



HB 185 - Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations
House Ways & Means Committee
January 29, 2025
SUPPORT

Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair and members of the committee thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 185. 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.**

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.

The Therapeutic Child Care Grant supports childcare providers in maintaining high-quality services, expanding access, and providing essential support to families with children with disabilities. The inclusion of \$500,000 specifically for new or existing providers to enroll additional children addresses the persistent gap in access for families in underserved areas. Research consistently shows that early interventions for children with developmental delays yield significant returns on investment. They reduce the need for costlier services later in life, improve educational outcomes, and foster self-sufficiency.

HB 185 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 HB 185.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope