

HB185. SB359. The Arc Maryland. Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Ande Kolp

Position: FAV



**HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE**

HB185/SB359: Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program – Funding – Alterations

January 29, 2025

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. HB185/SB359 will ensure the continuance of the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Funding program which ensures specialized providers can deliver quality childcare to Marylander children with complex needs. The specialized childcare provided by current grant recipients are utilized by many families throughout Maryland and provide a safe, nurturing, health-promoting, and supportive environment for their children with special healthcare needs. The program allows families to continue to work and contribute to our robust Maryland economy. Children served through this program are able to receive the early intervention services to which they are entitled and need to survive and thrive.

Federal and state laws mandate 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 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 a Therapeutic Child Care Grant recipient, and has been a recipient for many years. This organization uses the funding to operate its inclusive infant and childcare program. The program is a model, not only in our state, but nationally recognized for programming that supports children with and without special healthcare needs to 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 to continue this important program that would otherwise sunset this year.

For more information, please contact:

Ande Kolp, Executive Director, The Arc Maryland akolp@thearcmd.org

SB0359_MHAMD_Fav.pdf

Uploaded by: Ann Geddes

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 359 - Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program – Funding - Alterations

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

January 29, 2025

Position: SUPPORT

Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) is a nonprofit education and advocacy organization that brings together consumers, families, clinicians, advocates and concerned citizens for unified action in all aspects of mental health and substance use disorders (collectively referred to as behavioral health). We appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of SB 359.

SB 359 would extend the Therapeutic Childcare Grant Program, which the legislature established in 2022, past the FY25 sunset date in the original legislation, and sets it to resume in FY27. MHAMD strongly supports the continuation of the Grant Program.

It is not uncommon for very young children with social, emotional or behavioral challenges to be expelled from childcare settings. Young children are expelled at three times the rate of children in kindergarten through 12th grade.¹ Social/emotional/behavioral challenges among very young children are often the result of trauma, which can be linked to poverty. Expulsion of young children disproportionately affects children of color, males, children with disabilities, and those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged.² It can negatively impact a child's development and have lifetime consequences. Additionally, it puts tremendous burden on parents/caregivers.

Therapeutic childcare centers are one way to address the problem. By partnering with parents/caregivers to support the social-emotional development of children, helping them learn to manage behaviors, and addressing childhood trauma with evidence-based therapeutic interventions, therapeutic childcare centers can improve the trajectory of a child's life. One study of a therapeutic childcare center in Maryland that supported children with social/emotional/behavioral challenges found that 80% of children successfully transitioned to a regular kindergarten classroom setting.³

¹ National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness. Understanding and eliminating expulsion in early childhood programs. Accessed January 25, 2024.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/understanding-eliminating-expulsion-early-childhood-programs>

² Williams, P. and Yogman, M. Addressing early education and childcare expulsion. The American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement. October 2023. Accessed January 25, 2024.

<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/152/5/e2023064049/194508/Addressing-Early-Education-and-Child-Care?autologincheck=redirected>

³ Yair, Z. et al. Changing developmental trajectory in high-risk families: the effectiveness of an attachment-informed Therapeutic Nursery Program for preschool children with complex emotional and behavioral problems. Attachment and Human Development. Vol 23 (3). 2021. Accessed January 25, 2024.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14616734.2020.1722717?scroll=top&needAccess=true>

Prior to the passage of SB 506 in the 2022 legislative session, which established the Therapeutic Childcare Grant Program, therapeutic childcare centers were funded with a patchwork of federal and state funds that were undependable. By establishing a stable grant program, the legislature provided for the fiscal stability of these important centers.

For these reasons MHAMD supports SB 359 and urges a favorable report.

Children's National Testimony - SB 359 - Julia DeA

Uploaded by: Austin Morris

Position: FAV



111 Michigan Ave NW
Washington, DC 20010-2916
ChildrensNational.org

**Testimony of Julia DeAngelo
Program Manager of School Strategies
Children's National Hospital
Co-Lead for the Early Childhood Education Workgroup**

**SB 359: Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding – Alterations
Position: FAVORABLE
January 29, 2025
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee**

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in favor of Senate Bill 359. My name is Julia DeAngelo, and I am a Program Manager of School Strategies and a co-lead for the Early Childhood Education (ECE) workgroup at Children's National Hospital. Children's National has been serving the nation's children since 1870. Nearly 60% of our patients are residents of Maryland, and we maintain a network of community-based pediatric practices, surgery centers and regional outpatient centers in Maryland.

Formed in 2023, our ECE workgroup is advocating for high quality, affordable early childhood centers and stronger connections between early childhood centers and hospitals as part of our 2022-2025 Community Health Improvement Plan. Federal law requires nonprofit hospitals to assess community health needs and develop a response to those needs. The Children's National 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) utilized systematic, comprehensive data collection to help us understand and address the needs of the community we serve. Our analysis identified 12 key neighborhoods with the lowest Childhood Opportunity Index (COI) scores, including eight in Prince George's County, Maryland, that have been the focus for our ECE advocacy and programmatic initiatives.¹

Children's National and the ECE workgroup strongly support SB 359, with the stated intent of providing increased funding for providers that specialize in delivering high-quality childcare and education to children under 6 years of age with developmental and behavioral delays or difficulties. According to a recent report from the Maryland Family Network, the percentage of

¹ Children's National and HSC Health Care System's Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan can be found here: <https://www.childrensnational.org/in-the-community/child-health-advocacy-institute/community-affairs/improving-community-health>

children needing social/emotional accommodations lies between 36% to 54.9% and 46.8% of these children were identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder.² While the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommends integration of young children with disabilities into ECE programs as a way of promoting healthy development and promoting school readiness, many of our own patients and families find a lack of availability in ECE programs that can serve their special health and developmental needs.^{3,4} Children's National feels that the funding increases proposed in SB 359 will help close gaps in our ECE workforce shortage, and ensure more ECE centers have the capacity and skills to provide high-quality services to children across the developmental and behavioral spectrum.

Children's National and the ECE workgroup also acknowledge the benefits of this legislation on all children throughout Maryland. Children without disabilities or special health care needs also benefit from inclusive experiences. The funding allocation in this bill has the potential to increase positive academic, developmental, social, and attitudinal outcomes for all children from its encouragement of inclusive experiences.⁵

As mentioned, systemic workforce issues and high employee turnover contribute to a lack of stable ECE options for children with special needs across Prince George's County and Maryland as a whole. Specifically, 28% of center-based childcare workforce left their positions between January 2023 and December 2023.⁶ Children's National and the ECE Work Group feel strongly that adding funds to the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program will increase the quantity and quality of ECE programs and providers that service children with diverse needs. We applaud the efforts of the Maryland General Assembly for prioritizing early childhood education, which will benefit our state's youngest residents and their families and request a favorable report on Senate Bill 359. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

For more information, please contact:

Austin Morris, Government Affairs Manager
almorris@childrensnational.org

² Maryland Child Care Resource Network. (2024). Trends in Child Care - 2024. In *Maryland Family Network*. <https://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/trends2024%20final.pdf>

³ COUNCIL ON EARLY CHILDHOOD, COUNCIL ON SCHOOL HEALTH; The Pediatrician's Role in Optimizing School Readiness. *Pediatrics* September 2016; 138 (3): e20162293. 10.1542/peds.2016-2293

⁴ Sarah E. McLellan, Marie Y. Mann, Joan A. Scott, Treeby W. Brown; *A Blueprint for Change: Guiding Principles for a System of Services for Children and Youth With Special Health Care Needs and Their Families*. *Pediatrics* June 2022; 149 (Supplement 7): e2021056150C. 10.1542/peds.2021-056150C

⁵ US Department of Education & US Department of Health & Human Services. (2023). POLICY STATEMENT ON INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS. In *EDBlogs*. <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/policy-statement-on-inclusion-11-28-2023.pdf>

⁶ *Id.* See footnote 2.

SB 359_MFN_FAV_Morrow Therapeutic.pdf

Uploaded by: Beth Morrow

Position: FAV



Testimony Concerning SB 359
“Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations”
Submitted to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
January 29, 2025

Position: Support

Maryland Family Network (MFN) strongly supports SB 359, which would ensure continued funding for the Therapeutic Child Care Program (TCCP). Early intervention through a sufficiently funded TCCP will provide benefits to children and families and cost savings to the State. SB 359 fully deserves your favorable consideration.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and early childhood education as well as other supports for children and families in Maryland. We have been active in state and federal debates on child care policy and are strongly committed to ensuring that children, along with their parents, have access to high-quality, affordable programs and educational opportunities.

MFN has long been a champion of early intervention for children with special needs as well as inclusive education for children of all ages. Child care programs that would be covered under TCCP, which are also known as therapeutic nurseries, work with children birth to age 5 whose significant social and emotional challenges, among other possible factors, put them at high-risk for poor school and life outcomes.

As recently as 2020, researchers found that 4 out of 5 children moved from therapeutic nurseries to “mainstream” kindergarten and maintained social and emotional gains through second grade. Therapeutic nurseries’ documented success in transitioning children into typical education placements not only improves the children’s outcomes but also saves the major costs associated with more intensive special education services.

MFN respectfully urges favorable consideration of SB 359.

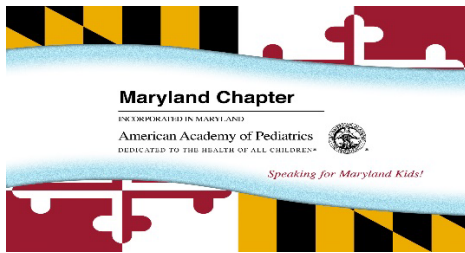
Submitted by Beth Morrow, Director of Public Policy bmorrow@marylandfamilynetwork.org



SB0359_FAV_MDAAP_Therapeutic Child Care Grant Prog

Uploaded by: Christine Krone

Position: FAV



Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
January 29, 2025
Senate Bill 359 – *Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program – Funding – Alterations*
POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of support for Senate Bill 359.

Senate Bill 359 extends funding for the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program which was created in 2022. The Program provides grants to providers that specialize in providing childcare and early childhood education to children under the age of 6 years who have developmental delays, physical disabilities, or delays in social, emotional, or behavioral functioning. The original legislation mandated \$3.7 million in funding for fiscal years 2023, 2024 and 2025. Passage of Senate Bill 359 will ensure the program continues and current funding levels are maintained beyond fiscal year 2025.

The Therapeutic Child Care Program supports partnerships between childcare centers and health programs to provide effective specialized childcare to children who need attention in addressing their cognitive, emotional, psychosocial and language development challenges. These partnerships are critical to supporting families seeking to ensure their children can integrate into educational, family, and social settings. The Program has been very effective in meeting its objectives and MDAAP strongly supports continuation of the program. Moreover, funding continuity is an important aspect to ensure the Program can continue to effectively care for and educate children with disabilities. It is for these reasons we request a favorable report on Senate Bill 359.

For more information call:

Christine K. Krone
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
410-244-7000

ArcPGC Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 359_ Th

Uploaded by: Ciara Barkley

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 359: Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program

January 27, 2025

Dear Chairperson and members of the Committee,

My name is Ciara Barkley-Cutting, and I am a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) at The Arc Prince George's County. For over a decade, I have dedicated my career to serving individuals with neurodevelopmental differences and behavioral challenges. I am here today to express my strong support for Senate Bill 359. The early childhood education field is facing unprecedented challenges. Recent studies indicate that childcare centers experience turnover rates exceeding 40%, with many educators citing lack of support for children with complex behavioral needs as a primary reason for leaving. Meanwhile, the prevalence of developmental disabilities among children has increased significantly, with approximately one in six children aged 3-17 years having one or more developmental disabilities. This growing need, combined with workforce challenges, creates a critical gap in services that this bill helps address.

Let me share a story that illustrates the transformative impact of therapeutic childcare support. We worked with a three-year-old boy with significant support needs, namely in communication and challenging behaviors, which occurred more than 50 times per day. Through our program's collaborative approach – involving parents, teachers, and providers like myself – and implementing hands-on modeling, we achieved remarkable results. His challenging behaviors decreased by 95%, and more importantly, he developed crucial social and communication skills. He successfully transitioned between classrooms, maintained his progress across different settings, and developed the foundational skills needed for school readiness, including sharing with peers and engaging in cooperative learning.

Children with challenging behaviors don't have to be isolated or left behind. I am testifying today because I have witnessed firsthand how proper support and funding for therapeutic childcare programs can prevent early childhood exclusion and promote genuine inclusion. Without such support, many children with high support needs face removal from early childhood settings, losing critical opportunities for development alongside their peers. The Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program provides essential resources that enable centers to maintain inclusive environments while supporting both children and staff effectively. This investment not only supports immediate needs but builds a foundation for long-term success in inclusive educational settings.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. I ask you to move this bill forward with a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Ciara Barkley-Cutting, M.Ed., BCBA, LBA
The Arc Prince George's County

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ciara Barkley-Cutting". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Easterseals testimony_SB359.pdf

Uploaded by: Dennis Alexander

Position: FAV



Testimony in Support of SB359, Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
January 29, 2025, 10:30 am
Respectfully submitted by
Dennis C. Alexander, Director of Government Relations

Mister Chair and Members of the Committee, on behalf of Easterseals, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support SB359 to extend funding for the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program in FY27 and beyond.

Easterseals DC MD VA is a nonprofit organization serving Maryland (except for the Eastern Shore), Northern Virginia, and the District of Columbia, leading the way to full equity, inclusion, and access through direct and life-changing disability and community services to thousands of children and adults in our neighborhoods, regardless of their disability, military status, income, race, or age.

We currently operate a combined total of eight child development centers and Head Start programs throughout the area. Five of these programs are located in the State of Maryland.

At Easterseals we recognize that the emotional and physical health, social skills, and cognitive and linguistic capacities that emerge in the early years are all important for success in school, the workplace, and in the larger community.

The Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program is critical to organizations like Easterseals that specialize in providing child development services to children under the age of 6 years who have developmental delays, disabilities, and physical and mental health concerns. Currently, about 30% of children enrolled in Easterseals center-based programs have a special need.

Providing high-quality child care for children with disabilities and delays requires a comprehensive approach that addresses their unique needs, promotes their development, and ensures they feel included and supported. Some key elements of Easterseals programs include:

- ongoing teacher training, including embedded training on communication development and support for children with trauma-based behavioral concerns;
- adaptations of learning environments such as calming corners in classrooms and use of equipment such as mobility aids or adaptive feeding equipment/seating;
- utilizing additional classroom staff and;
- hiring additional support staff, including a behavioral health clinician to support children and their families.

Since inclusive classrooms are a blend of children with and without special needs, we are limited in the number of spaces

we can offer to families of children who need support, especially in our classrooms for 3-4 year olds, in which we experience the highest demand. Due to the high number of families in need, our centers are often overwhelmed with more requests than we can fill. Due to this need, the continued support from programs like the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program is absolutely essential.

As one parent told us, "It was important for us that [our son] be able to take part in a larger community of kids...It gets back to those questions we had after the diagnosis: Would he ever go to school? Would he have friends? He is 2 ½ and he's done both...[Easterseals] has given us this gift of giving our child a fulfilling, happy life."

In summary, Easterseals continues to support many communities in Maryland by providing high quality, inclusive early child care and education that supports children with developmental, behavioral and medical needs. With 90% of brain development occurring in the first five years of life, a strong foundation in the early years increases the probability of positive outcomes in school and beyond. The Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program serves a critical role in helping us serve some of our most fragile children and I encourage you to support continued funding for this program.

MD Catholic Conference_SB 359_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Garrett O'Day

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE**

January 29, 2025

**SB 359
Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations**

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of Senate Bill 359. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government. We offer this testimony on behalf of the families of more than 50,000 students served by over 150 PreK-12 Catholic schools in Maryland.

Senate Bill 359 would extend funding for the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program, mandating funding from FY2027 onward. The purpose of the Program is to provide grants to providers that specialize in providing child care and early childhood education to children under the age of 6 years who have developmental delays, physical disabilities, or delays in social, emotional, or behavioral functioning. The Conference previously supported legislation to create the Program in 2022. Therein, funding was only mandated through FY2025. This legislation would ensure the existence of and funding for the program after fiscal year 2027.

Children are the core of the family unit and any legislation that seeks to stabilize their child care environment should be considered a priority. Stable child care is an essential component to supporting strong, economically secure families. Moreover, enabling working parents' continued access to child care services is an imperative part of combating poverty. Often, a barrier to sustainable and full-time employment is the availability and affordability of reliable child care services. The State should thus do all it can to support access to child care services for working parents.

This bill would provide specialized child care to those children who most need attention in addressing their cognitive, emotional, psychosocial and language development. Moreover, funding continuity is an important aspect in educating children with disabilities. It is for these reasons we request a favorable report on Senate Bill 359.

SB 359 Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Fund

Uploaded by: Jane Krienke

Position: FAV



Maryland
Hospital Association

Senate Bill 359- Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations

Position: *Support*

January 29, 2025

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

MHA Position

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 359.

The Maryland General Assembly passed legislation in 2022 to establish the Therapeutic Child Care Program to deliver specialized childcare and early childhood education for children with developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, or delays in social, emotional, or behavioral functioning. The bill includes an annual appropriation.

There are a limited number of therapeutic childcare programs in the state. These programs specialize in caring for medically fragile children. The [Early Childhood Education and Development Center](#), an affiliate of Kennedy Krieger Institute, for example, cares for medically fragile children younger than 5. Services are provided without regard to the family's ability to pay. The Center relies on grants and donations, which are not sufficient to cover the actual cost of these services.

[The Lourie Center for Children's Social & Emotional Wellness](#), part of Adventist HealthCare, serves approximately 4,000 children and families, offering a therapeutic childcare program, specialized preschool, and family-focused services for over 35 years. Research shows the effectiveness of interventions through the Lourie Center, which also relies on grant funding and donations.

Senate Bill 359 would ensure stable funding to continue these critical services. Sometimes children with special medical needs remain in hospitals beyond what is medically necessary if a parent or guardian does not have the resources or family support to care for them at home. Funding for therapeutic childcare programs supports the child receiving care as well as their family.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report on SB 359.

For more information, please contact:

Jane Krienke, Director, Government Affairs & Policy
Jkrienke@mhaonline.org

1.27 SB 359- Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program

Uploaded by: Lonia Muckle

Position: FAV



SB 359 - Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

January 29, 2025

SUPPORT

Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair and members of the committee thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 359. This bill will extend the Therapeutic Child Care Grant which gives grants to providers specializing in therapeutic childcare and ensuring children have access to early childhood education environments tailored to their unique needs.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

CASH was the nonprofit administrator for Baltimore City's guaranteed income (GI) program and provided \$1,000 monthly payments over 24 months to 200 young parents. During this program, CASH hosted a book club that combined GI participants and participants from Baltimore City's Infant and Toddler Program (BITP). The book club participants were all parents of children with disabilities, allowing them to connect over the shared challenges of caregiving. Many expressed concerns about trusting others to care for their children due to their unique needs. They shared the difficulty of finding childcare providers who are both willing to accept their child and capable of meeting their needs. This challenge often creates barriers to securing employment and accessing additional resources.

SB 359 provides opportunities for parents and children. It expands therapeutic childcare and provides families with the support needed to participate in the workforce and improve their financial well-being while providing care and resources for the children.

Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for SB 359.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope

2025 MOTA SB 359 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Paddy

Position: FAV



Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

PO Box 36401, Towson, Maryland 21286 ♦ mota-members.com

Committee: Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 359

Title: Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program – Funding -Alteration

Hearing Date: January 29, 2025

Position: Support

The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports Senate Bill 359 – *Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program – Funding Alterations*. The bill makes the annual funding level of \$3.7 million into a permanent requirement. Under current statute, the Governor is only required to fund the program through fiscal year 2026.

Occupational therapy practitioners are committed to early intervention for young children whose daily functioning is affected by developmental delays, physical disabilities, or behavioral health challenges. The Therapeutic Child Care Program supports partnerships between child care centers and health programs to provide effective early intervention for children. These partnerships are critical to supporting families seeking to ensure their children can integrate into educational, family, and social settings.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Michael Paddy at mpaddy@policypartners.net.

SB359 King Sponsor Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Senator Nancy King

Position: FAV

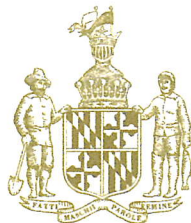
NANCY J. KING
Legislative District 39
Montgomery County

MAJORITY LEADER

Budget and Taxation Committee

Chair

Education, Business, and
Administration Subcommittee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR STATEMENT

Senate Bill 359 – Therapeutic Child Care Grant

January 29, 2025

Mister Chairman and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

Therapeutic Child Care Programs are licensed, integrated mental health and education programs for families with high-risk children from birth to five. These children show significant delays in social and emotional development. Many have experienced trauma in their life, and many have been removed from typical mainstream preschool/daycares due to safety concerns or behavioral issues. Many of these children are medically fragile with medical needs that cannot be addressed in conventional daycare or preschool setting.

There are several Therapeutic Child Care Programs in the State. They include:

- The Arc of Maryland
- Kennedy Krieger Institute
- Kennedy Krieger PACT – Helping Children with Special Needs
- The Lourie Center for Children’s Social and Emotional Wellness

Therapeutic Child Care Programs partner with parents/caregivers to effectively support the development of the child and the family as a whole. Therapeutic Child Care Centers can also offer specialized child care; for example, services for children who are experiencing homelessness or housing uncertainty. And services for medically fragile children.

Therapeutic Child Care Programs have an over 80% success rate of transitioning children to a typical kindergarten and maintaining typical education placement and social-emotional gains through 2nd grade. This success rate results in millions of dollars of savings to the state and counties by reducing long-term intensive special education expenditures.

During the 2022 legislative session, legislation was passed that defined Therapeutic Child Care Programs and set dedicated funding for those programs for two fiscal years. Senate Bill 359 will maintain that dedicated funding.

Interventions at younger ages have a huge potential to alter a child’s future developmental trajectory. The benefits from these early learning programs are substantial and need to be protected and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 359.

SB359_MARFY_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Therese Hessler

Position: FAV



January 29, 2025

Senate Bill 359 - Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) is an association of private child caring organizations providing foster care, group homes, and other services through more than 200 programs across Maryland. The members of MARFY represent providers who serve Maryland's most vulnerable children who are in out of home placements due to abuse, neglect or severe mental health, and medical needs. We operate group homes, treatment foster care programs and independent living programs, primarily serving the adoptive and foster care population as well as a juvenile services population.

We are writing in support of Senate Bill 359 - Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations. These funds enable parents to access high-quality, specialized childcare that offers structured, stable, and nurturing environments tailored to the unique needs of these children. By reducing caregiver stress and preventing burnout, these grants help maintain stable placements and foster strong bonds, both critical for the emotional healing and development of children. Additionally, quality therapeutic childcare enhances long-term outcomes by supporting children's social, emotional, and academic growth, ultimately reducing the likelihood of future systemic involvement and associated costs. Senate Bill 359 aims to ensure these critical support programs can continue.

1

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The Importance of Childcare Grants

Childcare grants ensure that parents can:

1. **Access Specialized Care:** Children often require caregivers with specific training to address trauma, emotional dysregulation, and other complex needs. Childcare providers who receive appropriate funding can offer this specialized support.
2. **Provide Stability for the Child:** Consistent and high-quality childcare provides a structured and predictable environment, which is essential for children recovering from instability and trauma.
3. **Support Parents:** Parents are often working professionals or caregivers with multiple responsibilities. Without access to childcare grants, many may struggle to balance their employment, family responsibilities, and the intensive needs of the children in their care. This can lead to caregiver burnout and placement disruptions, which are detrimental to the well-being of the child.
4. **Enhance Long-Term Outcomes:** Research consistently shows that children who receive quality early care and education are more likely to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. For children in therapeutic care, these positive outcomes are particularly crucial, as they work to overcome the challenges of their early experiences.

The Economic and Social Impact

Maintaining funding for these childcare grants is not just a compassionate choice but also a fiscally responsible one. Children who receive the proper care and support are more likely to transition successfully to adulthood, reducing the long-term costs associated with mental health services, juvenile justice involvement, and unemployment. These grants represent an investment in the future of our children and our communities.

On behalf of the children and families who rely on these services, we ask that you prioritize and protect this critical funding. Together, we can help these children heal, grow, and thrive.

For more information call or email:

Therese M. Hessler | 301-503-2576 | therese@ashlargr.com

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Maryland Association of
Resources for Families & Youth

SB359 - KK - Testimony in Support w Modifications.

Uploaded by: Caitlin McDonough

Position: FWA



Kennedy Krieger Institute

DATE: January 29, 2025

BILL NO: Senate Bill 359

COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation

TITLE: Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program – Funding -
Alterations

POSITION: Support (with modifications)

**Kennedy Krieger Institute supports Senate Bill 359 - Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program – Funding -
Alterations.**

Bill Summary: Senate Bill 359 provides a continuation of the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program – Funding -
Alterations. The purpose of the Program is to provide grants to providers that specialize in providing child care and early
childhood education to children under the age of 6 years who have developmental delays, physical disabilities, or delays
in social, emotional, or behavioral functioning.

The Program officially took effect in Maryland on April 12, 2022. The Program’s grants sought to incorporate the
services formally provided under the Medically Fragile grant. The broad range of medical conditions, developmental and
physical disabilities, and behavioral issues present with resource needs that require a full array of skilled professionals.
Since 2022, the identified programs have provided reports on the cost per child of providing services and the funding
sources.

Background:

Kennedy Krieger Institute is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young adults with developmental,
behavioral, cognitive, and physical challenges. Kennedy Krieger’s services include inpatient, outpatient, school-based,
and community-based programs. Over 27,000 individuals receive services annually at Kennedy Krieger. We employ close
to 3,000 persons who play a vital role in our mission to transform the lives of children with disorders of the brain.

Families and caregivers for children with complex medical needs have very few resources for inclusive, medically, and
developmentally supported early childhood education. We believe our mission is to serve children and their families
through a stimulating MSDE (Maryland State Department of Education) accredited (five-star Maryland EXCELS rating)
integrated early childhood education center. As you are aware, Kennedy Krieger is home to the Early Childhood
Development and Education Center (EDEC, formerly known as PACT, Helping Children with Special Needs, Inc.)
providing a continuum of programs offering early child care and education to children and families:

- EDEC World of Care: 6 weeks- age 5 educational child care with embedded nursing and therapies
- EDEC Early Learning Classrooms: inclusive 3-and 4- year-old preschool classrooms with diverse needs
- EDEC Southeast Early Head Start: 6 week- age 3 attachment-based and trauma-informed model of care
- CASSI Inclusive Pre-K: inclusive 3-and 4- year-old preschool classrooms with diverse needs

These programs are built on an inclusion model – bringing together typically developing children with those who are
neurodiverse or have medical needs to learn and play together in a safe and supportive environment.

Rationale:

The ability of our early childhood programs to provide exemplary service for children with significant medical and/or
developmental needs is in large part because of our highly skilled and educated workforce of teachers, support staff, and related
service providers who dedicate themselves to the children and families we serve. Kennedy Krieger and our partners
participating in the Therapeutic Child Care Program must rely heavily on government and philanthropic (both foundation and
corporate) grants, as well as donations from private philanthropy, to continue programming to cover costs. We expect the same
transition to kindergarten for children with such significant needs as we do for those who may be typically developing, without
providing sufficient resources to support the needed differential learning environment and specialized learning approaches.

This legislation can create a permanent funding source that has not previously been present for early childhood providers serving children with medical fragility and developmental concerns. Kennedy Krieger strongly recommends a tiered cost model rather than a standardized cost per child. In 2021, the legislation established \$3,700,000 per year; there has been no adjustment for inflation, annual cost-of-living, nor the increasingly complex array of services our children and their families require each year, especially post-COVID-19.

To support the amendment to SB 359 related to a tiered model with a new 2025 based, Kennedy Krieger encourages the committee to review the three years of cost-per-child reports submitted by each program, showing the complexity of children served and the array of services provided—not all which were covered by the Therapeutic Child Care legislation. While we have four programs that are designated as Therapeutic Child Care Programs, each program’s funding is not determined by the developmental (to include behavioral), the medical acuity, nor the complexity of the child/family dynamic. The average cost may be higher, should a child need a dedicated aid, nurse, or other services not readily provided by the program. Each child and family requires individualized responses and planning to address their unique needs. We account for this range by supporting all children with and without disabilities through a customized child family learning plan as well as supporting children with disabilities through an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Educational Program (IEP).

Going forward, our early childhood programs can develop enhanced partnerships to support training, competency, and capacity building to provide exemplary service for enrolled children with significant needs. Kennedy Krieger’s EDEC has committed significant resources in supporting and retaining a highly skilled and educated workforce of teachers, support staff, and related service providers who dedicate themselves to the children and families we serve. Unfortunately, because of being a historically underpaid field, Kennedy Krieger, like fellow childcare programs, has struggled to retain and hire highly qualified staff.

We are confident that creating permanent and increased funding will enable us to continue to innovate in supporting the early childhood workforce, enhance service delivery models for our children, and result in a significant return on investment. Research has shown that effective early care and education make a difference and yield a significant return on investment, with the Bipartisan Policy Center citing that it is as much as \$13 for every dollar invested.¹

Renewing and expanding the Therapeutic Child Care fund to allow the full implementation of staffing and practices proven to benefit children is not simply good for children, but society at large. The availability of research-based therapeutic early learning enables parents to work, helping to address Maryland’s higher-than-the-national-average reduction in prime-aged women in the workforce. But more than that, it gives these families peace of mind as their children thrive. Early learning and preschool have a considerable impact on the health and well-being of families. High-quality programs generate long-term impacts to prevent or reverse the damaging effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), improve access to nutrition, and enhance a child’s cognitive and physical development; a particularly critical need given the exponential increase in mental health challenges being demonstrated by Maryland’s youngest learners and their families post Pandemic.

While we applaud the allocation of funding under the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program, it is critical that these funds adjust to inflation and the increased cost of providing efficacious care that meets demand in subsequent years.

Summary:

Enacting the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program – Funding - Alterations will allow Maryland families to have access to the highest quality of early childhood education programming, while decreasing the burdens placed on the child, family, and the system. We thank Delegates Mireku–North, Atterbeary, Foley, Kaufman, Miller, Solomon, Terrasa, and Vogel and the Ways and Means and Appropriations Committee for their leadership on this issue. It is time for Maryland to join other States to avoid being the last to readjust post pandemic in early childhood education.

Kennedy Krieger Institute requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 359 with consideration of annual funding adjustment to cover costs.

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¹ Bipartisan Policy Center (2023). *Investments in the Future Workforce*. Washington: DC.
<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/download/?file=/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/BPC-ECI-Bipartisan-Toolkit-2023-Investments-in-the-Future-Workforce.pdf>

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Senate Bill 359 Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program—Funding—Alterations

STATEMENT OF INFORMATION

DATE: January 29th

COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation

SUMMARY OF BILL: Senate Bill 359 alters the fiscal years during which the Governor must include an annual appropriation of \$3.7 million to the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program. The bill would extend the mandatory funding beyond fiscal years 2023-2025 to include fiscal year 2027 and each fiscal year thereafter.

POSITION: Statement of Information

The Administration acknowledges the critical services that the therapeutic centers provide and has included \$1.5 million in the FY 2026 budget to support continuity of operations for the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program through MSDE. The bill would require a mandated appropriation of \$3.7 million annually beginning in FY 2027 and each fiscal year thereafter, and therefore the fiscal impact relative to the FY 2026 budget as proposed is \$2.2 million general funds. Of this amount, \$1,283,000 would go to existing providers maintaining FY 2022 levels, \$1,917,000 to existing providers for additional services, and \$500,000 to new providers or existing providers for enrolling additional children.

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is charged with submitting a balanced budget to the General Assembly annually and will be working with the General Assembly to achieve structural balance over the long term. If this bill were to pass, we look forward to working with the General Assembly to identify a sustainable solution for the remainder of the mandated funding.

**For additional information, contact Dana Phillips at
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