



Alliance for the Betterment of
Citizens with Disabilities

Empowering People: Providers Shaping Policies

DOH FY'27 Budget Listening Session
November 5, 2025

Commissioner Brown and NJ Early Intervention staff, during the span of the Murphy Administration working closely with Senate Majority Leader, Theresa Ruiz, your achievements have been considerable. Thanks to you, armies of occupational, speech and physical therapists continue to show up at family homes each week to support and instruct families and to teach infants/toddlers how to walk, talk, and gently play with toys, minimizing and sometimes preventing permanent disability. It's easy to forget that this was not a reality for infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities and delays over a generation ago. Thank you for defending societies' achievement. Thank you in advance for I have no doubt the proposed budget you pass to the next administration will reflect this dedication.

Our therapists find their work extremely rewarding because they make a difference in children's and families' lives. Their effectiveness is due in no small part to their professional training and licensure. 55% have a master's degree and 16% have either a doctoral degree or advanced diploma. 58% hold a certificate or licensure for the early childhood years; 37% for the lifespan. ¹ But far too many of these committed and qualified professionals report that they are likely to leave in the next 5 years, while 25% reported looking for a job outside of the field in the last six months. ²

Shortages of qualified workers is a pervasive problem across health and human services. Low compensation is not the only, but it is certainly a major factor. This administration has worked hard to ensure that our workforce is well supported, trained, and compensated. We must continue to support DOH staff and EI providers in this effort, so that children do not "face delays and interruptions in accessing the services they need to succeed. "³

To this end, we request that the Early Intervention Provider rates increase by a minimum of 3% COLA.

Thank you.

¹ Friedman-Krauss, Barnett, Jost, & Garver *Help Wanted: Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education Workforce Needs. Findings from a National Survey*. National Institute for Early Education Research. July 2024.

² Ibid, page 6.

³ Ibid, page 6.