



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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April 2, 2018

TO: Honorable Councilmember Hans Riemer, President
Montgomery County Council

Honorable Councilmember George Leventhal, Chair
Health and Human Services Committee

Honorable Councilmember Craig Rice, Chair
Education Committee

FROM: Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director 
JoAnn Barnes, Chief, Children, Youth and Family Services 

SUBJECT: Final Recommendations and Options for Prekindergarten Expansion

On behalf of the participants in the Prekindergarten Research Group, we would like to thank the Education Committee and the Health and Human Services Committee for the opportunity to investigate options for the expansion of local Prekindergarten services. Since submitting the December update report, the group has continued to meet at least twice a month in order to select options for expansion which are a match both for the existing public and private services for four-year-olds in our community, as well as those which are a realistic option within the licensing system in Maryland.

The information which follows is provided as short-term recommendations in light of current fiscal constraints and lack of information from the state Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission) on state-level proposals for Prekindergarten expansion. Additional long-term recommendations can be provided once the Kirwan Commission presents information on the funding and oversight of state-wide expansion.

We encourage you to review this report in its entirety since it addresses important aspects of cost, staff and program quality, workforce development, return on investment and other elements important for expansion as opposed to starting with a review of the options.

Please do not hesitate to contact Monica Ortiz, the Early Care and Education Policy Officer, at 240-777-1867 or either of us at 240-777-1266 with any questions about this final report.

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

**FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS
AND OPTIONS
FOR PREKINDERGARTEN EXPANSION**

APRIL 2018



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Introduction

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Policy Officer for Early Care and Education (the Policy Officer) facilitated the Prekindergarten Research Group (the research group) which was tasked with investigating information from established PreK programs across the country to develop recommendations for the best options to expand PreK services in Montgomery County.

The research group has met at least once a month since September of 2017. Participation expanded from primarily County agency representation to include other stakeholder groups in January. Each of the nine child care provider associations were invited to identify a representative to participate in the research group, and connections to the meetings were made available via Skype and conference line for those unable to leave their worksite during the designated meeting times. A representative from Montgomery College's Early Childhood Education program joined the group. Representatives from the County's Commission on Child Care were identified, as was one to represent the County Child Care in Public Space providers.

This report was compiled with input from the group and represents the Policy Officer's best thinking on how Prekindergarten (PreK) services could be expanded in Montgomery County, Maryland. The contributions represented a variety of perspectives and interests of early care and education stakeholders and did not always result in a consensus of preferences.

Source materials relevant to specific aspects of early care and education were shared by each of the stakeholder groups. Information from the current Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Head Start and Prekindergarten programs has been included, as well as from the state and local child care voucher programs.

The January 2016 final report on "A Comprehensive Analysis of Prekindergarten in Maryland" submitted by consulting firm Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA) to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) as part of the 2002 Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools adequacy cost study was identified as being timely and more comprehensive than what the research group could compile. It is referenced in this report to provide information on several of the Joint Committee's questions.

Because the APA report was conducted for the state, much of the data is aggregated at a state level. Additional information on PreK programs implemented at local jurisdiction levels from OLO Report 2017-7: "Pre-K in Montgomery County and in Other Jurisdictions" is referenced to allow for parallels with the design of a County sponsored program.

Montgomery County has a robust variety of early care and education options for families. Services range from drop-in activities at the Montgomery County Public Libraries or state designed Judy Centers, to enrollment in two-generation and home visiting programs such as Early Head Start, Healthy Families, and S.M.I.L.E. Some have a targeted school readiness mission, such as Head Start and MCPS Prekindergarten, while others focus on child development in family child care and center-based settings.

Some of these programs are only available to low-income families and are free of cost, but the significant majority of families in Montgomery County must pay for part day and full-day child care services. There are over 1,400 licensed child care providers in the County which offer a variety of services for children of different ages and for different hours of care. Montgomery County has made efforts to support low-income and working families with costs for child care through development of the local Working Parents Assistance (WPA) child care voucher program and reduced cost options like the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Care in Public Space program (CCIPS) and Before-and-After Care supported by the county Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) services.

PreK is an essential part of the early learning continuum for children ages birth through age eight. PreK helps to provide preschool aged children with school readiness experiences so that they can transition readily into Kindergarten and continue having successful school experiences. The parameters of a PreK program in this report are based on services for 4-year-old children from families whose income is at or below a designated income threshold enrolled in a 6 ½ hour school-day program for a 10-month school year. The program would be implemented through a mixed delivery system, meaning services would be provided to families in both public schools and private child care provider settings.

Three of the essential partners in a comprehensive mixed delivery PreK system are the public schools, private center-based child care providers, and private Family Child Care (FCC) providers. When PreK is available in locations across a school district and provides more than half-day classes, working parents benefit, as well. Recommendations in this report include considerations for the best implementation of school readiness services for 4-year-olds in each of these early learning settings.

The necessary components of providing PreK in a mixed delivery system are outlined in the following sections. Distinct program options, infrastructure, and staffing needs have all been taken into consideration. Each recommendation may require more detailed planning across agencies due to the structural, budgetary, physical plant, and personnel needs for effective implementation.

The Cost for Prekindergarten Services in Different Settings

The estimated birthrate in the County is 13,000 children per year, which remains consistent through the elementary grades with an even mix of in-county and out-county migration. Of the approximately 13,000 4-year-olds in the County, approximately 11,500 are enrolled in MCPS kindergarten and an estimated 40%, or 4,600, qualify for the federal Free and Reduced Meals program (FARMS) which means their families income is up to 185% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL). An initial expansion of the Montgomery County PreK program is recommended for families at 185% FPL in order to simplify eligibility determinations and tracking of outcomes for Return on Investment (ROI), the state Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), and other commonly used benchmarks of student reporting. Expansion of services for children from families with higher income levels could come at a later date (*see Attachment A*).

Information from other major cities providing universal PreK indicates an 80% participation rate by families can be expected, on average, at full program implementation, regardless of family income. Information from MSDE enrollment data provided for the APA report shows that over 74% of 4-year-olds at all income levels in Montgomery County are enrolled in public PreK or child care with a private provider, and that slots for low-income children are at 100% capacity throughout the year. Therefore, it is assumed that at least 80% of children in the eligible income range will enroll when expanded PreK becomes available in the County.

Over 3,200 4-year-olds are currently served through MCPS Head Start and PreK programs, PreK classrooms in community-based provider settings funded by the state Prekindergarten Expansion Grant, and classrooms in community-based provider settings funded by the federal Preschool Development Grant. Due to the funding requirements of these programs, eligible children could be from families at 100% FPL through 300% FPL. It is not yet known which income ranges the state PreK expansion will seek to enroll first, or if enrollment will begin in FY2019, which will affect the number of families seeking to apply to a local PreK option.

The estimated figure of 3,000 will be used for purposes of this report to calculate the number of participants in this local expansion program. The estimate is based on the number of 4-year-olds currently enrolled in publicly funded PreK options in the county, minus the capped Head Start enrollment, minus an estimate of children above the 185% FPL eligible for other PreK programs, plus an estimated number of previously unserved participants who would now seek enrollment because of the affordability and full-day schedule of this program.

After having evaluated the per child costs in other jurisdictions offering PreK in mixed delivery settings, reviewing the analysis completed by APA, and comparing the average market rate cost of child care for a preschool-aged child in the County, \$14,500 a year was determined to be a competitive rate for tuition for center-based care if there were no additional requirement for teacher certification beyond the current qualifications. If credentialing requirements are increased there be would need to be an increased per child annual tuition amount.

The per child costs for a child placed in a FCC setting could be the same at \$14,500, but there will be additional program costs related to oversight and training to ensure high-quality services are delivered in a comparable way across multiple FCC settings.

As noted in the OLO report, MCPS currently blends Head Start and Title I funds to provide \$12,900 per pupil for full-day classes for 4-year-olds at designated elementary schools. The proposed rate for PreK expansion is closer to the MCPS per pupil costs of over \$15,000 for kindergarten and elementary-aged students, but could be adjusted for economies of scale when incorporating these classrooms into an elementary school sized setting.

Description	Prekindergarten in center-based settings
Annual tuition cost per child	\$14,500
Monthly tuition cost per child	\$1,450
Estimated number of annual participants	3,000
Current Annual PreK Expenditure	\$23,000,000*
Additional Expansion Allocation	\$20,500,000
Annual cost per classroom of 20	\$290,000

*OLO Report 2017-7

Some providers will have start-up costs because they will convert classrooms previously used for other ages or add new classrooms for the PreK program. For any of the implementation options outlined in the Options section starting on page 5, additional funds should be made available for the costs related to purchasing curriculum materials and staff training, as well as refurbishing and equipping new classrooms.

Transportation for children assigned to community-based slots, either at child care centers or in family child care homes, will not be feasible due to the rotation schedule MCPS uses to assign buses to routes for high school, middle school, and the two elementary school daily schedules. Children assigned to slots at MCPS facilities will ride the buses on the current routes made available for each elementary school. Therefore, transportation costs for PreK expansion were not factored in to overall program costs.

While the PreK Research Group did not investigate local funds to reallocate for the expansion of PreK, or researched options for new or increased tax revenue, the group did review information from the OLO report on sliding scales for families of different income ranges to contribute to tuition payments. Few child care centers offer 6-hour a day, school-year program, so it would be difficult for them to offer such a program separately without additional funding or fees to cover the Before-and-After care or summer components.

- In the Denver, Colorado, system there are income-based sliding scale tuition credits for all families based both on income and preschool quality indicators. Average monthly credits are \$303 for a full-day program.
- In the San Antonio, Texas, program, higher income children are chosen by lottery for limited slots, and their families pay tuition based on a sliding scale while children in the eligible low-income range do not pay any tuition.
- The San Francisco, California, program provides free half-day PreK for all families, free full-day for low income families, and a sliding scale tuition option for higher income families.

- The Seattle, Washington, program requires a payment on a sliding scale for families over 300% FPL. The table of fees has been provided as an example in the attachments to this report.
- The Michigan state program requires a payment on a sliding scale for families over 250% FPL.

Maryland allows for sliding scale fees for public education programs which are not compulsory. This is an additional program element which could be considered if implementation of expanded PreK were pursued.

Options to Administer a Mixed Delivery System

The research group reviewed information on locally designed PreK programs outlined in the OLO report and which MSDE has been considering in its planning for expanded state-wide PreK in Maryland.

The key factors that the group used to determine the most actionable options for Montgomery County mixed delivery systems were 1) the availability of licensable facilities, 2) the availability of qualified staff in the current workforce, and 3) the impact of an expanded program on the local Maintenance of Effort (MOE) obligation for public education funding.

As indicated in the options below, any expansion of PreK would require necessary structural changes for each of the essential partners. There would be a need for significant investments to achieve program and policy goals.

A full range of options have been outlined and are offered to policymakers for consideration recognizing that a multi-sectoral cost share approach is likely to be most attractive. The following are suggested as short-term expansion options which could be undertaken in advance of state PreK expansion, and which could also be implemented incrementally as additional funding sources become available locally. In a mixed delivery system, the MOE obligation would only apply to services being provided in MCPS facilities with MCPS employees.

Family Child Care elements of mixed delivery

FCC partners would participate through a “hub” model where DHHS staff would coach providers and serve as Technical Assistance Coordinators for implementation of the curriculum and lesson planning. Incentives could be provided for new providers to set aside slots for 4-year-olds participating in the PreK program so that enrolled children are part of a cohort with each FCC provider and are not the sole child in their age range in that setting.

There would not be an MOE obligation for the portion of services provided in FCC settings.

Option A: Expansion of MCPS Half-day PreK classes to Full-day – Expand half-day sessions to full-day in thirteen existing MCPS PreK classes that have capacity to extend hours in the assigned classrooms.

- The staff would need to be hired by MCPS and with adequate resources would operate in alignment with the current MCPS PreK program.

Implementation challenges

- There would be MOE obligations on the full cost of this program option.
- Should funding become available, there would need to be significant investments and building of infrastructure to achieve program and policy goals. MCPS would need time to address issues around the hiring and training of additional staff, outreach and enrollment, and other adjustments to organizational infrastructure needed to implement expanded services.

Option B: A mixed delivery system in MCPS and community-based settings – 1) Expand half-day sessions to full-day in thirteen existing MCPS PreK classes that have capacity to extend hours in the assigned classrooms, 2) designate additional classrooms in any MCPS facilities with full-day capacity, and 3) contract for additional classrooms with center-based providers and for slots with private FCC providers.

- This option would facilitate the hiring of staff by allowing private providers to hire teachers directly.
- This option would reduce the impact on MOE obligations.
- For the component of this option delivered in MCPS facilities, staff would need to be hired by MCPS and with adequate resources would operate in alignment with the current MCPS PreK program.
- For the component of this option delivered by community partners, staff would be hired directly as employees of the provider.
- Providers who are not already community partners for other publicly funded early childhood services could be invited to apply to participate in PreK expansion in an effort to extend additional quality enhancement supports to providers which have not entered into EXCELS or become accredited.
- DHHS would be the authorizing agency for contracts with community providers. The program would be based on MSDE PreK Expansion grant requirements with some local modifications.

- For the component of this option overseen by DHHS, additional resources would be needed for full implementation such as contract monitoring, technical assistance, and invoicing.
- Families would provide transportation if their child is enrolled in a community-based slot.

Implementation challenges

- There would be MOE obligations for the component of this option delivered in MCPS facilities with MCPS employees.
- Should funding become available, there would need to be significant investments and building of infrastructure to achieve program and policy goals. MCPS would need time to address issues around the hiring and training of additional staff, outreach and enrollment, and other adjustments to organizational infrastructure needed to implement expanded services.
- PreK classes could be competing for space with other MCPS services.
- Should funding become available, DHHS would need time to address issues around the hiring of additional staff and other adjustments to organizational infrastructure needed to implement expanded services.

Option C: A mixed delivery system with MCPS facilities – 1) Expand half-day sessions to full-day in thirteen existing MCPS PreK classes that have capacity to extend hours in the assigned classrooms, 2) designate additional classrooms in any MCPS facilities with full-day capacity for contracted community providers to deliver PreK services, and 3) additional slots contracted with private FCC providers would remain in private home settings.

- This option would facilitate the hiring of staff by allowing private providers to hire teachers directly.
- This option would also reduce the impact on MOE obligations.
- For the component of this option delivered in MCPS facilities, staff would need to be hired by MCPS and with adequate resources would operate in alignment with the current MCPS PreK program.
- For the component of this option delivered by community partners, staff would be hired directly as employees of the provider.
- Providers who are not already community partners for other publicly funded early childhood services could be invited to apply to participate in PreK expansion in an effort to extend additional quality enhancement supports to providers which have not entered into EXCELS or become accredited.

- DHHS would be the authorizing agency for contracts with community providers. The program would be based on MSDE PreK Expansion grant requirements with some local modifications.
- For the component of this option overseen by DHHS, additional resources would be needed for full implementation such as contract monitoring, technical assistance, and invoicing.
- Families would provide transportation if their child is enrolled in a community-based slot.

Implementation challenges

- There would be MOE obligations for the component of this option delivered in MCPS facilities with MCPS employees.
- Should funding become available, there would need to be significant investments and building of infrastructure to achieve program and policy goals. MCPS would need time to address issues around the hiring and training of additional staff, outreach and enrollment, and other adjustments to organizational infrastructure needed to implement expanded services.
- PreK classes could be competing for space with other MCPS services for Kindergarten through grade 5.
- Should funding become available, DHHS would need time to address issues around the hiring of additional staff and other adjustments to organizational infrastructure needed to implement expanded services.
- Contracts with providers would need to include specifications of the components of occupancy for which MCPS and DHHS would each have separate oversight.

Option D: A mixed delivery system in MCPS, community-based settings, and leased commercial space – 1) Expand half-day sessions to full-day in thirteen existing MCPS PreK classes that have capacity to extend hours in the assigned classrooms, 2) designate additional classrooms in any MCPS facilities with full-day capacity, 3) contract for additional classrooms with center-based providers and for slots with private FCC providers, and 4) the County would lease storefronts, commercial real estate, etc., to contract for services with private center-based providers for additional slots.

- This option would facilitate the hiring of staff by allowing private providers to hire teachers directly.
- This option would reduce the impact on MOE obligations.

- For the component of this option delivered in MCPS facilities, staff would need to be hired by MCPS and with adequate resources would operate in alignment with the current MCPS PreK program.
- For the component of this option delivered by community partners, staff would be hired directly as employees of the provider.
- For the component of this option delivered by community partners in public space, the County would provide space licenses for classrooms in the leased commercial space.
- Providers who are not already community partners for other publicly funded early childhood services could be invited to apply to participate in PreK expansion in an effort to extend additional quality enhancement supports to providers which have not entered into EXCELS or become accredited.
- DHHS would be the authorizing agency for contracts with community providers. The program would be based on MSDE PreK Expansion grant requirements with some local modifications.
- For the component of this option overseen by DHHS, additional resources would be needed for full implementation such as contract monitoring, technical assistance, and invoicing.
- Standard build-out costs would be incurred by the County.
- Families would provide transportation if their child is enrolled in a community-based slot.

Implementation challenges

- There would be MOE obligations for the component of this option delivered in MCPS facilities with MCPS employees.
- Should funding become available, there would need to be significant investments and building of infrastructure to achieve program and policy goals. MCPS would need time to address issues around the hiring and training of additional staff, outreach and enrollment, and other adjustments to organizational infrastructure needed to implement expanded services.
- PreK classes could be competing for space with other MCPS services.
- Should funding become available, DHHS would need time to address issues around the hiring of additional staff and other adjustments to organizational infrastructure needed to implement expanded services.
- Contracts with providers would need to include specifications of the components of occupancy for which MCPS and DHHS would each have separate oversight.

- This option would need to be phased in in order to build out the facilities and arrange for the MSDE licensing reviews.
- There would be significant costs to the County for implementation of this option related to the leasing and build-out of space to meet Maryland Office of Child Care licensing requirements.

One of the greatest benefits of mixed delivery systems is that families with multiple children can select providers who have services for a variety of ages (often infants and toddlers, but occasionally Before-and-After Care for older siblings). Some providers may not want to reduce or limit services for other ages, and some parents may not be interested in a setting with services for just one child.

Having a centralized enrollment entity would facilitate managing the availability of slots in each setting and would provide transparency for families to get accurate program information. Should funding become available, MCPS would need to be provided with adequate resources to expand the current Head Start and Prekindergarten recruitment, eligibility, and assignment process to facilitate enrollment of eligible children.

Stakeholders provided feedback on the pros and cons of program oversight being assigned solely to MCPS, solely to DHHS, jointly to the two agencies, or options for a new entity to oversee mixed delivery PreK. One model for PreK expansion which has been considered at the state level is for funding from MSDE to local school systems (LSS) to establish contracts with private providers and is similar to the structure of PreK in other state and local jurisdictions across the country. The recommendation for initial expansion of services in Montgomery County is to mirror existing staff hiring and vendor contracting regulations in the County.

Standards for Staff and Program Quality

Staff Quality

There are efforts underway on the national and regional level to align early childhood educator credentials and professionalize the field. Two of the most significant initiatives are being led by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Washington Region Early Care and Education Workforce Network (the Network).

One of the primary elements of child care which is used to indicate quality is the provider or teacher's professional training. There is significant discussion about what level of teacher qualifications and/or teacher preparation is truly best practice because of its correlation with high-quality in child care services. Evaluation and assessment regarding teacher qualifications has led to significant research on the national and regional level. In an effort to have a better understanding of indicators of best practice, representatives from Montgomery College and the Early Childhood Services division of DHHS participate in the Network. This group of educators from the Washington DC region formed a regional group representing the District of Columbia,

Northern Virginia (Alexandria, Falls Church, Arlington, Fairfax) and suburban Maryland (Prince Georges and Montgomery Counties). The Network was formed after the release of the Report of the National Academy of Medicine 2015 report, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*. The Network developed the project *Mapping competency-based career pathways that are linked to quality and compensation and can be used across the region* to be delivered by January 1, 2019.

After considerable research the Network determined that while the Academy recommends a four-year degree for Early Childhood teachers there is not one approach to a qualified workforce in early childhood. The competency-based framework under development by the Network will provide for multiple avenues and options for demonstrating competency in critical areas of teacher education that support young child's development and learning. Discussions throughout the early childhood field recognize the reality of the current system would require considerable change to succeed in providing all ECE teachers with 4-year degrees. This includes access to 4-year programs and attainment of degrees that are tied to increased compensation for those already in the field. The Network is framing the project around those concerns and the needs of the early care and education field (*see Attachment B*).

DHHS, the Network, and national child care advocacy organizations share concerns about how quickly a degree requirement could be implemented for child care teachers. Research in the OLO report confirms that there is not conclusive evidence that a degree greatly differentiates the level of care young children receive. The current design of local college degree programs does not facilitate enrollment for child care providers currently in the workforce. While some institutions of higher education have begun to offer on-line courses, a majority of institutions still schedule classes during the day, when child care providers are at work. Additionally, because of the teaching practicum requirement for both on-line and classroom-based degrees, teachers would have to leave the workforce, forgo their income, and teach voluntarily for the length of time of that component of the degree requirement.

The following staffing qualifications are proposed for staff in private provider settings in an effort to ensure quality services for families while taking into account the current lack of degreed teachers in the early childhood field.

A Certified Teacher to coordinate a cohort of Teachers with qualifications from those listed below. The Certified Teacher could be part of a Technical Assistance structure within MCPS or DHHS and would parallel the educational supports provided to partners in the FCC hub model.

Teachers qualifications:

- A Bachelor degree in early childhood or approved related field, or
- An Associate degree in early childhood or approved related field and a specified number of years of classroom experience, or
- Be enrolled in an Associate degree program for early childhood or approved related field with two semesters or less of coursework remaining to complete and a specified number of years of classroom experience, or
- Reciprocity for other credentials such as Montessori certification, or

- Competency based requirements if they have received a CDA and are actively maintaining their credential

A competency-based system would allow for college credit equivalencies for the specific number of years of experience an individual has worked in a paid child care position. Staff could demonstrate their proficiency through the professional portfolio used for the nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) credentialing process in addition to completing a college credit requirement. This credentialing option would make it possible to retain experienced, knowledgeable, providers unable to take the lengthy leave of absence required to attend college courses while also recognizing their years of experience in the field.

Program Quality

Determinations of program quality vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and even from accrediting body to accrediting body. Licensing is seen as a foundation for program regulation while quality ratings and accreditation can highlight a program's ability to meet additional standards. Factors such as the condition of the learning environment, use of an evidence-based curriculum, classroom materials, and staff credentials are often the defining criteria in quality ratings systems.

Although the state of Maryland has a Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System (TQRIS), named Excellence Counts in Early Learning and School Age Care (EXCELS), it is a voluntary program. There are minimal incentives for providers to participate in EXCELS, which has led to a low number of providers in most jurisdictions having been rated (*see Attachment C*).

Eligibility for a provider, center-based or FCC, to participate in the County PreK expansion program could be determined by a provider's level in the EXCELS rating system and/or having received accreditation from MSDE or a nationally recognized accrediting agency. Programs published at EXCELS Level 3 could be allowed to participate in the mixed delivery system if they have put in place a realistic timeline to achieve higher ratings levels. MSDE also has standards already in place for Non-Public Nursery School providers which could be considered as a program quality determination.

Accreditation is provided for center-based programs by NAEYC, MSDE, and the American Montessori Society (AMS). Recognition of a Montessori approach is provided by the Association Montessori Institute USA (AMI/USA).

Accreditation of family child care homes is provided by the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC).

Additional eligibility indicators would be the requirement for providers to demonstrate they have not had licensing violations for a determined number of previous years of operation, and that they have not had fiscal findings during an audit.

Curriculum

The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning at the federal Office of Head Start has identified the necessary elements of an effective curriculum as: comprehensive domains of learning; specific learning goals; well-designed learning activities; responsive teaching; culturally and linguistically responsive teaching; individualized instruction; ongoing assessment; family involvement; and appropriateness for program staff, children, and families. Use of an effective curriculum helps provide structure to each day of learning as well as identify learning goals across the year.

In order to ensure instructional quality in contracted PreK classes, contracted providers would be required to select a curriculum approved by MSDE for preschool aged children. Technical assistance would be provided by the Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center (R&R) to align Kindergarten readiness elements with Curriculum 2.0 that is used by MCPS Kindergartens (*see Attachment D*).

MCPS uses the Houghton Mifflin *Big Day for PreK* for Head Start and PreK instruction. There is also a crosswalk to align Kindergarten readiness elements with Curriculum 2.0 that is used at the elementary school level.

MSDE currently has only approved one curriculum for use in FCC providers which was designed for FCC settings. The cost of the edition of this curriculum currently approved by MSDE is \$100 but the cost of the newest edition, which will replace it, is over \$2,000. Support for providers to purchase and receive training with the updated edition could be provided as part of the start-up costs for contracted providers. Technical assistance would be provided by the R&R to align with Curriculum 2.0 that is used by MCPS Kindergartens.

The Early Learning Assessment (ELA) is the formal standardized assessment used for the MCPS Head Start and Prekindergarten programs. Several FCC and center-based providers have also begun using this state-designed assessment, and technical assistance would be available through the R&R for programs participating in the mixed delivery PreK system.

Screening tools used by MCPS for preschool-aged children are the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), the ESI-R and its Spanish companion; ABLE for behavioral assessments; and other speech and language assessments. Training on how to use these tools could also be provided to community partners for use in their programs through the technical assistance components of PreK expansion.

Options for Family Child Care Participation

While the staffing structure and daily activities are similar in public school and center-based child care classrooms, there are distinct operational differences of services in a Family Child Care setting.

A hub model is recommended for designing the FCC component of PreK services. DHHS would staff a team of Technical Assistance Coordinators who would provide coaching to FCC providers around lesson planning, conducting assessments, and meeting EXCELS standards.

Currently, MSDE has only approved one curriculum for use in FCC settings, The Creative Curriculum for Family Child Care from Teaching Strategies. This would be the curriculum participating FCC providers would be required to use with enrolled PreK expansion children as an element of program quality and so instruction would be consistent across all FCC slots in the PreK program.

Because of the low adult-to-child ratio in FCC setting, an additional team of staff would be needed to help conduct assessments and complete reporting requirements for program monitoring and ROI measures. This would be a component of the hub model outlined in the mixed delivery options section starting on page 5.

School Communities to Be Initially Targeted for Expansion

Expansion of PreK is recommended for elementary school communities with the highest rates of families at 185% FPL and/or those elementary schools with low kindergarten readiness as identified by the state Kindergarten Readiness Assessment process.

MCPS has already located Head Start and PreK at most of the schools matching these criteria, and they may not have space to provide additional full-day PreK classrooms. Qualified private child care providers in these communities would be invited to participate in the mixed delivery system in order to make additional options available to eligible families with 4-year-olds in those neighborhoods.

A third option for location of mixed delivery services would be MCPS or DHHS operated classrooms in privately leased commercial space. This model has been successful in New York City, in particular, to ensure services are accessible to families in areas where existing providers are at capacity or private child care does not exist.

Annual phases for program expansion would be defined based on the number of available classrooms in MCPS, the identification of qualified private provider slots, and build-out of leased space.

The thirteen elementary schools listed below have capacity to add an afternoon session of PreK in a total of thirteen classrooms:

- McNair Elementary School
- JoAnn Leleck Elementary School at Broad Acres
- Cashell Elementary School
- Brooke Grove Elementary School
- Washington Grove Elementary School

- Brown Station Elementary School
- Watkins Mill Elementary School
- Fields Road Elementary School
- Oakland Terrace Elementary School
- Singer Elementary School
- Rock Creek Forest Elementary School
- Montgomery Knolls Elementary School

Educational Opportunities for Child Care Providers to Grow a Qualified Workforce

MSDE has annual training requirements for early childhood educators to remain qualified to work in licensed programs. There are currently too few MSDE-approved trainers to meet the training needs of the existing number of childcare providers and PreK teachers across the state. Whether PreK expansion is implemented at just the local level or also at the state level, there will be an increased number of staff looking to maintain their credentials as well as those looking to advance their careers through professional development.

The Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF) is a tuition assistance program offered through MSDE for child care providers to obtain a college education at participating colleges and universities in Maryland. Funding is available for a college degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Elementary Education, or Special Education. The fund does not reimburse participants as the payments are made directly to the college or university. Only providers at the Maryland Child Care Credential program at Level Two or higher are eligible to apply. This scholarship requires that recipients commit to remain employed in the child care field at least 10 hours per week (child care center or family child care) upon completion of the college degree or withdrawal from the Fund for a period of, whichever is less, one month for each college credit, two years for a completed Associate degree, or four years for a completed Bachelor degree. There are a total of 38 students across the entire state participating in the CCCPDF scholarship.

Montgomery College has created Montgomery College (MC) Advancing Child Care Teachers Towards Completion (ACCTTC) which is an initiative to support child care providers with completion of Associate of Applied Science (AAS) or Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) degrees. Montgomery college has also recently developed a joint program with MCPS for para professionals in MCPS early childhood positions to complete college coursework and become Teachers.

DHHS will be working with MC to provide students currently enrolled in ECE degree programs with access to MC scholarships and grants, state scholarship information, and federal tuition assistance programs.

Measuring the Impact and Return on Investment

The Return on Investment (ROI) for early childhood programs is often measured longitudinally and is relevant to an individual’s need to access or make use of other public services and programs at later staged in life.

The APA report includes a comprehensive assessment of ROI which extends past benefits solely for a child and their family, but also into areas such as teacher retention and satisfaction while working in early childhood programs.

Category	Estimated Per Child Benefit
K-12 System	
Reduced Special Education Costs	\$8,425
Reduced Grade Retention	\$2,018
Reduced Teacher Turnover Costs	\$78
Reduced Teacher Salary Costs	\$1,729
Reduced Teacher Absenteeism Costs	\$1,859
Reduced Teacher Support Costs	\$5,226
Higher Education and Career	
Increased Costs of College Participation	(\$970)
Increased Costs of High School Participation	(\$1441)
Increased Future Income	\$48,324
Criminal Justice	
Reduced Juvenile Crime Costs	\$7,257
Reduced Adult Crime Costs	\$4,530.00
Reduced Tangible Victim Costs	\$4,757.00
Child Welfare System	
Reduced Foster Care and Home Care Costs	\$327.00
Reduced Child Welfare Quality of Life Costs	\$2,016.00
Reduced Child Welfare Tangible Victim Costs	\$230.00
Total	\$84,365.00

The recommendations in the OLO report do include the observation that while the costs of expanding PreK to more children are significant, the benefits to participating children and their communities far exceed the annual program costs.

DHHS and MCPS are developing a joint “sandbox” for data sharing of students enrolled with both agencies. Should funding for PreK expansion become available, options to expand data collection and joint case management of children should be explored between the two agencies. This will aid in the tracking measuring, and reporting of outcomes for participants.

Need to Expand or Connect Other Programs and Services

There are multiple stakeholders and partners within those stakeholder groups in a mixed delivery system. Families, the public schools, Montgomery College and workforce development agencies, as well as community providers of early childhood services will all have a role to play in the expansion of PreK.

Family education on the importance of early childhood education and family engagement in early education services once a child is enrolled will be key components of a comprehensive PreK program.

Due to the nature of child care licensing regulations and educational standards and curriculum requirements applicable to this age group, coordination with MSDE and MCPS are essential to the success of this expansion effort.

MSDE oversees the Licensing division of the Office of Child Care and will need to increase personnel in order to facilitate the timely expansion of PreK classrooms across Montgomery County, as well as across the state.

MSDE also oversees the approved training process for early childhood educators, and will need to increase the number of trainings provided in languages other than English as well as increase the number of certified trainers approved to provide MSDE required trainings.

MCPS will have significant involvement in the design and implementation of the expanded PreK program because of their role in transitioning children to Kindergarten and collaborating with private providers on the elements of kindergarten readiness. MCPS currently extends invitations to early childhood trainings and professional development opportunities to Judy Center and partner child care provider staff, which could be expanded for providers participating in PreK expansion.

There are two local community providers of services specific to the needs of children with diagnosed disabilities. The ARC and Ivy Mount could be invited to participate in the mixed delivery system by providing a set number of slots annually for 4-year-olds. They could also be brought on as training partners to ensure early childhood educators in other settings are implementing best practices for children with special needs.

Conclusion

Providing 4-year-olds with comparable learning experiences before they enter Kindergarten will be a part of their foundation for school success. Implementing a program which helps to support low-income families in making quality early learning experiences available for their children will be a part of the foundation for equitable school success for all children in the County. Designing a program which takes into consideration the experiences and abilities of staff in public school,

center-based, and Family Child Care settings will make the program more comprehensive and more appealing to families of a variety of backgrounds.

As of July 2017, the population of Montgomery County is 1,058,810. As of 2016, 15.6% of households speak Spanish, 3.8% a form of Chinese, 2.4% French, 1.4% Korean, and 1.1% Vietnamese. While MCPS provides information and support resources in all of these languages for families, instruction for children is in English outside of the specialized immersion programs. Children will benefit from having an additional year of early learning experiences in English by attending PreK.

This report provides various options for modeling and phasing in PreK expansion in Montgomery County. It describes critical elements that must be taken into consideration, regardless of the option. Option D might be considered an ideal model for some stakeholders, but is extremely costly and requires lots of additional infrastructure and facility planning; Option A might be considered most feasible for the upcoming Fiscal Year, but can be tailored according to the number of classes expanded and/or added. Either way, planning for expansion needs to continue to include all stakeholders and will be impacted by the updated Cost of Quality Care Study that is currently beginning in the County. In addition, these options will likely be impacted by the final report from the Kirwan Commission. This work will be updated as part of the HHS Early Care and Education Strategic Plan

References

- Workman, S, Palaich, B, Wool, S. (2016, January). A Comprehensive Analysis of Prekindergarten in Maryland. Augenblick, Palaich and Associates. Retrieved 7/1//2017 from <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Documents/adequacystudy/MDPreKComprehensiveAnalysis011316.pdf>
- Bonner-Tompkins, E. (2017, February). OLO Report Number 2017-7: PreK in Montgomery County and In Other Jurisdictions. Montgomery County, Maryland, Office of Legislative Oversight

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Center-based Child Care Providers:

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Jennifer Rooms, Organization of Child Care Directors
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Sharon Sherry, Jewish Federation of Greater Washington Early Childhood Education Council
Representatives from the Montgomery County Commission on Child Care

Children's Opportunity Fund

Mala Thakur, Executive Director

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Nuri Funes, Latino Child Care Association
Jacqueline Grant, Family Child Care Association
Sobia Qureshi, Family Child Care Association*

Montgomery College:

Sonia Pruneda-Hernandez, Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator

Montgomery County Council:

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Craig Howard, Senior Legislative Analyst, Montgomery County Council
Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst, Montgomery County Council

Montgomery County, Department of Health and Human Services:

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Jennifer Arnaiz, Child Care Resource and Referral Center Program Manager
Charlene Muhammad, Head Start Program Manager
Mónica Ortiz, Policy Officer for Early Care and Education

Montgomery County Public Schools:

Amy Cropp, Child Find/Early Childhood Disabilities Unit Supervisor
Claudia Simmons, Prekindergarten and Head Start Supervisor
Verna Washington, Prekindergarten and Head Start Supervisor

**identifies alternate representative*

ATTACHMENTS

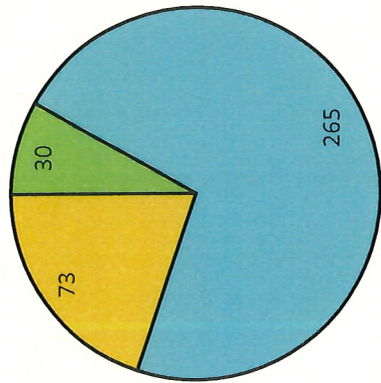
2018 Annual Income Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Continental United States

Household/ Family Size	25%	50%	75%	100%	125%	138%	150%	175%	185%	200%	225%	250%	275%	300%
1	\$ 3,035.00	\$ 6,070.00	\$ 9,105.00	\$ 12,140.00	\$ 15,175.00	\$ 16,753.20	\$ 18,210.00	\$ 21,245.00	\$ 22,459.00	\$ 24,280.00	\$ 27,315.00	\$ 30,350.00	\$ 33,385.00	\$ 36,420.00
2	\$ 4,115.00	\$ 8,230.00	\$ 12,345.00	\$ 16,460.00	\$ 20,575.00	\$ 22,714.80	\$ 24,690.00	\$ 28,805.00	\$ 30,451.00	\$ 32,920.00	\$ 37,035.00	\$ 41,150.00	\$ 45,265.00	\$ 49,380.00
3	\$ 5,195.00	\$ 10,390.00	\$ 15,585.00	\$ 20,780.00	\$ 25,975.00	\$ 28,676.40	\$ 31,170.00	\$ 36,365.00	\$ 38,443.00	\$ 41,560.00	\$ 46,755.00	\$ 51,950.00	\$ 57,145.00	\$ 62,340.00
4	\$ 6,275.00	\$ 12,550.00	\$ 18,825.00	\$ 25,100.00	\$ 31,375.00	\$ 34,638.00	\$ 37,650.00	\$ 43,925.00	\$ 46,435.00	\$ 50,200.00	\$ 56,475.00	\$ 62,750.00	\$ 69,025.00	\$ 75,300.00
5	\$ 7,355.00	\$ 14,710.00	\$ 22,065.00	\$ 29,420.00	\$ 36,775.00	\$ 40,599.60	\$ 44,130.00	\$ 51,485.00	\$ 54,427.00	\$ 58,840.00	\$ 66,195.00	\$ 73,550.00	\$ 80,905.00	\$ 88,260.00
6	\$ 8,435.00	\$ 16,870.00	\$ 25,305.00	\$ 33,740.00	\$ 42,175.00	\$ 46,561.20	\$ 50,610.00	\$ 59,045.00	\$ 62,419.00	\$ 67,480.00	\$ 75,915.00	\$ 84,350.00	\$ 92,785.00	\$ 101,220.00
7	\$ 9,515.00	\$ 19,030.00	\$ 28,545.00	\$ 38,060.00	\$ 47,575.00	\$ 52,522.80	\$ 57,090.00	\$ 66,605.00	\$ 70,411.00	\$ 76,120.00	\$ 85,635.00	\$ 95,150.00	\$ 104,665.00	\$ 114,180.00
8	\$ 10,595.00	\$ 21,190.00	\$ 31,785.00	\$ 42,380.00	\$ 52,975.00	\$ 58,484.40	\$ 63,570.00	\$ 74,165.00	\$ 78,403.00	\$ 84,760.00	\$ 95,355.00	\$ 105,950.00	\$ 116,545.00	\$ 127,140.00
9	\$ 11,675.00	\$ 23,350.00	\$ 35,025.00	\$ 46,700.00	\$ 58,375.00	\$ 64,446.00	\$ 70,050.00	\$ 81,725.00	\$ 86,395.00	\$ 93,400.00	\$ 105,075.00	\$ 116,750.00	\$ 128,425.00	\$ 140,100.00
10	\$ 12,755.00	\$ 25,510.00	\$ 38,265.00	\$ 51,020.00	\$ 63,775.00	\$ 70,407.60	\$ 76,530.00	\$ 89,285.00	\$ 94,387.00	\$ 102,040.00	\$ 114,795.00	\$ 127,550.00	\$ 140,305.00	\$ 153,060.00
11	\$ 13,835.00	\$ 27,670.00	\$ 41,505.00	\$ 55,340.00	\$ 69,175.00	\$ 76,369.20	\$ 83,010.00	\$ 96,845.00	\$ 102,379.00	\$ 110,680.00	\$ 124,515.00	\$ 138,350.00	\$ 152,185.00	\$ 166,020.00
12	\$ 14,915.00	\$ 29,830.00	\$ 44,745.00	\$ 59,660.00	\$ 74,575.00	\$ 82,330.80	\$ 89,490.00	\$ 104,405.00	\$ 110,371.00	\$ 119,320.00	\$ 134,235.00	\$ 149,150.00	\$ 164,065.00	\$ 178,980.00
13	\$ 15,995.00	\$ 31,990.00	\$ 47,985.00	\$ 63,980.00	\$ 79,975.00	\$ 88,292.40	\$ 95,970.00	\$ 111,965.00	\$ 118,363.00	\$ 127,960.00	\$ 143,955.00	\$ 159,950.00	\$ 175,945.00	\$ 191,940.00
14	\$ 17,075.00	\$ 34,150.00	\$ 51,225.00	\$ 68,300.00	\$ 85,375.00	\$ 94,254.00	\$ 102,450.00	\$ 119,525.00	\$ 126,355.00	\$ 136,600.00	\$ 153,675.00	\$ 170,750.00	\$ 187,825.00	\$ 204,900.00

Source: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>

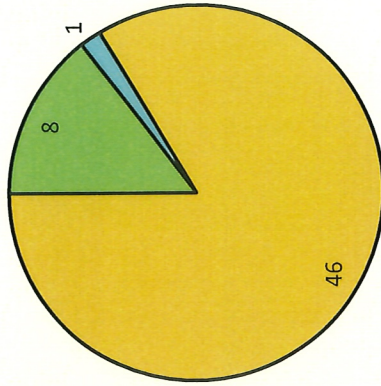
Degree Program Graduates (SUPPLY) for Early Education & Teaching Professions

MD Schools
Early Education & Teaching



- Associates Degree
- Bachelors Degree
- Masters Degree

DC Schools
Early Education & Teaching



- Bachelors Degree
- Post Baccalaureate Certificate
- Masters Certificate

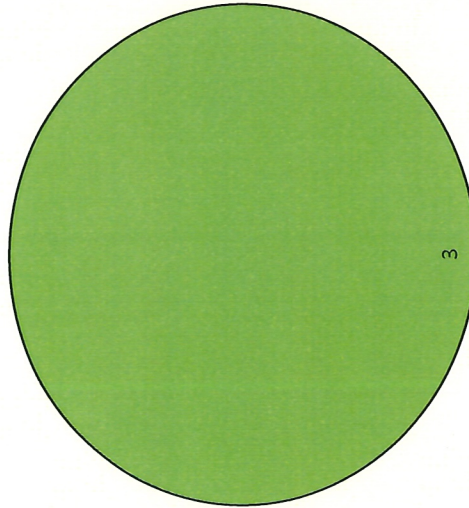
Virginia Schools Early
Education & Teaching



Source: EMSI, 2017 (using 2015 data)

Degree Program Graduates (SUPPLY) for Early Education with Special Education

MD Schools
Early Education w/Sp. Education

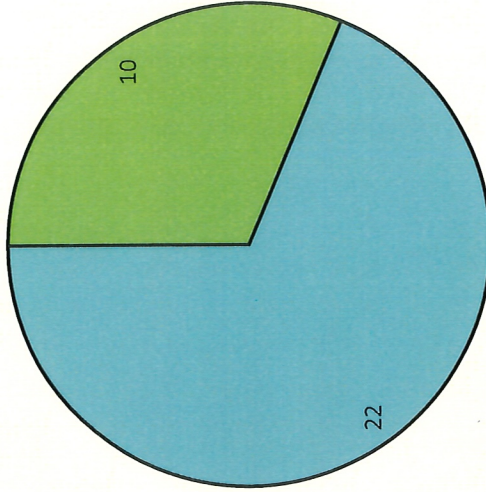


■ Post Baccalaureate Degree

VA Schools
Early Education w/Sp. Education



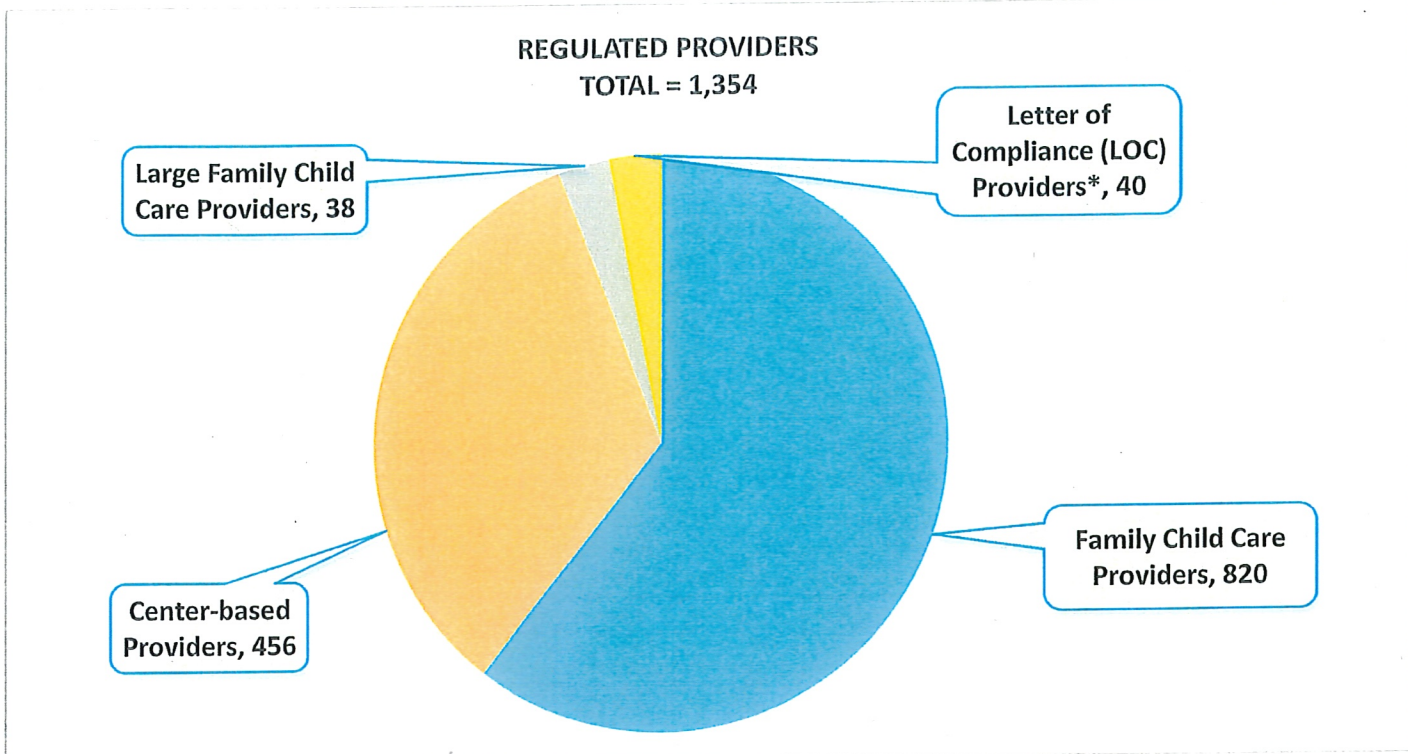
DC Schools
Early Education w/Sp. Education



■ Post Baccalaureate Degree ■ Masters Degree

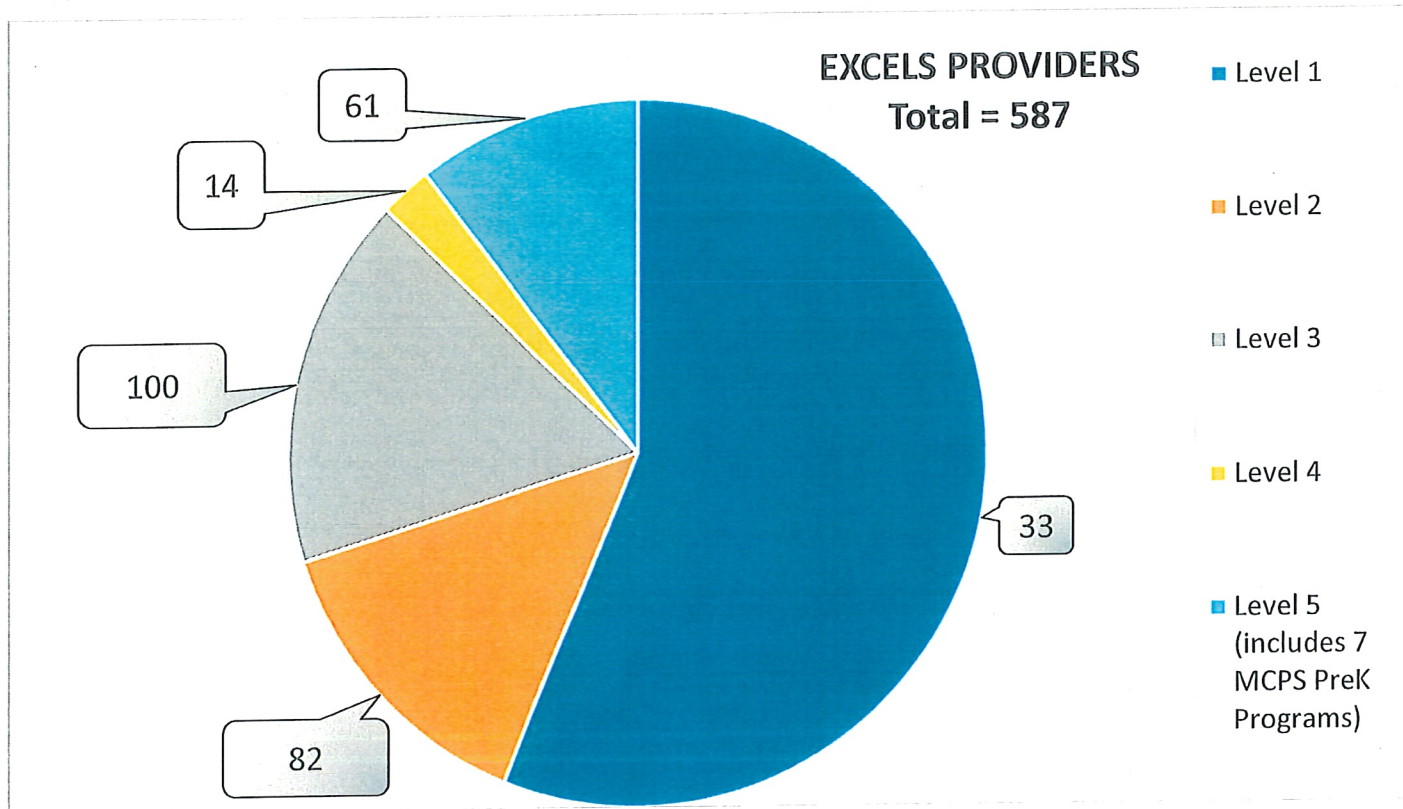
Source: EMSI, 2017 (using 2015 data)

MONTGOMERY COUNTY CHILD CARE LANDSCAPE



Note: Providers listed above serve ages birth to 12 years old

*LOCs are faith based programs (program must be part of the church/synagogue/Mosque fiscal budget covering expenses)



Source:

Monthly list of regulated child care, sent by MSDE

EXCELS info from www.marylandexcels.org



Recommended Curriculum – Comprehensive 3, 4, and 5 year old

Publisher	Curriculum	Expiration Date
Abrams Learning Trend	Let's Begin with the Letter People Land of the Letter People	December 2017
CORE Knowledge	Preschool Sequence Kindergarten	December 2017
High Reach Learning	Curriculum for Threes Curriculum for Pre K Passports: Experiences for Pre-K	December 2017
Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt	Houghton-Mifflin Prekindergarten Kindergarten	December 2017
MacMillan/McGraw Hill	Little Treasures Treasures	December 2017
McGraw Hill Wright Group	DLM Early Childhood Express	December 2017
Pearson Early Learning	Opening the World of Learning	December 2017
Success for All	Kinder Corner	December 2017
Teaching Strategies	Creative Curriculum	December 2017
Frog Street Inc.	Frog Street Pre-K (4) (copyright 2013) Frog Street Threes (copyright 2016)	Dec. 2019 Dec. 2022
McGraw –Hill	DLM EC Express (3&4) (copyright 2011)	Dec. 2019
MacMillan/ McGraw Hill	Little Treasures (4) (copyright 2012)	Dec. 2019



Robert Leslie	<i>The Investigator Club</i> Just for Threes Learning System (copyright 2009) Pre K with STEAM, Maryland Edition (4) (copyright 2014) Kindergarten Investigations with STEAM, Maryland Edition (5) (copyright 2014)	Dec. 2019 Dec. 2019 Dec. 2019
Success for All	Curiosity Corner (4) 2 nd Edition (copyright 2014) Kinder Corner (5) 2 nd Edition (copyright 2012)	Dec. 2019 Dec. 2019
Creative Curriculum Teaching Strategies	Family Childcare (3,4,5) (copyright 2009) Preschool (3,4) 5 th Edition (copyright 2010) Preschool (3's only) 6 th Edition (copyright 2016)	Dec. 2019 Dec. 2019 Dec. 2022
Kaplan	Connect 4 Learning (4 year olds) (copyright 2016)	Dec. 2022
Pearson	OWL Opening the World of Learning (copyright 2014)	Dec. 2022