

Submitter: Ashley Crow
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5515

To the Joint Subcommittee on Education,

When my son, Theo, was not walking at 18 months old, we were referred to private physical therapy services. These services were 1) next to impossible to book due to lack of providers in the area, 2) infrequent, 3) only held at the clinic, and 4) poorly covered by my insurance (which is generally very good), we only received 5 1 hour sessions per calendar year. I felt lost and anxious that I could not get my child the support he desperately needed to succeed. Fortunately, a friend of mine who has a special needs child, mentioned Early Intervention services that were provided by the state and recommended I check them out. Every single person I have had the pleasure of interacting with at the Northwest Regional Early Service District have been absolutely top tier in their knowledge, caring, and skills to help my son thrive.

Today, Theo is 3 1/2 years old, and we still are benefitting from the Early Childhood Special Education teachers. My son runs with his friends, has learned how to manage his big feelings without hitting/biting/scratching and shows very little signs of any disability. All of these triumphs are in credit to the teachers we've worked with at Northwest Regional. Keri taught us how to challenge Theo to use his muscles and build his core strength; Jill helped Theo strengthen his mouth and expand his vocabulary; Katy supported us when we went through the incredibly hard process of having to find a new childcare center and ensured that Theo landed somewhere that had the skills to ensure his success. These incredible teachers and therapists have all given my husband and I the peace of mind we needed to be able to sleep at night. Each and every single one of them has shown us an unparalleled level of compassion as we've endured some of the darkest times with our child. I cannot put into words the level of gratitude I feel towards these services, the people that do the work, and the amazing program. Please for the sake of our children and our future, please give these programs the funding they desperately need to continue to provide this impeccable level of support.

Thank you,
Ashley Crow