

HB 1416

House Human Services Committee

Feb 2, 2021

Chairman Weisz and members of the committee,

Today I am testifying in favor of HB1416. I am a mom to five children. Two children received Part C, Early Intervention Services. Another child received services in Part B, Early Childhood Special Education at BECEP (Bismarck Early Childhood Education Program). I have also worked as an Experienced Parent and Parent Mentor working with families in Early Intervention Services.

Many have called me “passionate” about Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education and I am because these programs changed the trajectory not only for my children but for our whole family. As a young mom to a baby born with a club foot the supports, I received from Early Intervention Services helped get the care my daughter needed, helped with my mental health as I navigated appointments and post-partum depression, and helped me identify that my older son was struggling. I was also supported by a parent with a child that graduated from Early Intervention and share my journey as a mom navigating so many new things as a home visitor came to visit our family, she was able to reassure me that my oldest child was struggle. My mom “gut” knew it, but our pediatrician said it was “normal” 2-year-old behavior.

Because of Early Intervention my daughter born with a club foot is an active 17-year-old. My son with “behavior” issues is now a 19-year-old attending Concordia College in Moorhead and is hopeful to have a soccer season this spring. Because of high quality Early Childhood Experiences both my children never required an IEP when entering the K-12 system.

As I have testified on this often, I have no DATA to support what high quality early childhood means in one or two decades.

I would like to list the pros and areas of suggestion

Concern:

1. In section 3 “To act on behalf of the department of public instruction to administer part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act” I have a with the Part B not being specific to only 3-year-old to K. Another concern is that Part B is part of IDEA and I feel needs to be done even under Kindergarten in collaboration with DPI.
2. I have concern with 4-year-old being the only age listed. When children with a delay or disability are age 3 and exit Early Intervention services that are also covered under Part B of the IDEA. We already have issues in rural area to get adequate services for family and children with children age 3. Concern some may only provide inclusive services for children that qualify for Part B services and start it at 4.
3. ALL Early Childhood Experiences must embrace inclusion.

4. We need to consider the family's needs in partnership with IDEA and our children Birth to K. I feel more emphasis should be placed in this bill on family to family supports, building family capacity, and building parents as a child's first/best teacher.

Pros:

1. All Early Childhood Experiences being under one entity. From Childcare, home visiting programs, Part C, Early Intervention, Preschool, Early Childhood Special Education, or any other entity that supports infants and toddlers.
2. Opportunity to develop longitudinal data on children like my own. To show what high quality early childhood experiences show in our communities in 10-20 years.
3. Increased efficiency and decreased duplication of services.

I recently toured the Burleigh Morton Detention Center that cost our taxpayers \$9 million to just build. I remember before my son received services through Early Childhood Special Education Services and I received the needed supports to advocate for him, I feared his behaviors were a path to the judicial system. I challenge you to take the leap to spend money on our greatest natural resources, our children and families.

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