



April 29, 2026

Chair Hanna Gallo
Senate Education Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: In support of Senator Valverde's S2785, re Early Intervention

Dear Chair Gallo and members of the Committee:

We write in strong support of S2785, specifically the provision requiring increased Medicaid payment rates for Early Intervention providers. The bill would direct the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to increase Medicaid rates for Early Intervention services by the amount recommended in the 2025 social and human service programs review, with implementation by October 1, 2026.

For over 190 years, Children's Friend has worked to advance the well-being and healthy development of Rhode Island's youngest and most vulnerable children. Today, we provide a continuum of services for children and families across the state, including Early Intervention, where we served approximately 770 children last year. We see every day how critical these services are in helping infants and toddlers with developmental delays build skills early, when intervention can have the greatest impact.

At the same time, Rhode Island's Early Intervention system is under significant strain. Low reimbursement rates have made it increasingly difficult for providers to recruit and retain the qualified staff needed to deliver timely, high-quality services. S2785 addresses this challenge directly by increasing Medicaid payment rates so providers can better cover the actual cost of employing service coordinators, early educators, and licensed professionals.

For providers like Children's Friend, rate increases are essential to sustaining capacity and improving access. When reimbursement rates do not keep pace with the true cost of delivering services, agencies face staffing shortages that limit the number of children they can serve and delay needed support for families. Strengthening provider rates is one of the most practical and immediate steps Rhode Island can take to stabilize the Early Intervention system and improve service availability.

Board of Directors

Carmen A. Mirabal
Chairwoman

Kimberly I. McCarthy, Esq.
Vice Chairwoman

Kyle O. Mason
Treasurer

Benjamin J. Mellino
Assistant Treasurer

Bahjat Y. Shariff
Secretary

Kamilah A'Vant

Mary Cram

Rosa E. De Castillo

Ana Echevarria De Saquic

Mark Griffin

Maureen Gurchigian

Leonard L. Lopes, Esq.

Ivette C. Luna

Susan Carney Lynch, Esq.

Oliver Majewski

Eduardo E. Naya

Martha Newcomb, Esq.

Aneri A. Patel

David Caprio
President and
Chief Executive Officer



Children's Friend respectfully urges you to support S2785 and its investment in stronger Medicaid reimbursement for Early Intervention services. This is a necessary step to ensure that infants and toddlers with developmental delays can receive the timely support they need.

Thank you for your time and review of this testimony, and for your continued efforts to support the children who are the future of our State. If you have further questions or need any additional information, please contact me at dcaprio@cfsri.org.

Sincerely,

David Caprio
President and CEO