



Committee: Joint
Committee Review: At a future date
Staff: Christine Wellons, Chief Legislative Attorney
Purpose: To receive testimony – no vote expected

AGENDA ITEM #11
July 15, 2025
Public Hearing

SUBJECTS

Expedited Bill 23-25, Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity

Lead Sponsors: Councilmember Alborno and Council Vice President Jawando

Co-sponsor: Councilmember Fani-González

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Public speakers

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- Receive public testimony

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

Expedited Bill 23-25 would:

- (1) specify the duties of the Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity;
- (2) clarify the membership of the Board of the Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity;
- (3) alter reporting requirements of the Entity; and
- (4) generally amend the law regarding early care and education in the County.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- N/A

This report contains:

Staff Report

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Expedited Bill 23-25

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Fiscal Impact Statement

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*The Economic Impact Statement, Climate Assessment, and Racial Equity & Social Justice Impact Statements were not available at the time of publication of this staff report. They can be found at the below address when available: [Racial Equity and Social Justice, Economic, and Climate Impact Statements - Office of Legislative Oversight-Montgomery County, Maryland \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/legis/oversight/)

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M E M O R A N D U M

July 10, 2025

TO: County Council

FROM: Christine Wellons, Chief Legislative Attorney

SUBJECT: Expedited Bill 23-25, Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity

PURPOSE: Public hearing – Receive public testimony

Expedited Bill 23-25, Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity, was introduced on June 17, 2025. The Lead Sponsors are Councilmember Albornoz and Council Vice President Jawando. Councilmember Fani-González is a cosponsor. A public hearing on the bill is tentatively scheduled for July 15 at 1:30 p.m.

A joint worksession of the Education and Culture (EC) Committee and the Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee is tentatively scheduled for July 23.

Expedited Bill 23-25 would:

- (1) specify the duties of the Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity;
- (2) clarify the membership of the Board of the Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity;
- (3) alter reporting requirements of the Entity; and
- (4) generally amend the law regarding early care and education in the County.

BACKGROUND

In 2022, the Council enacted Bill 42-21 to establish an Early Care and Education (ECE) Coordinating Entity. Expedited Bill 23-25 would refine the original legislation by clarifying the duties and responsibilities of the entity.

BILL SPECIFICS

Under Expedited Bill 23-25, the duties and responsibilities of the ECE Entity would be clarified as follows. The Entity would:

- conduct a County-wide needs assessment for ECE programs;

- identify and analyze specific ECE needs through periodic mapping of ECE services and resources throughout the County;
- research and evaluate strategies to strengthen and sustain the ECE system in the County;
- analyze and recommend to the County Executive and County Council how to increase the quantity of, and equitable access to, high-quality ECE programs, including for children whose parents or guardians qualify for a government benefit based upon income, families of children with special needs, and English language learners;
- create, publish, and periodically update a comprehensive common ECE agenda based upon the consensus of ECE stakeholders;
- measure outcomes and progress towards the common agenda;
- educate the public about the importance of high-quality ECE programs;
- advocate at the federal, state, and local level for greater investment in and improvements to the ECE system; and
- solicit and accept public and private funding to support the work of the Entity under this Section.

Importantly, to avoid the duplication of services between the Entity and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the bill would clarify that the Entity must not:

- provide ECE;
- award or fund grants;
- enter into a contract with an ECE provider;
- provide goods or services to an ECE provider; or
- fund ECE seats or the provision of ECE to individuals.

This packet contains:

Expedited Bill 23-25

Fiscal Impact Statement

Circle #

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*The Economic Impact Statement, Climate Assessment, and Racial Equity & Social Justice Impact Statements were not available at the time of publication of this staff report. They can be found at the below address when available: [Racial Equity and Social Justice, Economic, and Climate Impact Statements - Office of Legislative Oversight- Montgomery County, Maryland \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/legislativeservices/impactstatements/)

Expedited Bill No. 23-25
Concerning: Early Care and Education
Coordinating Entity
Revised: 6/17/2025 Draft No. 2
Introduced: June 17, 2025
Expires: December 7, 2026
Enacted: _____
Executive: _____
Effective: _____
Sunset Date: None
Ch. _____, Laws of Mont. Co. _____

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Lead Sponsors: Councilmember Alborno and Council Vice President Jawando
Co-Sponsor: Councilmember Fani-González

AN EXPEDITED ACT to:

- (1) specify the duties of the Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity;
- (2) clarify the membership of the Board of the Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity;
- (3) alter reporting requirements of the Entity; and
- (4) generally amend the law regarding early care and education in the County.

By amending

Chapter 10A, Child Care.
Section 10A-12

Boldface	<i>Heading or defined term.</i>
<u>Underlining</u>	<i>Added to existing law by original bill.</i>
[Single boldface brackets]	<i>Deleted from existing law by original bill.</i>
<u>Double underlining</u>	<i>Added by amendment.</i>
[[Double boldface brackets]]	<i>Deleted from existing law or the bill by amendment.</i>
* * *	<i>Existing law unaffected by bill.</i>

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:

1 **Sec. 1. Section 10A-12 is amended as follows:**

2 **10A-12. Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity.**

3 (a) *Findings and definitions.*

4 (1) Early care and education [(ECE)] is an essential service and
5 economic imperative for the well-being of children, families,
6 employers, and the greater community.

7 (2) High quality ECE services prepare young children to enter school
8 ready to learn and start on a pathway of success in life.

9 (3) Accessible ECE programs are economic drivers that allow
10 parents to participate in the workforce and support the local
11 economy. ECE programs play a key role in workforce
12 development by attracting and retaining a talented workforce
13 through support to families with young children, and by
14 addressing the opportunity gap to ensure a future skilled
15 workforce by addressing the opportunity gap.

16 (4) A strong system of high quality, accessible, sustainable ECE is
17 needed to support the well-being of children and families in the
18 County and eliminate systemic racism and structures that have
19 been barriers for vulnerable, racially and ethnically diverse
20 populations.

21 (5) Designating an independent nonprofit entity to work with
22 [parents, employers and providers as] key stakeholders will
23 ensure community priorities are reflected in [building] a
24 collaborative and robust system that supports all residents having
25 access to high quality, affordable early care and education.

(6) For purposes of this Section, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

(A) ECE means early care and education.

(B) ECE seat means the capacity of an ECE provider to enroll a child in ECE.

(C) ECE stakeholder includes parents, caregivers, guardians, employers, ECE providers, philanthropy, nonprofit and business communities, and the public sector.

(D) Entity means the early care and education coordinating entity under this Section.

(E) Public sector includes the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Recreation, Montgomery County Public Libraries, Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, the Universities at Shady Grove, and any County board, committee, or commission that advises the County regarding ECE issues.

* * *

(c) *Board of Directors.* To qualify as the County's Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity, the [Corporation's] Entity's Board of Directors must have no more than 9 *ex-officio* voting members and 12 other voting members appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. Each member must reside or work in the County. Each member appointed from the public sector as an *ex officio* member represents the public interest and is not precluded from participating in a matter as a board member if that member's

government employer is a party to the matter. The Executive should appoint the following *ex officio* voting members:

- (1) a Council staff member with expertise in early childhood education;
- (2) [two] 2 representatives jointly designated by the County Board of Education and the Superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools;
- (3) 3 representatives of the County Department of Health and Human Services;
- (4) a representative of the Office of Management and Budget;
- (5) a representative of Montgomery College; and
- (6) a representative of the Universities at Shady Grove.

The Executive should appoint the following voting members:

- (1) 3 parents or guardians with children in childcare and/or pre-kindergarten programs, including 2 [low income] parents or guardians who qualify for a government benefit based upon income;
- (2) 2 center based early care and education providers;
- (3) 2 family child care providers;
- (4) 2 representatives of an employer who is not an early childhood education provider;
- (5) a representative of a philanthropic foundation; and
- (6) 2 representatives of a nonprofit corporation focused on equity and inclusion, youth development, economic development, or workforce development.

The Board must permit the County Executive, the County Council's Lead for Early Care and Education, and the President of the Montgomery County Board of Education, or a designee of each public official, to attend and participate at each Board meeting without voting. The Executive must strive to achieve Board representation from diverse geographic areas, socio-economic groups, and ethnic groups.

* * *

- (i) *Duties.* [In developing an equitable system of high quality, accessible, sustainable early care and education and eliminating systemic racism and structures that created access barriers for vulnerable, racially and ethnically diverse populations, the] The Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity must act as a neutral convener of ECE stakeholders and, in collaboration and consultation with ECE stakeholders:

[(1) develop recommendations for increasing availability of and access to high quality early care and education programs, with particular attention to underrepresented and special populations, including low-income children, families of children with special needs, and English language learners and with a focus on children from birth to 5 years old;]

[(2) convene and solicit input from all ECE stakeholders to identify unmet needs and barriers to accessing quality ECE services, develop common goals and priorities for system expansion and improvement, and identify opportunities for and barriers to collaboration and coordination among stakeholder groups. The Entity must seek advice from the members of the Early Childhood Coordinating Council while the Entity develops final

102 recommendations for realigning existing County committees and
103 advisory groups that provide input into the early care and
104 education system;]

105 [(3) solicit board members through a community-based process
106 involving parent groups and other advisory bodies. Create and/or
107 maintain existing advisory bodies to ensure continuing direct
108 input from a wide range of community perspectives;]

109 [(4) engage and educate families and the wider community about the
110 importance of high-quality early care and education programs
111 and advocate at the Federal, State, and local level for greater
112 public and private investment in and improvements to the early
113 care and education system;]

114 [(5) research and facilitate innovative service models and strategies to
115 improve the early care and education system and identify
116 community needs through periodic mapping of early care and
117 education services and resources and County-wide needs
118 assessments;]

119 [(6) secure and administer private-sector funding to support the early
120 care and education system and manage and administer public
121 funding that is directly appropriated to the Entity;]

122 [(7) measure and report on the efforts to improve and expand the early
123 care and education system with a focus on achieving tangible
124 results that improve access to high-quality ECE across the
125 County;]

126 [(8) address current inequities imposing barriers to accessible high
127 quality, affordable care for all communities; and]

128 [(9) create, as a neutral convener, a common early childhood
 129 education agenda based on community consensus that all major
 130 stakeholders commit to and maintain a 360 degree view of all
 131 aspects of the County's early childhood education sector.]

132 (1) conduct a County-wide needs assessment for ECE programs;

133 (2) identify and analyze specific ECE needs through periodic
 134 mapping of ECE services and resources throughout the County;

135 (3) research and evaluate strategies to strengthen and sustain the ECE
 136 system in the County;

137 (4) analyze and recommend to the County Executive and County
 138 Council how to increase the quantity of, and equitable access to,
 139 high-quality ECE programs, including for children whose parents
 140 or guardians qualify for a government benefit based upon
 141 income, families of children with special needs, and English
 142 language learners;

143 (5) create, publish, and periodically update a comprehensive
 144 common ECE agenda based upon the consensus of ECE
 145 stakeholders;

146 (6) measure outcomes and progress towards the common agenda;

147 (7) educate the public about the importance of high-quality ECE
 148 programs;

149 (8) advocate at the federal, state, and local level for greater
 150 investment in and improvements to the ECE system; and

151 (9) solicit and accept public and private funding to support the work
 152 of the Entity under this Section.

153 * * *

(k) *[Direct Services]* Independent and coordinating role of the entity. The Entity must not [provide direct services or deliver programs for early childhood education]:

- (1) provide ECE;
- (2) award or fund grants;
- (3) enter into a contract with an ECE provider;
- (4) provide goods or services to an ECE provider; or
- (5) fund ECE seats or the provision of ECE to individuals.

(l) *Reports.*

(1) The Board of Directors must report annually on the activities and finances of the Entity and provide an audited financial statement of the Entity to the Executive and Council by October 1 of each year. The report must include:

(A) the Entity's plan to solicit and receive additional public and private funding for its operations;

(B) [outcomes] an analysis of available data that measures the progress of early care and education system improvements, including changes in:

(i) the level of public and private investment in the ECE system;

(ii) the availability and use of [early care and education] ECE seats in the County as a whole and disaggregated for isolated and vulnerable populations;

(iii) the provision of ECE seats by private employers;
and

180 [(iii)] (iv) school readiness (including academic,
 181 physical, and social emotional competencies) rates
 182 broken out by total population, race/ethnicity,
 183 income categories, and special education status;
 184 [and]

185 (C) advocacy and outreach efforts and outcomes for the prior
 186 year; and

187 (D) recommendations for developing an equitable system of
 188 high quality, accessible, sustainable early care and
 189 education.

190 (2) The Entity must make [public data sets] available on [the
 191 internet] its website the Entity's assessments and
 192 recommendations, the common ECE agenda, community
 193 mapping, data on outcomes, and links to public data sets, to
 194 improve public knowledge of the Entity and its operations,
 195 further its mission, [or] and increase [its] the accountability and
 196 responsiveness of the ECE system.

197 (3) The Entity must provide the Executive and Council, upon
 198 request, all non-confidential data produced and received by the
 199 Entity, including research, data related to the delivery of early
 200 care and education services, and minutes of Board meetings.

201 * * *

202 **Sec. 2. Effective Date.** The Council declares that this legislation is necessary
 203 for the immediate protection of the public interest. This Act takes effect on the date
 204 on which it becomes law.

205 **Sec. 3. Transition.** This Act must not affect any contract or grant executed on
206 or before the effective date of this Act.



Fiscal Impact Statement

Office of Management and Budget

Bill 23-25

Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity

Bill Summary

Expedited Bill 23-25 would clarify the duties and responsibilities of the Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity (the Entity) which is currently the Children's Opportunity Alliance (COA). To avoid duplication of services between the Entity and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the bill provides further restrictions on the Entity not to provide: (1) Early Care and Education (ECE); (2) award or fund grants; (3) enter into a contract with an ECE provider; or (4) fund ECE seats or the provision of ECE to individuals.

Fiscal Impact Summary

The bill/regulation does not have a fiscal impact. FY26 approved expenditures are \$775,465 in ongoing costs. Annual expenditures total \$775,465 each year thereafter. The department will not require new positions to implement the bill/regulation. The bill/regulation is not expected to generate any revenues.

Fiscal Year	0	0	0	0	0	0	Total
Personnel Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Operating Expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Impact	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

Fiscal Impact Analysis

There is no fiscal impact because the bill does not impact any services that DHHS currently funds COA to provide. In the FY26 contract that DHHS has with COA totaling \$775,465, \$640,677 in funding is provided for existing COA staff, \$20,000 is provided for COA's ongoing communications expenses, and \$114,788 is provided in indirect administrative costs (15%). None of the additional restrictions on COA's activities considered in this bill will impact DHHS' contract with COA. DHHS has no current revenue related to its contract with COA and DHHS' revenue will not be impacted by this legislation.

Staff Impact

The bill is not expected to impact staff time or duties.

Actuarial Analysis

The bill is not expected to impact retiree pension or group insurance costs.

Information Technology Impact

The bill is not expected to impact the County Information Technology (IT) or Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems.

Other Information

Later actions that may impact revenue or expenditures if future spending is projected

The bill does not authorize future spending.

Contributors

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Budget

