

Montgomery County Commission on Child Care



Annual Report

2016-2017

Montgomery County, Maryland

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COMMISSION ON CHILD CARE

November 27, 2017

TO: The Honorable Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive
The Honorable Roger Berliner, President, Montgomery County Council

FR: Edward Krauze, Chair, Commission on Child Care

SUBJECT: The Commission on Child Care 2016-2017 Annual Report

The Commission on Child Care (CCC) has had another successful year and we are pleased to share our work and progress with you in the 2016-2017 Annual Report.

The mission of the CCC is to advise the County Executive and County Council on the development, implementation and effectiveness of government policies, programs and services that enhance community support of quality, affordable and accessible child care.

The Commission is comprised of a committed group of volunteers who work tirelessly to continue raising awareness on issues involving quality, affordability and accessibility in the early care and education arena. The Commission affirms the belief that early care and education experiences are critical to ensuring that all children have the necessary foundation for school readiness and the basis for lifelong learning and success.

The Commission's dedicated group of volunteers again demonstrated its continued commitment to spreading awareness by hosting "*Our Children: Worth the Cost of Quality Child Care*" event on January 25, 2017. Members the County Council, State Legislation, Health and Human Services Leadership, Board of Education and the Superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools were invited to join stakeholders from the community to gain a greater understanding on the value of investing in early care and education. A panel of experts from the child care community and a parent/consumer of child care services shared the challenges faced when providing high quality early care experiences to children with limited funding.

Our Children ARE worth the Cost of Quality Child Care

Montgomery County was one of the early leaders in its support of child care and early education. Although, times have changed, the needs of our youngest and most impressionable have only continued to grow. We must keep up with our children's growing needs by investing in them financially (Recommendation #1 – Working Parents Assistance Program) and through our commitment to making our County's bureaucratic systems among the best in the county (Recommendation #2 – Child Care in Public Space reform).

We believe we can make a difference and continue to make an impact on the lives of our youngest citizens and their families. We need your continued help and support to move these pressing issues forward.

We wish to acknowledge and thank our commissioners and other stakeholders for their commitment and determination to this incredibly important work. Their volunteer energy and passion to our cause is boundless. We look forward to continuing the important work with you.

The Commission on Child Care

Vision

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

Mission

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

Purpose

Section 27-62 of the Montgomery County Code provides authority for the Commission on Child Care to “advise the County Executive and County Council on the development of policies, programs, and services that enhance community support for high quality, affordable, and accessible child care.”

Meetings

The full Commission meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Early Childhood Training Center located at 1401 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852. All meetings are open to the public. The full Commission does not meet in December and August.

A significant portion of the Commission's work is accomplished through the Executive, Programmatic Issues, Public Policy, and Membership Committees. Volunteers from the general public are invited to assist the committees. Committee meetings take place on the first Wednesday of the month at the Early Childhood Training Center located at 1401 Rockville Pike, with the Programmatic Issues Committee and Public Policy Committee meeting concurrently at 6:30 p.m., and the Executive Committee meeting at 6:00 p.m. All meetings are open to the public. Committees do not meet in August.

Please call 240-777-1716; TTY 240-777-1009 for more information regarding full Commission and Committee meetings.

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 2016 - 2017 Voting Members

Parent Representatives

Lindsey Allard Agnamba
Hashan Chowdhury
Jessica Kelley
Edward Krauze
Laura Seminario-Thornton

Child Care Representatives

Michelle Belski
Rosalba Bonilla-Acosta
L'Ornya Bowie
Diana Holzberger
Greg Smith
Lara Woodruff

Business and General Public Representatives

Sybil Philip
Greg Stevens
Barbara Warman
Dr. Mayme Williams

Non-Voting Members

Dr. Barbara Andrews, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Blaise DeFazio, Montgomery County Community Use of Public Facilities
Pamela Dunn, Montgomery County Planning Board
Carl Eggleston, Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care
Yvonne Iscandari, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
Claudia Simmons, Montgomery County Public Schools
Lynn Sobolov, Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth, and Families, Inc.

Staff

Erin Stillwell, Program Manager, Commission on Child Care, Early Childhood Services
Department of Health and Human Services

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Staff

Erin Stillwell, Program Manager, Commission on Child Care, Early Childhood Services
Department of Health and Human Services

Recommendation#1

Ensure that the Working Parents Assistance Program supports families' access to quality child care by adequately funding subsidies for eligible parents.

The Working Parents Assistance Program (WPA) was designed in 1986 to help families obtain quality, licensed child care and support family self-sufficiency. The WPA program was created to serve middle income working families as well as support lower income working families in the face of rising child care costs and the cost of living in the County.

The Goal is accessibility and affordability of high quality child care for all working families. Providing working families access to such care is not only an essential component for a thriving workforce, but a crucial component of a child's early development.

Every child in our County, including our youngest learners, deserves a strong start!

The Commission recommends increasing the income tables so more families are able to access WPA support. With rising costs and the overall high cost of living in Montgomery County, the WPA subsidy amounts no longer provide a meaningful supplement for families to access quality child care programs that promote school readiness. Therefore, too many young children arrive at kindergarten lagging behind their peers and the County must then spend even more resources to try and help them to catch up.

The Commission recommends that the County continue to increase overall funding of WPA up to the level recommended in the original WPA workgroup report. Overall, in 2016-17, 506 children were served by the allocated budget for WPA. The Commission appreciates the County Council's approval of increased funding for the past year through a supplemental allocation which allowed an additional 68 children to be served. If the County is willing to invest an extra \$250,000 in WPA funding, **37 additional children** could be served at the current subsidy level. And if the County were willing to double that funding up to \$500,000, **75 additional children** could be served.

The graphic below illustrates the investment outcome of the number of additional children who could be served if supplemental funding was provided to the Working Parents Assistance Program.

#	If Additional Funding is	Average Monthly Subsidy per Child	Projected Number of Additional Children Served for 12 Months	Projected Number of Additional Families Served for 12 Months
1	\$250,000	\$555	37	24
2	\$500,000	\$555	75	48

(Note: The above calculations are based on the following scenarios: 1) the average monthly subsidy amount per child for FY17 is \$555 and 2) the ratio for the number of children per family for FY 17 is 1.55. The calculations above do not include any consideration of attrition nor replacement mode. The subsidy amount represents 70 percent towards the average cost of care.)



Recommendation #2

Create a more transparent and uniform system for Child Care in Public Space that better serves families and children and encourages and facilitates the operation of high quality child care programs.

Since the 1980's Child Care in Public Space (CCIPS) has been administered by several different County entities (CUPF, DHHS and MCPS), each with different missions, timelines, procedures and policies. The Commission has attempted for many years to tackle public space issues. Providers and parents have felt frustrated and excluded from these processes.

Given the large number of children and working families that are served in child care in public space, the Commission recommends that the County Council continue to examine and evaluate the processes to ensure all children and families are receiving the highest quality and affordable child care and that the rebid processes provide for transparent systems that delivers more stability for children, families and child care providers.



Commission Activities 2016-2017

Highlights of the Commission Year

On January 25, 2017, the Commission on Child Care hosted a community event entitled, “*Our Children: Worth the Cost of Quality Child Care.*” This program provided policymakers and other stakeholders the opportunity to gain a greater understanding on the value of investing in quality and affordable child care.

Commission members facilitated a lively panel discussion with members from the child care community and a parent/consumer of child care services. Attendees included staff of the County Council, HHS Leadership, and representatives from MCPS, CUPF and other associations and individuals actively involved in the early care and education community.



Our Children *Are* Worth the Cost of Quality Child Care!

Commission Activities 2016-2017 (continued)

Guest Speakers, Presentations and Collaborations with Other Groups:

- The vice chair of the Commission attended a meeting with Ms. Uma Ahluwalia, Director, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and discussed the priorities of both DHHS and the Commission (September 2016).
- The full Commission met with Mr. Carl Eggleston, Regional Manager, Office of Child Care, MSDE, to receive updates on current child care regulations and learn about the results from the child care provider survey (September 2016).
- The full Commission met with Ms. Angela Cabellon, Social Services Officer to received updates on the Working Parents Assistance Program (WPA) and the State Subsidy Program. Ms. Cabellon also provided information on the priorities and benchmarks identified by Health and Human Services for the upcoming fiscal years (November 2016).
- The vice chair of the Commission attended a meeting with Ms. Uma Ahluwalia, Director, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and provided updates on the priorities being addressed by the Commission (January 2017).
- The full Commission met with Ms. Monica Ortiz Neustrup, Policy Officer, Early Care and Education, DHHS, to receive updates on the Early Care and Education Strategic Plan (March 2017).
- Members of the Commission attended the County Executive's Annual Meetings with Boards, Committee and Commissions (March 2017).
- The Public Policy Committee of the Commission met with Mr. William Broglie, Office of Internal Audit, Office of the County Executive. Mr. Broglie was the former internal audit manager who oversaw the Program Assessment of Community Use of Public Facilities Before and After School Childcare Programs in Public Schools (March 2017).
- The full Commission invited Ms. Ramona Bell-Pearson, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive, to receive updates on the CUPF Internal Program Assessment and the recommendations specific to the administration of child care in public schools (April 2017).

Commission Activities 2016-2017 (continued)

Testimony and Correspondence:

- Transmitted a letter to County Executive Leggett expressing concerns about the unintended consequences of the proposed minimum wage legislation (Council Bill 12-16) to consumers of child care services and the child care community (January 2017).
- Transmitted a letter to President Roger Berliner and members of County Council providing the Commission's input into the planning and development of a diverse delivery Pre-K system (March 2017).
- Transmitted a letter to President Roger Berliner and members of County Council expressing concerns about MCER 6-17: Montgomery County Regulation on Before and After School Childcare Programs in Public Schools. The Commission requested that the Council allow the current regulation to sunset and form a workgroup to create a fair and impartial process (July 2017).



Priorities 2017-2018

Priority 1:

Outreach to the community and alignment with other groups who support access to high-quality and affordable child care in Montgomery County.

Priority 2:

Engagement with the Montgomery County Early Care and Education Strategic Plan 2017, as a framework for birth to 5 system of care.



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Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director
JoAnn Barnes, Chief
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Language translation and alternative formats of this report are available upon request. For additional information on the Commission, please call or write at the address and telephone numbers listed above.

Montgomery County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in employment or in the admission or access to its programs or services.

