

April 6, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Murray, Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As organizations committed to promoting positive emotional development for our youngest children, we request that you fund the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Grant Program at a level of \$15 million. This groundbreaking mental health program benefits children who are at risk for mental health disorders or who have been repeatedly exposed to trauma. As the leaders of the respective Subcommittees on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations in the House and the Senate, you have always shown a strong commitment to caring for our nations' young children, especially those who are most in need. This was demonstrated in your decision to fund these new grants in Fiscal Year 2018, a decision that is being celebrated by mental health providers across the nation. We hope you will continue to support the foundational development that positive early mental health represents by increasing funding in this area, where it is desperately needed.

In the 114th Congress, the House and Senate recognized the importance of the mental health of young children and their families by passing the bipartisan *Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act of 2016* as a part of the *21st Century Cures Act* (P.L. 114-255). This important law includes the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Promotion, Intervention, and Treatment program (Sec. 10006) which creates grants that can leverage and improve critically important services in states and communities. First funded in Fiscal Year 2018, these grants will help to change the course for children at risk for mental illness and behavioral disorders and children who have experienced trauma. By investing in early mental health promotion, identification, and treatment, as well as training, coordination and integration among providers through evidence-informed approaches, we can promote positive emotional development from the start and reduce the need for treatment later in life, when it becomes much more difficult, time intensive, and expensive.

These grants will meet an immense need for IECMH treatment services around the country and fill serious gaps in the mental health workforce. By directing resources where the foundations of strong mental health are laid – with young children, starting from birth- you are investing in the future stability and capacity of our nation. For this reason, we urge you to increase funding for the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health grants in the Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations process, and in doing so, invest directly in much needed services that will support young children, build the workforce, and strengthen communities and our country.

Sincerely,

ZERO TO THREE

Alaska Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
Alliance for Strong Families and Communities
Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Group Psychotherapy Association
American Muslim Health Professionals
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
Arkansas Association for Infant Mental Health
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Boston Medical Center Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics
Children's Home Society of America
Children's Hospital Colorado
Colorado Association for Infant Mental Health
Colorado Irving Harris Program in Child Development and Infant Mental Health
Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health
Family Voices
Florida State University
Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health
Illinois Association for Infant Mental Health
Infancy Onward, Indiana Association for Infant Mental Health
Infant Toddler Mental Health Coalition of Arizona
Iowa Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
The Jewish Federations of North America
Kansas Association for Infant Mental Health
Louisiana Infant Mental Health Association
Maine Association for Infant Mental Health
Massachusetts Association for Infant Mental Health: Birth to Six, Inc.
Mental Health America
Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health
Missouri Infant and Early Childhood Association
NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors
New Hampshire Association for Infant Mental Health
New Mexico Association for Infant Mental Health
New York State Association for Infant Mental Health

Ohio Association for Infant Mental Health
Oklahoma Association for Infant Mental Health
Pennsylvania Association for Infant Mental Health
Rhode Island Association for Infant Mental Health
School Social Work Association of America
South Carolina Infant Mental Health Association
Tennessee Association for Infant Mental Health
The Erikson Institute
The Jewish Board
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
The Yale Child Study Center
Tulane Institute for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
University of California San Francisco Infant-Parent Program
Washington Association for Infant Mental Health
West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association
Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health