

(E) "PROGRAM" MEANS THE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM.

7-702.

(A) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT:

(1) THERE ARE OVER 2,500 DISABLED CHILDREN PLACED OUTSIDE OF THEIR HOMES BY STATE AGENCIES;

(2) BECAUSE OF A LACK OF SUPPORT SERVICES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, FAMILIES ARE OFTEN FORCED TO PLACE THEIR DISABLED CHILDREN OUTSIDE THE HOME AND EXCESSIVE COSTS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH CERTAIN RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS;

(3) THE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES PROJECT SPONSORED BY THE MARYLAND STATE PLANNING COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT DISABLED CHILDREN CAN BE RETURNED TO THE COMMUNITY AND NEW RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS PREVENTED WHEN SUPPORT SERVICES FOR FAMILIES ARE AVAILABLE;

(4) FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES ENABLE FAMILIES TO PROVIDE FOR THE NEEDS OF THEIR DISABLED CHILDREN IN THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE SETTING; AND

(5) MAINTAINING DISABLED CHILDREN WITH THEIR FAMILIES HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED TO BE COST EFFECTIVE.

(B) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECLARES THAT IT IS THE POLICY OF THIS STATE TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY AND THEIR FAMILIES, TO PRESERVE FAMILY UNITY, AND TO PROMOTE FAMILY STABILITY BY:

(1) PROVIDING ESSENTIAL FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES TO ASSIST FAMILIES IN CARING FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY IN THE HOME; AND

(2) DIMINISHING THE USE OF RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY.

7-703.

(A) (1) ~~THE--ADMINISTRATION--SHALL--ESTABLISH~~ THERE IS A FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM.

(2) THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL CONTRACT WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE PROVISION OF FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES.

(B) THE ADMINISTRATION SHALL IMPLEMENT A SLIDING PAYMENT SCALE FOR REIMBURSEMENT FROM FAMILIES FINANCIALLY ABLE TO PAY FOR ALL OR PART OF THE SERVICES UNDER THE PROGRAM.

(C) (1) BEFORE USING PROGRAM FUNDS, THE PROGRAM SHALL COORDINATE AND ASSIST ANY ELIGIBLE CHILD AND FAMILY IN RECEIVING SERVICES AVAILABLE UNDER EXISTING PROGRAMS INCLUDING: