



April 12, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education & Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole, Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education & Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS,
Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Cole, Chair Murray, and Ranking Member Blunt,

As you work to develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 appropriation bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (L-HHS-ED), the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD), which represents the 1 in 5 individuals with learning and attention issues, urges you to put children, their families, and schools first by increasing spending levels for the programs that support them.

Children with learning and attention issues have brain-based issues that may cause trouble in reading, writing, math, organization, concentration, listening comprehension, social skills, motor skills or a combination of these. These children are in every classroom across the country and spend most of their time in general education settings, while many also receive specialized instruction and support through our nation's special education program (the Individual with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA). Research confirms that when provided the right services and supports, children with learning and attention issues can and do thrive in school and life. Yet, our nation's schools are struggling to serve these students and will continue to face challenges during and beyond the pandemic. There is a great need for continued investment from the federal government. We urge you to adopt the following recommendations as you finalize the FY 2023 appropriations bill.

RESEARCH FUNDING

Funding and Report Language for Learning Disabilities (NIH/NICHHD)

Over the last several decades, research in the area of neuroscience has revealed that learning disabilities (LD) are brain-based and result from a range of neurological factors. Thanks to continued investments into scientific brain research, we know more than ever about LD and how to support students who have them. However, this same research has also revealed much about how children learn, how their brain develops, and the evidence-based interventions that can help students – with and without LD – succeed.

The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) within NIH has been the leading source of funding for LD research for decades and has yielded groundbreaking research in the science of reading and other areas. NICHD funds more than 50 research centers across the country on a variety of topics related to child health and development. However, only three of those are related to learning disabilities, despite LD being the most prevalent type of disability in students and impacting more than 2 million students.

We urge the Committee to include report language supporting the use of National Institute of Health (NIH) funds for learning disabilities (LD) research.

Learning Disabilities Research Centers and Learning Disabilities Innovation Hubs. –The Committee is increasingly concerned with the decline in achievement for students with disabilities and recognizes the need for continued research and improved interventions, particularly in light of the COVID–19 crisis, which has led to significant loss of in-person instruction for many students. The Committee recognizes the importance of NICHD’s funding of Learning Disabilities Research Centers and Learning Disabilities Innovation Hubs, which are the only source of Federal funding available to researchers interested in exploring child development and learning disabilities to conduct randomized control trials and explore the relationships between different variables at work. While learning disabilities do impact an individual’s education and academic achievement, these disorders are brain-based, and so clinical research using the latest technology and advances in neuroscience is essential. To continue robust research into language, reading development, learning disabilities, and disorders that adversely affect the development of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and mathematics abilities, the Committee urges NICHD to continue its investment in its Learning Disabilities Research Centers and Learning Disabilities Innovation Hubs ([PAGE 127-128](#) in FY 2022 House report language)

Funding for Special Education Research (IES/NCSEER)

Within the Institute for Education Sciences (IES), National Center for Special Education Research (NCSEER) supports high quality and rigorous research on special education and related services and the full range of issues facing children with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, school personnel, and more. Its findings help inform interventions, teaching strategies, and other critical factors in educating children with disabilities. Moreover, innovations in special education research have served as an impetus for improvements in general education. For example, Response to Intervention (RTI) was developed by psychologists as a new framework for more accurate identification of students for special education services and for supporting students who required more instruction to succeed but did not necessarily display a learning disability. Researchers experimented with identifying students and providing extra systematic instruction. Today, RTI is commonly used when making decisions in both general and special education. Yet, the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSEER) has been significantly reduced in recent years, and we urge the Committee to restore funding to its FY 2010 funding levels (\$70 million).

- Increase **IES** to \$815 million, including at least \$70 million for **NCSEER**

FUNDING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Furthermore, to support students with learning disabilities, their parents, and the educators who work with them, NCLD urges you to pass a funding bill that increases investments in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Despite a longstanding promise from Congress since IDEA was enacted to fully fund IDEA, or 40% of the additional costs of educating students with disabilities, that promise has never been fulfilled and previous increases have only covered a portion of annual inflation.

- Increase funding for the **IDEA Part B Grants to States** to at least \$16.2 billion;
- Increase **IDEA Part B Section 619** to at least \$502.6 million;
- Increase **IDEA Part C** to at least \$932 million;
- Increase **IDEA Part D** (National Activities) in the following amounts:
 - State Personnel Development: at least \$38.6 million
 - Technical Assistance and Development: at least \$49.3 million
 - Personnel Preparation: at least \$300 million
 - Parent Training and Information Centers: at least \$45.2 million
 - Media and Technology: at least \$32 million

OTHER CRITICAL EDUCATION INVESTMENTS

- Increase **Title I in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** to \$36.5 billion;
- Increase **Title II in ESSA Part A** to \$2.5 billion;

- Increase **Title III in ESSA** to \$2 billion;
- Increase **Title IV Part A in ESSA** to \$2 billion;
- Increase **Title IV Part B in ESSA** to \$1.4 billion;
- Increase **Title IV - Part E in ESSA** to \$20 million;
- Increase the **U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights** to \$161.3 million
- Increase **Title II, Part A of the Higher Education Act (HEA) Teacher Quality Partnerships** to \$300 million;
- Increase **Title II of HEA Augustus F. Hawkins Centers for Excellence program** to at least \$20 million;
- Increase **Competitive Grants for State Assessments** to at least \$428 million; and
- Fund **School Based Mental Health Services Professionals and School Based Mental Health Services grants** at \$111 million.

Thank you for your consideration and NCLD looks forward to working with Congress as you move forward with the FY 2023 appropriations process. Please feel free to contact me at lkubatzky@nclد.org with any questions.

Sincerely,



Lindsay Kubatzky
Director of Policy & Advocacy
National Center for Learning Disabilities