



**DATE:** February 19, 2020 **COMMITTEE:** Senate Budget & Taxation  
**BILL NO:** Senate Bill 637  
**BILL TITLE:** Children – Therapeutic Nursery Program - Funding  
**POSITION:** Support with amendments

**PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs, an affiliate of the Kennedy Krieger Institute, supports Senate Bill 637.**

### **Bill Summary:**

Senate Bill 637 establishes a Therapeutic Nursery Program to provide specialized child care and early childhood education for children with developmental disabilities, physical disabilities or delays in social, emotional or behavioral functioning. The bill includes an annual appropriation of \$10,000 for every typically developing child served and \$45,000 for every child served who has a developmental delays, physical disabilities, or delays in social emotional or behavioral functioning.

### **Background:**

PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs, Inc. operates the **only child care centers in the Baltimore Metropolitan area for young children who are medically fragile and infants and toddlers who are homeless.**

#### **World of Care Medical Child Care**

- Only child care center in the Baltimore Metropolitan area for young children (ages birth to five) needing daily nursing care and specialized equipment not available in typical child care centers, i.e. children with:
  - Heart and breathing problems requiring monitors and oxygen
  - Eating disorders requiring nourishment through feeding tubes
  - Severe seizure disorders
  - Organ transplants and other serious surgeries
  - Juvenile Type I diabetes
- Comprehensive services include daily skilled nursing care/interventions, occupational, physical and speech therapy.

#### **Therapeutic Nursery for Homeless Infants and Toddlers**

- Only Early Head Start/child care center in Baltimore City providing specialized attachment-based, trauma-informed care and education for infants and toddlers whose families are currently living in homeless shelters or transitioning back to the community
- Mental Health Services for parents using research-based interventions.

### **Rationale:**

PACT's goal is to serve all children in need, regardless of family income. While PACT receives government, foundation and corporate grants, as well as donations from generous private donors, our funding does not cover the actual cost of providing the complex array of services our children and families require. Additionally, our programs need sustained state funding that reflects annual cost-of-living adjustments.

#### **The Challenges Maryland Families Face**

1. Maryland children with complex medical needs have very few resources for medically supported day care and early childhood education, resulting in reduced parent employment.
2. Young children whose families are experiencing homelessness



are at risk for a number of adverse childhood experiences, including:

1. Learning disabilities
2. Major mental health disorders
3. Continuing the cycle of complex intergenerational trauma

**Our Answer: Benefits of Medical Child Care**

- \$1.3 million net annual benefit to State of Maryland due to reduced need for private duty nursing, increased parent earnings and benefits, and a rise in state tax revenues (2008 study by Dr. David Greenberg U.M.B.C. professor subcontracted by D.H.M.H.)
- Parents can return to work
- Children are in a safe, stimulating MSDE-accredited (five-star Maryland EXCELS rating) child care center with other children and are better prepared for entry into school.
- Children’s special needs are met through onsite occupational, physical and speech therapy
- 94% of children gain skills to close the gap with same-aged peers.
- Children’s medical conditions may improve with less frequent need for hospitalization due to daily nursing assessments and interventions.

**Benefits of Therapeutic Nursery for Homeless Infants and Toddlers:**

- Parents receive support in finding housing, employment, school programs and other community services (family support/case manager works with families)
- 100% of children participating in the Therapeutic Nursery program for at least 90 days demonstrated substantial increases in developmental growth, school readiness, and attachment skills, as measured by the Child Outcome System, Teaching Strategies Gold, and the NCAST Parent Interaction Scale, respectively
- Children’s social-emotional needs are met through family interventions, including individual counseling with parents, parent support groups, parent-child attachment work and attachment based play therapy
- High quality early education (Early Head Start) with an Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale score in the “Excellent” range

**PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 637.**