President’s Message

Dear Members,

As spring is in full bloom with new growth all around so is our Spring Conference by the Sea. Thank you to all of our wonderful members and non-members who have made it possible for our conference to sell out.

I have been busy representing our interests in many committees and workgroups. Some of these include representing our interests in House and Senate bills that directly affect our centers, finding answers to the continued delays in credentialing and disseminating information to clarify the Child Care Subsidy and Temporary Cash Assistance Program. On March 31st, myself and others from the provider community met with Liz Kelley, Angeline Bishop, and Traci Verzi to discuss credentialing and the impact it has on all of us. We were informed delays were due to training of the new vendor and time lapse between the old vendor and the new vendor contracts. We discussed improvements and how deadlines are being met. The conversation ended on a positive note with the goal to be caught up by the end of July. The vendor will be working nights and weekends to meet this goal. Please continue to send in your renewal paperwork, bonuses and reimbursements to be paid. If there is a problem, do not hesitate to contact Xerox, Credentialing and or the Association. With regards to subsidy, the Partners newsletter will provide helpful, up to date information on the current process for submissions. There is light at the end of the tunnel with the 12 month vouchers!

As Early Child Care Educators, our jobs are critical in providing the right environment and structure for each child’s introduction to organized learning. We have the opportunity to be a part of their future through the quality of care, experience and education we offer them. In order to accomplish this and to have consistencies throughout the state, my goal is to promote the growth and development of professional licensed child care centers to ensure quality care is provided to all children. Through required training and education, I feel we, as licensed providers, will excel in providing the best care for future generations.

As the legislation session wraps up I am particular thankful for Christina Peusch as she has worked diligently providing testimony on behalf of all MSCCA members and legal child care providers with the Senate and House bills that directly affect us. We are excited about the potential of the Maryland Family Leave Insur-

(Continued on page 2)
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ance Program and the benefits it will have for employees. In addition, we continue to support House Bill 329 Children-Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers - Advertising and Penalties. As providers we need to continue to educate parents on illegal child care in the state.

In the near term I will continue to work with others at the state level to meet the federal requirements of the Child Care Development Fund. There are 10 training topics required under the reauthorization and Maryland already meets 4 out of the 10 which is better than most states. There will be continued work to have these required topics met through pre-service, during orientation and ongoing training.

Of course the Professional Development Committee and I will begin planning for the Fall Symposium and next year’s Conference by the Sea. We will continue to support our newly formed and long standing chapters with assistance with training, updates and representation.

This is an election year for both the country and the MSCCA. If you have a desire to learn and grow with a non-political organization, consider becoming more involved as either a member at large on our board, part of the Professional Development Committee or starting your own MSCCA County Chapter. Becoming more involved allows you to make a difference and learn first-hand what is going on with regulations as well as receiving a professional activity unit when you are on a committee. Nomination forms will be sent out via email and we will make them available at the registration table. Please remember before you nominate someone speak with them first to see if they interested in serving on the board and can regularly attend board meetings.

Our job is to provide you with information from MSDE, State Legislation and assist you in growing your child care program to be the best it can be. Our role is to help you and your centers with Accreditations, Credentialing, EXCELS, and training.

If I can be of assistance or if you have questions with EXCELS, Accreditation, Credentialing, or other aspects of child care please feel free to call me or send an e-mail. My cell phone is 443-418-6394 and my email is twoforkira@msn.com.

Thanks,

Angie Robinson
Executive Director’s Message

Happy Spring Members!

Spring has FINALLY sprung and MSCCA has sprung into action in 2016!

The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is growing. We have close to 300 member centers, (equating to thousands of child care professionals working in center) 7 Individual Members and 26 Business Members. Our benefits continue to grow to better serve child care community. We work to be sure your voices are heard at the state agency level and in Annapolis during legislative session to monitor, submit written testimony and orally testify on bills that could have an impact on providers, children and families in Maryland.

It has been a busy year in Annapolis! I have researched and written testimony on several child care related bills and orally testified on numerous bills including, Senate Bill 312, House Bill 668 and HB 1391 along with Budget testimony. The Senate Bill 312, sponsored by Senator Nancy King from Montgomery County, addressing illegal child care in Maryland has passed! Maryland has tragically lost 15 children to deaths in illegal child care related incidents over the past 5 years. MSCCA took the lead in initiating this legislation and working to make steps to save children’s lives. I met with many partners over the last year to move this issue through a legislative path of stricter penalties for those operating illegally. This legislation basically requires licensed child care providers to post their license number when advertising, similarly to home improvement contractors MHIC numbers in order for parents and the public to visibly see a valid license number when searching for licensed providers in Maryland. Should the license number be missing or is not verified as registered or licensed in Maryland then MSDE/OCC can issue a cease and desist citation immediately based on the new law. The law also authorizes the Fire Marshalls throughout the state to be able to, according the Life Code, issue a citation or shut down illegal care reported along with MSDE/OCC during complaint visits. We are proud of the legislation and plan to take the next steps towards a public parent campaign to shed light on what is legal and illegal child care in our state and the benefits of licensed, safe, quality early care and education.

Please visit the website below to read the summary of the legislation!

I continue to serve on numerous coalitions and committees including; the State Early Childhood Advisory Council, the Governor’s Commission on Lead Poisoning, the Family Engagement Coalition, the Workforce Development Committee making recommendations to the Governor, the workgroup for the new implementation of the federal Child Care Block Grant, The Abilities Network Advisory Board and Co-Chair of the Office of Child Care Advisory Committee. MSCCA has a presence and seat at the table to share concerns and issues on behalf of the professional child care provider community to impact policies and decisions.

MSCCA has a new website platform and a new web design company, Tree Branch Designs! We hope you like our website and we will continue to make improvements over the summer to up our game to better serve the members.

(Continued on page 4)
MSCCA has a very active Facebook page now! If you haven’t yet, please like and share! We hope you enjoy this form of communication and plan to reach out to more providers through social media. MSCCA has new Chapters within the state forming. Howard County will now have the MSCCA Chapter represented by Randi Albertsen and we are combining our Baltimore City and Baltimore County Chapters to reach out to more providers to get involved. More information about our new chapter will be forthcoming through our Constant Contacts emails and Facebook page. We have some new members interested in helping with our Prince George’s chapter and want to encourage all providers needing PAU’s to join us at a local level to impact the community. Kudos to our Anne Arundel County Chapter and Harford/Cecil County Chapter for continuing to create and maintain strong MSCCA chapters with great partnerships and relevant trainings to benefit the child care professionals and the community at large. Western Maryland, Washington County and Frederick/Carroll County Chapters are partnering with the Resource and Referral Agencies to reach out to child care providers to determine their needs and create and maintain wonderful networking and advocacy opportunities for all. Read more about our chapters in this newsletter!

The MSCCA Professional Development Committee works year round to host 2 statewide conferences in Maryland. The committee consists of the most dedicated, selfless, amazing team of people who want you to enjoy a successful weekend of quality training, networking and fun! MSCCA wants the conference experience to be exciting and informative with professional trainers, national keynotes a fun theme and lots of opportunities to win prizes! Join me in singing the praises of the members of MSCCA Professional Development Committee. Many thanks to Christy Lewis, Deb Kamplain, Marina Maier, Angie Robinson, Catherine Neville, Bonnie Hendershot, Cindy Nissley, Audrey Pabs Garnon, Barry Bene-sch and Marcia Tivoli for all their tireless work in planning a conference offering 17 hours of training in a fast-paced, fun weekend!

Our fall mini-conference will be held on Thursday, October 13, 2016 at the Ten Oaks Ballroom in Clarksville, MD. MSCCA will offer another 7 hours of training for a total of 24 for the year with registration discounts for our members. You can use your state training voucher for payment if you apply 60 days prior to our scheduled trainings or you can always get reimbursement for your payment if you meet all requirements. Registration for the fall conference will open June 30, 2016.

Finally, MSCCA is excited about our 2016 MSCCA-Jennifer Nizer Passion for Excellence Award for members only. Last year was our very first year and we were able to award close to $4,000.00 in grant monies to 4 of the 5 applicants. In 2015, we awarded cameras for classrooms, Investigator’s Club curricu-lums and a playground Hungry Hippo! This year we have doubled our award and have received 11 applications. Jennifer Nizer will announce the recipients of 2016 award in her name at the Conference by the Sea. MSCCA would like to thank the many centers, businesses, individuals and partners for their generous donations to the MSCCA-Jennifer Nizer Passion for Excellence Award. We are working on a brand new donor page for the website this summer. You will be able to read more about our donors and how to make a donation, along with testimonials and pictures from our worthy recipients.

Thanks for all you do to make a difference in the lives of children and families!

Christina Peusch, Executive Director
The Jennifer Nizer
"Passion for Excellence Grant"

Are you passionate about working with young children?
Do you strive for excellence for children and for yourself as a teacher, provider, or program?

Let MSCCA help you ignite your passion and reach the high standards required in our state. MSCCA will pay direct service payment to the college or certification program with this grant or Professional Development training needed to attain the highest levels of credentialing paid directly to MSDE approved trainers in Maryland.

Additionally, should your program need staff training, equipment, curriculum, assessment tools or quality improvements to attain highest standards, MSCCA will use the grant funds to pay for direct services or products needed for program quality.

Please read and follow the application guidelines below and submit your request by the deadline indicated.

Contact Christina Peusch at 410-820-9196 or email mscca1@comcast.net to answer questions or clarify application.

The completed application must be postmarked or emailed by March 1, 2017. Grant applicants must be members of the Maryland State Child Care Associations. All successful grantees must sign a grant agreement regarding the use of funds and project reporting at the time of receipt of funds. Non-compliance with the terms of the grant may influence future application decisions.

MSCCA is a 501(c)(3) Charitable Organization, EIN:52-1398476

Many thanks to the Professional Development Committee for all their hard work to make the MSCCA training events a huge success.

Christy Lewis—Chair
Marie Maier
Catherine Neville
Angie Robinson
Bonnie Hendershot

Deb Kamplain
Cindy Nissley
Barry Benesch
Audrey Pabs-Garnon
March 7, 2016

House Bill 1391

Health and Government Operations
Large Family Homes and Child Care Centers-Green Product Cleaning Supplies-Regulations

The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) supports with amendments HB 1391

MSCCA supports and promotes the health and safety of all children and child care providers. Children’s health and safety is the foundation of quality care and best practice for regulated child care professionals.

MSCCA applauds Delegate Angel and the Co-Sponsors of this legislation for their commitment to health and safety for children and the child care community. We want what is best for all children and stand with you in continuing to look for improvements and alternatives in cleaning products used in child care settings.

The amendment we propose is to establish a Green Product Cleaning Supplies Task Force to evaluate and define a variety of green cleaning products that can be used safely in all regulated child care settings to ensure the health and well-being of children and child care providers. The membership of task force should include representation from child care provider associations representing for child care centers, school age child care programs, and family child care providers, the Office of Child Care (OCC) in the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Child Care Resource Network, the State Children’s Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council and the General Assembly. The task force should be charged with examining the best practices in green cleaning for child care facilities and making recommendations to OCC on regulations that will give child care providers guidance on purchasing and using green cleaning products to promote health and safety in child care.

The amendment would require the task force to report its recommendations to the appropriate legislative committee by October, 2016.

MSCCA strongly urges the support with amendments of HB 1391.
February 23, 2016

Appropriations Committee
Preschool Development Grants-Expansion Grants-Required State Funding

The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is a non-profit, statewide, professional association incorporated in 1984 to promote the growth and development of child care and learning centers in Maryland. We have 10 Chapters in Maryland and represent membership in Baltimore City, as well as 23 counties. MSCCA has over 2500 members and our members provide care and learning for more than 12,000 children therefore assisting over 20,000 working parents. We believe children are our most important natural resource and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the child care provider community.

MSCCA supports House Bill 668
Continuing the funding will:

- Provide accessibility to quality early care and education environments in diverse delivery settings for over 4000 children
- Allow at risk children to get the best start
- Narrow the achievement gap
- Save money
- Prepare children for kindergarten and life

MSCCA supports House Bill 668 because our members value the importance high quality environments for young children and the connection those positive experiences have on school readiness, as well as the long term effect the investment in young children has on society. The continuity and stability in children’s learning experiences help children thrive and allow children an easier transition to Kindergarten.

We are asking for the Governor to include in the State budget for FY 2018 and 2019 an appropriation of state funds equal to the amount that the state committed to fund as a state match in its application to the US department of Education for the Pre-K Expansion Grant through the federal Preschool Development Grants Program.

It is imperative that Maryland continue to provide the children at greatest risk accessibility to high quality Pre-K programs in their communities. The continued funding requested allows accessibility to quality Pre-K settings to thousands of children allowing parents peace of mind to work and/or continue their own education. The Pre-K Expansion Grant also mandates public and private partnerships between the school system and child care community to work together to share the efforts to implement positive early education programs which contribute to preparing children for success in school and in life.

In 1998, the New Jersey Supreme Court ordered the state of New Jersey to provide high-quality, half-day prekindergarten programs to all 3- and 4-year-old

(Continued on page 10)
MSCCA supports Senate Bill 312

This legislation will:

- Educate parents and unlicensed providers about child care laws, benefits to licensure and resources for becoming licensed.
- Require child care provider advertisements to include license numbers, similarly to contractors and realtors.
- Enable law enforcement to write civil citations when illegal child care providers refuse to comply.
- Increase fines for those in violation of the law.

This bill will not:

- Criminalize any form of child care that is not already illegal.
- This bill does not include “informal-relative” providers.

MSCCA represents thousands of child care professionals who welcome the requirement to include license information in ads because they have worked hard to obtain and maintain a state license with a high standard that has proven to keep children safe and prepare children for kindergarten. Licensed professionals want to share this accomplishment in advertising. They are proud to function legally and to pay taxes on income earned and reported, unlike illegal child care.

Parents should be aware that a caregiver who is not a relative and who is paid by the parent to care for their child outside of the home on a regular basis for 20 or more hours per month must be licensed in accordance with Maryland child care regulations. In Maryland, it is illegal for a non-relative or an agency to provide paid out-of-home child care for 20 or more hours per month on a regular basis without proper Office of Child Care licensure. A person or agency that provides illegal child care is subject to civil and criminal penalties under State law.

The majority of parents assume that all child care is legal and that all child care programs are licensed and inspected. Many parents believe that providers are required to have background checks and training, especially when they are advertising their child care services. This assumption is not always correct and can have unwanted consequences.

Using illegal child care can be dangerous for children because an illegal caregiver has not met any of the health, safety, or professional standards.
required of regulated caregivers. The home or building where illegal child care is provided has not been inspected by Office of Child Care or local authorities to determine if the premises are safe or appropriate for child care purposes. All children in child care settings deserve equal protection under the law, and state child care regulations are designed to protect children from harm. Educating parents about the benefits of choosing legal, regulated care by using the professional standard of providing license or registration numbers is critical to children’s fundamental safety and educational foundation, as well as providing an effective way to report unlicensed care.

Statistics from Maryland report 13 deaths of children from 2010-2014 while in an illegal child care settings. That is 13 too many. There are incidents of injury in illegal child care settings that go unreported because there is no reporting mechanism, no oversight and no standards met. These devastating losses beg for action and change.

There are a number of states across the country implementing effective and creative practices to suppress illegal childcare. Texas, for example has specific procedures for searching for child care advertisements for unlicensed providers and following up on all reports. Texas, in response to the death of eight children in unregulated care in 2004 and 10 children in 2005, launched a major campaign to discourage parents from placing children in unlicensed child care, “Don’t Be in the Dark about Child Care.” In 2013, the Texas legislature approved 40 additional licensing positions to proactively identify illegal operations and move them toward licensure or closure. Previously, the licensing agency had only been able to follow up on reports of illegal care. The new program focuses on identifying illegal providers through Internet advertisements, signs, and publications. The staff is using an internet application to match phone numbers or email address to a physical address and are trained in surveillance to determine the number of children who are in care. An injunction is sought should staff believe children are at risk and the provider does not cease the operation. Reports of illegal care are already increasing in response to these changes. Maryland is a much smaller state and would not need the resources of 40 additional specialists and technology has improved vastly in the last 3 years. Maryland would be able to utilize resources already in place or contract with little fiscal impact to implement a similar model.

The Maryland State Child Care Association is utilizing its own resources to increase public awareness of the definition of “legal” child care in Maryland and offer grants to those who would like to become licensed.

Senate Bill 312 will assist in positive outcomes for children by requiring license numbers in advertisements, increasing fines, giving authority to law enforcement, such as fire marshals and sheriffs to partner with the Office of Child Care to be a part of the resolution process and convert illegal providers to licensed or registered providers. The legislative changes will strengthen the existing law and culminate in much needed public awareness, equity for those legal providers doing the right thing, higher reporting of illegal child care, increases in licensed providers and ultimately a decrease in illegal child care across the state.

For all these reasons, we strongly urge your favorable consideration of SB 312.

Sincerely,
Christina Peusch, Executive Director
Maryland State Child Care Association
olds in 31 of the state’s highest poverty districts, also known as “Abbott districts,” named after the long-running school finance equity lawsuit, Abbott v. Burke. The Abbott preschool program is a national model for high-quality pre-K and has had a demonstrable impact on improving learning outcomes for participating children through at least third grade.

The National Institute for Early Education Research, an independent research group associated with Rutgers University, has conducted an evaluation of the impacts of Abbott pre-K programs for more than 8 years, and it has found that Abbott pre-K had large, significant impacts on children’s language, literacy, and math skills at kindergarten entry. Even more important, recent evaluations tracking Abbott alumni who are now in fourth and fifth grade show that those gains persist through the end of elementary school. Children who attended Abbott pre-K were also less likely to be held back in elementary school or diagnosed with learning disabilities.

When you combine the Abbott research other evidence, such as the HighScope Perry Preschool and Chicago Longitudinal studies showing the long-term effects of pre-K well into adulthood, and more recent research showing positive effects for state pre-K in Oklahoma, Michigan, New Mexico, Arkansas, and Texas, the Abbott pre-K study provides a very compelling case that high-quality pre-K can deliver meaningful, sustained results improving children’s school achievement.

The Maryland Pre-K Expansion Grant has encouraged partnerships between public schools and already existing high-quality early education child care programs, including accredited centers and centers who have achieved the higher levels in Maryland Excels. These collaborations have helped local jurisdictions maximize the cost efficiency of Pre-K expansion in Maryland. It also means we can devote more dollars to instructing more children instead of spending capital costs on classroom construction and transportation costs for school buses. These partnerships also accomplish a faster start up time to accomplish our goals of broader access to reach more children who will benefit from positive early education programs.

A total of 29 states nationally have a version of the Pre-K Expansion. Public-private partnerships give parents greater flexibility. Keep in mind that half-day Pre-K is typically 2.5 hours and even “full day” Pre-K amounts to a total of 6.5 hours, which would not match the definition of “full day” for many working parents. The availability of high-quality programs that offer before and after care, as well as meet the requirements for Pre-K all in one community based settings can offer significant advantages to both parents and children, who would experience fewer disruptive transitions during the day.

For all these reasons, we strongly urge your favorable consideration of HB 668.

Sincerely,
Christina Peusch, Executive Director
Maryland State Child Care Association
The Maryland State Child Care Association (MSCCA) is a non-profit, statewide, professional association incorporated in 1984 to promote the growth and development of child care and learning centers in Maryland. We have 10 Chapters in Maryland and represent membership in Baltimore City, as well as 23 counties. MSCCA has over 2500 members and our members provide care and learning for more than 12,000 children therefore assisting over 20,000 working parents. We believe children are our most important natural resource and work hard to advocate for children, families and for professionalism within the child care provider community.

Early care and education constitutes one of the major small business sectors in Maryland’s economy, and a large constituency of Maryland voters, in every legislative District in Maryland. Our profession is struggling to keep afloat this year, because too many parents simply can’t afford to pay the full cost of the high quality care that their children need, and the highly trained members of our profession are working at sacrificial pay scales, because the State of Maryland has not kept pace with actual costs for obtaining and providing high quality care for more families and child care providers are struggling. The consequences include children on waiting lists and parents unable to work due to lack of accessibility to quality early care/education or parents choosing illegal care. Maryland statistics report that 14 children have died in illegal child care settings over the past 4 years. Fiscal efforts to bridge these gaps have been languishing for many years.

We have come together for a simple purpose: to convince you that this year’s Budget must give a much higher priority for Maryland’s young children, in real General Fund dollar terms. Almost all of the Maryland Government activities and programs affecting young children and their families in the Governor’s Proposed Budget are flat funded, after years of cutbacks forced by a fiscal stringency that has dissipated. Early childhood needs a much greater State investment in this year’s Budget, both for our State’s present relative productivity and for future growth as a State. It should be one of the Governor’s highest priorities to invest in the future now, in this budget for early childhood development. Only you can change that course, and we support in your efforts. Our priority is shared by President Obama and his Administration, as shown by his public statements and Budgets. But Federal dollars require a State match, and Maryland’s Race to the Top Federal investment expired last October. Additional State funding for early childhood is required to sustain the gains made over the time of the investment.

Just as the Maryland schools have slid from their Number 1 ranking in public education, our early education’s status has slid even further, into the middle of the States. So you will need to address with vigor and intelligence the Kindergarten achievement gap that affects far too many children from low-income, non-English speaking homes, or children with disabilities who require special education services. Maryland has been a national leader in early care and

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education, but it cannot remain in that role unless legislators and the Governor step up to the challenge of reducing that achievement gap when it still is easy to do so, in early childhood. Two features of the Budget are vital to meeting that challenge: child care subsidies, and funding enhancements to improve child care and education program quality.

**Child Care Subsidies:**

Although there has been an increase of 5.8 million (6% increase over FY 2016) to Maryland’s child care subsidy system, MSDE has still not been able to open all income levels for parents to access quality child care. The concerns we have relate to the proposed FY 2017 budget for MSDE’s Division of Early Childhood Development which increases funds for the Child Care Subsidy Program but, the increase may not allow enough funds to meet new requirements required by the federal government through the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant.

Maryland’s child care subsidy system is broken, and only you and the Governor can fix it with continuing substantial additional investments. Most of the subsidy recipients have to pay far more than their official co-payment, because the subsidy amounts are far below the market prices for child care. Since eligibility for subsidies is based on income levels, the low wage earners who are eligible are the least able to afford co-payments for most care, especially high quality care. To get by on the existing subsidy alone, parents often choose the lowest quality care available on the market to reduce the cost of co-pay. As a result of the current inadequate subsidies, some parents unfortunately are forced to turn to cheaper or even unlicensed child care. Parents worry what’s happening to their children while they’re at work, and children are locked into lives of substandard personal development and academic performance, because they can’t afford to get the kind of high quality care that has been proven to erase the achievement gap. Increasingly child care providers are unwilling to accept children with subsidies, because of the difficulty of collecting adequate and timely payments from the parents and the State, and because of the insufficiencies of the subsidies themselves. In short, low wage earners accessing the current subsidies do little to alleviate the pressures of raising a family that crush the hopes and potential for their young children for their entire lifetimes. It’s an outrage.

In 2011, MSDE initiated an enrollment freeze and established a waiting list for families applying for child care subsidy. Between the freeze on applicants and time MSDE reopened subsidy program to new families in 2013 but only 8 of 10 levels of income. At the end of 2015, there was still a waiting list of over 3,200 children. It should be the states priority to eliminate a freeze at any level and give relief in the form of subsidy to all eligible families. Even with the increase of close to $6 million dollars, there are still 2 levels of income-eligibility families closed.

If you and the Governor can agree to boost materially the amount of subsidies going to Maryland’s needy children to enable them to get high quality care, you will realize immediate and long term savings that result from the reduced costs of having to provide expensive remedial and special education, juvenile justice, welfare, mental and physical health, and adult criminal justice. Economists measure
these government savings at between seven and twelve times the amount of money spent on improving access to quality early care and since higher subsidy amounts would increase such access, it makes sense to invest in quality when children are young and brains are developing at the highest rates. This is the easiest, most cost-effective way for Maryland to restore its #1 rating for public education and improving quality will give parents the confidence they need for better work productivity and retention.

Federal guidelines recommend that subsidy rates be set to the 75th percentile of the current market rate, ensuring that low-income families have access to quality care. Maryland has not been able to meet that recommendation in more than ten years. Current reimbursement rates continue at the 10th percentile, forcing Child Care Subsidy families to the cheapest and, in many cases, the lowest quality care in their communities. Additionally, family income eligibility remains fixed at a unrealistic level (less than $30,000 annual income for a family of three), and parent co-payments continue to be problematic for both parents and providers.

The new federal rules associated with the reauthorization of CCDBG address many positive ideas but from a budgetary standpoint may have unintended consequences. Among the most potentially dangerous requirements from a budgetary standpoint is the new requirement that Child Care Subsidy vouchers be issued on a 12-month basis. (Shorter durations were previously accepted practice.) While this requirement is in theory very positive and would achieve goals of family stability and continuity/consistency of child care, it comes at a significant cost: more than $43 million annually, according to an analysis conducted for MSDE by the Regional Economic Studies Institute. MDAEYC recognizes that estimates of this provision’s impact, but the result will, in any case, be considerable. This issue may cause negative consequences including freezing access to subsidy and closing more income levels to accommodate a smaller amount of children for a longer period of time without additional funding increases at the state and federal level.

**Restore Early Childhood Services:**

Over 10 years ago the General Assembly created its Joint Committee on Children, Youth and Families, that approved a plan of supports for young children to promote school readiness in Maryland. Like the child care subsidies, almost every element in that plan has been impacted as a result of the disproportionate cuts in subsidy funding made since 2008 to help balance the budget. Most of the programs and services envisaged in the original plans are still in place, but lack adequate funding to function successfully therefore the state continues to incur long waiting lists for the basic services every child needs for success. This also applies to the employees in the agencies administering those services. Child care licensing specialists, social workers helping children and families needing help, child care resource and referral agencies, early childhood mental health services, people who identify and meet special needs to reduce or eliminate the need for expensive special education, home visitors, and others serving young children and their families. You can look to the Governor’s Early Childhood Advisory Council on setting priorities to better support this early care infrastructure, but all these services are struggling.

(Continued from page 12)
For child care this struggle is exacerbated by the growing demands of the public education system in Maryland and elsewhere for higher education requirements without any corresponding increase in government supports for low-income child care providers to continue their professional development earn living wages they deserve and achieve higher credentials. Increased funding and creative collaboration with partners will assist early childhood professionals the Maryland EXCELS quality improvement system incorporates these features, but needs your help fiscally in supporting education for early childhood professionals over the long term.

What Maryland needs to do specifically to fix the subsidy system is first, to fund full enrollment for all eligible parents; second, to follow the Federal guidelines for the use of the 75th percentile of the current market rates as a basis for setting the subsidy amounts; third, to reduce the parents’ mandatory co-payments to levels that the parents can afford; and fourth, pay subsidies at a rate that doesn’t unfairly undercut the providers’ rate structure for other parents.

Thank you for your consideration and support of investments in early care and education which research proves yields success for children and keeps parents working.

Christina Peusch

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**MSCCA Election Calendar**

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<td>May 31, 2016</td>
<td>Nomination Forms will be emailed to all current MSCCA members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 30, 2016</td>
<td>Completed Nomination Forms must be received by Headquarters Office.</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1, 2016</td>
<td>Final Ballots will be e-mailed to all center members for the 2017-2019 Board Term.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 1, 2016</td>
<td>Final Ballots must be returned/received by Nominating Committee Chair on or before this date.</td>
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Election Results will be tallied on October 6, 2016. The results will be announced during the MSCCA General Membership Meeting at the Fall Symposium on October 13, 2016!
Responsibilities of an Elected Member of the MSCCA Board of Directors

Responsibilities of the Executive Committee:
- Determining how MSCCA carries out its mission through planning and review
- Working familiarity with MSCCA By-Laws governing the Board and the Association
- Establishing policies for the effective management of MSCCA
- Adopting an annual budget and providing fiscal oversight
- Recruiting, orienting, and developing new members
- Evaluating the performance of its Executive Director
- Annual Evaluation of performance of MSCCA in achieving its annual mission and objectives

Responsibilities of Board of Directors and Members at Large:
- Accept the obligation as a Board member to serve and advance the interests of MSCCA and its members
- Understand and promote the organization and its mission
- Be familiar with the organization’s overall operations
- Be a working member of at least one MSCCA Committee
- Participate in resource development and fundraising
- Assist in membership development
- Participate in advocacy, both legislative and regulatory, to advance the interests of MSCCA
- Help to educate the community on the role of licensed child care and early learning centers and the role of MSCCA
- Review Board materials distributed, with particular attention to the financial reports
- Contribute your ideas, insights, concerns, and questions about issues before the Board or which you believe should come to the attention of the Board, the President, or the Executive Director

Approximate Time Demands:
- Attend and participate in at least 80% of Board meetings (11 monthly scheduled Board meetings of two hours each—must attend at least 8). Attendance records will be kept by the Executive Board; member removal for noncompliance is determined by a simple majority vote of the full Board; only two ‘Excused Absences’ will be accepted.
- Board Members will advise the Executive Director of their attendance/non-attendance; those not providing advance notice to the Executive Director will be given an “unexcused absence” for that month
- Board Members must be willing to commit the equivalent of one-hour, per-week, to assisting with Association goals when assistance is requested
- Committee work (one to three hours per month, determined by Committee agenda and assignments)
- “Conference by the Sea” attendance required (three days in May)
- Owners/Directors Symposium attendance required (one day in October or November)
- Executive Committee Sessions as required; and/or additional full Board sessions, as determined by the Board

Financial and Resource Development Expectations:
- Annual center/individual membership dues must be paid by the first Board meeting of the New Year;
- Board members not remitting dues prior to the Board meeting, will not have voting privileges
- Register and attend all trainings sponsored by MSCCA to include both the Conference & Symposium
- Assist in recruiting sponsors and exhibitors for the Spring Conference and Fall Symposium
- Volunteer to host one Board meeting during the year should the Board’s agenda require member center host facilities.

Removal from the Board of Directors:
- Failure to meet these stated responsibilities may result in my removal from the MSCCA Board of Directors by simple majority vote of the full Board.

Name: _________________________________ 2017-2019 Board Position: ________________________________

Signature: ________________________________________________________________________________
WE NEED YOU!! Our chapter is looking for strong, dedicated members who are willing and available and have the commitment to become leaders of our chapter. Child Care Centers in Prince George’s County have wonderful teachers and directors and we would like to expand our chapter and bring in new faces with fresh ideas. Calling on someone who would like to take the lead with assistance from me and Audrey Pabs-Garnon, to move our chapter forward. Having a strong chapter means we can be a part of the MSCCA board and represent Prince George’s County and bring back licensing information and legislative information to share to all in our county so we can stay current with the ever changing face of Early Childhood Education.

Please reach out to me, Barbara Dubik @barbara.dubik@stanns.org, or call 301-559-5500. I am here at the Conference by the Sea. Find me and we can talk. As a team we can be strong advocates for the children in our county.

Submitted by: Barbara Dubik, St Ann’s CDC

Silver Anniversary News

Congratulations And Happy Anniversary To: Quala Care Child Care Center!
Nurturing, educating and serving children and the community for 25 wonderful years!
Howard County – Early Childhood Advocates in Action

We are excited to announce the formation of a Howard County chapter of MSCCA! We are working in collaboration with MSCCA, the Office of Children’s Services, and Innovations in Education, LLC to help unite the voices of early childhood educators in Howard County.

One of the primary goals of our chapter is to advocate for high quality early childhood programs. As a new chapter, we are seeking input from the early childhood community about your needs and how we can support you. We plan to provide opportunities for networking, professional development, and collegiality in addition to our work as advocates on behalf of children and families.

We welcome new members and any suggestions and insights you have.

Please contact Randi Albertsen for more information, innovationsed@verizon.net or 410-370-2837.

“Holiday Traditions” Family Engagement Project

The Johns Hopkins Bayview Child Development Center parents and staff contributed to a Holiday Traditions Quilt. Each family was given a fabric square to decorate displaying their family’s traditions and celebrations. There were so many creative ways they did this and each child loved telling about their square.

The project was such a hit, we are thinking of doing a FAMILY QUILT at the beginning of the school year and adding squares as new families join us! We could then keep the quilt hanging for years!

Classroom Quilt Kit can be ordered through Oriental Trading Co.

Submitted by: Bonnie Hendershot, Director JHBMC Child Development Center
Happy Spring from the Harford County Director’s Association! We are excited to welcome Project Act to Bel Air and look forward to lots of exciting new training opportunities.

We kicked off spring with a meeting with Kathy Griffin from Harford County Public Schools. She shared lots up helpful information regarding the preschool programs. We are grateful for this annual update she provides that allows us to stay current with their guidelines, curriculum and procedures. We also discussed the implementation of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and theories and guidelines for homework in preschool.

April’s meeting will feature licensing specialists from the Office of Child Care. This is one of our most important meetings of the year. The purpose is to clarify items that may need improvement and prepare us for new regulations that may be coming our way. There is an opportunity for a question/answer session which is incredibly helpful to directors. As a result, this is our meeting with the highest attendance all year.

Our organization is proud to report that our 7th annual Multi-cultural event was a huge success. Each year, we choose an activity that introduces our students to another culture. We offer it at a discounted rate to our members but are still able to make a profit. That profit is used towards activities that further our group’s mission, such as funds towards scholarships. This year we featured NRITYA, a style of expressive Indian dance. We all learned something!

Finally, we would like to extend big congratulations to Forest Hill Nature Preschool, one of our active members, for raising $850.00 for the Children’s Miracle Network through the Children Helping Children Initiative. Great job, guys! We are so proud of you! Little people helping other little people--what a wonderful lesson. You are an example to us all.

A World of Friends Learning Center has been very busy this past year 2015. They are the 1st in Baltimore City and the 2nd in the state of Maryland to have completed all of 5 EXCELS Achievements. They also partnered with the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council to be a part of a training video called, “Jayla Side by Side.” This video demonstrates how to include children with disabilities in your program. They reached level 4 in MD EXCELS and are waiting for their accreditation visit to become a level 5 program. They supported the efforts of Johns Hopkins Children Center by sponsoring a “King & Queen” dance that raised $500.00.

In 2016, AWOFLC hopes to continue to provide quality child care to the children of Baltimore City.

Submitted by: Jennifer Dorsey
Meritus Closes the Learning Center

In a stunning and unexpected move, Meritus Health will close The Learning Center (formerly Surrey Child Care Center) in June 2016. Meritus officials said the health system “must continue to focus on its primary mission to improve the health status of the region by providing comprehensive patient and family-centered health services.” Washington County Health System senior management previously recommended closing TLC in June 2010, saying “the closure would cut costs as the health system prepares the budget for fiscal year 2011, which starts July 1.” However, the health system’s board of directors rejected the recommendation and has left the center open for the past 6 years. The current closure is a terrible loss to Maryland’s Early Care and Education community.

The Learning Center (TLC) was established in 1987 and currently provides early care and education for over 125 children and employs almost 35 providers. During peak years, TLC served over 200 children and employed over 60 providers. The center has been a high quality model early childhood program in Maryland. TLC was one of the first child care programs to achieve MSDE’s State accreditation. Previously, TLC was, simultaneously, Nationally Accredited by the National Early Child Program Accreditation (NECPA), State Accredited by MSDE Office of Child Care, and held the Office of Child Care’s highest Center Credential – Level IV (now EXCELS).

TLC has been a member of MSCCA for over 20 years. Christy Lewis, MSCCA’s 2nd Vice President and Chairperson of MSCCA’s Professional Development Committee (PDC) has been TLC’s Director for the past 7 years. Charles Wainwright, Emeritus Board Member of MSCCA was the TLC’s Center Director for 19 years.

Submitted by: Christy D. Lewis

News From Anne Arundel County Champions for Children

Champions for Children is the Anne Arundel Chapter of MSCCA. Formed in the fall of 2014, we welcome all staff of child care centers, including Teachers, Directors and Owners.

Champions for Children meets the second Tuesday of every month at 6:30 pm. Our location rotates, giving our members a chance to see other Centers and network with fellow teachers in their own classrooms. Please contact Ruthi Claytor (Grannie Annie’s) or Jenn Davis (Quala Care) for information on meeting locations. aachaptermscca@gmail.com
**Mission/Goals**

EDUCATION: To establish an MSCCA chapter in Frederick/Carroll counties and surrounding areas with the expressed goal of gaining more knowledge and understanding of early childhood initiatives and best practices.

ADVOCACY: To use our knowledge based on current research to become a voice of advocacy for children, families, and early childhood professionals in the state of Maryland.

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**News From A World of Friends Learning Center**

A World of Friends Learning Center has been very busy this past year 2015. They are the 1st in Baltimore City and the 2nd in the state of Maryland to have completed all of 5 EXCELS Achievements. They also partnered with the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council to be a part of a training video called, “Jayla Side by Side.” This video demonstrates how to include children with disabilities in your program. They reached level 4 in MD EXCELS and are waiting for their accreditation visit to become a level 5 program. They supported the efforts of Johns Hopkins Children Center by sponsoring a “King & Queen” dance that raised $500.00.

In 2016, AWOFLC hopes to continue to provide quality child care to the children of Baltimore City.

Submitted by: Jennifer Dorsey
March 8, 2016
Play and Learn at Community Place

1. **New members:** Marie Boyer from Pasadena Early Learning Center

2. **Updates:**
   A. **By-laws:** new rules and policies will be adopted and printed by the end of the conference
   B. **Legislative:**
      i. **Illegal child care:** If a center is going to advertise on social media, newspaper, craigslist, etc, you will need to include your licensing number
      ii. **Public schools time spent in a classroom:**
         1. Instructional time spent for standardized testing and assessment will be going down to 2%
         2. The teacher’s union only wants Kindergarten readiness Assessments (KRA’s) to be given to a sampling of children and no standardized testing for kindergarten.
            a. Limiting KRA’s is hard for child care centers to know how we are doing to help children be ready for kindergarten. MSCCA wants some kind of assessment to show ready kids are for kindergarten.
      iii. **Family child care association** is proposing that all family providers MUST HAVE at least a high school diploma or GED.
      iv. **FMLA Paid Leave:** This doesn’t just cover maternity leave but falls under FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act)
         1. 2 types of paid leave are being proposed:
            a. Employee based/paid: Bill #: HB7240 Senate bill 4875
            b. Employer funded
      v. Another bill is being proposed to restrict the use of bleach in centers

3. **New Regulations**
   A. **Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG):** This si being renewed in September and is where MSDE gets their money
   B. **Voucher co-pays:** centers can’t charge parents over their assigned co-pay
   C. **Staff immunizations:**
      i. Mostly will be a regulation in September
      ii. Titors- You can have your blood drawen and can find out what you are immune to
      iii. Affordable care act could cover co-pays for titers or immunizations because it is job required but your visit may not be covered.

4. **MD Excels:** There is a new Eco-Friendly Badge like the Asthma Friendly Badge
   A. Depending on your level you have to have a certain percent of staff at a certain credentialing level
      i. Level 5 has to have 60% of lead teachers credentialed at a certain level

5. **Family Engagement:** Money is available with the Kellogg’s Grant through Early Childhood Advisory Committee; Hoping to use this grant for a parent class about toxic stress/children under stress

(Continued on page 22)
6. If anyone has any outside or inside field trips please pass along ideas
   A. Science tellers is a really fun in house field trip
7. Debbie Wood: Big read event at AACC on April 16th
   A. Topic is ‘Reading through History’
      i. Speakers:
         a. Alex Haley’s (author of ‘Roots’) son or grandson
         b. An expert on Maryland and slavery
         c. Hispanic speakers
8. How do centers receive emergency alerts?
   A. Trying to establish a system for child care centers to be alerted when there is an emergency at a nearby school
   B. Idea: Call the Board of Education to add your phone number for emergencies
9. Questions for law enforcement for a future meeting?
   A. Custody battle concerns
   B. Parents intoxicated: could we be sued by a parents for withholding a child or would we be liable for releasing a child to someone that is intoxicated?
   C. CPS said we have the right to know what’s going on in our building if it’s something between a parent and child versus center and child?
10. Conference by the sea:
    A. Registration is open, over 200 people have registered.
    B. Our chapter needs to make a donation to the Jenn Nizer Grant
    C. Our basket for the conference “Dinner & Desert: A night on the town!”: Ruthi has 2 restaurant gift cards (Friendly’s & Glory Days)
       i. We are planning on using money from the chapters account for the rest of the basket
11. Future training ideas:
    A. A representative from CPS (Child Protective Services)
    B. Community discussion from Debbie Wood about Race through families

Future meetings:
April 12, 2016: Bricks for Kidz
838 Ritchie Hwy Suite 2 Severna park

May 10, 2016
Sensory Processing Disorder by Cisco Nochera
Location: Kindercare in Pasadena

June 14, 2016
Tree Branch Design- Marketing your program
Location: Quala Care Linthicum

July 12, 2016
Location: Grannie Annie’s

(Continued on page 23)
(Continued from page 22)

August 9, 2016
Speaker: Someone form Credentialing
Location: Edinboro School Severna Park

September 13, 2016
Location: Play and Learn at Community Place Crownsville

October 16, 2016
Location: Kindercare Pasadena

November 14, 2016
Location: Quala Care Linthicum

December: NO MEETING

Speaker: OT Specialist Christine Duda:
(If you would like any other information from Christine’s presentation please contact Ruthi)

1. There is a lot of stress on writing in Kindergarten
   A. By the end of kindergarten children are expected to write a paragraph

2. Suggestions to help with writing
   A. Adapted pencils
   B. Teach writing top to bottom
   C. Use small pencils; gold pencils can be used too.
      http://www.amazon.com/Half-Pencils-Eraser-Classroom-Sharpened/dp/B00ZPW8Y9M/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1459986428&sr=8-1&keywords=short+pencils
   D. Twist and write pencils: can be purchased on amazon
      http://www.amazon.com/Twist-Mechanical-Pencil-Refills-Colors/dp/B019002C7O/ref=sr_1_6?ie=UTF8&qid=1459986372&sr=8-6&keywords=twist+and+write+pencils
   E. Backwards letters are common for children up to 8-9 years old

3. Good things to help writing grip: regular but broken crayons and regular pencils. Having a smaller crayon forces the child to grip it with the front three fingers

4. Games that help with pincer grip: Ice breaker and feed the frog

5. Suggestion for cutting
   A. Saying to help with cut: Thumbs up, elbows in that’s how we cut
   B. Scissors with springs
      http://www.amazon.com/Maped-Spring-Scissors-Assorted-037910/dp/B0013NDVCM/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1459986543&sr=8-1&keywords=scissors+with+springs
   C. Mini loop scissors
      http://www.amazon.com/Easi-Grip-Mini-Scissors/dp/B000JLL24S/ref=sr_1_2_a_it?ie=UTF8&qid=1459986598&sr=8-2&keywords=mini+loop+scissors
   D. Use card stock to practice cutting
State Early Childhood Advisory Council 2016 Plan

Under the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT ELC), Maryland’s State Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) advised on these projects to ensure they were accomplished. Based on the State’s ECAC Legislative Report submitted December 2015, to sustain the work of the RTT ELC grant and to continue to advance these goals, the Council will create a strategic plan through their work in Goal Groups while focusing on these main policy questions:

- Which children have access to high-quality ECE programs?
- Are children, 0-5, on track to succeed in K-12?
- What are the characteristics of effective programs?
- Is the quality of Maryland’s early care programs improving?
- How prepared is the ECE workforce to provide effective education and care for all children?

Proposed Plan – Create a proposed plan that will address strategic planning, ongoing needs assessment, barriers to collaboration, outreach, standards, and promotion/marketing of the importance of early childhood. Outcomes include an updated strategic plan, needs assessment and an Annual State ECAC Report that will include recommendations for the work of the State ECAC.

Goal Groups – The purpose of the Goal Groups are to advise the State ECAC on activities and strategies that can help be the driving force of early childhood education policies and advancements. Goal Groups give opportunities for leaders in early childhood education to provide ideas, strategies and activities that will allow necessary information to get to direct service providers and improve the quality and care of early education programs.

Each group will have a facilitator and a note taker. Minutes and notes will be sent to all group members and the DECD’s Early Childhood Coordinator after each meeting. Goals Groups will meet during the last hour of each State ECAC meeting and will be given specific topics to discuss and research. From this work, Goal Groups will develop a proposed plan for their component. This plan will be considered as part of the State ECAC’s strategic plan to continue to improve early childhood care and education.

Goal Group 1

Program Improvement and Outreach – This Council Goal Group will advise on activities that will further the work of the Family Engagement Initiative that started under the RTT ELC. With this initiative, several outreach activities and program improvement programs, including the family engagement requirements in MD EXCELS, were developed. Additionally, MSDE was awarded $494,000 from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to further the work of the Family Engagement Initiative. Outcomes of the Kellogg grant support strategies, including outreach to special populations and include a Communication and Technology Plan, Effective Practices Toolkit for providers and increased family engagement activities within the jurisdictions of the Local Councils.

Specific topic areas for the Program Improvement and Outreach Group:

(Continued on page 25)
Outreach to DLL (addressing 50% gap of not previously served children with Kindergarten enrollment)

Extending/sustaining work of the Local Councils (focusing on Family Engagement/Outreach)

Family Engagement Communication Plan (advising/promotion)

Goal Group 2

Data Dissemination—This Council Goal Group will focus on the dissemination of data to support programs in the process of continued improvement. The Maryland Early Childhood Research Advisory Group was started in 2012 to support the work of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge in early childhood research development and offer recommendations in the areas of data collection, warehousing, and data analysis. The Research Advisory Group will inform the Council has to how to use research to continue to the work of the ECAC and improve early childhood education.

Specific topic areas for the Data Dissemination Group:

- What data/information needs to be disseminated?
- How do we disseminate this information?
- How should programs use this data and how can we support programs with this data?

Goal Group 3

Workforce Development—This Council Goal Group will focus on professional development and career advancement for early childhood educators. The Maryland Consortium of Early Childhood Faculty and Administrators developed The Professional Development for Teachers and Providers of Early Childhood Education Master Plan that addresses statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators. The State Early Childhood Advisory Council will continue to advise and assist the Consortium in the implementation of the Master Plan.

Specific topic areas for the Workforce Development Goal Group:

- Promoting the understanding of the needed skills to work in the field.
- Expanding and promoting pathways to grow and improve professionals in the field.

Goal Group 4

Early Learning Standards—This Council Goal Group will focus on the continuing development of the Early Learning Standards. The Early Learning Standards as content standards have been updated and will continue to be revised. The Council will continue to advise on the development of high quality comprehensive state early learning standards, specifically regarding professional development and the use of the early learning standards. Additionally, the standards will also be aligned with the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (SEFEL) and continue to build on the Early Learning Standards in the area of Social Foundations.

Specific topic areas for the Early Learning Standards Goal Group:

- Making standards accessible and supporting programs as they learn and work with the standards.
- Aligning the standards with the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (SEFEL) and expanding SEFEL Training.
- Continue to build on the Early Learning Standards in the area of Social Foundations.
What does STEM look like in preschool and what is STEM anyway?

By Deborah J. Stewart, M.Ed.
http://www.teachpreschool.org/2012/06/stem

When Rae Pica from Bam Radio wrote me and asked me to participate in this next radio show, I looked at the topic and immediately knew that I had no idea what the topic was even about. I mean, you may have heard of the acronym STEM before but I hadn’t heard of it and I sure didn’t want to talk about a topic that I knew nothing about. Or did I? Come to find out, I know quite a bit about STEM and it is something that I bet you know more about than you think too!

First of all, if you haven’t ever taken a minute to listen to one of the Bam Radio interviews I have shared here before then this one is a must do! Just listening to these ladies talk motivates and inspires me to get busy teaching! Today’s discussion is titled, “What, Teaching STEM in Preschool, Really?”

What is STEM?

According to Dr. Sherri Killins, “What STEM does is give a label to what you are already doing... helping children to explore, observe, ask questions, predict, integrate their learning... its what we’ve always done in early childhood education.”

The Distinction between Academic Learning and Intellectual Learning

Dr. Lilian Katz says, “It is important to know the distinction between academic learning and intellectual learning.... and most people don’t get that.”

Academic learning “by definition is the stuff that is clear like the alphabet, it’s no logic, it just has to be memorized... and it does have to be learned eventually.” (Lilian Katz on Bam Radio)

Intellectual Learning “has to do with reasoning, hypothesizing, and predicting, theorizing, and so forth and that’s natural.” (Lilian Katz on Bam Radio)

“You want children to learn their academic skills in the service of their intellect so when they come and say, show me how to measure this or show me how to write that because they are doing an investigation – which is an intellectually based activity and it comes so naturally to all children.” (Lilian Katz on Bam Radio)

How to apply Stem in your preschool classroom

Our experts give the following advice...

- “Become more intentional about what you are doing. If you start by reflecting on what you are doing already, you will find you that you are already doing things in STEM and with an increase in your language and your ability to support children to predict what might happen next or explore or question, you will already be advancing those ideas of science, technology, engineering, and math.” (Dr. Killins on Bam Radio)

(Continued on page 27)
Remember that “The basic dispositions of science are asking questions then predicting what the outcome might be and then saying, ‘well, what data do I need to find out which is the right answer?’ and that is what children do in project work starting at age 3.” (Dr. Katz on Bam Radio)

“Do with things that are available that are in front of you. What isn’t in the best interest of advancing this knowledge is to imagine an ocean if you don’t live near an ocean or imagining a pirate that doesn’t exist. Use what is in front of you to create this learning and explore so you can test and try.” (Dr. Killins on Bam Radio)

How to learn more about STEM

Think about something you want to know about and explore it and look up more information and then share this information with your children. Use your natural curiosity – go into the concept of STEM by using your own sense of curiosity. (Dr. Killins on Bam Radio)

Put ideas into action, reflect on them, then figure out how you can take this idea or process up another notch to invite even more exploration, questioning, hypothesizing, observation and you will see that there is always another way.

The importance of play

“There are no greater natural scientists and engineers then young children. Inquisitive learners who learn STEM concepts through play. High quality early learning environments provide children with the structure in which to build upon their natural inclination to explore, to build, and to question.” Once again it comes down to letting the children play! (JD Chesloff shared by Rae Pica in “What, Teaching STEM in Preschool, Really?”)

The benefits of STEM

The link between early childhood and STEM is indisputable. Early exposure to STEM – whether it be in school, at a museum, a library, or just engaging in the natural trial and error of play – supports children’s overall academic growth, develops early critical thinking and reasoning skills, and enhances later interest in STEM study and careers. (JD Chesloff in Sparking a Child’s Interest in Science and Technology.”)
The paradox of American child care continues to perplex parents. It’s increasingly expensive for young families nationwide, devouring mortgage-sized shares of household income, even while child care workers remain among the country’s lowest-paid workers.

The consequences: Top-notch programs are available to those who can afford the tuition, once they get off the waiting lists — and everyone else is left gambling on quality, even safety. Take Washington, D.C., where the average yearly cost of full-time care for infants is about $22,000. But the annual mean wage for childcare workers in the nation’s capital, where a typical one-bedroom apartment rents for $2,000, is... $26,900.

In a new report published Wednesday, a group of economists argued the market alone can’t fix this problem. Researchers at the Economic Policy Institute, a think tank in the District, say daycare should become a national priority, a human right on par with public education, because it contributes to academic achievement gaps, among other unequal outcomes later in children’s lives.

In order to make high-quality child care — with well-trained staff and a cognitively enriching environment — available to all in the current system, many children would have to be crammed into the best day care centers and safety would have to be severely compromised, said co-author Josh Bivens, EPI’s research and policy director. “The easiest way,” he said, “would be to shove 70 kids in one class.”

Rather than encourage this dystopia, he said, America should invest more resources into building a national childcare system, one that rewards quality.

[The staggering cost of day care when you make only the minimum wage]

The report focuses on the potential benefits: Since much of our brains form in the first three years of life, toddlers who receive stable, loving care in an unstressful environment tend to perform better in school, neuroscientists have found. (Britain now offers free parenting classes inspired by this notion.) The EPI authors recommend, among other updates, expanding public funding for home visits by nurses to help expectant parents make healthy choices during pregnancy and adding subsidies for those who can’t afford high quality care.

They also campaign for the public provision of early childhood education that focuses on cognitive development, so kids with different family incomes, can enter school at more equal levels of preparedness.

(Continued on page 29)
They don't detail a funding mechanism — more research and analysis is required, Bivens said. Launching the new child-care infrastructure, he estimates, would cost roughly $90 billion, or 0.5 percent of GDP. To break it down: The annual ballpark cost of high quality pre-Kindergarten is $40 billion, and a voucher system for younger kids would require another $40 billion. A nurse visiting program, he said, would cost close to $10 billion.

“In the long run, it’s probably self-financing,” Bivens said. “The kids who grow up 10 to 20 years from now would be more likely to earn higher wages and avoid contact with the criminal justice system.” Add that, he said, to the increased labor force participation of parents.

The idea of universal daycare — or any form of government-provided child care — is, of course, controversial.

Consider a 2015 study of Quebec's universal childcare program. In 1997, the Canadian province started offering full-time kindergarten to all 5 year olds and supplied $5-per-day daycare for all 4 year olds. The $5-per-day program was extended to 3 year olds in 1998, 2 year olds in 1999 and all younger children in 2000. The outcome was disappointing, to put it lightly.

Though more parents got to work, middle class kids who’d gone through the province’s programs exhibited worse health outcomes and got into trouble more often than those who didn’t, the research found. They also showed a “sharp and contemporaneous increase in criminal behavior” as they grew older.
Co-author Jonathan Gruber, an MIT economist (who was one of the chief architects of the Affordable Care Act), said no one knows exactly what went wrong. "The harm may have been it was such a big expansion, it did not have qualified providers," he said.

High quality programs aimed at low-income preschoolers, however, have produced much happier outcomes: Kids who participated scored better on tests until at least eighth grade. (No positive effect, however, emerged in higher-income children’s test scores.)

So, Gruber said, lawmakers working to remedy America's daycare woes should pour resources into the poorest communities, where kids who qualify for state vouchers are often stuck on waiting lists.
TO: To Whom it May Concern
FROM: David Hanlin
DATE: March 2016
RE: A Comprehensive Analysis of Prekindergarten in Maryland

IN 2001 the Commission on Education, Finance, Equity, and Excellence issued its report. Referred to as the Thornton Commission, legislation was approved in 2002. Known as Bridge to Excellence legislation reformed public education and established much of the current existing formula driven system for determine the State share of public school funding. This legislation also committed the State to begin to provide pre-kindergarten to four year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds. The commitment established the framework of expanding pre-k services in public schools and required qualified providers approved by the Maryland State Department of Education. This latter feature has become the EXCELS program.

The act called for a re-evaluation of the system after approximately ten (10) years. Work is being done within MSDE in anticipation of a formal commission being created.

Current legislation in the Maryland General Assembly HB999/SB905 establishes the “Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education” to review the findings of the Study on Adequacy of Funding for Education in the State of Maryland. The House is scheduled to review and act on HB999/SB905 having received unanimous support in the Senate.

Part of this work includes a draft report “A Comprehensive Analysis of Prekindergarten in Maryland” by APA Consulting dated January 6, 2016 which includes a re-evaluation of the adequacy and equity of funding for education.

“A Comprehensive Analysis of Prekindergarten in Maryland” presents a literature review of effects and effectiveness of prekindergarten services; an analysis of capacity, enrollment, and quality of prekindergarten in Maryland; comparison of Maryland’s system to other political jurisdictions; cost-benefit analysis of pre-kindergarten services, and a series of recommendations. The final report is due in late 2016.

This memorandum encapsulates the analysis of capacity, enrollment, and quality of prekindergarten; the cost-benefit of service; and recommendations. I offer comments with a special focus will be on issues most significant to Washington County.

CAPACITY, ENROLLMENT, AND QUALITY
Enrollment and Capacity

Estimated pre-k enrollment of four

(Continued on page 32)
year olds in Maryland totals, 52,908. This estimate is distributed as 50.3% in public pre-k, 40.9% in child care centers (including Head Start), and 8.8% in family homes of licensed providers.

The licensed providers servicing these children have a licensed capacity of 58,050 children. Statewide, there is capacity to accommodate four-year olds. However, this capacity is not equitably distributed around the State. So there are pockets of tight supply and others of extra capacity.

The report estimates that in Washington County that 1,276 four year olds, or 67.6%, are enrolled in some form of licensed pre-k. This includes full time and part time enrollments. With current capacity of 1,389, the resulting utilization rate of 91.9% is a very high.

**Quality**

Maryland has established a pre-k quality measurement system, called EXCELS. Participation in EXCELS by pre-k providers is voluntary. Public pre-k and other providers participating in national accreditation efforts, such as Head Start, are referred to as “quality” providers. Other providers that voluntarily participate in EXCELS are evaluated on five measures; administrative policies and practices, licensing and compliance, developmentally appropriate learning practice, accreditation and rating scale, and staff qualifications and professional development.

In Washington County only 17% of licensed sites are either accredited or have a published EXCELS rating. Only if licensed child care centers or family residence centers receive funding through the State’s Child Care Subsidy Program must the provider participate in EXCELS.

Most pre-k in Washington County is provided by the public school system. Including public school pre-k capacity, then, 59% of all capacity is deemed “quality”. “Quality” capacity in Washington County is less than that Statewide; at 63%.

**Gap Analysis**

The State of Maryland has licensed capacity of 58,040 to serve 75,455 four year olds. Licensure does not distinguish between half time or full time enrollment. And it must be recognized that capacity is not equally or equitably distributed across the State. For example three counties have licensed capacity which exceeds the population of four year olds.

Washington County has an estimated population, for planning purposes, of 1,888 4-year olds. With capacity of 1,276 a shortfall of 499 is suggested. However, this apparent shortfall is only part of the picture. The experience of states that offer universal voluntary pre-k experience only 80% of four-year olds participate. Applying this factor to the estimated population suggests a capacity shortfall of 234.

(Continued on page 33)
Child Care Subsidy Program

The CCSP provides qualifying families with financial assistance for child care costs. CCS beneficiaries must be 1) Maryland residents who are working, in training, or attending school; 2) receiving Temporary Cash Assistance or Supplemental Security Income, or have earned income within CSSP guidelines; 3) have child immunized per State standards; or 4) pursue child support, if applicable. Statewide average support, in 2014, was $4,601 per child and $7,888 per family.

CCSP participation requires that pre-k providers also participate in EXCELS. In Washington County, because of the relatively few programs that participate in EXCELS, parents who otherwise qualify for CCSP assistance may be unable to use that social benefit.

Comparability Analysis

States with highest prekindergarten enrollment experience lower unit cost per student compared to states with lower enrollment.

Cost BenEFIt

Full day pre-kindergarten for four year olds has a greater return on investment than half day pre-k. And pre-k for children from families with incomes less than 300% of federal poverty level, has a greater return on the investment than providing services to children from higher income families.

The authors applied nationally recognized cost-benefit studies to Maryland data. These data point to a wide range of benefits. Such benefits include, but are not limited to, grade retention, reduced juvenile crime, reduced adult crime and corrections, reduced child welfare costs, and reduced special education costs. Of all benefits identified in the report, 23% are realized during k-12 years, with the balance accruing primarily as adults.

1. Higher quality programs are associated with more individualized attention from higher qualified and better educated staff.
2. Full day, more intensive programs tend to have higher effects than half-day programs.
3. Except in vocabulary, two year programs (those for three year olds followed by four year old enrollment) do not realize statistically better results than one year programs (those for four year olds only).
4. Children enrolled in one year or two year programs score better in vocabulary, literacy, and math skills that children who receive no pre-kindergarten.
5. Pre-kindergarten offers greater benefits for at-risk and ELL students.

The study estimates the return on investment for service. The study estimates that the current system generates a ROI of $4.36 per child. The current system does not have a sufficiently well developed network of high quality”; a.k.a., EXCELS 5, centers to meet the need across the State. If there was sufficient EXCELS 5 capacity the ROI would increase to an estimated ROI to $4.87 from Child Care Centers, $5.08 from licensed Family Residence Homes, and $6.16 from public pre-k.

(Continued on page 34)
RECOMMENDATIONS

This study offers five recommendations. It also offers a section of additional considerations.

**Recommendation 1.** *Continue to invest in early childhood data systems, and use them to establish targets for the number of high-quality prekindergarten available in each district.*

1. continue to invest in the capacity of the Office of Child Care
2. establish targets of the number of high-quality slots available to children and families.
   In order to serve 80% of estimated number of full day four years and to do so at EXCELS 5, Public or Accredited providers, the State of Maryland needs 27,713 additional slots. Washington County needs to increase “quality” capacity by 801 slots.

**Recommendation 2.** *Understand the differences in ROI between a one-year investment and a two-year investment in prekindergarten, and target expenditures appropriately.*

1. the best use of scarce resources is to fund high-quality pre-kindergarten for four-year olds.
2. Three year olds from low income families are likely to realize the next largest investment.

**Recommendation 3.** *Increase the ROI of prekindergarten by providing increase investment to support child care centers and family homes to reach the highest levels of Maryland EXCELS.*

1. establish an expanded prekindergarten quality improvement fund for child care centers and family incomes. This fund should focus on private providers improve program quality as an incentive for long term improvements.
2. continue to invest in Maryland EXCELS.

**Recommendation 4.** *Increase the ROI of prekindergarten by encouraging providers to participate in Maryland EXCELS and by encouraging parents to enroll their children in quality prekindergarten programs.*

1. undertake a public information campaign
2. increase the per child subsidy amount to cover the cost of prekindergarten at EXCELS 5.
3. establish a differentiated funding system that gives tuition credits to providers according to the cost of quality at each EXCELS level.

**Recommendation 5.** *Offer universal prekindergarten in Maryland, providing funding for 80% of Maryland’s four-year olds to attend a high-quality prekindergarten program.*

1. target State-wide pre-k participation at 80% of the population
2. structure the program to be full-day because of the higher rate of return on the investment.
3. recognize that high quality care should be provided and build the system accordingly.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

**Creating Space for Prekindergarten Programs**

Expanding pre-k will require capital investment to fund infrastructure to accommodate the expanded capacity. This is primarily for creating new classroom space to use for pre-k.

1. To provide funds for private child care centers and family home providers, a loan program is

(Continued from page 33)

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2. Public school systems will need construction grant funding as many schools are already at or exceed state rated capacity for elementary school classrooms. Since public funding for education in Maryland has historically been through grants, it is assumed policy makers will continue with this approach.

**Phasing in Universal Access**

Fiscal constraints may require the targets and system to be phased-in over multiple years. One approach would be to focus on low-income children; i.e., those from families with household incomes less than 300% of federal poverty level. This threshold has been established in State Law.

Expand the pre-kindergarten system to serve 80% of all four year olds. But, priority should be given to expand programs that will ensure a return on investment. Initial investment should be o converting half-day slots to full-day slots.

Encourage licensed programs to participate in the EXCELS program, and once participating to increase the quality of the program offered. Similarly parents should be incentivized to choose quality programs, such as be providing a tiered tuition credit system, where families receive larger credits for choosing higher “quality” providers.

**Funding Universal Prekindergarten**

The report outlines two approaches to funding the universal (80%) full day pre-k expansion. In each approach funds to family residence and child care center providers would flow through the local public school systems.

The first approach follows the traditional approach in Maryland in which the State uses a formula to provide funding of public education. At the State level this was described in the Bridge to Excellence legislation and establish the foundation program for funding. State funding was coupled with funding from Local Education Authorities (LEAs); i.e., the counties and Baltimore City, often referred to as Maintenance of Effort.

The second model has been described as State-Local-Family model. This builds upon the State-Local model. This would serve children from families with household income which is at or below 300% of federal poverty limit. This is the system currently in place in many counties. This funding would increase the amount paid to local school systems and would allow expansion of service to this group of at-risk children.

Free pre-k service to these children would not achieve the desired goal of 80% of all four year olds. To do so would require participating by families at higher income levels. Thus, this model describes a means testing system for child care expenditures tied to a sliding scale for families depending on household income.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY**

Should this system come to fruition, there would be major implications for Washington County. Among the implications for Washington County Public Schools and the Board of County Commissioners are the following:
(Continued from page 35)

- Among currently licensed providers, a greater number of pre-k providers should begin to participate in EXCELS. If child care centers and family residential providers do not increase participation in EXCELS and commit to reaching “quality” levels, children will be denied service. Alternatively, existing providers, most notably the public school system will have to expand to meet the need.

- Within the licensed pre-kindergarten network, including public, child care center, and family residential centers, more capacity should be created at EXCELS 5 level of service. This means that these providers will need to not only participate in EXCELS, but commit to achieving Level 5.

- The Washington County Public Schools, as the highest quality with the highest ROI of tax dollars, should consider increasing its overall capacity but also move to eliminate half day pre-k.

- The Board of County Commissioners should consider beginning to plan for providing local share funding for all children from homes with household incomes at or less than 300% of federal poverty level. The children should be enrolled in full day pre-k programming.

- The Board of County Commissioners and the community should recognize that Washington County Public Schools is already providing as much as $1.62 million in general fund spending for pre-kindergarten, whose students are not included in Local Maintenance of Effort funding calculations.

Maryland’s Department of Business and Economic Development provides Day Care financing as part of its Small Business Unit. The goal of the program is to promote the development and/or expansion of quality day care facilities for children, adults and disabled people of all ages.

The Child Care Special Loan Fund provides direct loans up to $10,000 to eligible providers at fixed rates for furniture, inventory, supplies, training and repairs; equipment for infants and children with special needs; access of services for persons with disabilities; and renovations and upgrades to meet state and local licensing requirements.

The Day Care Facilities Direct Loan Fund is designed to finance up to 50 percent of the cost of the expansion or development of a child care facility. Loan may be used for construction, renovation, or acquisition of real property or to finance leasehold improvements. The minimum amount that may be borrowed is $15,000.

The Day Care Facilities Loan Guarantee Fund provides loan guarantees for construction, renovation, purchase of land and buildings, equipment, supplies and working capital. This is not a direct loan or grant, but a guarantee of up to 80 percent of a loan provided to the applicant by a bank or private lender. This guarantee is available for loans made for the expansion or development of day care centers for children, the elderly, and disabled people of all ages.

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