



New Findings From Baltimore City ECAC Highlight Critical Barriers to Access

Recent landscape analysis reveals significant disparities with quality early learning programs across the city

Baltimore, MD (June 26, 2025) – Family League, a key coalition partner in the Baltimore City Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), today emphasized the urgent findings of the newly released “[Baltimore City Early Care and Education Landscape Analysis: Supply, Demand, Obstacles and Opportunities](#).” The comprehensive report reveals significant disparities in access to quality early learning programs for Baltimore’s youngest students, underscoring critical shortages that threaten family economic stability and children’s school readiness.

The analysis, conducted by [Baltimore City ECAC](#) in coordination with the [Maryland State Department of Education’s state-level Early Childhood Advisory Council](#), provides critical data to support the ongoing collaborative efforts of Baltimore City Schools, the Mayor’s Office of Children & Family Success, Family League, and other community partners who are actively working to strengthen early childhood education access across Baltimore.

"The 2025 Landscape Analysis confirms what many of us working in early childhood have long understood: families in Baltimore face real and persistent barriers to accessing quality care and education. But the report highlights real strengths—dedicated providers and community partnerships that are already making a difference. This is a critical moment. With the right investments and coordinated action, we can build a more effective early childhood system for all of Baltimore’s children," says Imani-Angela Rose, ECAC Co-Chair, Executive Director of Joshua's Place Early Learning Education Center and second Vice President of the Board of Maryland State Child Care Association.

"Family League is proud to have supported this vital landscape analysis," said Demaune Millard, President and CEO of Family League. "The comprehensive assessment represents exactly the kind of collaborative, data-driven approach needed to address Baltimore’s early childhood challenges. As we work alongside the Mayor’s Office of Children & Family Success, state partners, and others, this report provides the roadmap for strategic investments that will transform opportunities for our youngest residents."

"As a member of the Maryland State Early Childhood Advisory Council, I’ve witnessed how the state-level ECAC framework enables local councils like ours in Baltimore to conduct critical assessments that inform both city and statewide priorities," said Yolanda Jenkins, Family League Program Director for School Readiness. "This landscape analysis represents the power of true partnership—from the Maryland State Department of Education’s funding support to the collaborative efforts of the Fund for Educational Excellence, members of the Prenatal to Five Impact Collaborative at the Maryland Philanthropy Network, and countless community stakeholders. Together, we’ve created a comprehensive tool that will help ensure more Baltimore children and families can truly thrive."

Report Findings Reveal Deep Inequities

The Baltimore City ECAC analysis found alarming gaps in early childhood education access:

- **Severe Capacity Constraints:** In Baltimore City, there are only enough licensed child care for 20% toddlers and babies aged 2 and under. Just 50% of all children under 5 are served by existing programs, and prekindergarten is available for only 65% of 4-year olds—and almost not at all for 3-year olds.
- **Unaffordable Costs:** Families earning the median income or less spend over 30% of their income on child care. By federal standards, care is considered affordable at 7% of a family’s income.



- **Economic Impact:** The lack of access to affordable care limits parents' ability to work. In Maryland, 80.8% of women with children under 6 participate in the workforce, according to the report.
- **School Readiness Disparities:** Children in formal early learning programs are two to three times more likely to be school-ready than in informal or home care, researchers found.

Family League's Collaborative Role in Supporting Early Childhood Research

As a committed partner of the Baltimore City ECAC, Family League has worked alongside coalition members to help facilitate this comprehensive analysis. The organization contributed to the research effort through its funding partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education, while also providing coordination support through its ongoing School Readiness programming and community engagement initiatives.

The Baltimore City ECAC operates under the Maryland State Department of Education framework, ensuring coordination between local findings and statewide early childhood priorities. This structure enables Family League and other partners to work collaboratively across governmental levels while maintaining focus on Baltimore's specific needs.

Comprehensive Recommendations for Action

The coalition urges city and state leaders to make early childhood education a top priority through:

- **Strategic Investment:** Fully fund prekindergarten expansion for all 4-year olds and low-income 3-year olds; especially in underserved areas; and raise caregiver wages to stabilize the workforce.
- **System Improvements:** Secure long-term funding for Maryland Child Care Scholarship Program and eliminate roadblocks to provider participation in prekindergarten and quality rating systems.
- **Enhanced Data Systems:** Create an identifier to track enrollment and readiness across care settings, with education officials regularly collecting and sharing enrollment and capacity data.

Future Research and Community Engagement

This report represents the first in a series by Baltimore ECAC and future research will explore early childhood experiences from birth to age 5, including parent and caregiver perspectives through surveys and focus groups—ensuring community voices remain central to solution development.

Family League will continue its collaborative leadership through the council, supporting evidence-based policy development and working alongside state partners and community stakeholders to transform early childhood education access in Baltimore.

The full report is available at www.ecacbaltimore.org/2025LA

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About Family League of Baltimore

Family League of Baltimore is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and the designated Local Management Board for the City of Baltimore. Since 1991, the organization has worked collaboratively to support data-informed, community-driven solutions that align resources to dismantle the systemic barriers which limit the possibilities for children, families, and communities. Guided by core values of stewardship, performance, trust, respect, and equity, Family League has invested \$19+ million to 84 community-based partners in the 2024 fiscal year, benefiting more than 14,000 children, youth, and adults in Baltimore.

For more information, visit www.familyleague.org.

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