



**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:

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