



Montgomery County
**EARLY CARE AND
EDUCATION INITIATIVE**
Action Plan FY24-FY27

MC MONTGOMERY
COLLEGE



Maryland's Largest School District
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential

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ACRONYMS/INITIALS	ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES
ECE Early Care and Education	Sustainability
FCC Family Child Care	Access & Affordability
FFN Family, Friend, Neighbor Care	Expansion
CDFI Community Development Financial Institution	Alignment
MCPS Montgomery County Public Schools	
ECS Early Childhood Services	

Early Care & Education Action Plan Introduction

In the fall of 2020, Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich released the first four-year Early Care and Education Action Plan to operationalize the Early Care and Education (ECE) Initiative. After managing the pandemic and supporting child care programs across the County while also managing projects in the Action Plan Mr. Elrich is now releasing the second four-year Early Care and Education Action Plan. The work of the Early Care and Education Initiative is a collaborative effort with the County Executive, the County Council, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), and Montgomery College with a \$20 million investment.

Formed in 2019, the Interagency Workgroup created the first action plan and pivoted quickly to response and recovery during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Multiple projects were developed and funded to support the sustainability of child care programs that included grants, subsidies for families, no cost personal protective equipment (PPE), rent relief for Child Care in Public Space programs, no cost for virtual child care required training and priority vaccines for child care staff among others. Communication was key as multiple types of engagement activities were held with the child care community. At the start

of the initiative early childhood scholarships were immediately created for Montgomery College.

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive system of high-quality, accessible and affordable early childhood education the second four-year Action Plan builds upon the first by collaboratively addressing multiple priorities that will result in a systems approach to improving education and care for the County's youngest children. From the development of a system financing strategy to building and strengthening the early childhood education workforce to supporting facilities for the expansion of child care this plan offers a bold and expansive approach for the future of the County. Imbedded in implementation of the plan is an intentional focus on children with special needs, cultural diversity and equity across the County.

The Executive and Steering Committees for the ECE Initiative are pleased to present work for the next four years. The action plan is organized into two tiers with critical supports that cross the tiers. The ECE Initiative priorities of Sustainability, Access and Affordability, Alignment, and Expansion are part of each project. The new four-year Action Plan is followed by a section on the accomplishments of the first four-year Action.

TIMELINE KEY	YEAR 1 FISCAL YEAR 2024
	YEAR 2 FISCAL YEAR 2025
	YEAR 3 FISCAL YEAR 2026
	YEAR 4 FISCAL YEAR 2027

ACTION PLAN

FY24 - FY 27

In line with the County's responsibility to equity, ECEI commits to acknowledging existing systems of bias and dismantling and correcting structural injustices that limit family's participation in early care and education programs and resources in Montgomery County.

EACH SECTION OF THIS PLAN WILL CONSIDER THESE OVERARCHING ISSUES

- Equity for Black, Indigenous & People of Color
- Children with Special Needs
- Support for Multilingual Learning
- Sustainability of all ECE Projects & Programs

Create an ECE System Financing Strategy

GOAL

Secure a long-term, stable revenue stream to support the ongoing ECE system

OUTCOMES AND ACTIVITIES

- Create strategies for securing a revenue stream
- Confirm political support for recommended revenue stream
- Develop community support for a stable financing strategy in collaboration with the Children's Opportunity Alliance
- Secure long term public financing for a robust ECE system

ECEI PRIORITIES: All

Build and Strengthen the ECE Workforce

GOALS

In partnership with Montgomery College and four-year colleges increase professional opportunities in the ECE Workforce.

Increase retention and recruitment opportunities.

GOAL

Achieve compensation parity with public schools for the ECE community-based

OUTCOMES AND ACTIVITIES:

Increase options for higher education:

- Provide scholarships at multiple institutions of higher education to include virtual and hybrid options
- Increase credentialing options at the community level
- Develop community-based options for internships leading to certification

Fully Implement recruitment and retention strategies:

- Build on State and National recognition of GO FCC!
- Strengthen pathways from recruitment to implementation of provider goals
- Increase collaboration with National Home Grown Child Care Network
- Provide opportunities for expansion of center-based child care

OUTCOMES AND ACTIVITIES:

Create a compensation framework that ensures a strong ECE Workforce:

- Commission a compensation study
- Apply funding strategies to create pay parity with public schools
- Capitalize on Federal and State funding

ACTION PLAN

FY24 - FY 27

Strengthen and Expand Early Intervention Services and Enhance Inclusion in ECE Programs

GOAL

Ensure equal access and inclusion for all children to early screening and early intervention services

OUTCOMES AND ACTIVITIES

- Provide access and inclusion to early intervention programming for all families seeking support
- Provide multiple access points for families seeking early intervention services
- Strengthen partnerships with community nonprofits providing early intervention services
- Maximize outreach to the medical community to increase appropriate referrals to early intervention services
- Develop new strategies and networking for child development resources for newborns and their families in hospitals, with midwives, doulas, etc.

GOAL

Develop and increase training and staffing support for inclusive practices in early childhood settings

OUTCOMES AND ACTIVITIES

- Broaden and enhance learning opportunities for young children with disabilities and their families through programs such as Hanen, Learning Language and Loving It and The Pyramid model for social and emotional development with embedded consultation in ECE Programs
- Create funding streams for trained embedded staff in ECE programs where children with disabilities are enrolled

Strengthen Friend, Family, Neighbor Care

GOAL

Provide support to children and caregivers in all settings

OUTCOMES AND ACTIVITIES:

- Develop strong partnerships across organizations to support young children and caregivers
- Develop a strong network in the county for families to engage with ECE learning opportunities (e.g. Parent Cafes, Learning Parties, The Basics, LENA, Family Support Programs, Library Programs)
- Connect Family, Friend and Neighbor Care (FFN) to existing professional development and ECE networking and learning opportunities

ACTION PLAN

FY24 - FY 27

Increase ECE Program Expansion

GOAL

Implement a facilities fund

OUTCOMES AND ACTIVITIES

- Use financing strategies to create a facilities fund
 - Increase ECE program facility expansion through access to a facilities fund
 - Contract with a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) to manage a facilities fund and support ECE program expansion
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Increase Community-Based PreK seats to meet the Maryland Blueprint PreK Seats Goal

GOAL

In partnership with MCPS, grow community-based PreK seats to meet Maryland Blueprint requirements

OUTCOMES AND ACTIVITIES:

- Provide a comprehensive support system for Blueprint PreK applications
- Develop a communications plan with MCPS and ECS for outreach to ECE programs
- Implement support for Blueprint PreK applications through MCPS

ECEI Accomplishments

2019-2022

Pandemic Response: Focus on communication and sustainability

- Consistent communication regarding State and County Pandemic requirements
 - Supplemental payments to child care programs providing care for essential employees
 - Child Care Grants for birth to five programs and for school-age child care programs
 - Additional child care subsidies for families
 - 4 rounds of free PPE for child care programs
 - Coordinated COVID-19 vaccines for child care providers
 - Rent relief for Child Care in Public Space (CCIPS)
 - Fund facilities support of CCIPS programs
 - Regular forums and other online groups with child care programs
 - Restoration of children's yearly vaccines at County clinics
 - Reference guide for child care on health and safety during the COVID-19 Pandemic
 - Facilitation of the re-opening of school age child care in MCPS buildings during virtual schooling
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Major ECEI Projects

- Development of a Community Portal starting with Working Parents Assistance Program that will culminate in an app for families and providers
 - Child Care Subsidy Pilot with Child Care in Public Space Programs
 - Community-Based Head Start-3-year-old aging out of Early Head Start
 - Scholarships at Montgomery College for multiple pathways for those working in child care
 - Funding support for a new child care facility program at the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Headquarters
 - Multiple workgroups on the Blueprint to develop the implementation plan for PreK and ECE for Montgomery County
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Data Gathering: Development of scope and structure to enhance funding and services

- Supply and Demand Study
- Cost of Quality Child Care Study
- Consultant for the development of a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)
- Consultant for a community process on shared services
- Consultant for evaluation and report on the Subsidy Pilot
- Report on Maryland Blueprint and Montgomery County

Additional Program Funding

- The Basics start-up at Montgomery Moving Forward/Nonprofit Montgomery and permanent home at The Montgomery County Collaboration Council
- Language ENvironment Analysis (LENA) at Family Services, Inc. at Sheppard Pratt –being implemented at the Family Discovery Center (Family Support Center)
- Funding for marketing and outreach for Working Parents Assistance Program (WPA)
- Marketing and social media outreach for DHHS Child Care Support Services (CCSS) including infographics for families and early childhood providers
- A texting program for Early Childhood Services for direct communication (Infants and Toddlers Program (ITP) and CCSS)
- Business supports for child care
- The Recreation Summer School Wrap Around Program 2022
- Additional County funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) summer 2022
- Development of an Early Screening Project with pediatricians and clinics for early detection of disabilities and early intervention through referrals to the Montgomery County Infants and Toddlers Program

Contributors

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ECEI FRAMEWORK

FY 2024 - FY 2027

TO SCALE PRIOR ACTION PLAN	Projects	Sustainability	Access & Affordability	Expansion	Alignment
	Contracted Subsidy Seats	✓	✓	✓	
	Community-Based Head Start (3's and 4's)	✓	✓	✓	
	Shared Services Network	✓			
	Facilities Fund (CDFI)	✓	✓	✓	
	Maryland Blueprint PreK <small>(by 2026)</small>		✓	✓	✓
	Community Portal and App: Enrollment and Eligibility	✓	✓		✓
	Family Involvement Centers (Total-5)		✓	✓	✓
NEW PROJECTS	ECE System Financing Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓
	ECE Workforce: Recruitment, Retention, Compensation, Higher Education, Credentialing	✓		✓	
	Implement Facilities Fund : Private and Public Space	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Friend, Family, Neighbor Child Care (Home Grown)	✓	✓	✓	
	Early Intervention/ Inclusion in Child Care	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Community PreK Grants Support (Maryland Blueprint)	✓	✓	✓	✓