



**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**

EMPOWERMENT • OPPORTUNITY • INCLUSION

House Ways and Means Committee

HB 776: State Department of Education – Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Project – Study and Report

February 12, 2021

Position: **Support**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council’s (Council) mission is to advance the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life by eliminating barriers, creating opportunities, empowering people, and promoting innovation. Increasing access to early care and education for Maryland’s children is critical for their development. This is particularly true for young children with disabilities who need more access and opportunity to learn and play alongside their peers without disabilities. The majority of child care providers want to support children with disabilities but need assistance, including training and coaching, to do so. Therefore, **the Council supports efforts that build that capacity of early care and education providers.**

Research demonstrates that classroom management, positive behavior supports, and other evidence-based interventions are effective in changing behavior – this is exactly what the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) does. The IECMHC is an evidence-informed intervention designed to build the capacity of early childhood professionals’ ability to nurture social and emotional development in infants and young children. This is particularly important now, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

When early care and education providers are empowered with the skills and knowledge they need, children are better supported to play, learn, and succeed together.

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