



ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

Helping children succeed in school

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ACTION ALERT: **Oppose Early Intervention Parent Fees**

BACKGROUND:

Brain research demonstrates that the stimulation and interaction a child receives during the first 5 years of life are critical to permanent brain development. Early intervention services can reverse a trajectory of poor development and help prepare children to succeed in school and life, ultimately saving taxpayers money.

Parent Fees: New York's Early Intervention (EI) program provides free services to 0-3-year-old children who have developmental delays or disabilities. However, Governor Paterson's 2010-2011 state budget proposal would require families to pay for EI, jeopardizing children's access to needed services. Families earning more than 250% of the federal poverty level (\$46,000 for a family of three) would have to make quarterly payments for each eligible child. If a family missed even one payment, the child would lose EI services and become ineligible for EI. Families who are unable to provide proof of income would have to pay the highest amount with no exceptions, impeding the eligibility of children in foster care, children whose families are homeless, and children of undocumented immigrants.

This proposal would burden families, increase bureaucracy, and force many children to lose services that help them develop during the important early years. The New York State Legislature and Governor Paterson are in the process of negotiating budget proposals, including the proposed EI parent fees.

TAKE ACTION:

CALL your state legislators and urge them to oppose Governor Paterson's budget proposal to require parents to pay for Early Intervention, included in the Health and Mental Hygiene budget legislation (S. 6608/ A. 9708), because it would burden families, increase bureaucracy, and force children to lose EI services. To find your NY State Senator, go to <http://www.nysenate.gov/?OpenForm> and to find your NY Assembly Member, go to <http://www.assembly.state.ny.us/mem/>

Please forward this alert to others who may be interested in taking action.

For more information, contact Randi Levine at Advocates for Children of New York at (212) 822-9532 or rlevine@advocatesforchildren.org.

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