

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Date March 1, 1995

MEMO FROM MAGGIE WILLIAMS

TO: Melanne Verveer

The attached is for your:

Information _____

Advice XXX

Action _____

COMMENTS: Should we answer this?

Children
With
Disabilities

Melanne Verveer

Keep on active
file 'til we
get response.

ICT
can we
file?
RM

*Melanne
Should
we answer
this
Maggie*

Gail Chasey Beam
425 Aliso Drive, NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108
505/266-5191

February 28, 1995

Maggie Williams
Chief of Staff, Office of the First Lady
FAX: 202/456-6244

Post-it* Fax Note	7671	Date	2/27/95	# of pages	6
To	Maggie Williams	From	Gail C. Beam		
Co./Dept.	Off. of First Lady	Co.			
Phone #		Phone #	505/266-5191		
Fax #	202/456-6244	Fax #	505/272-5280		

In view of Hillary Rodham Clinton's strong commitment to young children and their families, I would like you to know how very disappointed families and advocates are in the President's 1995-1996 budget proposals for the youngest children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This budget proposal includes three devastating changes:

1. NO FUNDING FOR PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION for children with disabilities, ages three through five (IDEA Part B, Section 619). Preschool funds have been transferred into the Part B state grant program without an earmark to ensure funding for 3-5 year olds. The combination of these grant programs will result in cuts to programs for preschool children. There must be separate funding at the level of at least \$670 million to guarantee appropriate services for these children.
2. THE ELIMINATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION AND TRAINING PROJECTS and the transfer of those funds to a block grant. The Early Education Program for Children with Disabilities (EEPCD) has provided state-of-the-art knowledge and methods for over 25 years. This program's budget is only \$25 million, and it has been evaluated independently as one of the best examples of research-to-practice in the federal government. The blocking of this program will undoubtedly result in a decreased emphasis on very young children and their families.
3. NO INCREASE FOR INFANT/TODDLER PROGRAM (PART H of IDEA) will result in fewer services to these very young children and their families. Last September, all states finally promised to provide services to eligible children and their families, thus increasing the number of children receiving services. Without the federal commitment, states may find it impossible to keep their promises, putting the program in severe jeopardy across the nation. The funding level needed is \$376 million.

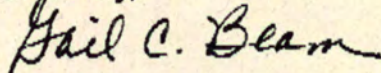
Here in New Mexico, where so many children live below the poverty level, and where so many families have to travel great distances to receive services for their young children with developmental problems, the effects of such actions will be suffered widely. We know that Mrs. Clinton is supportive of families and very

interested in children being nurtured and receiving a solid foundation at a very young age. Those of us who worked for President Clinton's election and who continue to support him hope that our appeal on behalf of these families and their young children will be heard.

I have also enclosed letters to President Clinton and Secretary Riley from the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) to provide you with additional background. Families and advocates are particularly upset that we have not been able to work with the Department of Education, despite more than 20 years of successful bipartisan collaboration with previous Administrations. In fact, when I called Secretary Riley's office about this matter, I was redirected numerous times, and was finally referred to the Director of EEPD, the program scheduled for elimination. I then called Judith Heumann's office to try to convey my concerns, and was again referred to the Director of EEPD. I did ask her staff to let her know that it does not feel **responsive** to have such calls referred an individual who is not at a decision-making level, and who, in fact, probably shares many of my concerns.

Thank you very much for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,



Gail C. Beam

xc: Melanne Verveer, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the First Lady



THE DIVISION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

EXECUTIVE OFFICES: 2500 BALDWIN ROAD, SUITE 15, PITTSBURGH, PA 15205

TELEPHONE: (412) 937-5430

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February 10, 1995

President Bill Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C., 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to express our shock and disappointment at your 1995 - 1996 budget proposals for the youngest children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). We do so on behalf of our 7,000 members who are parents and professionals working across this country to improve early services for children with special needs, birth to age eight years and their families. We do so, also, on behalf of the children who cannot speak for themselves.

For over twenty years, the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) has worked hand-in-hand with Presidents, the Department of Education and members of Congress of both parties to advance critical early intervention services for young children with special needs and the scientific knowledge upon which those services are based. We are greatly dismayed and alarmed that you propose to: 1) eliminate the funding for the Preschool Program under Part B of IDEA, 2) repeal the Early Education Program for Children with Disabilities (EEPCD), and 3) freeze the funding level for the Infant and Toddler Program of Part H of IDEA. As we are sure you are aware, the Preschool Program assures that even under current fiscal demands, school districts across the nation will have an assured federal partnership to help pay for educational services for 3 - 5 year olds. These services are critical prior to school age if these children are to reach their full potential. In the last few years every state in the nation held up their end of the bargain by adopting policies that provide these important preventative and supportive early services. The federal government needs to keep its' part of the bargain.

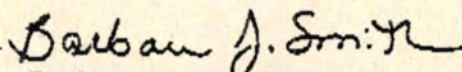
Secondly, the EEPCD Program has provided grants for research, program innovation, training and technical assistance for twenty five years to ensure that the service provided young children with disabilities and their families are based on sound and cutting-edge research and development. We know of no other federal grant program that has been evaluated as often with as stellar conclusions about the impact it has had nationwide on science and service. Indeed, it is

considered a model for transporting research into practice cost-effectively. It is ironic that your proposal should call for the outright repeal of EEPD in this it's 25th anniversary year and the second year of full implementation of early intervention policies by every state. The states' service providers and families depend on this program to help them do the very best they can for young children with disabilities.

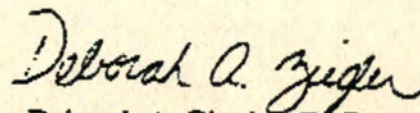
Finally, as noted above, every state in the nation embarked in 1986 under Part H of IDEA on a long and difficult road to reach all eligible infants with special support to assist in their optimal development. This journey only recently reached the significant milestone of assurances of early intervention services for every eligible infant in every state nationwide. The states embarked on this journey with the understanding that there would be sufficient federal support not to make empty promises to families. Your budget proposal of 1995 - 1996 funding at this year's level is a broken promise.

We implore you, Mr. President, to work with families and professionals to craft a more reasonable answer to budget reduction and government streamlining. It is also ironic that through your leadership, the nation has a goal to have every young child enter school ready to learn and yet these proposals would result in millions of children reaching school age unready to learn. Surely your administration can find ways to reduce the budget while having less impact on such a vulnerable group of children and families. Surely, you will save these programs for young children with disabilities. We stand ready to work with you to do this.

Sincerely,



Barbara J. Smith, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Deborah A. Ziegler, Ed.D.
President

cc: Secretary Richard Riley
U.S. Department of Education



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February 10, 1995

Secretary Richard Riley
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Riley:

We are writing to express our outrage at the 1995 - 1996 budget proposals for the three IDEA programs that address the youngest children with disabilities and their families. First, the funding for the Preschool Program under Part B is eliminated; second, the Early Education Program for Children with Disabilities (EEPCD) under Part C is repealed; and, finally, the funding for the Infant/Toddler Program (Part H) is frozen at this year's funding level. On behalf of our 7,000 members nationwide representing parents and professionals, we urge that these proposals be revised.

As expressed in the attached copy of our letter to President Clinton, these three programs represent an effective research to practice model as well as an important federal - state partnership. The Preschool Program and the Infant/Toddler Program are beacons of hope to millions of young children with disabilities and their families. Through these programs the federal government agreed to help pay the cost if states would assure that education, developmental and family services were provided as early as possible to children and families based on research findings that show that earlier is better than later. The states have held up their end of the bargain. In the face of daunting fiscal constraints, every state has recently assured that they will serve all eligible infants and young children. This is the time to support their efforts - not to withdraw.

The EEPCD program of research, innovation, training and technical assistance has, for twenty five years, been a model for research - to - practice. Indeed, according to outside evaluations of the program, perhaps no other federal program has been as successful in generating new knowledge and translating that knowledge into practice. With more young children with disabilities being served now than ever before - this is no time to stop learning how to do it better.

It is inexplicable to us why these programs have been targeted at a time when state commitment is so recent and the need for cutting-edge research findings and training is so great. It is also paradoxical, that in light of ED's focus on Goals 2000 which has as its first goal that all children will enter school ready to learn, the very programs which help to meet this goal for young children who have disabilities and their families are targeted by your Department for repeal or reduced support.

The Division for Early Childhood has worked successfully with every Administration for twenty years to improve and expand early childhood services. We have attempted over the past six months to do so with your department but to no avail. We beseech you, Mr. Secretary, to work with us to craft proposals that will support young children with disabilities and their families, and not abandon them in the rush to reduce budgets. We are eager to work with you in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Barbara J. Smith

Barbara J. Smith, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Deborah A. Ziegler

Deborah A. Ziegler, Ed.D.
President

cc: J. Heumann
T. Hehir
P. Guard