MoCo MSCCA Agrees on a Priorities Agenda
to Unify Providers and Guide Our Work

The Montgomery County Chapter of the Maryland State Child Care Association spent much of this year bring together child care providers across the County to adopt a Priorities Agenda to guide our work. The Agenda went through multiple revisions as we took input from providers to reach consensus.

In addition to feedback from center providers, we also took feedback from family child care providers as well as before and after school providers, and Montessori providers. It is our hope that our Agenda may be adopted in some form by other provider groups to help unify us around a set of agreed upon ideas. In addition to MoCoMSCCA, the Board of the Montgomery County Organization of Child Care Directors (OCCD) has also adopted our Priorities Agenda. Other child care associations are in the process of evaluating it to see if they could adopt it too.

The Priorities Agenda states:

1) **Significantly greater public support/investment is needed to expand access to quality, affordable child care.** It’s not a handout or additional social services burden. Child care affords parents the opportunity to work and contribute to the current economy and ensures children can be in the quality learning environments they need for proper brain development. Access to quality, affordable child care leads to better outcomes for children, reduced need for remedial and other services, and higher contributions to the future economy. Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman’s latest research released in 2017 showed a return on investment of $6.40 for each dollar that is spent supporting child care starting at birth. It’s a return of 13% each year that the investment is made.

2) **Public support/investment needs to go to parents through refundable tax credits and child care subsidies.** This is the most equitable way to expand access to child care as it helps parents afford child care no matter how old their children are (rather than only helping 4 year old children through universal pre-k). Tax credits and subsidies can support infant/toddler care, preschool, centers, family providers, before and after school providers. Implementation will not create more bureaucracy or come with strings attached where costs outweigh the increases in funding (as has happened with some of the universal pre-k pilots). It allows parent choice to ensure a family’s actual child care needs are met.

3) **As funding increases, providers can raise teacher pay, improve the workforce, and reach higher and higher levels of quality, but this will require tuition rates at the true cost of care.** The biggest subsidy in child care is low pay to child care professionals. Providers cannot make child care cheaper
as we cannot operate with less staff. We need to increase pay to develop our workforce and attract and retain quality teachers.

4) **Unfunded mandates need to stop** as they increase provider costs, reduce the supply of qualified child care professionals, and drive up tuition prices. Each year, more parents cannot afford child care which causes more demand for unlicensed care. MSDE and other regulatory and legislative entities need to stop implementing onerous requirements (pre-service training, etc.) without providing more funding and resources.

MoCoMSCCA is chaired by Shaun Rose from Rock Spring Children’s Center and Marcia Tivoli from Potomac Valley Academy. The Chapter has general meetings on the 4th Thursday of the month from September through April prior to the OCCD training meetings at the Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center.