

**TO:** The Honorable Members of the General Assembly

**FROM:** Education Stakeholders

**DATE:** October 13, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Early Intervention Funding - State Budget

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On May 29, 2020, Governor Wolf signed the 2020-2021 Enacted Interim Budget. In that budget, all direct service Pre-K – 12 education programs, including Basic Education Funding, Pre-K Counts, Head Start Supplemental, Career & Technical Education, and Special Education were funded at 100% of the prior year’s allocation; however, the Early Intervention line item was funded at only 43%. We urge the General Assembly to complete their budget work prior to November 30 to ensure continuity of services, and to fully fund early intervention programs so preschool children with disabilities are not negatively impacted by service reductions.

State and federal law requires Preschool Early Intervention programs to serve all eligible children at no cost to families. The number of eligible children and the number of services children require and receive has increased dramatically, resulting in multiple high-cost services per child. Pennsylvania’s Preschool Early Intervention Program serves over 50,000 children (ages three to five) with disabilities and developmental needs. These programs and services ultimately set children up for success in the K-12 education system.

During the COVID pandemic, intermediate units and other Mutually Agreed Upon Written Arrangement (MAWA) agencies continued to provide early intervention programs and services to children. Today, preschool children with disabilities continue to receive services even though there is no guarantee that the remaining funding will be allocated. Failure to provide the remaining 57% of the early intervention allocation will result in loss of services for these children and will necessitate that intermediate units and other MAWA holders furlough teachers and staff.

There has been strong bipartisan support in Pennsylvania for increasing investments in early childhood education. We urge you to extend the same commitment to preschool children with disabilities and developmental delays. We urge you to fully fund this program prior to November 30, 2020, and we urge you to allocate the remaining 57% of the monies needed to appropriately provide the needed programs and services for preschool children with disabilities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Allies for Children  
American Federation of Teachers – Pennsylvania (AFT)  
Education Law Center  
The Education Policy and Leadership Center (EPLC)  
Education Voters of Pennsylvania  
One Pennsylvania  
Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical Administrators (PACTA)  
Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units (PAIU)  
Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools (PARSS)  
Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA)  
Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials (PASBO)  
Public Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY)  
Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA)  
Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA)  
Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT 400)