

House Ways and Means Committee
*HB 718: State Department of Education- Early Literacy and Dyslexia Practices-
Guidance and Assistance*
February 19, 2020
Support with Amendments

The Arc Maryland is the largest statewide advocacy organization dedicated to the rights and quality of life of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We support House Bill 718, which would require MSDE to establish a stakeholder advisory group to develop a reading and dyslexia handbook. The Advisory group would use the best practices cited in the Maryland Dyslexia Task Force report (2017) as the starting point for the Handbook.

Like 23 other states with reading and dyslexia handbooks, a Maryland handbook would provide teachers, administrators and parents with state specific, consistent best practices for reading and dyslexia and would include best practice information on reading instruction, reading screening, reading interventions for students at risk and public access to information on MSDE's public website.

A majority of students with IEPs struggle with reading and have reading goals as part of their individualized education plan (IEP). Teachers, administrators, and parents need a definitive resource on reading practices and dyslexia practices that are easily located and accessible.

We support the amendments to be offered by the Sponsor and also ask that the composition of the stakeholder advisory group be amended to include

- AT LEAST ONE MEMBER WHO SELF-IDENTIFIES AS HAVING DYSLEXIA.

Self-advocacy is very important to The Arc Maryland. People who experience disabilities are experts, among those who study the condition, and are best positioned to make recommendations to develop the resources we seek.

Respectfully submitted,

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Executive Director