INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ZONING HEARING EXAMINER

TO: Rana Hightower, Committee Director
Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee

FROM: Maurene Epps McNeil
Chief Zoning Hearing Examiner

DATE: May 8, 2026

RE: CB-35-2026

"Day Care Centers for Children" are defined in Part 2 of the Zoning Ordinance as "[an] Establishment in which a program is operated that is designed to provide care and activities for nine (9) or more children not located in a dwelling unit, or thirteen (13) or more children in a dwelling unit, on a regular schedule (more than once a week). This term shall not include recreational program, before- and after-school, "private school" or "small group child care center." These uses currently require approval of a Special Exception, but the bill will allow them to operate by right.

I would first suggest a technical amendment to add brackets around the language on page 5 referencing Special Exception standards.

Historically, those opposed to Day Care Centers usually complained about the noise generated during outdoor play hours or the parking spaces used. The bill removes any language concerning setbacks from adjoining residences despite their ability to reduce the impact of noise. This will not be a concern if the play area is recognized as an accessory structure (and it should be), since the Zoning Ordinance includes language that requires setbacks for accessory structures and uses. Parking complaints may also be minimized if signage is erected that imposes limited times for street parking used by the parents/guardians of enrollees.

I would also note that these centers were banned in industrial and commercial zones due to safety concerns for the enrollees. The Council ultimately allowed them by Special Exception so that conditions could be added to reduce any possibility of harm to the children.

I therefore suggest that centers of a certain size (i.e., more than 25 or 30 enrollees?) be required to obtain a Special Exception, especially those located in commercial and industrial zones, so that conditions can be added where necessary to protect the children and the adjacent residents. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.