



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Ways and Means Committee

HB 1475: Office of Child Care Advisory Council – Publicly Funded Prekindergarten – Analysis and Report (Mixed Delivery Model Viability Act)

March 11, 2025

Position: Support with Amendments

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to lead the lives they want with the support they need. As such, we are closely involved in policy, practice, and legal changes that increase access to quality and quality child care where children with and without disabilities learn, play, and succeed together. As such, we support HB 1475, ***with an amendment to ensure the Advisory Council reviews ways to expand opportunities for children with disabilities to learn alongside their peers without disabilities***. Specifically, we strongly recommend including the following to Section 1(b):

- (13) Opportunities to expand publicly funded prekindergarten where children with and without disabilities, in natural proportions, learn together, including:
- (i) Ways to braid funds,
 - (ii) Improving teacher and staff recruitment and training in best practices, and,
 - (iii) Collaboration of local education agencies and private prekindergarten providers to provide specialized transportation and special education and related services to prekindergarten students with IFSPs or IEPs.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Requires the Office of Child Care Advisory Council to conduct an analysis of the mixed delivery, publicly funded prekindergarten system established under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

WHY is it important?

- **Increasing access to early care and education for Maryland's children is critical for their development.** This is particularly true for young children with disabilities who need more access and opportunity to learn and play alongside their peers without disabilities.
- Eligible three and four-year-old children with disabilities should be able to participate in public and private regular early childhood programs and settings with their non-disabled peers with meaningful access to the general education early childhood curriculum. **This leads to improved child outcomes on critical school readiness skills, resulting in a narrowing of the performance gap with non-disabled peers.**
- By conducting an analysis, the Office of Child Care can identify solutions to challenges, and create a path forward, to help even more Maryland families. **By including specific analysis of issues affecting access to early care and education for young children with disabilities, the mixed delivery system can be more effective for all children.**

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