



# Joining Voices Advocacy Toolkit 2023-2024

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**Child  
Resource  
Connect**

**Linking Children,  
Families, & Communities**



Dear Joining Voices Members,

Every day, you do the critically important work of nurturing and educating our youngest children, all while running small businesses and caring for your own families. We see you and we celebrate you for all that you do. And, we want to make sure that our elected officials see you too. That's why we created this toolkit—to support you in sharing your voice with the people who make decisions that impact you, your child care businesses, and the children and families you serve.

We know that your work is not easy, and that there are many challenges with the way early care and education is compensated and valued in our society. But we also know that you are the ones with the solutions. You know the types of resources and support that will allow you to thrive better than anyone, and you know the needs of the children and families who rely on your program. It's time to make your voices heard.

Thank you for taking the time to let our elected officials know how important it is to invest in child care and the people who provide that care. We hope this toolkit gives you the tools you need to do that. Please reach out if there is additional support we can provide.

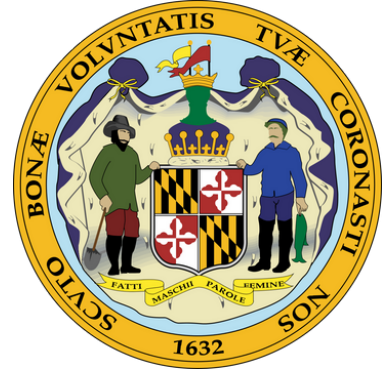
Sincerely,

Jennifer, Laura, Jackie, Yenny and Mary Beth

# Maryland General Assembly

## What is the General Assembly?

The Maryland General Assembly is a legislative body of elected officials who make policy decisions at the state level. Like Congress, which consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives, Maryland's General Assembly also has two parts: the Senate and the House of Delegates. There are 47 Senators and 141 Delegates in the General Assembly, and [they meet every year for what's known as a "regular session"--a period of 90 calendar days beginning in January during which State Senators and Delegates pass legislation and pass the state budget.](#)



## What role does the General Assembly play in the child care system?

The General Assembly has the power to make policy and funding decisions that impact the wellbeing of young children, their families, and their child care providers, including:

- ❖ The budget for the Maryland State Department of Education, including the Division of Early Childhood Development and Division of Special Education / Early Intervention Services
- ❖ Legislation that impacts the availability and quality of child care, education and related services
- ❖ Legislation that supports the economic wellbeing of families
- ❖ Legislation that impacts the health and safety of children and families



**Maryland General Assembly**  
**2024 bills we are watching –**  
**Google Docs**

# Maryland General Assembly

## How do I contact my State Senator and State Delegates?

### DETERMINE WHO IS YOUR STATE SENATOR AND STATE DELEGATE(S)

You will have one State Senator; you may have one or more State Delegates depending on the population of the district where you live. To do so, type in your address [here](#); once the results populate, scroll down to the section titled “Maryland Legislative District.” You will see the name of your State Senator and State Delegate(s), and will be able to click on those names for more information. To easily send an email to one or more of your legislators, click the checkbox next to the names of the ones you would like to contact and select “Email” next to “Contact Checked Legislators.”

### Maryland General Assembly Website

The screenshot shows the Maryland General Assembly website's "Find My Representatives" page. The page features a map of Maryland divided into legislative districts, each color-coded and labeled with a number and letter (e.g., 1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7A, 7B, 8, 9A, 9B, 10, 11A, 11B, 12A, 12B, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27A, 27B, 27C, 28, 29, 30A, 30B, 31, 32, 33A, 33B, 33C, 34A, 34B, 35A, 35B, 36, 37A, 37B, 38A, 38B). The website header includes the Maryland General Assembly logo, a search bar, and navigation links for MEMBERS, COMMITTEES, MEETINGS, LEGISLATION, BUDGET, LAWS, FLOOR ACTIONS, REDISTRICTING, and SEARCH. A sidebar on the left offers options for Senate, House, Publications, Related Links, and About. The main content area has tabs for Legislative, Congressional, and Lookup, along with a Print button.

# Maryland County Councils

## What is a County Council?

In Maryland, there are twenty-four local jurisdictions—twenty-three counties and Baltimore City, which has a city council that is considered on par with county government. Of the twenty-three counties, twelve are governed by boards of county commissioners. [The remaining eleven counties, including Prince George's County and Anne Arundel County, are governed by county councils.](#) A county council is a local elected governing body that has important functions such as enacting, amending, or repealing local laws, overseeing zoning and land use matters, serving as the local Board of Health, and managing the county budget.

## What role does my County Council play in the child care system?

County Councils are responsible for making policy and funding decisions that impact the wellbeing of their constituents. Prioritizing and investing in child care can and should be one of those decisions. While the majority of decisions about child care happen at the state and federal levels, County Councils have the ability to supplement those decisions in order to strengthen child care in their communities.

The needs of child care providers, children, and families may look different in different places. It is important for your County Councilmembers to hear from you about what is happening with child care in your community so that they can partner with you to create local solutions.

As an example, in 2019, Montgomery County launched their Early Care and Education Initiative with an initial investment of \$7 million, resulting in a four-year [action plan](#) with concrete steps the County can take to create a comprehensive, accessible, quality child care system that meets the needs of the children and families who reside there. Just this year, Montgomery County created a new Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity, a public-private organization that will [help realize the goals of the action plan.](#)



# Maryland County Councils

## How do I contact my County Councilmember?

The first step is to determine who your local County Councilmember is!

### ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY



**ANNE ARUNDEL  
COUNTY**  
MARYLAND

Anne Arundel County is split up into seven Council Districts; each District has their own County Councilmember who is elected to serve a four-year term.

❖ To find the Councilmember who represents your district, you can enter your address [here](#). Once you do, you will be able to click on the name of your Councilmember to learn more about them and access their contact information.

**Find out more about the Council here:**

❖ <https://www.aacounty.org/county-council/council-districts/who-my-councilmember>

### PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY



Prince George's County has eleven County Councilmembers—one for each of its nine Council Districts and an additional two at-large members who represent the entire County; members are elected to serve a four-year term.

❖ To find the Councilmember who represents your district, you should review the list of districts, and the municipalities included in each, [here](#). Once you determine your district, click on your district number to learn more about your Councilmember and access their contact information. Remember, you can also reach out to the two at-large members.

❖ Find out more about the Council here: <https://pgccouncil.us/27/The-Council>

# Email Template (County Council)

Email is a great way to contact your County Councilmember(s) to let them know what is important to you. When you write an email to your elected officials, you want to be sure to do the following:

- ◆ Introduce yourself, including your name, role, child care program, and where you live
- ◆ Clearly state why you are contacting them and what you want them to do
- ◆ Share some brief background information that supports your ask (this can include a personal story, data, etc.)
- ◆ Reiterate what you want them to do (this is a great place to ask them to visit your child care program or set up a meeting)
- ◆ Thank them for their consideration and let them know how you would like to hear back

See below for an email template that you can use in your outreach to your County Councilmember(s). Please note that you will need to customize the portions highlighted in yellow to reflect your personal information and experiences. You should also feel free to add to or change parts of this message so that it feels right to you.

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Dear (Honorable Councilmember + last name of the elected official),

My name is (first and last name) and I am a family child care provider in your district. I own (name of your program), a small home-based child care business that supports my community by allowing parents to go to work knowing that their young children are safe and learning. I am also a member of Joining Voices, a group of child care advocates across Prince George's County and Anne Arundel County. I am emailing today to ask you to (a quick summary of what you want them to do; for example, you might ask your County Councilmember to invest more local dollars in child care),

I have been doing this work for (number) years, and in that time I have experienced many challenges to providing sustainable care. (This is where you should add details about one or two specific challenges you've faced as a child care provider and business owner. Be sure to share what happened and also the impact it had on you and your own family, your business, and/or the children and families you serve. You should try to keep this section at one or two paragraphs.)

I am confident that with your support, we can strengthen the child care system in our district. Please let me know how we can partner to address these challenges moving forward. I would be happy to schedule a time to meet to share more information. In addition, I invite you to visit my child care program to see my work in action and gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities for child care in your district. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(First and last name)  
(Email), (Phone Number)



[Email Template \(County Council\)](#)  
[Word Document](#)

# Email Template (General Assembly)

Email is a great way to contact your General Assembly members to let them know what is important to you. When you write an email to your elected officials, you want to be sure to do the following:

- ◆ Introduce yourself, including your name, role, child care program, and where you live
- ◆ Clearly state why you are contacting them and what you want them to do
- ◆ Share some brief background information that supports your ask (this can include a personal story, data, etc.)
- ◆ Reiterate what you want them to do (this is a great place to ask them to visit your child care program or set up a meeting)
- ◆ Thank them for their consideration and let them know how you would like to hear back

See below for an email template that you can use in your outreach to your Senator(s) and Delegate(s). Please note that you will need to customize the portions highlighted in yellow to reflect your personal information and experiences. You should also feel free to add to or change parts of this message so that it feels right to you.

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Dear (Honorable Senator/Delegate + last name of the elected official),

My name is (first and last name) and I am a family child care provider in your district. I own (name of your program), small home-based child care business that supports my community by allowing parents to go to work knowing that their young children are safe and learning. I am also a member of Joining Voices, a group of child care advocates across Prince George's County and Anne Arundel County. I am emailing today to ask you to (a quick summary of what you want them to do; for example, you might ask your state legislators to invest in the Child Care Scholarship program to ensure greater access for children and families, make needed modernizations to the program's administration, and help providers get paid in a timely manner).

There are steps that the Maryland General Assembly can take to address these challenges.

I am confident that with your support, we can strengthen the child care system in our district, for the benefit of children, families, and child care providers. Please let me know how we can partner to address these challenges moving forward. I would be happy to schedule a time to meet to share more information. In addition, I invite you to visit my child care program to see my work in action and discuss additional opportunities to support child care. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(First and last name)  
(Email), (Phone Number)



[Email Template \(General Assembly\)](#)  
[Word Document](#)



# Additional Resources

**The following resources may be useful to your in your advocacy:**

## **[Anne Arundel County Report:](#)**



Includes 2023 information on demographics and child care supply, demand, and cost for Anne Arundel County.

## **[Prince George's County Report:](#)**



Includes 2023 information on demographics and child care supply, demand, and cost for Prince George's County.

## **[Maryland policy environment and progress 2023:](#)**



A summary from Alliance for Early Success

## **[Contacting Elected Officials:](#)**



Tips for contacting elected officials via phone, letter, and email, as well as a guide to requesting and preparing for a meeting with your elected officials.

## **[Submitting testimony online to a General Assembly Committee:](#)**



A step by step guide to creating your "My GA" account and using it for testimony