



Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

HB 664: Child Care Programs – Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program – Information and Assistance

March 29, 2022

Position: **Support**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, Disability Rights Maryland, and The Arc Maryland work to advance the inclusion, rights, and opportunities of people with developmental disabilities. We know that high-quality, coordinated early childhood services are critical for children with developmental delays and disabilities, and fully support the efforts of the Maryland State Department of Education’s (MSDE) Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES) and the Division of Early Childhood (DEC) to increase access and opportunity for young children with disabilities to learn and play alongside their peers without disabilities.

Federal law requires that children with disabilities have opportunities to meaningfully participate in programs with their non-disabled peers.ⁱ To meaningfully participate, children may need additional services and supports – some provided through early intervention services or preschool special education and some provided by the early care and education provider. **While more than 19,000 children in Maryland receive early intervention services, many have not yet been identified.**

HB 664 requires child care programs to provide information about the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program (MITP) to each parent or guardian of a child under the age of 3. **Increased awareness and knowledge of this important program may lead to an increase in the number of young children who receive critical early intervention services.**

- **The benefits of the MITP are clear.** Maryland’s 2018 longitudinal research confirms the benefits - **68% of children who received early intervention services enrolled in general education by the time they were in fourth through eighth grade.** (JHU, CTE, Spring 2018).
- For SFY2019, data indicate that **23% of children receiving early intervention services completed their IFSP prior to age three and may not need additional special education services.**
- **The greater the intensity of early intervention services, the better prepared children are for kindergarten.** Most children receiving early intervention services demonstrate progress in the areas of social-emotional development, learning new skills, and meeting their needs. In 2017, 74% of children who exited the program with at least 6 months of service made as much or more progress as their typically-developing peers.ⁱⁱ

Referrals to the MITP increased over the last five years as a result of continuous public awareness efforts. By providing information to families, HB 664 will further these awareness efforts. Therefore, we support HB 664.

ⁱ 20 USC 1400 (IDEA, Part B, §619).

ⁱⁱ *Id.* Pg. 17.