

Education Advocacy Coalition

for Students with Disabilities

HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 1261: Commission on Access to High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Child Care for Children Three Years Old and Younger

DATE: FEBRUARY 28, 2024

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC), a coalition of more than 40 organizations and individuals concerned with education policy for students with disabilities in Maryland, supports House Bill 1261 with amendment. The bill would create a Commission to address child care and early childhood education, both areas of significant interest to EAC members. Coalition members represent or work with families whose children with disabilities have been denied entrance into or have been terminated from child care programs and with families whose children receive services from Maryland's infants and toddlers program, for which families may wait months for services that when provided may be only consultative, rather than hands-on and provided directly to the child.

Although a Commission cannot resolve all of the issues facing child care and early childhood education, and although the main focus of the Commission is not on children with disabilities, neither can the Commission created by House Bill 1261 sidestep consideration of the particular issues facing children with disabilities and their families in these two areas. However, House Bill 1261 does not specifically include any parents of children with disabilities or any advocacy or family support organizations knowledgeable about children with disabilities, child care or early childhood education.

Therefore, the EAC recommends that House Bill 1261 be amended to include:

Page 2: (xiv): ONE PARENT OF A CHILD WITH DISABILITIES WHO IS 3 YEARS OLD OR YOUNGER AND IS ENROLLED IN A CHILD CARE CENTER OR WITH A FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDER;

(xv) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF A FAMILY SUPPORT OR ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT CHILD CARE, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.

With these amendments, the EAC supports House Bill 1261. For more information or if questions, please contact Leslie Seid Margolis, co-chairperson, at lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org; or 443-692-2505. (see next page)

Respectfully submitted,

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