RIPIN
PERSONAL SUPPORT BUILT ON PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Strengthening Preschool Special Education in Rhode Island
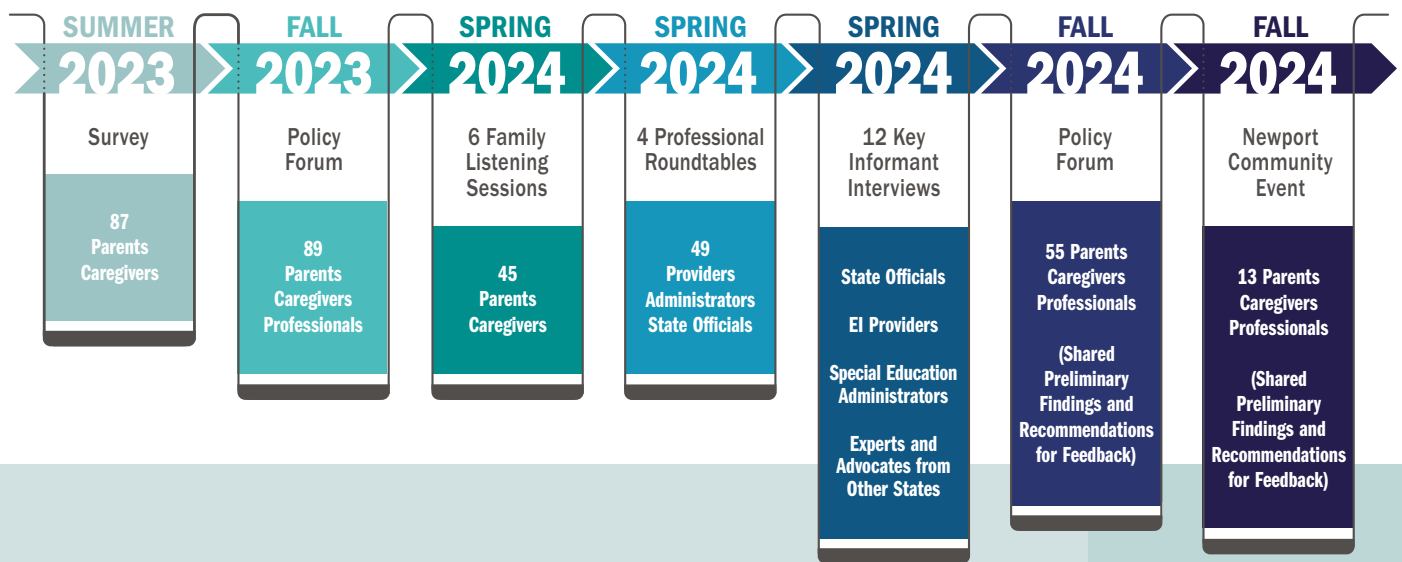
Background

Rhode Island's preschool special education system for 3-5 year-olds faces challenges and opportunities, so **RIPIN studied the system and developed these recommendations.**

SUMMER 2023	FALL 2023	SPRING 2024	SPRING 2024	SPRING 2024	FALL 2024	FALL 2024
Survey	Policy Forum	6 Family Listening Sessions	4 Professional Roundtables	12 Key Informant Interviews	Policy Forum	Newport Community Event
87 Parents Caregivers	89 Parents Caregivers Professionals	45 Parents Caregivers	49 Providers Administrators State Officials	State Officials EI Providers Special Education Administrators Experts and Advocates from Other States	55 Parents Caregivers Professionals (Shared Preliminary Findings and Recommendations for Feedback)	13 Parents Caregivers Professionals (Shared Preliminary Findings and Recommendations for Feedback)

Timely services for young children with disabilities help them catch up with their peers, reduce the need for services later, and increase their chance of success in K-12 education and beyond.

Scan to view the full report

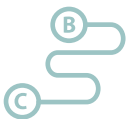| Part C: Early Intervention	Part B: Preschool Special Education
Birth Through 3rd Birthday	3rd Birthday Through Start of Kindergarten
Administered by EOHHS	Administered by RIDE and School Districts
Provided by Nine Nonprofit Agencies	Provided by Local School Districts
Family-Focused, Developmental Goals	Student-Focused, Academic Goals
Financed at State Level (Medicaid, Health Insurance)	Primarily Financed by Local School Districts

Recommendations

1. EI Extension Option:
Allow families to extend EI services until the September after the child's third birthday, preventing service gaps and supporting smoother transitions to preschool special education.

2. Focus on Transitions:
Enhance transition training for Part C and Part B staff, and streamline the transition process to reduce paperwork burdens.

3. Teacher Certification:
Make the early childhood special education certification more attractive to aspiring educators and hiring districts.

4. Funding Formula:
Support preschool special education in the funding formula by clarifying that preschool students with disabilities in community settings and RI Pre-K count in the funding formula, and consider incorporating a multiplier for students in preschool special education.

5. Strengthen Inclusion in RI Pre-K:
Ensure RI Pre-K grantees have the resources and relationships to serve children with disabilities, and invest in building pooled resources for RI Pre-K, such as specialized classrooms or mobile teams of special educators.