



HB0248 - Education - Child Care Subsidies - Mandatory Funding Level

Presented to Hon. Maggie McIntosh and members of the House Appropriations Committee

February 5, 2019 1:00 p.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges the House Appropriation Committee to give a favorable report on HB0248 – Education - Child Care Subsidies – Mandatory Funding Level.** Affordable childcare is not just an issue of economic stability, it is also a reproductive freedom issue. Increasing reimbursement rates aims to support needy families across the State of Maryland.

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. As part of our efforts to protect and expand reproductive freedoms for all Marylanders, we strive to ensure that individuals have the opportunities to decide, if when, and how many children to have. We honor pregnancy and parenthood in all its complexity. In doing so, we support measures that encourage working mothers and fathers to receive subsidized quality childcare so parents can better support their families, and children have more opportunities to learn and grow.

This bill allows for an increase in the current Child Care Subsidy Program's reimbursement rates to the 60th percentile of the most recent market rate survey or a certain equivalent by 2021. Increasing this rate allows for families to more readily support their children and cover the ever growing costs of childcare. According to the 2017 Maryland Child Care Provider Market Rate Survey (MRS), childcare costs from infants to age five can range from \$300 to nearly \$2,000 per month.¹

Receiving a subsidy to help pay for childcare may influence the type, frequency, quality and stability of childcare arrangements used by a family.² This can also increase the predictability of childcare arrangements, which can be very valuable to a child's functioning, as constant change is a detriment to a child's behavioral development. Parents who leave subsidy programs cite administrative issues like too many in-person meetings or tedious paperwork. A parent's employment may also be affected by instability in childcare arrangements. For low income-women, lack of consistent childcare is one of the primary reasons they lose their jobs,³ as it is often too expensive, unreliable, or low quality. Increasing access to quality care helps our women and children economically because it keeps families working, thriving, and healthy. Choosing to have children and raising them in a safe, reliable, enriching, and affordable environment should not result in poverty for either parent or child.

¹ Division of Early Childhood, (2017, January). *Maryland Child Care Provider Market Rate Survey (MRS) Results*
<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/cost-of-child-care-in-maryland>

² 1 Krafft, C., Davis, E. E., & Tout, K. (2017). Child care subsidies and the stability and quality of child care arrangements. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 3914-34. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2016.12.002

³ 2 Jacobs, A. W., Hill, T. D., Tope, D., & O'Brien, L. K. (2016). Employment Transitions, Child Care Conflict, and the Mental Health of Low-Income Urban Women With Children. *Women's Health Issues*, 26(4), 366-376. doi:10.1016/j.whi.2016.05.003

Many Marylanders rely on childcare subsidies to help support their families. HB0248 will allow for continued support and expand to meet the growing needs of families in the State of Maryland. For these reasons, **NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges a favorable committee report on HB0248.** Thank you for your time and consideration.