



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

09-19-2023

EEOC Sues Chesapeake Montessori School for Disability Discrimination

BALTIMORE – Chesapeake Montessori Foundation, Inc., operator of the Chesapeake Montessori School in Annapolis, Maryland, an independent childcare and educational institution that follows the Montessori pedagogical philosophy, violated federal law when it discriminated against a longtime teacher because of her daughter’s disability, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) alleged in a lawsuit filed today.

According to EEOC’s lawsuit, Chesapeake Montessori was aware the teacher’s daughter had a disability and it decided not to renew the teacher’s contract because it assumed her daughter’s disability, coupled with the COVID pandemic, would undermine the teacher’s focus and commitment to her job. The school elected to instead renew other teachers with less experience and tenure.

Such alleged conduct violates the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 which prohibits discriminating against any employee because of their relationship or association with a person with a disability. The EEOC filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland (EEOC v. Chesapeake Montessori Foundation, Inc., Case No. 23-cv-02544), after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its conciliation process.

“The ADA protects an employee from discrimination based on their own disability or the disability of persons close to them, including family members,” said Debra Lawrence, EEOC’s regional attorney in Philadelphia. “The EEOC will protect employees from associational discrimination just as vigorously as it does direct discrimination.”

“Chesapeake Montessori relied on stereotypes and assumptions when it refused to renew this teacher because of unfounded concerns over her daughter’s disability, precisely the kind of conduct the ADA’s associational discrimination provision was intended to prohibit,” said EEOC’s Baltimore Field Office Director Rosemarie Rhodes.”

For more information on disability discrimination, please visit

<https://www.eeoc.gov/disability-discrimination> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/disability-discrimination>). For more information on caregiver discrimination, visit: **<https://www.eeoc.gov/questions-and-answers-about-eeocs-enforcement-guidance-unlawful-disparate-treatment-workers> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/questions-and-answers-about-eeocs-enforcement-guidance-unlawful-disparate-treatment-workers>)**.

The EEOC’s Philadelphia District Office has jurisdiction over Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and parts of New Jersey and Ohio. Attorneys in the Philadelphia District Office also prosecute discrimination cases in Washington, D.C. and parts of Virginia.

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at **www.eeoc.gov (<https://www.eeoc.gov/>)**. Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our **[email updates](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new) (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new>)**.