

HB0185 Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations\_Written Testimony  
K.Rosenthal

January 27, 2025

Dear Chair Atterbeary and the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Krishtine Rosenthal am the mother of a child with a disability and am submitting this testimony in support of HB0185 Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations. Since 6 months of age, my now three year old son Desmond has been enrolled at the Karasik Family, Infant and Child Care Center (KFICCC) in Montgomery County, which receives The Therapeutic Child Care Program Grant. As you know, this grant is designed to provide medical based, child centered early education. While this is important for all children, it is even more critical for those like my Desmond.

Desmond is a jubilant three-year-old with Down Syndrome. My husband and I learned of his diagnosis while he was *in utero* and experienced a wave of emotions because of all the unknowns. A significant one was what to do about childcare. From the start we were very blessed though to have an amazing medical team and a community of families with loved one with Down Syndrome. When we asked both these groups for feedback on early childcare centers to consider, they both very highly recommended KFICCC and spoke its praises, which I can see why now. For instance, his teachers enthusiastically worked very hard with Desmond and his physical therapist to help him learn to walk independently and shared precious videos with us of him taking some of his first steps there!

At KFICCC, Desmond has had the opportunity to experience the wonderful benefit of learning in an inclusive, high-quality environment. As a psychologist and former preschool teacher with a Masters in Early Childhood Special Education, I was immediately impressed with the curriculum-based learning that the center follows and the focus on whole child development. Further, the fact that they have a nurse on site is crucial for children with special needs like Desmond who at times can require onsite support so that they can have their medical needs accommodated to so that those needs do not become a barrier to them accessing care and learning. Along those lines, Desmond also received early intervention services through the Infants and Toddlers Program of Montgomery County. It was a tremendous benefit to us that KFICCC has such a strong connection with the Infants and Toddlers program as this helped with communication between therapists and his teachers, which significantly facilitated more consistent implementation of goals on his Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Lastly, the fact that KFICCC's hours are from 7:30am-5:30pm makes it so that fulltime working parents, like myself, are able to continue working knowing that their child is being well cared for in such a loving and enriching environment. I cannot imagine sending him anywhere else!

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I would like to end this testimony by thanking Delegates Mireku-North, Atterbeary, Foley, Kaufman, Miller, Solomon, Terrasa, and Vogel for their support of this legislation. Without the Therapeutic Child Care Program Grant, Desmond and my family would face significant hardship as grants like yours help keep KFICCC's tuition affordable for us and other families. Please remember Desmond's story and approve HB185. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Krishtine Rosenthal