



EARLY CHILDHOOD COORDINATING COUNCIL

October 22, 2018

The Early Childhood Coordinating Council (ECCC) was established by Montgomery County Bill 13-15 and serves as the local Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) for Montgomery County, liaising with the State ECAC at the Maryland Department of Education (MSDE). The ECCC monitors, advocates, and makes policy recommendations for the development of a comprehensive system of early care and education (ECE) in Montgomery County that supports children entering school ready to learn.

The ECCC is comprised of a variety of stakeholders and professionals with expertise in the early childhood field including: County parents, representatives of the philanthropic and business communities, child care providers, state licensing staff, higher education, and representatives from county agencies such as Montgomery County Libraries (MCPL), Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Our collective knowledge and expertise about early care and education, the importance of school readiness, and the needs of children and families in Montgomery County allows the ECCC to examine, discuss, problem solve and provide a comprehensive perspective about early care and education to County officials.

The annual priorities are aligned with the goals of the Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education, released in December 2016.

PRIORITY 1: Creating a forum for effective communication and coordination between stakeholders.

In addition to the ECCC, there are many other Boards and Commissions that have a focus on matters related to early childhood. Additionally, the collective impact entity Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF) has also selected early childhood for its newest call to action. Building a seamless system of early care and education from birth through age eight requires connections across a variety of diverse stakeholders that include child care providers, families, MCPS, the Community Use of Public Space, and multiple programs within DHHS. The ECCC will work to facilitate communication and coordination among these groups and to create an aligned system of resources and priorities in which all children have access to high quality learning experiences.

PRIORITY 2: Examine existing resources and identify gaps related to building a ready ECE workforce.

The ECCC will look to recommendations from Goal 3 of the ECE Strategic Plan, credentialing and career development recommendations from the State's Commission on Innovation and Excellence (the Kirwan Commission), and career pathways recommendations from the Washington Region Early Care and Education Workforce Network to provide guidance on development of the ECE workforce for the programs in Montgomery County serving young children.

In the short term, the ECCC is currently focused on the following:

Monitoring the recommendations from the Kirwan Commission, Working Group 1, Early Childhood Education. As the Commission finalizes its report, the ECCC will highlight how a State framework can align with the challenges and needs of the children and families in Montgomery County. The Kirwan Commission's draft recommendations propose expanding high quality Prekindergarten to four year olds based on a sliding scale and for three year olds from very low income families; adding funding and supports from MSDE for early childhood teacher credentialing and professional development; assessing all children to identify those who need supports to be ready to succeed in school; and expanding Judy Centers, Family Support Centers, and the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program for children ages 0-5 and their families.

Assessing the impacts to the County's Working Parents Assistance program (WPA). In August 2018 the State issued an update to child care provider reimbursement rates and family eligibility income levels in its Child Care Subsidy (CCS) program. The CCS expansion has resulted in many families in Montgomery County receiving notice from the local Working Parents Assistance (WPA) subsidy program that they must transition to the State program by October 31, 2018. The ECCC seeks to monitor the impacts of this transition and ensure that the \$4.8 million in County WPA funds are preserved for supplemental vouchers and other early childhood supports.

Helping to advance the County's Early Care and Education Strategic Plan. The County's budgets since the release of the ECE Strategic Plan in December 2016 have not fully funded the recommended action steps to achieve the goals identified in the plan. The ECCC seeks to continue to assess the quality and availability of local early care and education services and integrate feedback on key issues to align with the County's budgeting cycle which advance strategic plan priorities.