



*Advocates for Children and Youth is a statewide non-profit focused on improving the lives and experiences of Maryland's children through policy change and program improvement. We champion solutions to child welfare, education, health, and juvenile justice issues, positioning us to influence the full spectrum of youth experiences. This multi-issue platform helps us to improve the entirety of children's worlds—the systems they touch, the people they interact with, and the environment where they live.*

## **Testimony before the Appropriations Committee**

### **In SUPPORT of**

### **House Bill 430- Education - Child Care Subsidies - Mandatory Funding Levels**

**Melissa Rock, 0-3 Strategic Initiative Director, Advocates for Children and Youth**

**February 13, 2018**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 430- Education – Child Care Subsidies—Mandatory Funding Levels. Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY) supports this bill.

The Child Care Subsidy program is in place to ensure that high quality child care is accessible to low income families. However, Maryland's Child Care Subsidy is not meeting these families' needs. While the federal recommendations are that the subsidy rate be up to 75% of market value of child care costs, Maryland's are among the lowest in the entire country at **9%**. This means that 91% of all child care centers charge more than the subsidy covers. Therefore, even for the few families that are eligible to receive the subsidy, it does not cover enough of the cost of child care to give that family the access as intended.

House Bill 430 brings the subsidy rate up to the 30<sup>th</sup>% in 2020, the 45<sup>th</sup>% in 2021, and up to the 60<sup>th</sup>% in 2022. These increases are critical for Maryland's Child Care Subsidy to eliminate the barriers to high quality child care faced by low income families in Maryland.

**We urge this committee to issue a favorable report on HB 430 to increase access to high quality child care for low income families in Maryland.**

