

Megan Badgley
Testimony on HB 33
Supporting the DD Workforce

My name is Megan Badgley and I am an occupational therapist who works with children in an alternative education environment. The children I work with have multi-disabilities and medical complexities that require one-on-one care from a DSP. These DSPs not only assist self-care and medical needs but they assist the child with accessing their education, a right every child deserves regardless of their disability. Children with this complexity require staff who are extremely knowledgeable about the child and their needs. Unfortunately, due to the current funding and availability of DSPs, the children I treat often are being cared for by a revolving door of DSPs. As a result, the child is NOT getting the quality of care or education they deserve. Every time a new DSP is paired with the child, they must go through an intensive training process to learn the needs of the child and how to implement therapeutic and educational supports. These supports include things such as high tech assistive technology devices and tools, bracing, vision and hearing supports, wheelchairs and positioning devices, and more. From experience, gaining in depth understanding of these supports takes hours of training before becoming competent. During this time, the child is NOT getting the care they need and by the time the individual is trained they are often quitting their job due to inadequate pay. Individuals with this amount of knowledge MUST be compensated appropriately for the care they are providing. Increasing compensation of DSPs will not only improve the attractability of the position and solve a crisis in the developmental disability population but it will increase the quality of care for an extremely vulnerable population of individuals with disabilities. This population deserves more. For these children and adults, please vote in favor of increasing funding to raise wages for workers in the DD system. Their well-being, safety, and life is counting on you.

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