

Support Children with Disabilities

The following legislation supports children with disabilities and their families:

HB 86/SB 421 – Special Education – Translation of IEPs and IFSPs – Native Language

Requires local school systems to provide parents a child's individualized education program (IEP) or individualized family service plan (IFSP) in the family's native language, if spoken by 1% or more of the student population in the local school system.

- With information in a parent's native language, he or she can be better prepared to meaningfully participate in the special education process for the child.

Parental Consent – no bill number yet

Requires school systems to get written parental consent when an IEP team proposes one of the following changes in a student's IEP: 1) moving a student from the diploma to certificate track, 2) including restraint or seclusion in the IEP, 3) reducing or terminating services, or 4) initiating a change in placement. If a parent refuses to consent, in writing, the school system can choose to mediate and/or file for a due process hearing.

- If the school system files for due process, they will have the burden of proving why they want to make the change to the student's IEP.
- This bill helps families become meaningful participants in the special education process and gives parents an equal voice in the decision-making process.

HB 85 – Education – Students with Disabilities – Support Services – Parental Notification

Requires school personnel to provide parents with written information about, and contact information for, the family support services staff members within the local school system.

- Family support services are staffed by an experienced parent of a child with a disability who has already been through the early intervention or special education process and can provide advice, guidance and support.
- With information about resources to support them, parents will be able to be more meaningful participants in the special education process.

Paraprofessional Training – no bill number yet

As currently drafted, this bill would require MSDE to establish a Task Force to create a plan to provide online training to paraprofessionals who work with students with autism.

Paraprofessionals are teacher aides or assistants who support the teacher and students with disabilities in the classroom.

HB 551 – Education – Children with Disabilities – Individualized Education Program Mediation

Requires IEP teams to provide parents of children with disabilities with a written and oral explanation of the parent's right to request mediation, contact information to receive more information about the mediation process and information about free legal assistance. It also requires MSDE to have staff to assist parents to understand the mediation process.

Maryland State Department of Education FY17 Budget:

The Governor's proposed FY 2017 budget includes the following funding, among other things that will impact children with disabilities and their families:

- \$18.2 million for the Autism Waiver so that 1000 children with autism will continue to receive services. This is the same amount of funding as FY2016. **There over 10,000 students in Maryland identified as having autism, over 4000 children are on the Autism Waiver registry waiting for services and the Autism Waiver currently serves 1000 children.**
- \$10.4 million for the Maryland Infants & Toddlers Program--the same funding level as FY2016. **The Maryland Infants & Toddlers Program supports over 17,000 children and their families each year. Early intervention services play a critical role in a child's development.**
- The Geographic Cost of Education Index (GCEI) was fully funded this year, after being cut last year. The GCEI is a discretionary component of the State funding formula for education that has provided additional funding to 13 local school systems since 2009 to reflect regional differences in the cost of education that are due to factors outside the control of the local jurisdiction.
- \$4.3 million for public prekindergarten education - the same amount of funding as FY2016.
- \$5.7 million increase in funding for the Child Care Subsidy program. \$3 million of this is General Funds. Total program funds would increase to \$97.4 million, which is estimated to provide free or reduced-priced child care to 18,610 children.

For additional information about the bills highlighted here, please contact:

Rachel London, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, RLondon@md-council.org



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COALITION

**People on the Go of Maryland • The Arc Maryland • Maryland Disability Law Center
Maryland Association of Community Services • Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council**

#DDDday16