

## OACB AMENDMENT REQUEST: Substitute SB332



The Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities requests an amendment to Substitute Senate Bill 332 (Jones-Tavares) to ensure the bill does not impact recent changes to the Early Intervention (EI), Part C, portion of the Help Me Grow (HMG) program.

OACB sees Sub. SB332 as a potentially valuable tool in combating infant mortality in the state, and we commend the legislature's effort in addressing this very important issue.

However, we are concerned that some of the bill's HMG provisions may negatively impact recent changes made to the EI portion of the program. Our amendment would address these concerns while ensuring that the intent of SB332 is not changed.

### BACKGROUND

When HMG was created the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) was the lead oversight agency for both the home visiting portion of the program as well as the early intervention portion of the program. While ODH was well suited to oversee the home visiting portion of the program, some issues began to develop with the EI portion of the program because those services were being coordinated and paid for by the county boards of developmental disabilities.

Beginning in 2013, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) and ODH established a collaborative partnership for the implementation of Ohio's Part C program. Each agency was given defined roles for oversight and supervision of different parts of the program. While these changes produced some good outcomes, problems continued to exist and the need to change oversight was apparent. As a result, earlier this year HB483 (Amstutz)—also known as the "DD MBR"—changed the EI lead agency status from ODH to DODD effective July 1, 2016, thus giving EI oversight authority to DODD and leaving oversight of the home visiting portion of the program with ODH.

### CONCERN

As mentioned, the county boards of DD coordinate and pay for EI services provided by county boards of DD. The county boards have become reliable EI resources for their communities, in part, because they have such strong connections to the community. The oversight shift from ODH to DODD has been a big step forward in assisting the county boards to continue to serve their communities. While there has not been enough time for the new changes to be in effect to gauge their overall impact, but we can say definitely that changes to EI at this time would create more problems than solutions.

Our concern with Sub. SB332 is just the one reference to EI on lines 223 and 224 on page 9. The bill creates a central intake and referral system beginning on line 218 on page 8 with Sec 3701.611. The language specifically includes EI as part of this system although the intent seems aimed at the home visiting portion of HMG, not EI.

We respectfully ask for an amendment that would strike the word "including" on line 223 and replace it with the word "excluding." This would ensure that recent changes to EI can take full effect, that eligibility determination for EI can continue to be conducted by a team that includes parents and professionals from multiple disciplines, and the service coordinator can remain the key contact for the family and child through eligibility determination, Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) development, and service access, provision, and monitoring.

Please contact Joe Russell, OACB Policy & Advocacy Director, at [jrussell@oacbdd.org](mailto:jrussell@oacbdd.org) for more information.