

Script for Calling Your Lawmakers about *Early On*

Call your state Senator and state Representative and urge them to prioritize this program!

Hi, my name is [full name]. I am a [parent, Early On Provider, teacher, advocate, etc] from [your city] and a constituent of [your legislator's name]. I am calling to urge you to invest in *Early On*, Michigan's early intervention program for infants and toddlers age 0-to-3 who have developmental delays or disabilities. *Early On* connects families with professionals who visit them in their homes to teach skills for supporting their infant or toddler's development. They provide services like physical and speech therapy, hearing and vision services, and specialized instruction to set up their child for success. [Share what you have noticed about the impacts of the pandemic on young children].

Early On reaches children in their first three years of life when their brains and bodies are growing at a faster pace than at any other time in their lives. Early interventions are critical to children's future educational success. Children who benefit from *Early On* are less likely to need special education or other costly services later in life. [Share other benefits of *Early On* and early intervention].

Early On is currently underfunded in Michigan. Programs across the state rely on a funding model largely based on local millages, which means that local access to services often reflects the property values in their counties. This has led to uneven service delivery where many kids are not receiving the frequency or types of services they need, and many more kids are not receiving early intervention services whatsoever. Referrals have skyrocketed since the pandemic and *Early On* providers need more funding to meet the need.

As your constituent, I urge you to increase investment in *Early On* beyond what the Governor and Legislature proposed in FY2023 budget talks. I am in support of the Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education's ask for *Early On*, which is \$28.4 million. This would be a \$7.1 million increase in funding. This increase would allow *Early On* programs to hire additional staff to provide more frequent services that reflect the needs of families, and reach more infants and toddlers who have developmental delays or disabilities. I would like a call back from your office to learn [your legislator's name]'s position on *Early On* and hear about [his/her] plans to invest in this critical services for kids and families. [Share anything else about the need to invest in kids and early intervention]. Thank you!