

May 26, 2019

Senator Anthony Portantino
State Capitol, Room 3086
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 217 (Portantino): Special education: individuals with exceptional needs.
AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Senator Portantino:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing the over 5,000 board-certified pediatrician members of California AAP Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 statewide, strongly supports your proposed legislation SB 217 to create the Early Intervention Grant Program to increase inclusive access to early education programs for children with exceptional needs, and expanding eligibility for transitional kindergarten (TK) to include children with exceptional needs.

“Inclusive preschool classrooms are in the best interest of all young children: including children with disabilities results in greater empathy and acceptance of differences among all children and in improved academic, social, and behavioral outcomes for children with disabilities.”

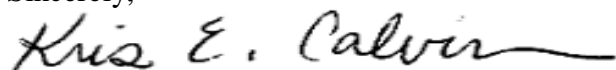
(<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/blog/preparing-young-children-inclusion>)

However, many children with special needs do not access the life-changing, research-affirmed benefits of early childhood education precisely because of difficulties related to their special needs. SB 217 would improve the long-term outcomes for California children with special needs by creating a grant program that would fund increased access to early childhood education, while also expanding transitional kindergarten eligibility for children with special needs.

Pediatricians across the state of California strongly support your proposed legislation SB 217.

Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of the children, youth, and families of California.

Sincerely,



Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer, American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP-CA Leadership