



March 27, 2025

House Bill 185 - Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) is an association of private child caring organizations providing foster care, group homes, and other services through more than 200 programs across Maryland. The members of MARFY represent providers who serve Maryland's most vulnerable children who are in out of home placements due to abuse, neglect or severe mental health, and medical needs. We operate group homes, treatment foster care programs and independent living programs, primarily serving the adoptive and foster care population as well as a juvenile services population.

We are writing in support of House Bill 185 - Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations. These funds enable parents to access high-quality, specialized childcare that offers structured, stable, and nurturing environments tailored to the unique needs of these children. By reducing caregiver stress and preventing burnout, these grants help maintain stable placements and foster strong bonds, both critical for the emotional healing and development of children. Additionally, quality therapeutic childcare enhances long-term outcomes by supporting children's social, emotional, and academic growth, ultimately reducing the likelihood of future systemic involvement and associated costs. House Bill 185 aims to ensure these critical support programs can continue.

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The Importance of Childcare Grants

Childcare grants ensure that parents can:

1. **Access Specialized Care:** Children often require caregivers with specific training to address trauma, emotional dysregulation, and other complex needs. Childcare providers who receive appropriate funding can offer this specialized support.
2. **Provide Stability for the Child:** Consistent and high-quality childcare provides a structured and predictable environment, which is essential for children recovering from instability and trauma.
3. **Support Parents:** Parents are often working professionals or caregivers with multiple responsibilities. Without access to childcare grants, many may struggle to balance their employment, family responsibilities, and the intensive needs of the children in their care. This can lead to caregiver burnout and placement disruptions, which are detrimental to the well-being of the child.
4. **Enhance Long-Term Outcomes:** Research consistently shows that children who receive quality early care and education are more likely to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. For children in therapeutic care, these positive outcomes are particularly crucial, as they work to overcome the challenges of their early experiences.

The Economic and Social Impact

Maintaining funding for these childcare grants is not just a compassionate choice but also a fiscally responsible one. Children who receive the proper care and support are more likely to transition successfully to adulthood, reducing the long-term costs associated with mental health services, juvenile justice involvement, and unemployment. These grants represent an investment in the future of our children and our communities.

On behalf of the children and families who rely on these services, we ask that you prioritize and protect this critical funding. Together, we can help these children heal, grow, and thrive.

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