



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

DIRECTOR

April 5, 2022

To the Dedicated Personnel of the Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education Workforce:

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) thanks you for your extraordinary response and continued dedication to serving and supporting infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities and their families over the last two years. You have met the challenges of the pandemic with compassion and a resolve to implement the Federal requirements under Part C and Part B 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and improve outcomes for young children and families. The Department appreciates the incredible energy that goes into these efforts with ever-changing circumstances, all while you contend with your own emotional, mental, and physical well-being.

Across the nation, early intervention and preschool special education providers and programs have creatively strategized to ensure the identification of our youngest learners with disabilities and the development and implementation of their individualized family service plans and individualized education programs. We recognize the pressures that providers and programs have and continue to contend with, which puts a strain on an already stretched and fragile work force. For example, the trauma of the pandemic has certainly exacerbated the long-time issue of personnel shortages, not just in Part C and Part B 619, but across the field of early care and education. Later this year, the Department expects to award personnel preparation grants to help address the current shortages of personnel essential to the implementation of services to young children with disabilities and their families.

As we move forward, it is even more critical for all early childhood programs to work together and share resources and expertise. We must build on the innovation and resilience you have demonstrated in the implementation of evidence-based service delivery in the last few years for the field to continue to evolve and have the greatest impact on young children's success in their early years and beyond. The improved outcomes that young children and families experience, as a result of participating in early intervention and preschool special education programs, rests in the expertise and commitment of the early care and education workforce.

Together we can address the challenges that we still face, including creating and sustaining an integrated system of early care and education that values all children and has high expectations for them to develop, learn, and participate in high quality inclusive programming.

Again, thank you for your service and dedication. Your expertise could have taken you many places, but you chose to serve families with the most vulnerable children. We are committed to

partnering with you for the improvement of child and family outcomes and are optimistic for the advancement of the early intervention and early childhood education field.

Sincerely,

/s/

Valerie C. Williams

Director, Office of Special Education Programs