

Dear County Councilmembers,

I'm writing about [Executive Order 122-20](#), part of which would restrict capacity at County child care centers to not exceed 50 percent. As a woman voter and parent at Takoma Park Child Development Center in Montgomery County, I strongly object to this Order and urge you to vote **against** it for the following reasons.

This pandemic is economically devastating a generation of women. Childcare is essential infrastructure for families, and without it, we all suffer. We cannot expect parents to be able to work and to encourage economic growth -- or even maintain a local economy -- during this time if we do not provide childcare for families.

Capacity at Montgomery County childcare centers is already more restricted than the rest of Maryland. Childcare centers in Montgomery County are already capped at no more than 15 people per classroom, while the rest of the state currently allows full capacity. Keeping small class sizes is critical to reduce exposure to COVID, but that guideline is already in place. There is no need to further restrict capacity. Takoma Park Child Development Center has been operating, without any COVID cases since mid-August, at 49% center capacity, and between 37-65% capacity per classroom. (It's unclear what the Executive Order means when it references "capacity" -- is that per classroom or per center?)

This order would remove children receiving care on Thursday from receiving care on Friday. Passing this order would force childcare center providers to choose between their current families to decide who is more in need of care. With less than 24 hours' notice, families would be without essential care for their children.

This order jeopardizes the financial viability of already-stressed County centers and the jobs of childcare workers. Centers are already operating at reduced capacity and therefore reduced income. Further restricting capacity reduces center tuition revenue, risking centers' ability to remain open during this health and economic crisis.

Restricting access to childcare is not an essential method of COVID prevention. A recent study from Yale University has shown that [child care is not associated with the spread of COVID-19](#). Childcare centers are following CDC and Maryland State Department of Education health and safety guidelines seriously, and their enrollments do not need to be further restricted to prevent the spread of COVID.

Thank you for voting AGAINST Executive Order 122-20.

Sincerely,

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