



Testimony Concerning HB 477
“Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers - Adult to Child Ratios - Alterations”
Submitted to the House Ways & Means Committee
February 5, 2025

Position: Oppose

Maryland Family Network (MFN) opposes HB 477, which would alter the required adult-to-young-child ratios in child care centers and family child care homes. This bill raises serious concerns about the health and safety, adequate supervision, and developmentally appropriate care for very young children. We respectfully ask that we not loosen child care rules in ways that could harm young children.

Currently Maryland’s regulations governing family child care permit no more than two children under the age of 2 in a group of eight. Maryland’s child care center regulations permit a 1 to 3 staff:child ratio in a maximum group size of 6. HB 477 would significantly alter current ratios and prevent the Department of Education from using their discretion to set ratio and group size limits in family child care through regulations.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and early childhood education as well as other supports for children and families in Maryland. We have been active in state and federal debates on child care policy and are strongly committed to ensuring that children, along with their parents, have access to high-quality, affordable programs and educational opportunities.

We recognize the supply of infant child care continues to challenge communities across the State. We maintain it is in the best interest of young children and their families for the State to focus on supply-building strategies that maintain the primacy of infant health and safety. Similar attempts to alter ratios failed in the past primarily because of safety concerns in the event of an emergency. However, meeting the day to day needs of multiple children under two—including feeding, diapering, and the critically important give and take of communication during early language development—requires one-on-one attention and bonding between infant and caregiver.

Let us not risk injury or the loss of an infant to grow child care supply. MFN respectfully urges an unfavorable report on HB 477.

Submitted by: Beth Morrow, Director of Public Policy

