



The Arc Maryland
8601 Robert Fulton Drive
Suite 140
Columbia, MD 21046
T 410.571.9320
www.thearcmd.org

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
SB 506: Children - Therapeutic Child Care Program - Funding
March 2, 2022
POSITION: SUPPORT

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights and quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Arc Maryland supports SB 506, which will address the need for specialized child care provided by early childhood educators, early intervention providers, mental health providers, and health care providers to children under a certain age who have delays in development, physical disabilities, or delays in social, emotional, or behavioral functioning by ensuring appropriate funding.

The Arc Montgomery County's Karasik Family, Infant & Child Care Center, affectionately known as **KFICCC**, is a family-centered child care program in Montgomery County. **It is a model for inclusive early intervention services where children with specialized healthcare needs receive childcare and early intervention services next to their typically developing peers.**

In every classroom, typically-developing children, children with developmental disabilities and children with special health care needs play and learn together. The education staff team includes pediatric registered nurses, trained child care providers, and a family worker who provides case management services. Services that children need are pushed in to the classroom; different from many other centers where students are pulled out to receive specialized services and supports. This normalizes treatments and assistance children with special health conditions need- demystifying them and setting up all children for future educational experiences that are inclusive, equitable, and welcoming.

The progressive, well-equipped program is funded through private paying clients and highly subsidized by grants from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Maryland State Department of Education.

The operation of this center was difficult financially before the pandemic, and since the pandemic, it has been in trouble, struggling to cover costs associated with subsidies to families, workforce salary demands, and inflation. **The funding provided by this bill is truly needed to ensure children with disabilities and special healthcare needs and their families have access to affordable, reliable, safe childcare.** This will allow parents to work and contribute to the overall healthy-family dynamic.

For these reasons, The Arc Maryland asks the committee for a favorable report on SB 506.

Please contact: Ande Kolp, Executive Director of The Arc Maryland
akolp@thearcmd.org