



March 17, 2025

To: The Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
From: The Lourie Center for Children's Social and Emotional Wellness  
Re: HB185/SB359 Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Dear APP Chair Delegate Ben Barnes and B & T Chair Senator Guzzone,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the Therapeutic Childcare legislation under consideration, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this critical conversation. I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Delegate Bernice Mireku-North and Senator King for their dedication and leadership in advocating for the needs of our most vulnerable and youngest children.

As the Vice President of Special Education and Early Childhood Programs at Adventist HealthCare, I bring over 15 years of experience as an educator and education administrator, specializing in serving vulnerable populations, including those in special education and low-income communities. While Adventist HealthCare is widely recognized as a premier medical center, we are deeply proud of our unwavering commitment to addressing the social and emotional needs of children and families through the efforts of the Lourie Center and its Therapeutic Nursery Program.

Our Therapeutic Nursery Program stands as a testament to our dedication to early intervention and support for children. This program not only serves as a crucial investment in our community but also proves to be a cost-effective measure overall. By providing a structured and nurturing environment, our Therapeutic Nursery Program equips preschoolers with the tools to regulate impulses, foster positive relationships, express emotions healthily, boost self-esteem, and cultivate a love for learning.

Research has demonstrated that such early interventions not only enhance the well-being of children and families but also significantly reduce the likelihood of future incarceration, poor health outcomes, and other challenges. By supporting initiatives like the Therapeutic Childcare legislation, we are not only investing in the present well-being of our children but also in a brighter and more prosperous future for our society.

I implore you to consider the profound impact that the proposed \$2.2 million cut to this legislation will have on the lives of countless children and families in our community. The suggested



allocation stands at 1.5 million, a notable reduction from the long-standing 3.7 million that providers have depended on. This funding is essential to uphold crucial services for families statewide with children facing intricate healthcare needs. A substantial reduction in funding puts the continuity of these services at risk and will undoubtedly decrease the number of children who benefit from them. These early intervention programs have proven impact that reduce future needs and costs. By advocating for sustained funding and support for specialized care programs like the Therapeutic Childcare initiative, we are taking a vital step towards ending intergenerational adversity and ensuring that every child can reach their full potential.

During this session, there are bills (HB 185/SB 359) aimed at prolonging funding for this program in the future. The Senate's approved version of the bill would secure funding from FY27 to FY29 at 3.7 million annually. However, the House's revised version of the bill from Friday would decrease the allocation for FY27-29 to just 1.5 million.

**We ask for your help to restore 2.2 Million to the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program (R00A02.57) to the FY26 budget AND conform the House Bill 185 to the same language/posture as Senate Bill 359, to ensure the appropriation of 3.7 million will be in place for the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program from FY27-29.**

Please let me know if there is any additional information I can provide to support this critical request.

With sincere gratitude,

*A. Kesso Diallo*

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