

## **Ways and Means Committee**

### **Public Testimony re: Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education Services**

**Date: Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Given by:**

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#### **Outline of Public Testimony**

Thank you for your time this morning and for the opportunity to provide my personal testimony regarding the Early Intervention program. This testimony is centered on the journey my family has been on with our daughter, Ava, who is 2 ½ years old.

#### **Child's disability:**

- In utero, Ava was diagnosed with Tetralogy of Fallot, a common but complex congenital heart defect. Ava's primary complication was a hole between the two chambers of her heart which required surgical repair. At 5 months old, she had open heart surgery during a 6 hour procedure where she was on heart/lung bypass the majority of the time and had a week of recovery at Legacy Emanuel Hospital.
- At 21 months old she was then diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) – which is an Autism Spectrum Disorder. She has a severe speech delay and difficulty with social interaction.
- At this time there is no known tie between her heart defect and developmental disorder.

#### **Services received from Early Intervention:**

- Specialized physical therapy services concentrated from July 2011 – April 2012 to address her gross motor skill delays – specifically focused on helping her develop her core strength, pull herself up, sit up, learn to crawl, learn to walk and now address her low muscle tone
- Speech therapy services from April 2012 on to address her

#### **What these services have meant to our family:**

1. The coordination of care: nowhere else have I received this type of overall coordination (interacted with 11 different specialty doctors over the last 30 months)
2. The parental support: overwhelmed, distraught at times, don't know what to do to help your child. You cannot put a price on the community of support they provide for the kids and the parents
3. The therapy: provided at home where the child shows their "normal" self and given with tools and techniques to apply in our home to help our child make progress
4. Absolutely positively instrumental in our daughter's progress