



## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

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### House Ways and Means Committee House Appropriations Committee

#### **HB 849: Child Care Scholarship Program – Freeze in Enrollment – Exceptions** **Letter of Information**

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) supports the Child Care Scholarship Program because of the positive impact on children with disabilities and their families. The Child Care Scholarship Program (CCSP) provides financial assistance with child care costs to eligible families in Maryland. The eligible family receives a voucher to use to purchase child care directly from the provider of their choice. Services are provided to eligible families based on an established categories and priorities. Within in each category, eligible families experiencing homelessness and eligible families of children with disabilities are given first priority.

Programs must provide children with disabilities and their families an equal opportunity to participate in the child care program and services by providing reasonable modifications, accommodations, and provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services needed for effective communication.<sup>i</sup> Some of these additional accommodations may be costly. In recognition of that, **Maryland law allows for increased CCSP reimbursement rates to a child care provider for the additional costs of providing one-time or ongoing accommodations to a child with a disability – up to 15% above the traditional reimbursement rates or more if approved by MSDE.**<sup>ii</sup>

#### **WHAT does this bill do?**

- Adds to the list of people who are exempt from the CCSP enrollment freeze. Current regulation sets out 4 groups of people currently exempt from the enrollment freeze (page 3, lines 23-32).

Since the early 1990s, Maryland families, children, and child care providers have dealt with several long periods of CCSP enrollment freezes and waiting list. The most recent enrollment freeze and waitlist began in May 2025, causing a hardship for many Maryland families, including those of children with disabilities. **This is equally true for the direct support workforce that supports Marylanders with developmental disabilities.**

In addition, the cost of raising a child with disabilities is already higher than raising a child without disabilities. Prioritizing families, other than those of children with disabilities, and those who care for Marylanders with developmental disabilities, potentially adds an additional expense that not possible for many families. There are many groups of people that care and support others, and access to child care is critical for them too.

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<sup>i</sup> Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C. § 12101 (2009).

<sup>ii</sup> COMAR 13A.14.06.11(E)(5).