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Testimony to Ways and Means Education 3.29.21

Please fully fund the Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education -EI/ECSE Programs

I remember after my daughter's initial evaluation the EI teachers asked me directly 'How are **you** doing?'. I cried at that moment because I had been so worried about my daughter for 8 months that I had forgotten about myself. I answered honestly, 'I feel so relieved that it's not just my imagination that she needs help, that she qualifies for it and that there are people who can help her because I don't know what to do'.

Aven continues to thrive and is almost 4 years old. We marvel at her physical dexterity and her growing confidence and skill with speech and social situations, both of which are direct results from her time with the teachers at Alyce Hatch. It's hard to go back to that place of fear and isolation 4 years ago where the range of challenges facing our family was extensive and maddeningly unknown. I do know that without the support we received from Alyce Hatch services, I don't think we would have ever heard these words from our pediatrician, 'She just gets better and better every time I see her and I have no further concerns about her development'. We need to fund the EI/ECSE programs and the people who know what to do.

From one grateful and thriving family-The Pembertons 2021