



Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children



Right from the Start

March 5, 2026

The RI Association for the Education of Young Children voices its support for H-7968, Rep. Giraldo’s bill to strengthen Temporary Caregivers Insurance, which represents the state’s paid family leave program. The bill would bring our program up to the national standard with number of weeks (12), establish an option for self-employed workers to buy in, and add seriously ill grandchildren and seriously ill people for whom a worker routinely provides care and safety to the program. We believe that the increase in weeks is long overdue, as where we were once a national leader, we are now falling behind.



As the state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, RIAEYC represents early childhood educators who are committed to advancing high-quality early learning and promoting the well-being of young children and their families across Rhode Island. We support paid family leave because we recognize that a child’s first high-quality early learning experiences happen at home when infants bond with parents/caregivers. **These critical weeks of development represent the foundation for all future learning and improves health outcomes.** Studies show\*...

- Mothers that had access to paid family leave saw a 51% reduction in re-hospitalization
- Infants of the same population saw a 47% reduction in re-hospitalization
- Increased paid family leave (12w+) increases immunization uptake
- Increased paid family leave decreases infant mortality rates

Furthermore, we recognize paid family leave’s benefits on the broader early childhood education system. For one, early childhood educators’ employers may struggle to support this critical leave on their own given their razor thin margins, so the state’s support in this endeavor will matter greatly and reduce burnout. Also, longer leaves will alleviate some of the demand for infant care, as parents/caregivers are able to spend more time at home and delay enrollment in child care.

Securely attached, healthy infants eventually show up to early learning programs ready to learn and play, and early childhood educators will positively benefit from access to adequate paid family leave. Please consider passing H-7968, Rep. Giraldo’s bill to strengthen Temporary Caregivers Insurance.

Sincerely,

Lisa A. Hildebrand, M.A.  
Executive Director  
RIAEYC

Alyson Panzarella Girard, M.J.  
Early Learning & Policy Specialist  
RIAEYC