

Rhode Island Chapter

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American Academy of Pediatrics

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Testimony in Support of H-7627: Early Intervention Extension: Bridge to Preschool
House Health and Human Services Committee

March 30, 2026

Dear Chairperson Donovan and Members of the Committee:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, RI chapter supports H-7627, which would improve transition from Early Intervention services into the preschool system for children who remain eligible for services.

Early Intervention provides critical services for infants from birth to age 3 who have been diagnosed with developmental delays, under federal IDEA law, Part C. At the 3rd birthday, these services transition into the special education department of their school district (Part B) if the student remains eligible for services. For young learners whose 3rd birthdays are in the spring or summer, this results in a gap of services while waiting for the new school year to start. Subsequently, these children may regress in skills and lose opportunities for therapeutic and educational optimization. This bill would give families the option to continue EI services with providers who have a therapeutic relationship with their child until September after the child's 3rd birthday, if that child has demonstrated need and remains eligible for services. The bill only impacts children whose birthdays fall between May 31 and August 31. This bridge will allow for a more seamless transition into the public school special education setting with peers when the school year resumes.

As a pediatrician who cares for many children with medical complexity and developmental needs, I can personally speak to the importance of a smooth transition from Early Intervention into the school system. When services lapse at this critical age, progress is delayed and this can impact long term developmental potential.

All children in Rhode Island deserve the opportunity to grow and thrive; to obtain their optimal physical, social, and emotional health, and to thrive academically in school. This legislation - which has already been passed in six other states and Washington, DC - is necessary to support our youngest and most vulnerable learners in our school special education systems. The AAP, RI Chapter urges you to support this necessary legislation.

Sincerely,

Allison W. Brindle, MD, FAAP
Board of Directors, American Academy of Pediatrics, RI Chapter
East Greenwich, RI

