July 29th, 2019

The Honorable Mark DeSaulnier
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rodney Davis
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives DeSaulnier and Davis,

The Autism Society of America writes to thank you for introducing the “Funding Early Childhood is the Right IDEA Act”. This bill increases funds for the two early childhood programs within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It authorizes a glidepath of increased authorization levels for the IDEA Part C early intervention program and the Section 619 preschool program. The bill complements the IDEA Full Funding Act (H.R. 1878), which the Autism Society also supports.

Funding for Part C has eroded significantly in the last two decades, from a high of $1,768 per child in 1999 to $645 per child in 2017 as well as Section 619 from a high $1,484 per child in 1992, to $529 in 2017. This bill restores per child authorization amounts under Part C and Section 619 of IDEA. Additionally, with the gradual increase in funding, it insures that as the population of children with disabilities grows, there will continue to be enough funding to provide for all children with disabilities who are preschool age. Early intervention is especially important to students with autism spectrum disorders, who benefit greatly from getting services and supports as early as possible. Early intervention can make a significant difference in the developmental trajectory of an autistic child’s life.

The Autism Society is the nation’s oldest and largest grassroots organization representing children and adults with autism. Ensuring free and appropriate education for students with autism and other disabilities is one of our highest legislative goals.

Thank you again for the introduction of this bill. The Autism Society stands ready to help move the bill through Congress. Please contact Kim Musheno, Vice President of Public Policy at the Autism Society of America (kmusheno@autism-society.org or 800-328-8476) for more information and assistance.

Sincerely,

Scott Badesch
Executive Director and CEO
The Autism Society of America