

## **A.A. County Early Childhood Childcare Task Force Meeting April 28, 2025**

**Meeting Attendees:** Sharlie Hazen, Barbara Palmer, Debbie Wood, Diana Taylor, Pam Brown, Kimberly Curtis, Karen Nissly, Kristina Banks, Lisa Buchy, Rhonda Paige, Miesha Walker, Trayshelle Cherry, Carole Parker, Bill Hudson, Denise Bourdeaux

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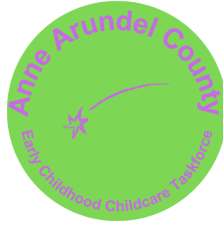
### **2025 Early Childhood Summit Planning**

- Have decided to host in September
- Due East Partners will be our consultants to help with planning
- All are welcome to attend planning meetings
- Individuals/groups to include:
  - MSDE Deputy Superintendent
  - Women's Legislative Caucus
  - Dr. Palmer can reach out to National Childcare Association
  - Maryland Family Network
  - Montgomery County executive policy group around early childhood
  - Del. McCaskill
- MALMB and United Way will sponsor the summit to support statewide participation
- Utilize summit to determine priorities for the 2026 legislative session
- Topics to be covered:
  - Workforce
  - Reinstatement of certification funding through MSDE
- Next planning meeting will be hosted in Mid May

### **Childcare Audits at MSDE**

- In 2023, MSDE required both email and mail submissions for scholarships. The current portal did not exist and pre-payments were beginning
- Integrity audits for 2023 are now in progress
  - Documentation from 2023 payments is now being required within 2 weeks
    - Centers did not receive notice
    - Documentation was submitted in 2023, but MSDE has no record of it
  - If documentation can not be provided, then centers will be required to pay back the funding they were advanced
  - Mandate came directly from and MSDE email account that you cannot respond to
    - Phone number on the audit notice is no longer in service
    - No contact from a real person as of now
- Childcare centers reached out to media and news outlets due to lack of communication from MSDE regarding the audit
  - [WMAR Article](#) has been published and MSDE responded that they'd take a look internally and make contact with providers

### **Budget Cuts to Head Start and Early Head Start**



- We will circle back on this discussion next month - all updates will be shared via email in the mean time
- At the County level, we are tracking where gaps will be and what cuts have been made to figure out how to fill predicted cuts and needs

### Additional Discussion

- Article in the Baltimore Banner
  - The federal childcare center office in DC is no longer in existence
  - These were childcare centers inside of federal buildings to support federal workers
    - Most were chains, not privately owned or smaller centers
- What are childcare centers seeing?
  - Some see a full house plus a waiting list
  - Federal workers who return to work are looking for child care
  - Others are seeing a slow down due to concern about finances, families are not able to sign a full school year contract
  - There's a large demand for toddlers, but not for other age groups
- School system is taking on pre-k 4
  - There has been a sense of competition between public schools and community based public pre-k even though they are offering the same things
    - Will likely intensify as there are more publicly funded slots in public schools
  - In mixed classrooms of 3 and 4 year olds, it will be challenging to fill a classroom
    - Those who are turning 4 will be sent to public school if the pre-k expansion is only for 3 year olds
  - Private providers can still service Tier One 4-year olds, but it is now the parent's choice
    - Challenge is informing the public that education does not have to equate to public schools
- What behaviors are we seeing in young children?
  - Aggressive behaviors, children have had to be dismissed more than usual due to safety issues related to children's behavior
    - Elopement, throwing objects, destroying rooms, hitting peers and teachers
  - Seeing this behavior with ages 2 through 5
  - It has gotten better for Kingdom Kare; a few students were dismissed last year, but not much during this year
    - Teachers and staff have managed better this year, maybe due to increased pay
  - Why are we seeing these behaviors?
    - Can be a result of pandemic and trickle down stress of the adults in their lives
      - As a result, children's brains are laying pathways for chaos
    - Financial hardships for families also plays a factor
    - Normalized for parents
      - Parents seem hopeless and/or ignore behaviors
      - Parents are not available and do not know how to handle behaviors
  - Is there an increase in nonverbal children?
    - There's been a rise in autism diagnoses recently
      - Some of it is from the social environment



- There are better ways of recognizing/diagnosing behaviors
- The spectrum of autism is very wide
- A lack of connection with caregiver plays a major role
  - Baby has to connect with a put together adult to become a put together adult
- Need to find a way to mitigate stress and trauma for parents to help their children
  - Parents feel burnt out, tired, irritable and detached
  - Parents also need connection to other parents, this was not readily available during the pandemic
  - Family support centers are vital to this

#### **Kids n Kaboodle**

- Sunday June 1st 12pm-4pm: free fair for all children in Annapolis
- Looking for community partners to share an activity, reach out to Debbie Wood
- Bus passes will be available to families in Annapolis

#### **Member Announcements/Asks and Offers**

- May 1st is Worthy Wage Day for childcare workers
- There will be a joint graduation for teen parents at the West County and Annapolis Family Support Centers on May 20th

**Next Meeting will be on May 19, 2025**