**February 2, 2022**

**Testimony Concerning the State FY 2023 Budget for the**

**Maryland State Department of Education—Division of Early Childhood Development**

**Submitted to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee’s**

**Education, Business and Administration Subcommittee**

**Your first and last name**

**The name of your child care program**

**Address of your child care program**

**Phone number to reach you**

**Email address to reach you**

The proposed FY 2023 budget for MSDE’s Division of Early Childhood includes:

* $50 million in additional stabilization grants to child care providers – to be made available in Fiscal Year 2022
* $5.2 million to support child care staff with attaining credentials
* $5 million for awards to providers who participate in Maryland EXCELS
* $3 million for continued support of local Head Start programs
* $1 million for the Child Care Accreditation Support Fund, which assists child care providers with the costs of achieving accreditation

**We urge your support for these investments and help ensure a thriving child care system in Maryland.**

Child care providers across the nation continue to struggle as they recover during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Child care providers are in crisis, and so are families, and Prince George’s County is no exception. I am no exception. In the last two years, we have experienced (fill in a few sentences about your experience).

In Prince George’s County, area child care providers like me are experiencing deep challenges with

funding/finances, staffing and enrollment which are all totally intertwined. The stabilization funds offered in 2021 were an important step. There is more to be done.

The Governor’s budget proposes level-funding for Early Childhood Mental Health. **We urge you to increase funds for these crucial services.** 72 % of Prince George’s County child care providers are seeking training to provide children with social emotional supports. (Say something about yourself if this feels personal.)

We need help rebuilding our businesses and keeping our quality, relationship-based practices strong, so we can be there for working parents and for young children. The quality of child care, and the experience of the birth-to-five years, are crucial to school readiness and supporting working families.

Thank you for your leadership for our community. Together we can help child care programs to stay open successfully and offer more choices for families, when we make sure that all the pieces and parts of policy ideas come together.