



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Ways and Means Committee

SB 350: Early Childhood Development – Child Care Scholarship Program - Alterations

March 29, 2023

Position: Support

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities live the lives they want with the support they need. The Child Care Scholarship Program (CCSP) provides financial assistance with child care costs to eligible families in Maryland. The eligible family receive a voucher to use to purchase child care directly from the provider of their choice. The CCSP has undergone dramatic improvements over the last couple of years. Additional funding coupled with policy changes, including changes to income eligibility requirements and raised rates, allowed more families to qualify for subsidies and be able to afford more child care. **The FY2023 and FY2024 budgets already fund current CCSP parameters with a combination of General and Federal funds.**

Since the early 1990s, Maryland families, children, and child care providers have dealt with several long periods of CCSP enrollment freezes and waiting list. The state agency responsible for administering the CCSP made each cost-containment decision unilaterally.

This affected families of children with disabilities because:

- Eligible families of children with disabilities are given first priority.
- There is a “special disability rate” that can be used to support children with disabilities.

Programs must provide children with disabilities and their families an equal opportunity to participate in the child care program and services by providing reasonable modifications, accommodations, and provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services needed for effective communication.ⁱ Some of these additional accommodations may be costly. In recognition of that, **Maryland law allows for increased CCSP reimbursement rates to a child care provider for the additional costs of providing one-time or ongoing accommodations to a child with a disability – up to 15% above the traditional reimbursement rates or more if approved by MSDE.**ⁱⁱ

As amended, SB 350 removes sole authority for implementing measure from the Maryland State Department of Education and ensures an opportunity for review and possible action by the General Assembly. **This could help limit the hardship and negative affect on Maryland families, children, and child care providers.** It does not preclude the implementation of cost-containment measures should they become necessary in the future. **It does, however, add critical oversight and accountability.**

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ⁱ Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C. § 12101 (2009).

ⁱⁱ COMAR 13A.14.06.11(E)(5).