

Testimony in Support of *HB-7586*

Early Intervention Funding

House Committee on Finance

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The Economic Progress Institute supports Representative Cotter's HB-7586, which would fully fund Medicaid rate increases for Early Intervention services and mandate the state to maintain and update the Early Intervention data dashboard.

All children deserve equal access to high-quality education. For babies and young children with disabilities or developmental delays, Rhode Island's Early Intervention program - which provides free developmental and educational support for children under the age of three - is a critical piece of achieving equal access to high-quality education. Early Intervention has been proven to have lasting beneficial effects throughout a child's life with improving socioemotional development, academic performance, and employment outcomes.¹

However, babies and young children are not able to get their needs met through Early Intervention due to service delays and inadequate staffing. As of January 2026, there were 134 infants and toddlers who had been waiting more than 45 days for services. The average wait time was 102.3 days for the children and families who have been waiting over 45 days for services.² Rhode Island is failing to meet our own state standards and federal rules, despite the Medicaid rate increase for Early Intervention services that passed in 2024 – the first rate increase in the last 20 years.

Additionally, HB-7586 mandates the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to continue to maintain and update the Early Intervention data dashboard. Comprehensive dashboards have been proven to provide policy makers and administrators with the critical information they need to make informed quality improvements for educators and programs.³

Fully funded Early Intervention is beneficial for children, families, and the workforce. Increased funding reduces turnover and ensures more children receive the services they need to thrive. The Early Intervention data dashboard is a vital tool for administrators and policymakers to understand needs, prioritize investments, and implement effective strategies to improve services for vulnerable children and families. The Economic Progress Institute urges passage.

¹ [Importance of early intervention as it relates to developmental delay or disabilities, 2023](#)

² [Factsheet Fund Early Intervention, Right from the Start, 2026](#)

³ [State Early Childhood Data Dashboards, Alliance for Early Success, 2023](#)

