



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 995

DATE: March 4, 2022

SPONSOR: Delegate Solomon

ASSIGNED TO: Ways & Means

CONTACT PERSON: Leslie Frey (leslie.frey@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT

Early Childhood Development – Child Care Scholarship Program – Alterations

House Bill 995 creates a presumptive eligibility process to enable families seeking to access the State's Child Care Scholarship Program (the Program) to receive a child care subsidy before and during the eligibility determination process for the Program. Under the bill, an individual would submit a form to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) certifying that the individual meets the eligibility requirements for the Program. Upon submitting the form, the individual would receive a subsidy under the Program beginning on the day the form was submitted. If the individual does not fill out an application for the Program within 15 days of submitting the form, the subsidy would end after 15 days. If the individual fills out an application for the Program within 15 days of submitting the form and MSDE determines the individual does not qualify for a subsidy after reviewing the application, the subsidy would end on the date on which MSDE makes that determination. The subsidy would be payable to child care providers and would be for an amount sufficient to ensure that the individual would not be required to pay a co-pay for child care if the individual provides proof of participation in certain benefits programs or is employed or enrolled in an education or career training program. MSDE would be prohibited from requiring an individual to pursue or receive child support payments or apply for services from a child support agency in order to receive the subsidy.

House Bill 995, if enacted, would have a twofold policy benefit: it would encourage families to access the Child Care Scholarship Program and complete the application process and it would enable child care providers to access funding as soon as a child enrolls in care. At a critical time when child care providers are struggling to recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19, House Bill 995 could provide an additional path to relief by enhancing an existing program.

Since the onset of the pandemic, Montgomery County has allocated over \$21M to supporting child care programs in an effort to maintain an adequate supply of child care providers while parents balanced work, virtual learning for school-aged children, and other uncertainties during the pandemic. Despite these efforts, child care providers across the state remain in need of the financial support offered by House Bill 995. Montgomery County respectfully urges the committees to issue a favorable report.