



HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB0377: Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program – Funding – Alterations

January 31, 2024

Position: Support

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to the rights and quality of life of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We support HB0377 in that it will extend the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Funding program which ensures specialized providers can deliver quality childcare to Marylanders with special needs. These are lifeline services utilized by many families throughout Maryland to have a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment for their children with special healthcare needs. The program allows families to continue to work and contribute to our robust economy, and children to receive the early intervention services to which they are entitled to and need to survive and thrive.

Federal and state law mandates that young children with disabilities shall receive early intervention services in the natural environment, and special education services in the least restrictive environment. This means, to the extent possible, every child should receive services alongside the child's peers without disabilities. Separate education should only occur if success cannot be achieved with appropriate services and supports in a less restrictive setting.

Currently, the Maryland State Department of Education partners with certain organizations in the state to provide medically-based child care and early education services to children with medical diagnoses and those who have developmental delays, physical disabilities, and behavioral issues requiring specialized care. The Arc Montgomery County is one of the organizations that receives this grant funding and uses the funding to run its inclusive infant and childcare program. The program is a model not only in our state, but in our country, for how children with and without special healthcare needs can and should receive quality childcare- together. In The Arc Montgomery County program, all children benefit from the ratios of care and individualized approach.

We respectfully ask the Ways and Means Committee for a favorable report on HB0377.

For more information, please contact:

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