

Heidi Katz, Easterseals Vermont
Testimony to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees
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My name is Heidi Katz, I live in Norwich, Vermont, and I am a Post Permanence Supervisor with Easterseals. Post Permanency Services help adoption and guardianship caregivers build the confidence, therapeutic parenting skills, and networks they need to care successfully for their child.

To begin, I want to thank you for supporting an increase in Post Permanency funding last year. I am not here to ask for any additional funding this year – we ask you to support the level of funding in the Governor’s recommended FY26 budget.

Rather, I’m here to share a little bit about my own experience with the Easterseals Post Permanency Program, and why your support makes a difference for families in Vermont.

My family adopted my younger brother when he was an infant. Like many families formed through adoption, we were naïvely optimistic. Over time, my parents learned firsthand about the significant impact that experiences in utero, and during the first few months of life, can have on a child’s development. My brother would have explosive outbursts and tantrums that would last for hours, and my parents felt unequipped to parent him, despite having raised myself and my older biological brother fairly successfully. They struggled understanding the system of care, and knowing how and where to access help.

Eventually, they were told about the Easterseals Post Permanency Program and they reached out for support. My brother is now 19 years old, and they are still receiving support from their original post permanency worker. She has been a constant provider in their life, supporting them through difficult times, and celebrating the growth that my brother and my parents have made. Knowing how valuable this program has been to my family, I decided to pursue a career in it; to support families like mine in navigating the complexities that come with adoption and guardianship.

I am grateful to be a part of this meaningful work. I would like to conclude by thanking you again for your continued support for Post Permanency, and for taking the time to listen.