



SB 2012
Senate Appropriations – Human Resources Division
Tuesday, January 24, 2023
Senator Dick Dever, Chair

Chair Dever and Members of the Senate Appropriations - Human Resources Division:

My name is Roxane Romanick and I am writing as the representative for Designer Genes of ND, Inc., as their Executive Director. Designer Genes' membership represents 230 individuals with Down syndrome that either live in our state or are represented by family members in North Dakota. Designer Genes' mission is to strengthen opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome and those who support them to earn, learn, and belong.

Our organization is primarily concerned about the funding for the Inclusion Support Program (<https://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childcare/inclusion.html>) as your committee discusses the Early Childhood Section of the Department of Health . The Inclusion Support Program has two main components to assure young children with disabilities can be supported in a typical child care setting. These are a grant program for child care providers for additional staffing, equipment, supplies, and/or facility modifications and inclusion specialists to help stabilize, maintain, and enhance placements of children with disabilities.

This program is funded with state general funds and the Early Childhood Section for the Department manages the grant program. The Department contracts the funding for the inclusion specialists to a non-profit provider.

Designer Genes would like to see a strong continuum of opportunities for our youngest members who have Down syndrome and the Inclusion Support Program is critical to that work. We would encourage the committee to consider an expansion of this program and to create some additional permanence to the grants so that children do not experience any interruption to their supports.

Roxane Romanick
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