

Montgomery County Commission on Child Care



Annual Report

2023-2024

Montgomery County, MD

Table of Contents

Vision, Mission & Purpose Meeting Information	3
Membership Commission Year 2023-2024	4
Commission FY24 Priorities 2023-2024	5
FY24 Child Care Forum April 17, 2024	6
Commission FY25 Policy Priorities 2024-2025	8

The Commission on Child Care

Vision

Access to high-quality, affordable child care for all Montgomery County families.

Mission

To advise the County Executive and County Council on the development of government policies, programs and services that enhance community support for high-quality, affordable and accessible child care.

Purpose

Sections 10A-4 and 10A-5 of the Montgomery County Code provides authority for the Commission on Child Care to advise the County Executive and the County Council on the development of government policies, programs and services that enhance community support for high-quality, affordable and accessible child care.

Meetings

The full Commission meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm. The CCC takes a summer recess during the months of July and August and reconvenes in September. All meetings are hosted virtually via Microsoft TEAMS with the exception of the Annual Planning Retreat which is hosted in-person in June. In compliance with the Open Meetings Act, all meetings are open to the general public.

A meeting schedule for the Commission on Child Care can be located at this [link](#). The Microsoft TEAMS virtual meeting links can be found on the [Montgomery County Calendar](#).

Membership

The Commission has 17 voting members and six to eight non-voting members appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. Membership includes parents, center and family child care providers, and representatives from the business community, general public, and government agencies with interests in child care. The Commission is supported through staff effort from the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services.

Commission Year 2023-2024 Membership

Voting Members

L'Ornya Bowie, Representative, Business and General Public
Tracey Clay, Representative, Child Care
Allison Fialkov, Representative, Parent
Elka Forbes, Representative, Child Care, *Co-Vice Chair*
Brandon Howard, Representative, Business and General Public, *Co-Vice Chair*
Niambi Heyward, Representative, Child Care
Melissa Mitchell Jordan, Representative, Child Care
Maya Massey, Representative, Business and General Public
Eden Medhanie, Representative, Child Care
Tara Phillips, Representative, Child Care, *Chair*
Nagwa Rizk, Representative, Business and General Public
Lesley Romanoff, Representative, Child Care

Non-Voting Members

Jennifer Arnaiz, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
William Polman, Montgomery County Community Use of Public Facilities
Vacant, Montgomery County Planning Board
Laurie Moran, Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care
Yvonne Iscandari, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Vacant, Montgomery County Public Schools
Vacant, Montgomery County Collaboration Council

Staff

Erin Stillwell, Program Manager, Early Childhood Services, Department of Health and Human Services

2023-2024 Policy Priorities

During FY24 the Commission worked to advance its mission through a focus on the following priorities:

Priority 1:

Develop recommendations on the [Early Care & Education Initiative \(ECEI\) Action Plan FY24-27](#) in an effort to support the County's child care system with a specific focus on equity.

Priority 2:

Focus on the sustainability of the early care and education workforce by providing recommendations and hosting a collaborative event on ways to attract and retain professionals to commit to early childhood education as a long-term career option.



Child Care Forum: April 17, 2024

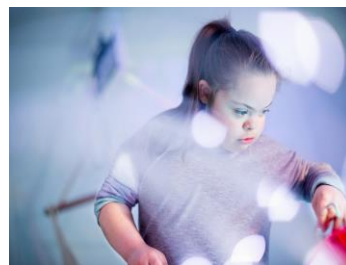
The mission of the Commission on Child Care is to advise the County Executive and County Council on developing, implementing, and evaluating government policies, programs, and services that enhance community support for quality, affordable, and accessible child care.

The Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath have highlighted how essential yet vulnerable the early care and education workforce is to the well-being of our children and the financial stability of parents and caregivers. Even though the vital role child care providers play in supporting other industries is now widely recognized, much work remains to properly support this workforce. We must continue our efforts to build and strengthen an early care and education system that recruits, supports, and retains a qualified and diverse workforce capable of serving all children and families.

On April 17, 2024, the Commission on Child Care hosted a forum, inviting early childhood educators, stakeholders, and community members from the District of Columbia, Virginia, and counties in Maryland. This gathering aimed to bring together the local child care community as an instrument to build connections, explore synergies, discuss challenges, and share innovative solutions around workforce stability.

The Commission hosted over fifty participants at this virtual event and was overwhelmed by the level of contribution and collaboration. Many participants voiced concerns and challenges involving the recruitment and retention of qualified staff, building the capacity to meet the needs of children with special needs and diverse abilities, and providing quality multicultural and multilingual early childhood education programs.

What set this event apart was its focus on not just discussing challenges, but also on sharing innovative solutions. Below is a sample of some of the inventive solutions and resources shared at the event. In FY25, the Commission plans to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the recommended solutions to assess their feasibility for implementation in Montgomery County.



Child Care Forum-Shared Innovative Solutions

Recruiting and Retaining Qualified Staff

- Strengthen screening of candidates prior to the initial interview to identify interested and qualified candidates right from the start.
- Invite qualified candidates for a “teaching interview” where they can demonstrate their skills in a classroom setting, ensuring their resume accurately reflects their real-world abilities.
- Support and utilize local apprenticeship programs to offer opportunities for apprentices to join the child care workforce while completing coursework to achieve their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.
- Ensure that providers receive equitable pay based on market rate surveys to guarantee their wages are competitive within the field.
- Enhance retention of staff by offering comprehensive benefits packages, including health insurance, retirement plans, and paid leave.
- Enhance retention of staff by offering free child care to early care providers, regardless of household income.

Building Capacity to Serve Children with Special Needs and Differing Abilities

- Ensure a sufficient number of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health consultants to support programs for children with special needs and diverse abilities. These services enhance providers’ capacity to prevent, identify, treat, and mitigate social, emotional, and other mental health issues in children from birth to 5 years old.
- Engage in professional development programs that provide learning opportunities centered around social-emotional learning and behavior, inclusive instruction and family and community engagement (e.g., [Maryland Rebuilds-Early Learning Model of Excellence](#))

Providing Quality Multicultural and Multilingual Early Childhood Education

- Increase inclusion of children and families of multilanguage learners by providing multilingual classroom, communicating with parent/caregivers in multiple languages, and hosting events that highlight the various cultures of children in the program.
- Recruit early care providers with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds for center-based and family child care programs to better connect and support families of similar backgrounds.

2024-2025 Policy Priorities

During FY25 the Commission will work to advance its mission through a focus on the following two priorities

Priority 1:

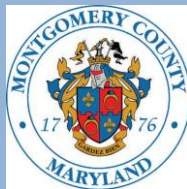
Develop recommendations in line with County efforts to support the County's child care system with a specific focus on equitable access and affordability for families.

Priority 2:

Identify best practices to improve, recruit, retain, and expand the evolving early care and education workforce by hosting collaborative events, collecting data, and providing recommendations to inform and guide stakeholders.



Marc Elrich, County Executive
Dr. James Bridgers, Director
Oscar Mensah, Acting Chief
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Children, Youth and Family Services
Commission on Child Care
Early Childhood Services
1401 Rockville Pike, Suite 200
Rockville, Maryland 20852



*Language translation and alternative formats of this report can be made available upon request.
Montgomery County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in employment or in the admission or
access of its programs or services.*

***To learn more about the Commission on Child Care, please visit:
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cc***

