Testimony Re: H-7127, RI Department of Health FY27 Budget – Family Home Visiting
Senate Finance Committee
April 14, 2026
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Rhode Island KIDS COUNT coordinates the RIght from the Start Campaign, a state policy coalition led by eight organizations to advance state policies and budget priorities that help babies and young children get off to the right start.

Both Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and the RIght from the Start Campaign support the news last week that the RI Department of Health has been able to secure $409,765 in state general revenue as a partial state match to receive $1,229,295 in available federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECVH) funding. This funding will support implementation of Healthy Families America and Parents as Teachers programs in Rhode Island. **However, we remain concerned that the state was unable to make the full target match and is forfeiting approximately $400,000 in available federal MIECHV funds allocated for Rhode Island.**

Rhode Island needs to have state general revenue allocated in the core budget to fund evidence-based home visiting programs. We need to sustain the match allocated in previous years and build on it, so we don't have to scramble each year to find the match. Next year, the state match target for Rhode Island will be even higher -- $787,000, allowing us to draw down $1.4 million in available federal funding. Almost every state in the U.S. has been able to meet the state match requirement and draw down all available MIECHV funds.

Since 2021, **the number of Rhode Island families participating in these proven programs**, which improve long-term outcomes for both mothers and babies, **dropped by 32% due to staffing and financing challenges**. In 2024-2025, the staff turnover rate for home visiting programs in Rhode Island was 28%, significantly higher than the national rate of 10%.

Federal reauthorization of MIECHV funds in December 2022 provides level funding for 5 years. Newly authorized funds to sustain and strengthen the program require a 25% state match to draw down funds. The match is being phased in to give states time to adjust. **Rhode Island is one of only a handful of states that has not been able to make the full state match for the first three years and thus has been unable to draw down all federal funds** to support these proven programs.

Estimated Rhode Island MIECVH Match Funding Needed

Federal Fiscal Year	RI State Match Challenge Target	Total State Match Secured	Total Federal Funds Forfeited
2024	$242,000	$200,000	$126,000
2025	$356,000	$56,000	$900,000
2026	$535,000	$410,000	$400,000
2027	$787,000	TBD	Up to $2.3 million

Currently Rhode Island is level funded at $8.5 million/year in federal MIECHV grant funds to implement two evidence-based models: Healthy Families America and Parents as Teachers. These programs follow rigorous research models to deliver services that produce lasting improved outcomes for children and families including:

- Significant reductions in child maltreatment, language delays, and emergency room visits for accidents.
- Significant improvements in school readiness, maternal mental health, parental education, and parental employment.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. **We urge the General Assembly to allocate sufficient funds in the FY27 budget and beyond to allow the state to draw down the full MIECVH federal funding available** so we can sustain the existing programs and restore access to these proven, relationship-based, comprehensive, multi-generational services.