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The Honorable Marie Alvarado-Gil
Chair, Senate Human Services Committee
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 7240
Sacramento, CA 95814

April 2nd, 2024

RE: SUPPORT SB 1112 (MENJIVAR)

Dear Chairwoman Alvarado-Gil and Committee Members,

On behalf of Special Needs Network, we are pleased to support SB 1112 (Menjivar), which will provide tens of thousands of children with access to early childhood developmental screenings and other appropriate developmental screenings. SB 1112 will ensure that children ages 0-5 who need additional services after screening are referred for further assessment and intervention at no cost to the parent.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), in the United States, about 1 in 6 children aged 3 to 17 have one or more developmental or behavioral disabilities such as autism, a learning disorder, or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. However, many children with developmental disabilities are not identified until they are in school, by which time significant delays might have occurred and opportunities for treatment may have been missed. A 2023 Report by the Early Childhood Technical Center found that racial and economic disparities also occur in access to early intervention, screening, identification, and referral. In the past year 36% of families above low income reported that their child had received a screening in comparison to 27.2% of low-income families. Black and African American families have the lowest screening and response rate due to affordability and insurance issues. Research shows that early intervention treatment services can greatly improve a child's development.

In California, approximately 50% of young children receive their care through the Medi-Cal system. Of those, less than 1 in 4 children received a developmental screening in 2020. The Medi-Cal system has a historically poor performance on developmental screenings. Less than 1/3 of children in Medi-Cal managed care received a developmental screening in the first 3 years of life. SB 1112 will ensure all children have access to a timely screening by adding child care agencies in the Alternative Payment Program as a required partner in a memorandum of understanding with managed care plans to address the systems of care coordination gap and serve as primary prevention coordination partners.

It is our goal to support children and families by identifying partners in the health and mental health communities that will expand programs focused on prevention and early intervention. For that reason, we support this bill and respectfully ask for your "Aye" vote. If you have any questions regarding our support, please contact me at 323-291-7100.

Sincerely,

Mary Lee

Senior Manager, Community Outreach, Advocacy & Engagement