

Greetings Council President Albornoz, Council Vice President Glass, and members of the County Council,

My name is Iris Carlo, and I have been a Montgomery County resident for the past 23 years in Germantown and Rockville. I am here today to ask that the council allot funding to centers that can provide reduced cost care to help aid working families in Montgomery County out of poverty. As a young single mother I experienced a great challenge when planning for childcare for my toddler son. I earned what I thought was a good amount of money in 2012, \$16.00 per hour. I quickly learned that the majority of my earnings would have to go towards childcare costs. This made me feel so defeated and I questioned what the point of working was. I spent all my time away from my baby for small financial gain. I applied for a special program that assisted mothers in need with a daycare stipend but this lasted one month. I received a letter stating that funds for the program had depleted and I would no longer receive the stipend. I was in a position where I had a financial responsibility to cover and I felt so unhappy with my life circumstances. I had to struggle during this time with the choice to be a working mother or stay at home living in poverty. I felt I couldn't work, couldn't go to school because I couldn't afford it. I even contemplated hiring an unlicensed provider. This is a common issue that many women with children in Montgomery County face. In Washington DC there is a daycare/preschool program that only works with income qualified families charging them a fraction of the typical cost of daycare. There is no stipend, just direct funding to the school with a reduced monthly cost to families. An example of a center like this is "Centronia". I am asking the Council to allocate funds in the budget to support community-based child care centers, which provide an essential service to families.