



House Ways and Means Committee

January 29, 2025

House Bill 185 – *Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program – Funding – Alterations*

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of support for House Bill 185.

House Bill 185 extends funding for the Therapeutic Child Care Grant Program which was created in 2022. The Program provides grants to providers that specialize in providing childcare and early childhood education to children under the age of 6 years who have developmental delays, physical disabilities, or delays in social, emotional, or behavioral functioning. The original legislation mandated \$3.7 million in funding for fiscal years 2023, 2024 and 2025. Passage of House Bill 185 will ensure the program continues and current funding levels are maintained beyond fiscal year 2025.

The Therapeutic Child Care Program supports partnerships between childcare centers and health programs to provide effective specialized childcare to children who need attention in addressing their cognitive, emotional, psychosocial and language development challenges. These partnerships are critical to supporting families seeking to ensure their children can integrate into educational, family, and social settings. The Program has been very effective in meeting its objectives and MDAAP strongly supports continuation of the program. Moreover, funding continuity is an important aspect to ensure the Program can continue to effectively care for and educate children with disabilities. It is for these reasons we request a favorable report on House Bill 185.

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