



**Interested Party Testimony- Senate Education Committee
Am. Sub Bill 33- State Operating Budget
May 10, 2023**

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Ingram and members of the Senate Education Committee - Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Amended Sub Bill 33, the State Operating Budget, in support of The Childhood League Center's funding request which would appropriate \$250,000 in each fiscal year through the Ohio Department of Education's Educator Preparation appropriation line to provide intensive early intervention and educational services in Franklin County, services and training for providers and families serving children with developmental delays statewide, and to support the Play and Language for Autistic Youngsters (PLAY) Project at The Childhood League Center and in underserved counties.

My name is Diane Ingber. I'm an intervention specialist and the preschool supervisor at The Childhood League Center. I've been a preschool teacher at The Center for 33 years.

I have been a PLAY and TEACHING PLAY consultant for over 5 years. PLAY stands for Play and Language for Autistic Youngsters. When we first started PLAY it came natural to me and it also provided me with many new strategies to engage children on the autism spectrum. What I found is that those strategies are also very effective with all children. As I incorporated them into my daily teaching style, I found that some of the other students were watching me, then they would try to interact with the child as well. The most important part for all the kids is that were having fun and including everyone in their play.

PLAY Project and Teaching PLAY for our teachers and therapists at The Childhood League Center has been invaluable. We infuse the strategies and interventions during the typical school day to the child who is on the autism spectrum. Teaching PLAY is also valuable for all students.

As the only licensed PLAY Project Center in the country, both for Teaching PLAY and PLAY Project, we are honored to train others so they can also effectively engage with children with autism: to complete "circles" of engagement (looking at the person and interacting with them for example) and use the child's interest to further social engagement.

Parents are able to join our PLAY Project training sessions as well. This training helps them to understand what the teachers are doing and helps them come up with their own strategies of ways to engage with their child. This past fall, one of our Center families, attended a PLAY Project training. Her son likes to twirl in circles at times. One day she was having trouble getting him to walk to his classroom at the start of the day. What did she do? She started twirling while

walking, and he joined her—with a smile! She looked up at those of us in the hallway and stated, “I am doing PLAY!” Yes, she was...she saw a moment to engage her son, jumped in and completed a circle. This is the goal, those moments of connection, those moments of joy interacting with your

child, those moments of watching the awakening of a child who has been diagnosed with or is showing signs of autism and was previously shut down. This is also the power of parents, parents learning how to be their child’s best teacher”.

Every child with autism and their family members deserve to know about this intervention. Every teacher should have access to this powerful intervention to help their students learn and grow into successful students.

I respectfully ask you to include our amendment of \$250,000 in each fiscal year in the Ohio Department of Education’s Educator Preparation line to support The Childhood League Center and our work

I can take any questions you may have at this time. Thank you.

Diane Ingber
Teacher
The Childhood League Center