

March 10, 2015

To: Co-Chair Betty Komp and Co-Chair Rod Monroe and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Sub Committee on Education

From: Sara Koyano

Re: Support to House Bill 5016 and 5017

My name is Sara Koyano and my husband Derrik and I have five children. Our youngest is Carly, who is four years old and is attending with me today. Carly was born with trisomy 21, which is third copy of the 21st chromosome also known as Down syndrome. After the initial shock from the diagnosis, my husband and I quickly recovered knowing that we loved this little girl no matter what. We have the same hopes and dreams for Carly as we do for our other children.

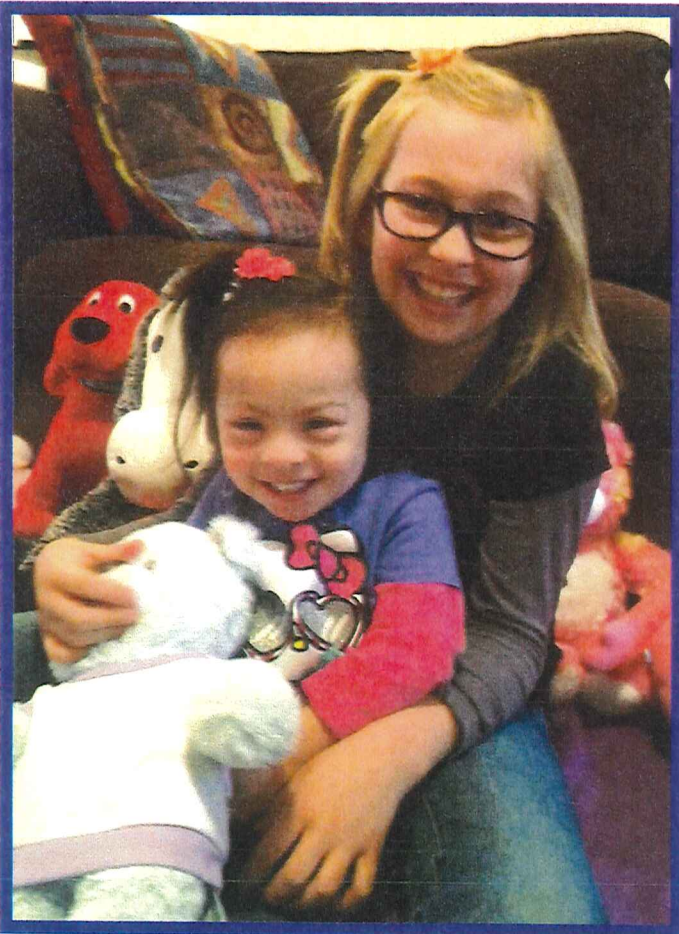
Carly is the bravest and most determined person I know. She enjoys playing with her dolls and her kitchen and loves Elmo and the Wiggles. She loves to run and ride her bike. She especially enjoys hanging out with her big sister Bailey who is her BFF!

Our family has received Early Intervention services since Carly was four months old. When we initially began, we received home visits only and later added in speech therapy. Carly is currently attending a community preschool, where she is in a classroom with typical peers. Carly receives Early Childhood Special Education services at her school which includes speech therapy and augmentative communication consultation from an Occupational Therapist along with visits from her Early Intervention Specialist. Recently Carly has also received a special education assistant in the classroom who helps with things that the teachers may not have time for like helping her use her iPad to make choices during circle time and help with toileting.

I can not begin to tell you how much Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education has meant to our family. We have always had high expectations for Carly and more importantly, she has very high expectations for herself. From the very first meeting with Vicki our Early Intervention Specialist, it was obvious that she too had high expectations for Carly. She never once told me "Carly can't do that." Vicki was a huge source of inspiration and support for our family. She was a person who understood when others didn't. I will forever be grateful for her. When Carly started preschool, we knew that we wanted her in a typical preschool with typical peers. Early Childhood Special Education has helped provide the supports that Carly needs to succeed in that setting. Not only is Carly successful in pre-school but she enjoys it immensely and she has made many friends. She is an important part of her school and her community and we know that this success will follow through to kindergarten and beyond. Early Intervention has provided our family and our daughter a framework of information, encouragement and support that has helped ensure her success.

I request that you increase funding for the vital services of Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education. Thank you for your time.

Carly



Bailey and Carly

Expect me to succeed.



I will.