are hosted meetings virtually via Microsoft TEAMS and open to the public.

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.

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 2020-2021 Voting Members

Parent Representatives

Lindsay Allard Agnamba, *Chair*
Hashan Chowdhury
Edward Krauze

Child Care Representatives

Tracey Clay
Tara Phillips

Business and General Public Representatives

L'Ornya Bowie
William Hegwood
Sybil Philip, *Vice Chair*

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

2020-2021 Policy Priority

During FY 21 the Commission worked to advance its mission 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.



Commission Activities

Presentations and Testimony

- The chair presented the Commission on Child Care's [Top Policy Priority](#) to the HHS Committee of the County Council (November 2020).
- The Commission welcomed Ms. Amy Turner-Thole, Education Advocate and MMF Consultant and Ms. Franca Brilliant, MMF Consultant, Montgomery Moving Forward, to share updates on the independent public-private [Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity](#) (November 2020).
- The Commission prepared a [letter](#) for Council President Hucker requesting support of the County Executive's FY22 budget priorities for early care and education (May 2021).



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 FY 21, like all Americans, the Commission shifted its focus and priorities to the process of recovering from the economic and social disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The national health crisis exposed how vulnerable, yet how essential the early care and education workforce is to parents and caregivers who are trying to return to work. Despite the crucial role child care providers play in the support of other industries, the early care system is at risk of crumbling. Child care providers were forced to close or were at risk of closing their programs due to low enrollment while at the same time attempting to sustain the cost of operations. Many families were left trying to access affordable child care options, while trusting that their children would be safe. Now more than ever, the efforts support child care programs along with the efforts to increase affordability and access to quality child care are necessary to help rebuild the economy.

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

1. **Support and Retention of 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 create a pathway to opportunities for childcare providers to further pursue careers in education or business ownership that bring them closer to a middle socioeconomic level. We recommend the creation and funding of professional opportunities for career advancement and compensation that will help support the retention of a qualified workforce. This will require pay parity with public schools.
2. **Increase Access and Affordability:** Improve customer service and 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. We recommend the creation a local child care resource finder service (similar to [LOCATE](#)) to assist parents and caregivers in locating accessible, affordable, and quality early care and education programs for their children. This service should also help identify those child care programs that serve children with special needs.

2021-2022 Policy Priority

During FY 22 the Commission will work to advance its mission through a focus on the following two priorities

Priority 1:

Provide feedback to the County Council and County Executive on the Early Care & Education Initiative (ECEI) Action Plan in an effort to support the County's child care system response and recovery with a specific focus on equity and operational recovery.

Priority 2:

Focus on the sustainability of the early care and education workforce by providing recommendations on ways to increase compensation for early childhood educators in an effort to attract and maintain professionals to commit to early childhood education as a long-term career option.



Marc Elrich, County Executive
Dr. Raymond Crowel, Director
JoAnn Barnes, Chief
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Children, Youth and Family Services
Commission on Child Care
Early Childhood Services
1401 Rockville Pike, Suite 200
Rockville, Maryland 20852
240-777-1716 Voice, 240-777-1009 TTY, 240-773-1190 FAX



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/ccc