



***Elementary and Secondary Education Public Hearing on:***

***H.B. 5005: An Act Adjusting the State Budget for The Biennium Ending June 30, 2021***

***Testimony of Kimberly Paluska, Vice President of Early Intervention for Harc, Inc.***

February 13, 2020

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Lavielle and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am Kimberly Paluska, the Vice President of Early Intervention for Harc Inc., a Birth to Three Early Intervention provider that currently serves 550 children and their families annually in 16 towns in the Greater Hartford Region.

Please support the Governor's proposal to increase funding for Birth to Three by \$3 million, a program of the Office of Early Childhood (OEC). Birth to Three is a crucial program that helps children with significant delays get ready for school. Every dollar invested in Birth to Three saves the State \$12 per year in the future.

These services are important to families and children achieve age appropriate developmental milestones from an early age. Research shows that children who receive intervention in these critical years achieve better outcomes. For example, when our early intervention professionals first assessed 18-month old Jose for potential communication delays, he only spoke two words and deemed eligible for the program. Through the intervention of our therapists and the work of him and his family, Jose graduated from the program at three years old with an age appropriate vocabulary, speaking in two- to three- word sentences. This illustration demonstrates the difference Early Intervention can make in the life of a child.

Respectfully,

Kimberly Paluska  
Vice President of Early Intervention  
Harc, Inc.