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PREK EXPANSION GRANT

Pending state funding availability, the Division of Early Childhood anticipates announcing the release of the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant FY 2021 in February, 2020. This state-funded grant will expand access to high-quality prekindergarten for three-year-olds and four-year-olds from families with household incomes up to 300 percent of Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG). There will be a technical assistance webinar to provide additional information regarding the grant application process. The webinar information and all updates regarding the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant will be found at earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/prek-grade-2

Family Child Care is the Backbone of Maryland's Mixed-Delivery System

Maryland prides itself on a diverse-delivery system, and it will be important that all settings—including Family Child Care—have the resources and quality supports needed to thrive.

By Steven Hicks, Assistant State Superintendent, Division of Early Childhood

As I shielded my eyes from the bright morning sun filtering through the trees, a deer darted across the road and in front of my car. I had just turned off the main highway and was heading towards Kay's Playhouse, where I would be taking my first visit to a Family Child Care (FCC) provider. I turned again at the whimsical sign, crept down the long driveway to the ranch-style house, and parked behind a small white van. I walked up the wide steps, past a colorful array of mums and opened the front door. At once I could tell this was an enchanted place. Orange, yellow and red crepe streamers hung from the ceiling like a fall canopy. Six children, varying in ages from 14 months to 6 years old, were gathered in the kitchen awaiting the breakfast ritual to begin. Two girls were lined up to wash their hands, while an older boy was focused on directions for setting the table, meticulously dictated by Rebecca Hancock. Rebecca is the owner of Kay's Playhouse, a Maryland EXCELS program with a quality rating of 5. She's also the teacher, cook, hygiene specialist, family engagement coordinator, before-and after-care facilitator, and so much more. FCC truly is akin to the one-room school houses of a past era, educating multiple ages in one space.





“What’s nice about a family home setting is that there are so many opportunities for the provider to integrate, in a natural way, the kind of skills that are important for building a learning foundation later on.”

“What we’ve seen in Maryland, and across the country, is a decline in family care providers. It’s just a tough business. Family care providers, especially in rural areas, provide a really necessary service and help to fill that void. We’re working with [MSFCCA] and others to try and solve this issue.”

-Steven Hicks



Over the last decade, Maryland has seen a decline in FCC—from 8,923 in 2009 to 5,366 in 2019. While this represents a mix of FCC home providers closing and new providers opening, the net result is a staggering **40% decline** of this critical option for working parents. Echoing a national trend, approximately 54,000 licensed family child care homes closed in the United States between 2011 and 2017. While some center- and school-based programs have expanded, the net result has been fewer choices for families and a scarcity of infant and toddler care. In Maryland, the number of child care deserts—areas with an insufficient supply of licensed child care—has expanded to the extent that **51% of the population live in child care deserts**, reflective of the national average. What this means for parents is that it’s increasingly difficult to find child care options that meet location, quality, and household budget needs.

Maryland prides itself on a diverse-delivery system, and it will be important that all settings—including FCC—have the resources and quality supports needed to thrive. The **Division of Early Childhood** is committed to supporting FCC so that these

small businesses grow throughout our communities, especially in child care deserts and rural areas. To that end, senior Division staff met with the Board of the **Maryland State Family Child Care Association** during its annual conference in fall 2019 to discuss ways in which the state can be a helpful partner. We also held the first of many town hall meetings solely focused on FCC. We found there are huge areas of need, such as administrative support, reduction in paperwork, professional development, forging partnerships with schools, addressing substitutes, and connecting providers to resources. To begin to address some of the feedback, the state has included supports for FCC in its **Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five** renewal proposal, including significantly increasing the start-up grants to FCC providers and conducting a statewide FCC capacity study to better understand and address the declining numbers of FCC providers.

Last month, the **Kirwan Commission** voted 19-3 on its \$4 billion educational improvement recommendations to state lawmakers. These recommendations—to be implemented over the next decade—include expanding PreK for three- and four-year old children; providing workforce and program quality supports; increasing the number of **Family Support Centers** and **Judy Center Early Learning Hubs**; and fully-funding the **Infants and Toddlers Program**. These proposed investments provide opportunities to further support Maryland’s mixed-delivery system, including expanding and promoting FCC.

Throughout the morning at Kay's Playhouse, I saw mothers drop off their kids; a group of children mixing and baking muffins; and one tearful child comforted by the soothing motion of being enveloped in the arms of a caring adult and feeling the slow, continuous motion of a rocking chair. I can see how valuable it is to have FCC as a choice for parents and part of a robust mixed-delivery system. FCC provides a smooth, nurturing transition for children as they move from home to FCC and then later to school. For some children, this is the right and necessary place to thrive, and we need to do everything we can to support their learning and development.



Photo Credits: Steven Hicks



Welcome

Alberta Stokes to the Division of Early Childhood as Specialist for PDG-B5 Grant. She can be reached at alberta.stokes1@maryland.gov.

Farewell

Ronaldo Graham is no longer in the Division of Early Childhood. After 47 years of service with the State of Maryland, he is now retired.

Nancy Garcia is no longer in the Division of Early Childhood. She is now at Baltimore County Campfield Judy Center.

Contacting the Division Branches

Division of Early Childhood	earlychildhood.msde@maryland.gov
Early Learning Branch	early.learningbranchesmsde@maryland.gov
Collaboration and Program Improvement Branch	collaboration.programimprovement@maryland.gov
Office of Child Care	earlychildhood.msde@maryland.gov
Licensing Branch	licensingocc.msde@maryland.gov
Credentialing Branch	credentialocc.msde@maryland.gov or 1-866-243-8796
Child Care Scholarship Program	ccscentral@conduent.com or 1-866-243-8796
Maryland EXCELS	info@marylandexcels.org or marylandexcels.org



Director's Dugout

Winter Season with the
Director Jennifer Nizer,
Office of Child Care

Grants and Contracts

The Division of Early Childhood (DEC) has several grants and contracts with key partners across the state of Maryland. As the DEC

moves forward with many of these opportunities through Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Bid (RFB), we invite the child care provider community to pass this information along to anyone who may qualify. This includes the many contract/grant partners that have assisted in building the great early childhood education system in Maryland. We appreciate your help getting the word out to encourage participation in the application process.

Grants/Contracts currently under review

The Office of Child Care (OCC) will be calling for applications in 2020 for two critically important aspects of the child care community.

1. The Statewide Coordinating Entity (SCE) for the Maryland Child Care Resource Center Network (MCCRCN's): Applicants will be applying to be the coordinating entity for the 13 local child care resource centers throughout the State.
2. Resource and Referral Services for Families: Applicants will be applying to coordinate resource and referral services for families that are trying to locate child care services in their area.

These opportunities are unique in that they were previously combined into one opportunity, but are now being viewed as separate grants/contracts. Please be aware that both of these opportunities will be available in 2020, so subscribe to our mailing list to stay "in the loop"!

What is Marylandchild.org?

Since the day I walked through the doors of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), I vowed that the OCC would improve communication with the provider community and to the families of the children throughout our state. I thought communication would be easy since there are so many means to communicate: social media, websites, newsletters, emails, flyers, mail, etc. While looking at all the types of communication we had and reviewing what the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) defines as "consumer education," it dawned on me that Maryland did not have a one-stop-shop for child care information, services for families and resources for both communities. That is where Marylandchild.org comes in!

As part of the Reauthorization of the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) of 2014, the federal government made it a priority that all states must provide a "consumer education website" that is consumer-friendly, easily accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This means all materials should be in plain language and consider the abilities of the targeted audience, including home language, disabilities and how access to aids or services for receiving information can be available in alternative formats at no cost.

There are also seven key components that must be included in the consumer education website, which are:

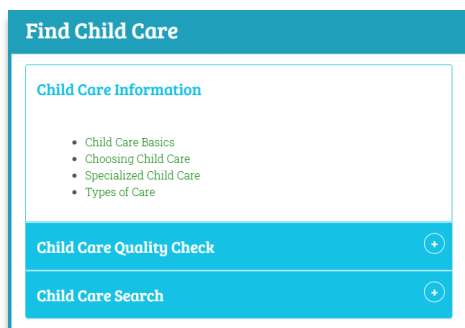
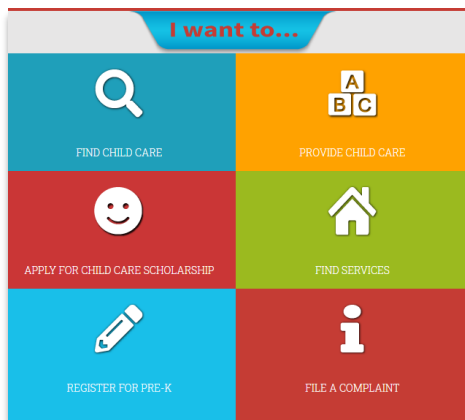
1. Policies for licensing and monitoring and inspecting child care providers, policies and procedures related to criminal background checks for child care providers, and the offenses that prevent individuals from serving as child care providers;
2. Information on the availability of child care providers, searchable by zip code;
3. Quality rating of child care providers, if available for the provider;
4. Provider-specific monitoring and inspection reports;

5. Aggregate number of deaths and serious injuries (for each provider category and licensing status) and instances of substantiated child abuse in child care settings each year;
6. Referral to local child care resource and referral organizations;
7. Directions on how parents can contact MSDE and other programs to better understand information on the website.

In addition to the information required by the CCDBG, Maryland included other features that make it more informative, user-friendly, and easy to understand.

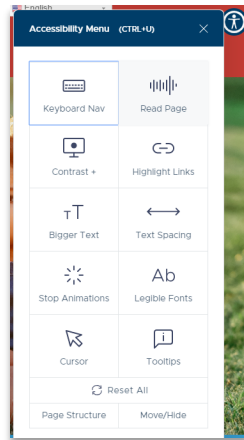
Marylandchild.org is made possible by federal funding. The OCC partnered with Johns Hopkins University, IDEALS Institute, for assistance with developing the site.

The homepage has an easy to navigate block system that guides the user to what they need, starting with an “*I want to...*” statement and easy-to-select tiles under the heading.

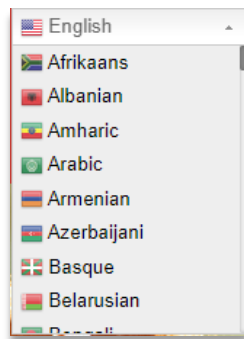


open another area of interest.

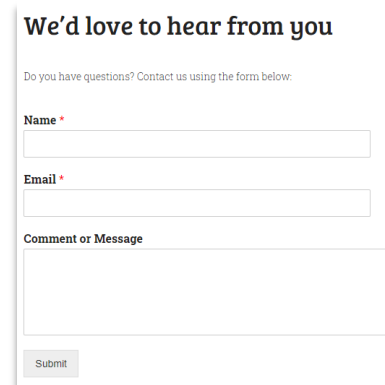
Once a user selects a tile, a topic-related dropdown list appears. Collapse the list of items under the topic by selecting the “+” sign to



On the homepage in the upper right hand corner, there is a small blue circle with a person in the middle with their arms spread. This is the Accessibility Menu that allows users to have the page read to them, choose a different contrast for the screen, increase spacing of the text, increase text size and stop any animation that may be a distraction, among others.



We have included an extensive listing of languages the site text can be converted to so numerous families in Maryland can have access to information to help them make important choices for their children.



There is also an easy-to-use “Contact Us” button at the bottom left of the page for families and providers to request further assistance or ask questions.

In addition to these features, Maryland has worked to implement many of the best practices recommended by the federal government. Please tell your families and colleagues about the new Marylandchild.org website!

MARYLAND EXCELS

The state's quality rating and improvement system for child care and early education programs.

Outreach to Families

A Purple Evening



The 13th annual women's event A Purple Evening, at M&T Bank Stadium, gave Maryland EXCELS a tremendous opportunity to connect with families (mothers, grandmothers, aunts,

and more) and friends of young children. We interacted with over 1,500 women attendees—educating them about the importance of high quality child care and early education, while promoting Maryland EXCELS' programs.

Three hundred attendees submitted raffle tickets to win one of two gift baskets containing items donated by Lakeshore Learning Materials and Maryland EXCELS.



care special and high quality." Over 120 nominations were submitted. Here are a few... The Goddard School of Arnold "...is an extension of our family. They have treated my sons wonderfully while teaching them well beyond their years." - Annie Sickmen

"There's no early childhood education learning center quite like Hampton Lane [Child Development Center]! The teachers that they have in each classroom (2's, 3's, and 4's) are all phenomenal and care so deeply about each and every child under their care. They have themes of the week where the children learn new themes that they dive deeply into. They are constantly creating incredible art projects, taking music classes, exploring outside, and learning every step of the way. They are a hidden gem in Towson and every parents' dream-come-true preschool!" - Heather Darney

"The St. Agnes Extended Care Program is absolutely AMAZING! It allows my daughter to learn and play in an environment that promotes kindness! My daughter and other students often don't want to leave when it's time to go home! I am thankful for this program." -Kay Taylor

Oriole Bird Visits



The Oriole Bird visited the following four Maryland EXCELS programs in December 2019: The Goddard School of Arnold, Hampton Lane Child Development Center, Saint Agnes Extended Care Program and

Childtime of Bel Air. These programs were randomly selected from nominations sent in by families enrolled in the programs. Maryland EXCELS provided programs a flier to share with their families. The flier invited families to nominate their programs and tell "what makes your child

"The caring teachers at Childtime in Bel Air take the time to get work with each child on the level that's best for their development. The creative activities are stimulating and educational. My son (2 years old) loves going to Childtime because he's excited to see his teachers and friends. Additionally, Childtime works seamlessly with the Harford County Infants and Toddlers program to coordinate specialty instruction for my son to help him catch up with his classmates. Our family has enjoyed the high-quality care provided by Childtime for the last 1.5 years." - Sarah Brochu

Have You Met Kacey—the Maryland EXCELS Koality Bear?

Kacey debuted in fall of 2019 at A Purple Evening. You'll see Kacey in materials focused on helping families find high quality child care and early education programs. Be on the lookout for this friendly face.



Is Your Family Looking for Child Care?

Maryland EXCELS can help! We assist child care programs with increasing and maintaining high quality care and offer families two easy ways to find high quality child care and early education.

- Search the Find a Program tool on www.MarylandEXCELS.org
- Download the free Maryland EXCELS Quality Finder mobile app from Google Play or the App Store



This promotion (pictured above) appeared in the fall 2019 Poe's Playbook, an activity book distributed at Baltimore Ravens home games to young football fans.

Thrive by Five Conference

Maryland EXCELS interacted with families at Thrive by Five—an Essential Family Engagement Conference. This conference was held by Howard County Family Institute, Office of Children and Families on Saturday, November 16, 2019. The conference focused

on helping families build a solid foundation for their child's learning habits, skills and expectations—with the ultimate goal of preparing them for kindergarten and a lifetime of learning.

Managing Behaviors That Challenge Us

Maryland EXCELS, in conjunction with Abilities Network and Harford Community College, presented a valuable conference on November 9, 2019 entitled "Managing Behaviors That Challenge Us." The conference boasted a phenomenal keynote speaker, Cayla Weller. Ms. Weller is a special educator with Cecil County Public Schools. As someone diagnosed with ADHD as an adult, she offered a unique perspective into the world of ADHD. Ms. Weller provided tips, tools, and suggestions for helping even our youngest students to be successful while in our care.

The conference included three training sessions to guide participants in preparing classrooms, students, and themselves to optimize positive behaviors and deal effectively with less desirable behaviors. Participants were very pleased with the information and delivery system and asked for additional trainings in the near future! We'll keep you posted.



Enhance Your Early Learning Environment and Save

Lakeshore®

Check out the Lakeshore Learning Materials catalog for educational activities and other materials for your classrooms. To help guide your selections, the catalog highlights several items that align with Maryland Accreditation standards and support specific improvement and criteria for Maryland EXCELS. View the catalog [here](#).

MARYLAND EXCELS

Outreach to Programs

Lakeshore Training—Take Two!



The July 2019 Inclusion Training at Lakeshore Learning Materials, hosted by Quality Assurance Specialists (QAS), was so well received that the QAS held a second training on November 14, 2019. Feedback from attendees of this event was very positive.

Comments highlighted

that the training taught them ways to create inclusion, institute “multicultural markers for children to view themselves” and meet special needs within their programs.

Coffee and Camaraderie

The Baltimore County Directors and Providers Coffee Hour events have proved quite popular. Held the first Thursday of each month, these events give important opportunities to voice opinions, ask questions and network with fellow providers. The next coffee hour will be February 6, 2020. Register to attend by signing up at this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0f4caca923a1f85-baltimore>

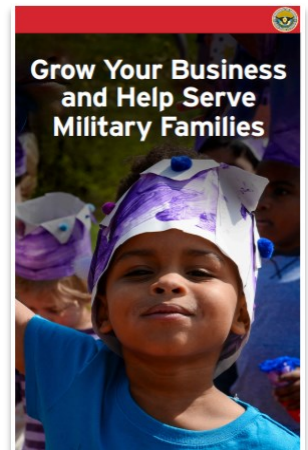
Maryland EXCELS participation continues to grow. As of January 3, 2020, the **total number of programs participating in Maryland EXCELS is 4,712.**

- Quality rated programs have increased by 120 from January 2019.
- Over 57% of all eligible child care programs are participating in Maryland EXCELS.
- Quality Rated 3 programs increased by 53 and Quality Rated 5 programs increased by 44 since January 2019.

View data by county [here](#) and select Maryland EXCELS below the image.

How Can You Help Military Families and Grow Your Business?

Have you heard about the exceptional opportunity to serve military families? The Department of Defense (DoD) has increasing access to quality child care options for eligible military families through its fee assistance program Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN). On October 1, 2019, the DoD launched a pilot program known as MCCYN-PLUS. This pilot includes programs that participate in Maryland EXCELS, at a quality rating 3 or above, and meet the eligibility requirements for MCCYN.



Interested in offering your child care services to military families? Email Child Care Aware directly at QRISMCCYNPLUS@usa.childcareaware.org to receive expert assistance with the verification process to become a participant. For more information about the pilot, visit <https://usa.childcareaware.org/feeassistancerespitproviders/qrismccyn-plus/>

Quality Rating	# of Programs
1	2,793
2	418
3	591
4	75
5	379
TOTAL	4,202

Have you visited the new Maryland Accreditation web pages?



Learn about the benefits of becoming accredited [here](#).

Interested in Maryland Accreditation?

Attending orientation is the first step in pursuing Maryland Accreditation. Find orientation dates, location, and registration information [here](#).

Need support with pursuing accreditation?

The Accreditation Support Fund pays fees for national accreditation and reimburses the cost of instructional supplies for Maryland Accreditation.

To view the current programs accredited with Maryland Accreditation, visit marylandexcels.org/marylandaccreditation/accredited-programs/. If you have any questions about Maryland Accreditation Orientation, please contact accreditation@marylandexcels.org.

Child Care Providers! Are you getting recognized for all your hard work?

Maryland EXCELS is here to help your program! Participate in Maryland EXCELS to benefit from free marketing, including your program being listed on the Maryland EXCELS search tools (online and mobile app) and many other opportunities to grow your child care business.

Visit MarylandEXCELS.org/commitment-to-quality/ to learn more.

For questions or further assistance, contact a Quality Assurance Specialist from this list: marylandexcels.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/QASContactList.pdf

Learn more about Maryland EXCELS:

Visit www.MarylandEXCELS.org.

Sign up for the Maryland EXCELS newsletter (sent via email) near the bottom of the homepage.

Follow @MarylandEXCELS



Email info@marylandexcels.org



Want to Increase Your Quality Rating?

Sign up for training or a work group session [here](#).

**Are you a credentialed provider?
Need to contact the Maryland Child
Care Credential Program?
Have questions?**

Mail or fax your Maryland Child Care Credential Program application to Child Care Central.

Child Care Central

PO Box 598
Baltimore, MD 21203
1.866.243.8796
Fax: 410.229.0145



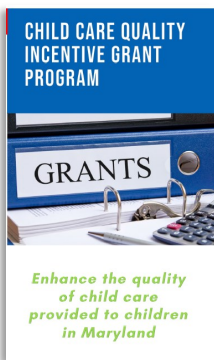
Do NOT mail your credential program application packet to MSDE Headquarters. Applications received at MSDE for the Maryland Child Care Credential program will be returned.

Applications, forms and additional information for the Maryland Child Care Credential Program are available at:

earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/credentialing

What does "credentialing" or "being credentialed" mean?

Credentialing is a systematic approach to the collection and verification of a child care provider's professional qualifications. The qualifications that are reviewed and verified include, but are not limited to, relevant training, certification and/or registration to practice in a child care field, and academic background.



Do you need assistance achieving or maintaining compliance with the requirements of the Office of Child Care, Licensing in Maryland?

The Family Child Care Provider Direct Grant

Fund Program provides reimbursements to registered family child care providers for expenses incurred to comply with the licensing requirements.

- The applicant must acquire compliance-related expenses.
- Applicants are eligible for a one-time award.

More information can be found at:
earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/fccpdgfp

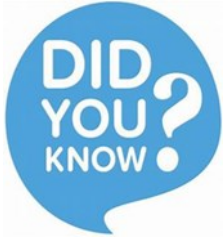
All Maryland Child Care Credential Program applications are processed within 30 days of receipt

Why participate in a Professional Activity?

- ◆ To increase competence, performance, and effectiveness of those working with children in child care.
- ◆ To promote and support the workforce in ways such as workforce development and program improvement, ultimately improving outcomes for children.
- ◆ To increase the knowledge of others in and outside of the profession.

What is a Professional Activity Unit (PAU)?

A PAU is the number assigned to an activity depending on the number of hours spent, level of effort, and commitment to the activity.



There are perks to being a member of a local, state, or national child care professional organization. These training organizations host early childhood conferences and offer discounted registration fees for

members.

Discounted training = more money available for training vouchers/ reimbursements!!

Credentialed providers are also offered one (1) Professional Activity Unit (PAU) for membership to a local, state or national child care professional organization! See the credential booklet for PAU documentation requirements.

Check out child care professional organizations on pages 18-20.

Get your membership today!



Training Voucher and Reimbursement Program



Training voucher and reimbursement applications should not be mailed, faxed or emailed to Child Care Central.

Applications sent to Child Care Central will not be forwarded to MSDE for processing.

By mail

MSDE-Credentialing Branch
200 West Baltimore St. - 10th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21201

Online

earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/office-child-care/credentialing-branch/training-vouchers-and-reimbursements

Applications faxed to MSDE will NOT be processed.

For more information, visit earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/credentialing.



There are incentives available to child care providers who choose to participate in the Maryland Credential Program at Level Two or higher.

The Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund

Are you interested in pursuing an associates or bachelor's degree?

The Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF) is a tuition assistance program for child care providers to obtain a college education at participating colleges/universities in Maryland. Funding is available for child care providers to earn a college degree in the following areas:

- Early Childhood Education
- Child Development
- Elementary Education
- Special Education

COLLEGE BOUND

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

CCCPDF applicants must meet the following requirements to receive funds (COMAR 13A.14.09):

- Participate in the Maryland Child Care Credential Program at Level Two or higher
- Work in a licensed child care center or be a registered family child care provider in Maryland at least 10 hours per week
- Fulfill entrance requirements at the participating college of your choice
- Have at least one year of documented experience working with groups of children in an approved setting
- Maintain employment in child care in Maryland while participating in the Program

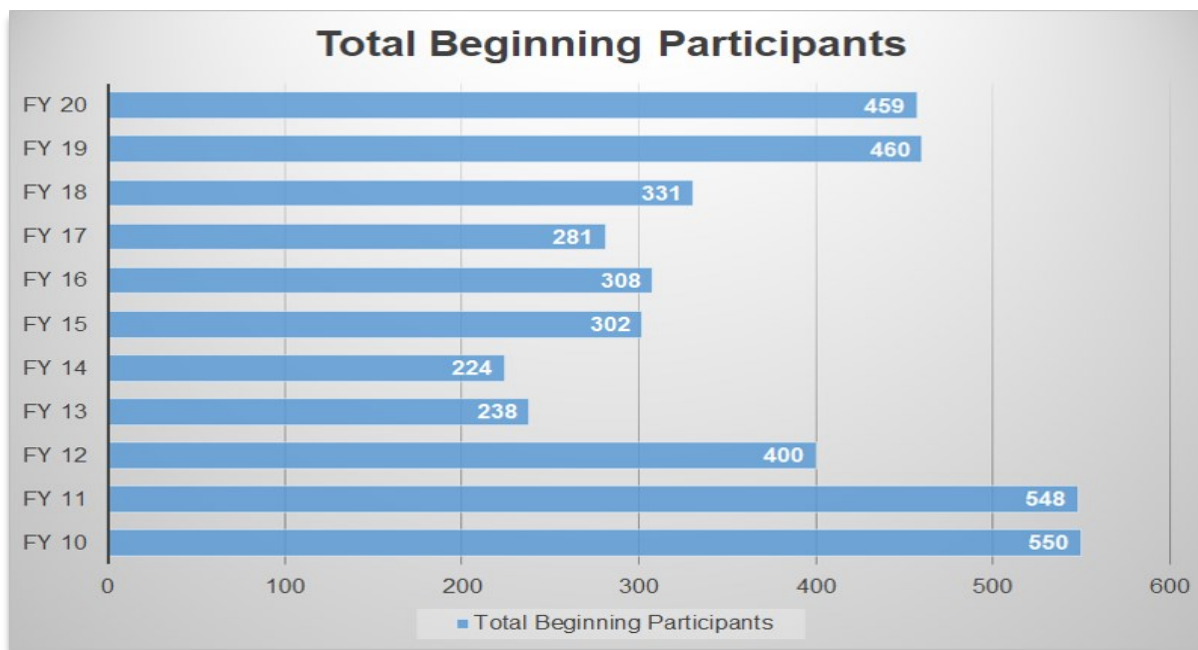
- Participate in professional development
- Agree to complete the child care service requirement in Maryland for at least 10 hours per week after completion of the degree and/or withdrawal from the fund
- Maintain at least a 2.50 cumulative GPA from the point of first entering the Program

THE DEADLINE FOR NEW APPLICATIONS IS MARCH 1, 2020

Helpful tips for preparing to apply for the CCCPDF:

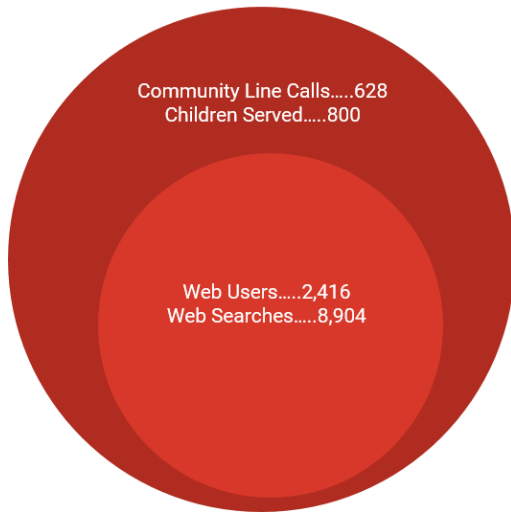
- Review program information online: earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/office-child-care/credentialing-branch/child-care-career-and-professional
- Apply to the participating college of your choice
- Get to know your coordinator: Once accepted into the college of your choice, schedule a meeting with the CCCPDF Coordinator to review the application before submitting to MSDE
- Ensure that your credential is up to date and current through application deadline

For more information about the application process and a list of participating colleges, please visit our website: earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/

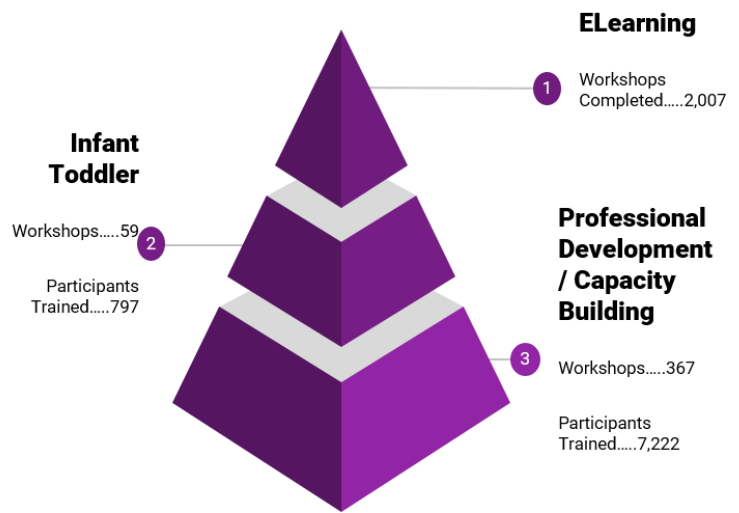


State Coordinating Entity and the Maryland Child Care Resource Center Network

LOCATE

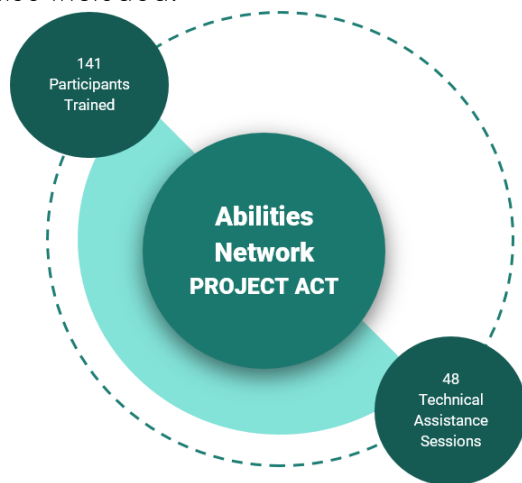


TRAINING



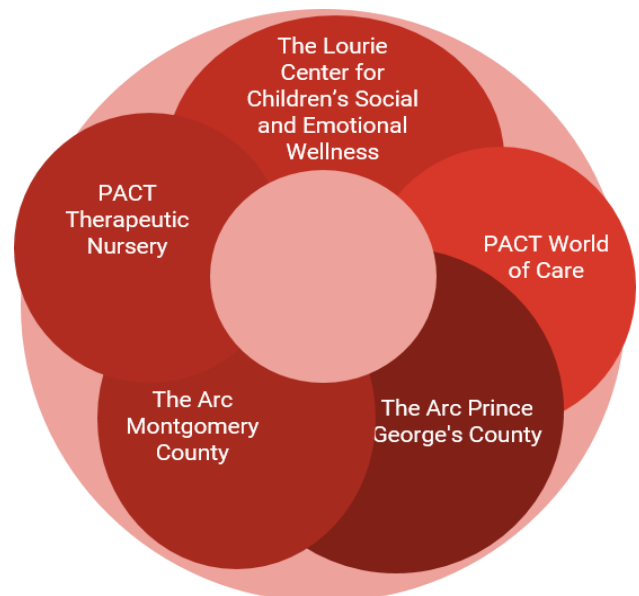
Special Needs Technical Assistance and Training for Caregivers of Infants and Toddlers

The Special Needs Technical Assistance and Training for Caregivers of Infants and Toddlers grant provides comprehensive statewide technical assistance and training for caregivers who are providing care services to special needs children, birth through 3 years of age. These children must be enrolled in regulated family child care homes; licensed child care centers; and facilities operating under the Arc of Maryland Programs and children in Foster Care are also included.



Child Care for Medically Fragile Children Birth to Five

The Child Care for Medically Fragile Children Birth to Five grant provides medically-based child care and early education services to children with medical diagnoses and those who have developmental delays, physical disabilities, and behavioral issues requiring specialized care.



Zero to Three has been training trainers on Critical Competencies

Look for the 45-hour Critical Competencies for Infant-Toddler Educators in 2020. This in-depth training was developed to fill the gaps for infant-toddler educators. It provides a diversity, inclusion, and equity lens that can and should be applied to all practices and services aimed at supporting our children and families.

Director's Institute in Prince George's County



Prince George's Child Resource Center sponsored its seventh annual Director's Institute at Newton White Mansion in Mitchellville, MD on October 23, 2019. Eighty-five child care center directors and assistant directors along with Maryland State Department of Education Credentialing Branch Chief Angeline Bishop-Oshoko and Agneatha Wright, Deputy Branch Chief were in attendance. The Director's Institute increases the capacity of child care center owners, directors and assistant directors to build, nurture and maintain high quality developmentally appropriate programs that support young learners while providing leadership that promotes the health and well-being of all adults who parent, nurture and/or work with young children.

The theme for the 2019 Institute was "Building Your Bounce: Strategies to Support Adult Resilience." Training was conducted by Chris Kelley, a certified trainer for the Devereux Center for Resilient Children. The Devereux Center for Resilient Children Adult Resilience Initiative focuses on promoting the health and well-being of all adults who parent, nurture and/or work with young children. The training received by those in attendance was designed to explore the importance of taking care of and promoting social and emotional health of the caregiver caring for young children. The critical connection between children's resilience and the health and wellness of the adults in children's lives cannot be underestimated. The

training guided participants through reflective activities with an opportunity to self-reflect on their own well-being and then take action to better support resilience in themselves and others.

Some of the takeaways mentioned by those in attendance included cultivating an attitude of gratitude, exploring personal resilience with staff and helping them build resilience, being more considerate of what staff members, parents and children are going through in their personal lives and being optimistic so that the positivity will resonate through staff, students and parents.

It was a great day, in a great place, with great training and great people who are already looking forward to Director's Institute 2020!



Many child care associations in Maryland offer training as a benefit of becoming a member. While we understand that there is a cost to membership, training included within the association membership fee ***is not** eligible for training reimbursement. Membership fees are non-reimbursable.*

Early Learning Assessment (ELA) Updates

Next Deadline to Apply is February 15!

The number of programs using the ELA continues to grow across Maryland! We are very excited for the launch of the revised training and ELA site resources coming very soon!

Programs who wish to use the ELA will need to do the following:

Process Overview

ELA Program directors have a 5-step process to complete the enrollment to use the ELA.

Step 1 - Application to ELA

*The application window will close on **February 15, 2020**. * For additional dates, see chart below

The **Program Director** completes the [Early Learning Assessment Program Application Form](#) to start the enrollment process. Once the window closes, all applications go through the MSDE system and Johns Hopkins CTE sends the Data Managers a program account.

Step 2 - Data Manager Webinar

The Data Manager will participate in a webinar in order to learn how to set up

teacher and student accounts in the ELA system prior to scheduled ELA training.

Step 3- Program Director Schedules Teacher Training

The Program Director will choose an MSDE approved ELA trainer from a provided list. ***Trainer fee is contracted between the Trainer and Program***

Step 4 - Providers/Teachers are Trained

- Providers/teachers must participate in a 12-hour ELA training to become certified to use the assessment.
- Participants receive the free ELA kit, learn about assessment best practices, how to use the online system, and how to access student reports.
- Providers/teachers must pass the content and simulation assessment with an 80% or higher.

Step 5 - Programs Begin Using the ELA

All programs who previously completed the Interest Survey AND have active accounts will not need to apply again.

Contact: Erika Anderson at erika.anderson@maryland.gov

KEY DATES

When will programs be able to schedule an ELA training?

Any program who previously completed the Interest Survey and has an existing ELA account can request training after January 21, 2020. New programs who complete the new ELA Application will be able to schedule ELA training in March 2020.

Refresher Training for MSDE Approved ELA Trainers: ONLY trainers who complete this updated training will be able to conduct ELA trainings.

Details for the ELA Refresher Training are coming soon!

ELA Window	Application Closing Date	Data Manager Receives Account and Attends Webinar	Training Can Begin	Training Must Be Complete
Spring	February 15	By March 1	March 15	By July 15
Summer <i>*These dates were selected to account for KReady system maintenance.</i>	July 15	By August 1	August 15	By October 15
Fall	October 15	By November 1	November 15	By February 15

Professional Membership. Professional Development. Advocacy for the Profession.



The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is the premiere professional association for licensed child care and early learning centers operating in Maryland and for associated businesses and individuals that

support the mission of the Association.

Why Become a Member?

- Pay one affordable center membership fee and gain Professional Activity Units (PAUs) for your full staff
- Receive continuous, cutting edge communication through social media and emails
- MSCCA members have dedicated, registered state lobbyists
- Receive discounts on training and conferences
- Grant opportunities offered for members only

mscca.org | info@mscca.org | 410-820-9196

Christina Peusch, Executive Director

The Leading Men Fellowship is Looking For Applicants

The **Leading Men Fellowship** is helping to diversify the teacher pipeline by engaging young men of color (ages 18-24) in exploring a career in Early Childhood Education. Fellows are placed in a PreK classroom in Baltimore City and implement daily literacy interventions with their students. Through this year-long, residency-style program, Fellows become role models and change agents in their communities who support the growth of young students, while transforming the trajectories of their own lives. Find more information and our application **here**. If you know a young man who would be a great fit for the program, please encourage him to apply! To make a referral, ask any questions, or have **The Literacy Lab** visit your school or organization to present this opportunity, please email Nick Picciotto at npicciotto@theliteracylab.org.



Maryland State Child Care Association (MSFCCA)

MSFCCA Mission:

The mission of the Maryland State Family Child Care Association is to educate, unify and advocate to strengthen the profession of family child care; enriching the lives of providers, children, families and communities.

MSFCCA Vision:

We envision MSFCCA as leaders and experts that empower and support family child care providers with continual professional growth, networking opportunities, and collaborative relationships with stakeholders in order to enrich Family Child Care.

msfccca.org | contact@msfccca.org

240-994-0292

mdaeyc Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children

Membership in the Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC) is open to any interested individual. As a proud affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, MDAEYC is here to help YOU on the journey to improve educational opportunities for all young children.

mdaeyc.org | [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/mdaeyc1) | [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/mdaeyc1) | [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/mdaeyc1) | [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) | [TikTok](https://www.tiktok.com/@mdaeyc1) | [Snapchat](https://www.snapchat.com/add/mdaeyc1) | [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/mdaeyc1) | [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/mdaeyc1) | [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) | [TikTok](https://www.tiktok.com/@mdaeyc1) | [Snapchat](https://www.snapchat.com/add/mdaeyc1) | [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/mdaeyc1)



Accurate census count critical for Maryland kids

FACT: Children under the age of 5 had the highest undercount of any age group in the 2010 Census.



Population statistics, based on the number of people counted in the most recent census, determine how much money every state gets from the federal government. Whether Maryland receives its fair share over the next decade depends on counting everyone in the 2020 Census. But **funds for children's programs are distributed based on the number of children counted, not the number of people counted.**

When young children are not counted, support for programs, such as health insurance, hospitals, **child care, food assistance, schools, and **early childhood development**, is impacted because the more children there are, the greater the need.**

Young children most likely to be missed tend to live with:

- Foster families.
- Multiple families.
- People who are not related to them.
- Grandparents, single parents, or young adults.
- Individuals with limited ability to speak English.
- Renters or people who have moved.
- Parents or guardians with lower incomes or without a permanent home.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Emphasize that the census counts everyone where they live and sleep most of the time, even if the living arrangement is temporary or the parents of the child do not live there.
- If the child truly spends equal amounts of time between two homes, count them where they stayed on Census Day, April 1. Coordinate with the other parent or caregiver, if possible, so the child is not counted at both homes.
- If it's not clear where the child lives or sleeps most of the time, count them where they stayed on Census Day, April 1.
- Explain to service providers and families that responding to the census helps determine \$675 billion in local funding for programs such as food stamps (also called SNAP), the National School Lunch Program, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). When children are missed in the census, these programs miss out on funding that is based on the number of children counted.
- Explain that filling out the census yourself, on your own schedule, is easier than having to respond when a census worker knocks on your door. Remind these households that the form should only take about 10 minutes to fill out and can be done online or over the phone, in addition to mailing it back.
- Encourage moms with young children to ask other household members to count them and their children on the form if others live in the household.
- Emphasize that parents should include babies on census forms, even if they are still in the hospital on April 1.

R E S O U R C E S



Did you know?



Title I funds can be used to meet the requirements for family engagement including Ready At Five's Learning Parties!

Title I, Part A is contained in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which was signed

by President Obama on December 10, 2015. This legislation reauthorizes the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title I, Part A is a federal program that provides financial assistance to local school systems and schools with high percentages of poor children to support the academic achievement of disadvantaged students. All twenty-four local education agencies in Maryland receive Title I funds.

These funds provide additional academic support and learning opportunities to help low-achieving children who attend Title I schools master challenging curricula and meet state standards. Title I funds support extra instruction in reading and mathematics, additional teachers, materials of instruction, as well as after-school and summer programs to extend and reinforce the regular school curriculum.

Learning Parties are interactive, hands-on, parent/child parties that promote young children's development of school readiness skills. Based on the belief that parents are their child's first teacher, Learning Parties teach parents how to make everyday moments learning moments through playing, singing, talking, reading, and engaging in fun activities. Originally developed by Children's Resources International and modified by Ready At Five, the Learning Party curricula support the seven domains of learning: Language & Literacy, Math, Science, Social Foundations, Physical Well-Being and Motor Development, Social Studies and Fine Arts, in addition to the Parent Leadership Learning Party, which was developed in collaboration

with experts at EPIC (Every Person Influences Children). Parent Leadership Learning Party materials were developed with Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood, as part of the Family Engagement Initiative, funded through a grant opportunity with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Look for more Learning Parties Coming Soon!

Milestone Tracker Mobile App for Parents in Spanish!



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently announced that its free app, the Milestone Tracker, is now available

in Spanish! This mobile app is part of a suite of free, family-friendly materials available through the Learn the Signs Act Early program. The Milestone Tracker allows parents to track their child's development in a fun and easy way that gives them:

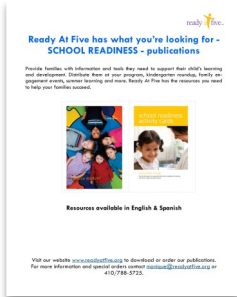
- tips to help their child learn and grow;
- a way to track milestones and recognize delays;
- and the ability to share this information with their child's health care provider.

Specifically, the app offers the following:

- Interactive milestone checklists for children ages 2 months through 5 years, illustrated with photos and videos.
- Tips and activities to help children learn and grow.
- Information on when to act early and talk with a doctor about developmental delays.
- A personalized milestone summary that can be easily shared with doctors and other care providers.
- Reminders for appointments and developmental screenings.

R E S O U R C E S

Ready At Five has what you're looking for— School Readiness Publications!

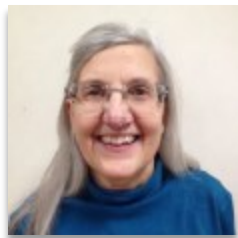


Please click **here** to access the order form or visit our website to find the programs we offer, such as our Family Engagement Resources and our Parents Matter publication (available in English and Spanish).

Sign up for our newsletter to keep updated on Ready At Five's activities and free resources.

Readyatfive.org

Pat Marks, Ph.D. Joins Ready At Five's Executive Leadership Committee



Ready At Five is pleased to welcome Pat Marks, Ph.D. to our Executive Leadership Committee. Deaconess Pat Marks, Ph.D. is a dedicated criminal justice advocate called to promote human

development, alleviate suffering, and eradicate the causes of injustice. She actively promotes criminal justice reform and effectively engages volunteers and faith communities in providing services and resources for children and their families. Pat serves on the Leadership Team of Putting Mercy into Criminal Justice (www.mercyjustice.net). She is active in the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform focusing on re-entry issues and in ReThink Justice DC envisioning a new criminal justice system based on restorative practices. Pat spent the earlier part of her career in early childhood education, getting her Ph.D. in Early Childhood Education from University of Maryland College Park, and then working with the Montgomery County schools as a Grants Specialist. As her career took her into prison ministry, she is particularly interested in early childhood issues as they relate to the school-to-prison pipeline, and how that trajectory can be changed. "I

delight in Ready At Five's focus on all aspects of children's development as they grow and thrive to become and shape the future, and I fully agree that the early years matter. In fact, I believe they matter the most." Pat is a graduate of Leadership Maryland Class of 2002 and Leadership Fairfax (VA) Class of 1992. She received her doctorate in Education from the University of Maryland and holds master's degrees from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC and Wheelock College in Boston. Pat was commissioned as a Deaconess in 2005 concurrent to graduating from Wesley Theological Seminary and receiving the first Certificate in Missions for work in social justice. "We are delighted to welcome Pat to Ready At Five's work, eager to learn from her experience with a critical parent population, and to include her perspective and voice in our efforts to improve outcomes for all children across Maryland," said Meredith Callanan, Chair of Ready At Five's Executive Leadership Committee. The goal of Ready At Five's Executive Leadership Committee is to support its mission. We are committed to comprehensive school readiness for all Maryland children. The organization does this by providing annual Maryland school readiness data and national research across the state, delivering innovative practices and resources, generating public awareness and engaging various constituents, and convening stakeholders for action and impact.

Access resources, documents and forms from the branches in the **Office of Child Care** by following these links:

Child Care Scholarship Program

<https://bit.ly/2FZiNsz>

Maryland Child Care Credential Program

<https://bit.ly/2vIa6Tf>

Licensing

<https://bit.ly/2DHABpO>

Maryland EXCELS

<https://bit.ly/2S1basj>



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



TOOLKIT

Teachers and Providers: Are your parents and families too busy to participate in or support their children's learning? If so, it's time for action!

Find strategies and best practices to engage families with the new, virtual Maryland Early Childhood Family Engagement Toolkit.



Review and Download here:
<http://bit.ly/2ZufQam>



Early Childhood Investigations offers free early childhood webinars, allowing early childhood professionals to attend conference-quality training without leaving their homes, classrooms, or offices.



Check out new and archived recordings at <https://www.earlychildhoodwebinars.com/webinar-resources/>.



Take free online child development courses to build your skills and advance your career. Learn child development and other in-demand subjects with courses from top universities and institutions around the world.

Training for the purpose of meeting licensing requirements and training and education for the Maryland Credentialing Program must be from a Maryland-approved trainer.

Find online classes [here](#) and Maryland-approved classes [here](#).

edx.org/learn/child-development

Business Practices Trainings

In July of 2019, 20 plus trainers went through a week-long Training of Trainers and have begun disseminating the Business Practices Trainings for Centers in four modules, and Business Practices Trainings for Family Child Care in three modules.

Locate an approved trainer [here](#).

**LOOKING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?
 ACCESS THE WORKGROUP + TRAINING CALENDAR**



PROVIDER PROFILES

Caring for Children and Giving Parents Piece of Mind

Pamela Funderburk doesn't make a distinction between caring for children and running her child care business—the children are the reason she's in business.

Funderburk, who has been a family child care provider for more than 30 years, considers the eight children in her Ms. P's Sprouts Family Childcare program in Woodlawn part of her family.

In fact, her 3-year-old grandson and 7-month-old granddaughter are among the children she cares for and teaches every day.

"A lot of times friends and parents have told me I care too much and I need to be focused on the business side of child care. My thought on that is if you're having somebody's children in your home, it's personal," Funderburk said. "Most of my kids have been with me since they were infants, and I just can't look at them as just a business, even though I know it's a business," she said. "My heart takes over."

But Funderburk has learned over the years that having a solid structure for the business side of her child care allows her to focus on what she loves most, which is caring for children and giving parents peace of mind while their children are with her.

"The best part of my job is when I'm looking into a parent's eyes and I realize that they trust me with their children," she said.

Funderburk, a Quality Rated Level 5 Maryland EXCELS provider, is accredited by the National Family Child Care Association and holds a Maryland Child Care Credential. She credits Maryland EXCELS' staff and resources with helping her achieve her goals to grow as a provider and business owner.

"It helps me to check myself. As a family provider, we're on our own. We do our own business," she said. "I found that I had to sit there and make myself make sure that I was implementing

everything I needed to do in family child care. I'm my own director and assistant director but [Maryland] EXCELS helps me to know what I need to be doing."

She has also been able to share the importance of Maryland EXCELS with families. When Maryland EXCELS held a Family Fun Day at Oriole Park at Camden Yards on a weekend in September, Funderburk brought some of the children from her child care.

"I thought, if I win, I'm going to take all of these kids whose parents have trouble finding care on the weekends," she said. "I explained [to parents] that [the event is] ... through Maryland EXCELS. They promote high-quality family child care, and

they want to make sure we're providing a safe environment for the kids and also make sure the kids could have a fun day. It was really, really nice."

Funderburk also goes out of her way to let other programs and providers know about the benefits and mission of Maryland EXCELS.

As an observer for programs and providers who are seeking accreditation through the National

Association for Family Child Care, Funderburk has the opportunity to encourage other family child care providers to take advantage of Maryland EXCELS and the extensive training available. She emphasizes the importance of building a foundation for their businesses as well as growing as child care and early education providers.

"It's a win-win situation for all. If people don't participate in credentialing or Maryland EXCELS or accreditation, you're shorting yourself and your career goals," she said.

Whether it's nurturing the children and families in her child care or encouraging other family child care providers, Funderburk's motivation is to ensure children are receiving the best possible care.

"I've been doing family child care for 31 years. And I always say, when I get to the end, I want to be a mentor just to encourage people to stay in family child care," she said. "It is family."





December 13, 2019 marked the 20th anniversary celebration of the opening of the first **Judy P. Hoyer Center Early Learning Hub (Judy Center)** in Maryland, at Cool Spring Elementary in Prince George’s County. Congressman Steny Hoyer, Dr. Nancy Grasmick, Prince George’s County delegates, and Prince George’s County Public Schools staff were in attendance along with the Judy Center partners to celebrate this occasion.

Thirteen additional centers opened across the State during the following year, and there are now 53 Judy Centers throughout Maryland. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will mark this year-long anniversary with a series of celebrations honoring each of the original 13 sites. Each of the sites will hold community events, share activities on social media, their support over the years. The next event will be held on Saturday, January 25th at 9am at the Patuxent-Apael Elementary Campus Apael Building, 11655 H G Trueman Road, Lusby, MD.

College (FCC), the Interagency Early Childhood Committee (IECC), and the Frederick County Judy Center presented: Learning Day 2019: Mind Management-Just Breathe for Child Care Providers on Saturday, November 2, 2019. This was a full-day event, held on the campus of FCC, designed to enhance the professional development of child care providers in Frederick County. The opening session, *Mind Management: Neuroscience, Self-Care and Life Success*, presented by Frank J. Kros, MSW, JD-President of the Transformation Education Institute, showed attendees how to keep their minds in the best possible shape emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. Participants learned how to develop a high level of mental fitness and extraordinary psychological health. In addition, participants were shown how to accelerate their learning, deepen their relationships and effectively resolve stress.

Learning Day 2019 also featured workshop selections in the Child Development, Curriculum and Health, Safety and Nutrition Core of Knowledge areas, as well as a variety of child-related informational exhibits and included a 6-hour core of knowledge certificate as well as breakfast and lunch.

Evaluations of the overall day as well as each individual breakout session were overwhelmingly positive with 96% of the participants having indicated they would implement strategies learned during the conference.



Learning Day 2019

Child Care Choices, a Program of the Mental Health Association, Frederick Community



Learning Day 2019 was made possible due to funding from the Early Childhood Advisory Council for Frederick County (known as the IECC) as part

of a Preschool Development Grant and the wonderful collaboration between multiple agencies and institutions in Frederick County.



Have an event you'd like to promote to early care and education providers? Feel free to submit your events or resources at <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/communications>

Transforming Challenging Behaviors



Conference

March 28, 2020

Salisbury University
7932 Opossumtown Pike
Frederick, MD 21701

Visit here for more info.

Conference by the Sea



Conference

April 30 - May 2, 2020

Clarion Conference Center and Resort
Ocean City, MD

For more info and to register, visit here.

Social and Emotional Learning Conference



Conference

May 18-20, 2020

Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel
202 East Pratt Street
Baltimore, MD

Visit here for more info.

Family Engagement Summit



Annual Summit

July 31, 2020

Maritime Institute
Linthicum, MD

Updates will be available at marylandfamiliesengage.org

By day, he's a preschooler. By naptime, he's super sleepy.

SUPER TOOLKIT BOY

Featuring Miss Ruby Daniels



Premiering at a Program Near You.
WARNING: Cuteness Overload

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S MDE DIVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD VIDEOS
Presents A MARYLAND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PRODUCTION FOR THE MARYLAND FAMILIES ENGAGE
WEBSITE NEW ONLINE EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT AND MARYLAND EXCELS
FEATURING MISS RUBY DANIELS OF MISS RUBY'S FAMILY CHILDCARE DIRECTED AND WRITTEN BY MALKIA
'KIA' MCLEOD AND VIDEOGRAPHERS MICHAEL MULLEN AND STEVEN ROGERS.



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IMPACT

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