

**Testimony Re: H-5164 – Early Childhood IDEA Task Force**  
**House Education Committee**  
**February 6, 2025**  
**Elizabeth Burke Bryant, JD**

Chairman McNamara and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Elizabeth Burke Bryant and I am a Professor of the Practice of Health Services, Policy, and Practice, based at the Hassenfeld Child Health Innovation Institute. I am presenting this testimony in my personal capacity.

I strongly support H-5164 sponsored by Representative Lauren Carson. This bill would create an Early Childhood IDEA Task Force that would make recommendations to improve the delivery of IDEA services to young children with developmental delays and disabilities from infancy through kindergarten entry.

A comprehensive and coherent plan is needed to ensure all the babies and young children in the state that have developmental delays and disabilities get what they need as early as possible to thrive. Recommendations from this task force can also help to inform needed revisions to the RI School Funding formula to ensure adequate funding for the overlooked population of young children ages 3 to 5 with disabilities and delays. **There has been a 3+ year persistent waiting list for Early Intervention with 283 infants and toddlers waiting for services as of January 2025. And young children ages 3 to 5 receive inconsistent and often inadequate access to early childhood special education. See attached fact sheet.**

I urge your favorable consideration of this important bill that will improve the health, development, and school success of Rhode Island's young children.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and thank you for your leadership for children and families.