

**Support SB 155 (Senators Koehler-Morrison-Hunter-Crowe-Fine-Murphy-Belt-Harris):
IDEA Part C Early Intervention Eligibility to Fight Lead Poisoning**

SB 155 amends the Early Intervention Services System Act to ensure that young children with lead poisoning have access to critical services and supports that can prevent lead-induced delay. By defining lead poisoning as a medically diagnosed condition that typically results in developmental delay, and by offering Early Intervention (EI) services, we can alter the developmental trajectory for Illinois children who otherwise would likely not be eligible for these critical developmental services.

The Burden of Childhood Lead Poisoning

- Lead poisoning is one of the most prevalent, yet preventable, environmental health hazards that can affect any family, regardless of race or socioeconomic status. There is **no** safe level of lead in the body.
- In 2017, there were 2,659 children (birth to age 3) in Illinois with venous confirmed elevated blood lead levels of ≥ 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$.
- Children exposed to lead are at risk of:
 - Challenges in school
 - Decreased IQ and cognitive performance
 - Poor decision-making and memory
 - Reading challenges
 - Increased incidence of ADHD and behavioral/mood disorders
 - Difficulty with fine and gross motor skills
 - Increased delinquency

What is the Illinois Early Intervention Program?

- The Early Intervention program (EI) was created to enhance the development of infants and toddlers (birth to age 3) with disabilities, minimize potential developmental delay, and decrease the need for special education services for school-aged children.
- Eligible children and their families are entitled to receive a broad range of home-based services designed to maximize their development including:
 - Speech and language therapy
 - Developmental therapy
 - Occupational therapy
 - Physical therapy
 - Social work services

Why Should Illinois Adopt EI Eligibility for Children Who Have Been Lead-Poisoned?

- *EI programs have a strong track record of success.* Consistently in IL and nationally, nearly half of children in EI exhibit growth greater than expected and exit the program functioning within age expectations.
- *EI is cost-effective.* EI services are at least 2.5 less costly annually than special education services in preschool and elementary years. Less than half of the budget comes from Illinois' state general revenue; Illinois Early Intervention services are funded through a combination of federal IDEA Part C funding, All Kids, private insurance, family fees and state general revenue.
- *Proactive intervention is key.* By considering lead poisoning a "medically diagnosed condition that typically results in delay," a child will be able to receive services early, even *before* delays occur. It is critical to engage in proactive developmental interventions rather than being deficit-driven based on a presenting qualifying delay.
- *Precedent set by other states.* Federal IDEA regulations allow states to include lead poisoning as a medical condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay, automatically qualifying a child for EI services. Amending the EI statute to allow eligibility for children suffering from lead poisoning would bring the state into alignment with at least 18 other states that recognize EI as a necessary tool to overcome developmental delays that can occur as a result of lead poisoning.
- The Illinois Children's Cabinet made lead poisoning prevention a priority, and the Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention voted unanimously to support the EI Bureau's adoption of automatic eligibility for lead-poisoned children.
- IDPH adopted a blood lead level of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ as the level of concern that triggers public health action. The bill also adopts this requirement for EI eligibility. As the state moves forward on efforts to remove lead from housing, water, and the environment, it is imperative to also be proactive in providing families and children with the services they need to prevent lead-induced delays from manifesting.

SB 155 Supporters (list in progress)

Champaign County Health Care Consumers

Cook County Department of Public Health

Cook County Health

Elevate Energy

Erie Family Health Centers

Erikson Institute

EverThrive Illinois

Family Voices of Illinois

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

Health Justice Innovations, LLC

Health & Medicine Policy Research Group

Housing Action Illinois

Health Justice Project, Beazley Institute for Health Law & Policy, Loyola University Chicago School of Law

Illinois Action for Children

Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Illinois Developmental Therapy Association

Illinois Public Health Association

Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center

Latino Policy Forum

League of Women Voters of Illinois

Legal Council for Health Justice

Loyola University Civitas ChildLaw Center

Metropolitan Family Services

National Association of Social Workers, Illinois Chapter

National Center for Healthy Housing

Ounce of Prevention Fund

ReadyNation Illinois

Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

The Arc of Illinois

Winnebago County Health Department