

# American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



## AAP Headquarters

141 Northwest Point Blvd  
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007-1019  
Phone: 847/434-4000  
Fax: 847/434-8000  
E-mail: kidsdocs@aap.org  
www.aap.org

## Reply to

### Department of Federal Affairs

Homer Building, Suite 400 N  
601 13th St NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: 202/347-8600  
Fax: 202/393-6137  
E-mail: kids1st@aap.org

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March 26, 2015

The Honorable Brett Guthrie  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2434 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lois Capps  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2231 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Guthrie and Capps:

On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), an organization of 62,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical sub-specialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, I write to express our strong support for continued provision of early hearing screening and interventions to all newborns, infants and young children through reauthorization of the *Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act*.

The prevalence of newborn hearing screening has grown dramatically since the passage of the hearing screening provisions in the Child Health Act of 2000. At that time, only 40 percent of newborns were being screened. Today, approximately 96 percent of newborns receive audiologic screening. This is extremely important for the 33 children born every day with hearing impairment, making it the most common congenital condition in the United States. Studies have shown that important language skills are learned before the age of 3 because hearing and learning language are closely tied together. However, if a child has an undiagnosed hearing impairment and the parents are unaware, the child will not receive the needed language stimulation, which can have a detrimental effect on development. That is why early interventions facilitated through the *Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act* are so important.

While the increased prevalence of children receiving initial newborn hearing screenings is very positive, there are still many infants who do not receive timely follow-up and treatment. We also still need to train more health care providers to care for infants with hearing loss. We are pleased that this reauthorization includes provisions to improve follow-up and continues to support better training of medical providers to screen and treat children who need intervention.

Thank you for introducing the *Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act of 2015*. We appreciate your efforts in this important area in children's health. We look forward to working with you on this issue and others important to our nation's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra G. Hassink, MD, FAAP".

Sandra G. Hassink, MD, FAAP  
President

SMG/pmj