

# Rhode Island Chapter

INCORPORATED IN RHODE ISLAND

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



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## **RIAAP Testimony in Support of HB7627**

Dear Chairman Donovan and members of the committee,

I'm writing on the behalf of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (RIAAP) in support of HB7627, which extends Early Intervention (EI) until the beginning of the school year for children born between May 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup>. This bill closes a common gap that we see when our highest risk children graduate from EI the day they turn three, but are not enrolled in special education services in their districts until late August or September.

Children with special needs, like those with autism, language delays, or physical ailments requiring intensive services, need continuous schooling and specialty services to have the best outcomes. Any gap in care, particularly at the critical age of three, can set them back, and require intensification of services to get them back the skills that they've lost. Receiving services from the providers that know them most to get them to a smooth transition in September is the ideal scenario that we fail to see well too often.

In addition, in my experience, but many districts with the least resources (like Providence and Central Falls to name two) are more likely to delay their PreK start until the beginning of the school year. This creates a racial and socioeconomic inequity, as those districts with more resources are more likely to offer smoother transitions and less gaps in care.

Thank you for your support of this important bill...

Gregory Fox, MD, FAAP

Advocacy Chair  
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