

# montgomery moving forward

mobilizing leaders to solve our biggest problems together  
nonprofits / business / philanthropy / government / education / community

August 18, 2020

To: Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent for Schools

Dear Dr. Salmon,

Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF), an initiative of Nonprofit Montgomery, convenes a regional public-private coalition of early care and education leaders and advocates from the business, education, philanthropic, and nonprofit sectors. We write to you today about an urgent matter as a committed partner with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) in working towards high quality, affordable early care and education (ECE) that meets the needs of all children and families.

We urge you to use your leadership to ensure that the immediate needs of school-age children, their families, and their child care providers are met. **Most importantly and immediately:**

- **Expedite licensing for school-age providers in public spaces, particularly elementary schools, and offer flexibility** in terms of virtual inspections, space modifications, and other innovative practices to accommodate safe, quality, child care in shared spaces.

To date, OCC Licensing has not participated in the virtual school opening conversation in a meaningful way. As child care providers face increased costs to adhere to CDC and local health and safety requirements, some of which necessitate more or alternative spaces in order to maintain physically distancing learning areas, the need for partnership and quick action from OCC Licensing is urgent.

- **Increase** flexibility to work with providers to create virtual learning supervision that is safe and accessible.

Safety is paramount as parents seek “pods,” nannies, and other unlicensed options. Families who do not normally rely on child care will need it now to be able to return to working outside of the home or to be productive while working at home. Families who do not have the option of overseeing their children’s work during the school day nor the broadband or technology capacity to support their child’s learning within the home will also benefit from school-age child care.

- **Expand the subsidy/scholarship availability** so parents can afford the child care they need while schools are closed and ensure that scarce resources are available beyond those families who can afford to hire supplemental providers.

- **Communicate clearly, collaboratively**, and in a timely fashion with child care providers, school districts, and families to ensure that all community partners can plan, adjust, and implement effectively and with the best interests of children in mind during this time of crisis.

MSDE must share with school systems and families Maryland's child care law and regulations, including lists of regulated child care programs, in an effort to decrease unsafe care.

***Absent expedited and flexible licensing, many children will be left behind in the 2020-2021 school year and many ECE providers who are on the frontlines of the state's economic recovery will be financially decimated.***

MMF and our diverse cross-sector coalition that includes labor, business, education, philanthropic, and nonprofit leaders from the early care and education sector in DC, Maryland, and Virginia, believes that there is an urgent and immediate need to support school-age child care providers and the children and families that rely on these programs.

***A tangible investment from MSDE of resources in our state's children, their families, and the early care and education providers at this critical time is necessary in bridging the widening equity gap in our communities.***

Respectfully and sincerely,

Montgomery Moving Forward Early Care and Education Workforce Advocacy Coalition Members

**Marilyn Balcombe**, Ph.D., President & CEO, Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce

**JoAnn Barnes**, Chief, Children, Youth and Family Services, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

**Kevin Beverly**, Co-Chair, Montgomery Moving Forward

**Rosalba Bonilla-Acosta**, Maryland State Director, CentroNia

**Bob Buchanan**, 2030 Group President

**Alicia Cross**, Montgomery County Regional Officer, Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children

**Ruby Daniels**, President Maryland State Family Child Care Association

**Michelle Green**, Executive Director, Montgomery Child Care Association, Inc.

**Joanne Hurt**, Executive Director, Wonders Early Learning and Extended Day

**Tiffany Jones**, Precious Moments Family Childcare

**Liran Laor**, Early Childhood Consultant

**Christina Lopez**, President, Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children

**Susan Madden**, Co-Chair, Montgomery Moving Forward

**Lesley MacDonald**, Executive Director, Nonprofit Montgomery

**Montgomery County Community Action Board**

**Charlene Marie Muhammad**, Head Start Program Manager, Community Action Agency, Montgomery County

**Benjamin Orr**, Executive Director, Maryland Center on Economic Policy

**Christina Peusch**, Executive Director, Maryland State Child Care Association

**Kathy Stevens**, Co-Chair, Montgomery Moving Forward

**Bill Tompkins**, Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation

**Laura Weeldryer**, Executive Director, Maryland Family Network

**cc: Steven Hicks**, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Early Childhood Development, Maryland State Department of Education

**Carol Williamson**, Deputy for Teaching and Learning, Maryland State Department of Education

**Clarence Crawford**, Chair, Maryland State Board of Education

**Marc Elrich**, Montgomery County, County Executive

**Sidney Katz**, President, Montgomery County Council

**Jack Smith**, Superintendent, Montgomery County Public Schools

**Raymond Crowel**, Director, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services