



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

Serino Fights to Improve Early Intervention Services for Disabled Infants and Toddlers

SUE SERINO June 9, 2015

| ISSUE: **FAMILIES, SPECIAL EDUCATION, CHILDREN**

SERINO FIGHTS TO IMPROVE EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES FOR DISABLED INFANTS AND TODDLERS

ALBANY, NY—Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) announced today that her bill aimed at improving efficiency, cost effectiveness, quality and access to services under the Early Intervention (EI) program passed in the Senate.

“Every parent wants to see their child reach their full potential,” said Senator Serino. “Early Intervention plays a critical role in connecting families to the resources and services they need to help their children develop and succeed in that regard. Ensuring access to and quality of the program empowers families to give their children the chance that they deserve.”

Senator Kemp Hannon (R—Rockville Centre), the Chair of the Senate Health Committee and the bill’s prime co-sponsor said, “Right now, access to these critical services are being delayed or eliminated and we have a responsibility to understand why that is and to find appropriate solutions. This bill will give us the tools we need to do that and to ensure that the high

quality of these programs is maintained because when it comes to Early Intervention, quality is key.”

Early Intervention is a family-centered, community-based approach to improving quality of life for infants and toddlers whose healthy development is compromised. The program’s mission is to identify and evaluate those children, as early as possible, to provide support, resources, and appropriate intervention to assist in the development of the family and the child.

Currently, providers, families, and the State Legislature are unable to access specific, timely, comprehensive data on the implementation of the Early Intervention Program that could have the potential to improve overall quality and efficiency.

Senator Serino’s bill, [S. 5497](#), requires the Commissioner of Health to collect and report data on the Early Intervention program annually, and by municipality, with an emphasis on information relating to provider capacity, timeliness of services to infants and children, and timeliness of payment so that the program may be evaluated and improved upon.

“The benefits of Early Intervention cannot be understated—by taking a proactive approach to helping our children with unique needs, it has the potential to reduce long term costs for special education services for our school-aged children, it provides necessary support to families and most importantly, it can literally change the course of a child’s life.”

The bill has been sent to the Assembly where it is carried by Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee.

###