



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

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Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

SB 362: Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2024

February 29, 2024

Position: Oppose the Implementation of a Freeze in the Child Care Scholarship Program

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council supports the Child Care Scholarship Program because of the positive impact on children with disabilities and their families. The Child Care Scholarship Program (CCSP) provides financial assistance with child care costs to eligible families in Maryland. The eligible family receives a voucher to use to purchase child care directly from the provider of their choice. Services are provided to eligible families based on an established categories and priorities. Within in each category, eligible families experiencing homelessness and eligible families of children with disabilities are given first priority.

Programs must provide children with disabilities and their families an equal opportunity to participate in the child care program and services by providing reasonable modifications, accommodations, and provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services needed for effective communication.ⁱ Some of these additional accommodations may be costly. In recognition of that, **Maryland law allows for increased CCSP reimbursement rates to a child care provider for the additional costs of providing one-time or ongoing accommodations to a child with a disability – up to 15% above the traditional reimbursement rates or more if approved by MSDE.**ⁱⁱ

Since the early 1990s, Maryland families, children, and child care providers have dealt with several long periods of CCSP enrollment freezes and waiting list. The state agency responsible for administering the CCSP made each cost-containment decision unilaterally. **That was, until last year when the General Assembly removed the sole authority for implementing enrollment freezes and waiting lists from the Department and ensured an opportunity for review and possible action by the General Assembly.**

HB352 would change that again by allowing the Department to implement an enrollment freeze. This would significantly impact families of children with disabilities. The cost of raising a child with disabilities is already higher than raising a child without disabilities. Taking away the possibility of child care is not feasible for many families. **The Maryland General Assembly should work with the Administration to identify the funding necessary to ensure that the CCSP remains affordable with no additional enrollment freezes.**

Contact: Rachel London, Executive Director, RLondon@md-council.org

ⁱ Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C. § 12101 (2009).

ⁱⁱ COMAR 13A.14.06.11(E)(5).