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7362 Calhoun Place
Rockville, MD 20855

Adult Services
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Employment
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Children & Youth Services
After All
4140 Wexford Drive
Kensington, MD 20895

KFICCC
10611 Tenbrook Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20901

January 27, 2025

House Ways and Means Committee
131 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Atterbeary and the Ways and Means Committee,

The Arc Montgomery County is submitting this testimony in support of [HB0185](#) Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program - Funding - Alterations. As I am sure you are aware, this grant helps organizations like The Arc Montgomery County operate much needed early care and education programs for all children, both those with and without disabilities.

Because of the timely support from the Grant Program, The Arc Montgomery County has been able to operate the Karasik Family, Infant and Child Care Center (KFICCC) facility in Silver Spring, which includes both children with and without disabilities into the same classroom. Our method ensures that all students enrolled are actively included in the classroom, without the need of segregated classes. While our methods are new, the results speak for themselves. All of our students are developing at or above anticipated levels, we believe this is largely due to our inclusive classrooms, which always maintain the necessary staffing levels for education and medical staff. In a time when early childcare is in short supply, and inclusive classrooms are deemed too expensive to run, we have managed to operate a facility that not only delivers but does so in a way that is less expensive than other early care programs.

Due to our highly competitive pricing, and general lack of early childcare education in Montgomery County, we unfortunately have had to limit the number of seats available. Currently, we have 120 children enrolled in our program, most of which come from low-income families and some that utilize our childcare program for reduced cost via the Childcare Scholarship, Working Parent Voucher, PreK grant or Equicare Grant. Any seat that opens in our facility is promptly filled from our waitlist, which varies by age and need. For infants, children with disabilities and children with medical needs, the wait can be as long as two years.

"Eddie" is a perfect example of how children and their families benefit from KFICCC. As a three-year-old with diabetes, "Eddie" needs a nurse on-site in order to attend PreK. He also receives on-site support for speech and a few other developmental delays that were likely the result of this medical condition. He loves our PreK program, and is on track to be ready for kindergarten. His parent was able to return to work because Eddie had secure childcare. In order to allow our nurse to have sick days or vacations, we are currently seeking a second full-time nurse. We also hope this will allow us to admit more medically fragile children, but a full-time nurse's salary is quite expensive.



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Unfortunately, none of this is possible without funding from the state, including the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program. Although we have a good business model, the funds from the state ensure that we are able to provide education and care for children regardless of a family's ability to pay. Timely and reliable funds from the State of Maryland are necessary for KFICCC to operate, and HB0185 will be a step in the right direction, providing reliable funds to be distributed every year. This certainty is key as it allows us to plan ahead and continue to provide the support and services to families in need.

We thank Delegates Mireku-North, Atterbary, Foley, Kaufman, Miller, Solomon, Terrasa, and Vogel for their support of this legislation, and urge the committee to vote in the affirmative.

Sincerely,

The Arc Montgomery County