



March 25, 2026

The Honorable Teresa Tanzi
Chair, Subcommittee on Human Services
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H7127, Governor's FY 2027, FY 2026 Revised and Capital Budgets – Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Dear Chairwoman Tanzi and Members of the Human Services Subcommittee:

Thank you for this opportunity to express my support for the Rate Increases in the FY2027 Budget (H7127) – EOHHS Budget, for Early Intervention services.

My name is Monique DeRoche, and I am the Director of Family Service of Rhode Island's Early Intervention program. I have worked in Early Intervention for 18 years in a variety of roles, and I have had the opportunity to speak before you previously in support of funding for these critical services.

I would like to begin by thanking you for your past support in approving rate increases for Early Intervention. These investments have made a meaningful and measurable difference; programs are more stable, children are receiving services sooner, and we have successfully eliminated waitlists. Just as importantly, families are now more likely to experience consistent care from the same providers throughout their time in Early Intervention, which is essential for strong developmental outcomes and family commitment and satisfaction with these essential services.

I am writing to emphasize the importance of continuing cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for Early Intervention providers outlined in the Governor's Budget Bill H-7127. While we appreciate the Governor adding rate increases in the budget, the proposed rate is only half of the rate recommended by OHIC. We ask that the legislature support the full OHIC rate and include that in the budget.

These ongoing increases are critical to maintaining a stable, qualified workforce. Without them, programs risk renewed staff turnover and shortages that can lead to service delays or the reemergence of waitlists; challenges we have worked hard to overcome, and which are especially harmful during this vital stage of development.

Thank you again for your leadership and continued commitment to Rhode Island's youngest children and their families. I respectfully ask that you prioritize these investments to sustain the progress we have made and ensure that every child who needs Early Intervention services can access them without delay.

Sincerely,

Monique DeRoche
Health Department Director
Family Service of Rhode Island