

Chapter 40

(House Bill 596)

AN ACT concerning

State Department of Education – Hearing Aid Loan Bank Program – Age of Eligibility

FOR the purpose of altering the age of eligibility to participate in the Hearing Aid Loan Bank Program in the State Department of Education; and generally relating to the Hearing Aid Loan Bank Program for eligible children.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Education
Section 8–601 and 8–602
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2014 Replacement Volume and 2015 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – Education
Section 8–603 and 8–604
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2014 Replacement Volume and 2015 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Education

8–601.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

(b) “Eligible child” means a child who:

(1) Is a resident of the State;

(2) Is identified by an otolaryngologist or a licensed audiologist as having a hearing loss;

(3) Has no immediate access to a hearing aid; and

(4) Is under the age of [3] 18 years.

(c) “Licensed audiologist” means an individual who is licensed to practice audiology under Title 2 of the Health Occupations Article.

(d) “Loan Bank” means the Hearing Aid Loan Bank.

(e) “Otolaryngologist” means an individual who:

(1) Is licensed to practice medicine under Title 14 of the Health Occupations Article; and

(2) Specializes in otolaryngology.

(f) “Program” means the Hearing Aid Loan Bank Program.

8–602.

(a) There is a Hearing Aid Loan Bank Program in the Department.

(b) The Program is established for the purpose of lending hearing aids on a temporary basis to a parent or legal guardian of an eligible child to ensure that children under the age of [3] 18 years will have maximum auditory input [during the critical period of language learning] **THROUGHOUT CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE.**

(c) The Program shall employ an otolaryngologist or a licensed audiologist.

8–603.

(a) There is a permanent Hearing Aid Loan Bank in the Department.

(b) The Program shall provide and maintain:

(1) A pool of hearing aids in the Loan Bank to lend to a parent or legal guardian of an eligible child;

(2) Testing and programming equipment for hearing aids in the Loan Bank; and

(3) Supplies for repair and reconditioning of hearing aids in the Loan Bank.

8–604.

(a) The Program shall lend a suitable hearing aid to a parent or legal guardian of an eligible child on receipt of:

(1) A prescription from an otolaryngologist or a licensed audiologist; and

(2) Any documents required by the Program to prove that the child is an eligible child.

(b) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the loan period shall be for not more than 6 months.

(2) The Program may extend the original loan period for additional 3-month periods if, prior to each extension, the Program determines that:

(i) The child does not have immediate access to another hearing aid under Medicaid, the Maryland Children's Health Program, or private health insurance;

(ii) The child's parent or legal guardian currently does not have the financial means to obtain immediate access to another hearing aid; and

(iii) The child's parent or legal guardian is making reasonable efforts to obtain access to another hearing aid.

(c) A parent or legal guardian who borrows a hearing aid for an eligible child shall:

(1) Be the custodian of the hearing aid;

(2) Return the hearing aid immediately to the Loan Bank on the expiration of the loan period or receipt of a suitable permanent hearing aid, whichever occurs first;

(3) Be responsible for the proper care and use of the hearing aid;

(4) Be responsible for any damage to or loss of the hearing aid; and

(5) Sign a written agreement provided by the State Superintendent that states the term and conditions of the loan.

(d) The Program shall ensure that the eligible child's otolaryngologist or licensed audiologist instructs the parent or legal guardian about the proper care and use of a hearing aid provided under the Program.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2016.

Approved by the Governor, April 12, 2016.