

Stand Up for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities: Support Full Funding for ECI

April 2019

ECI Is Effective for Babies & Toddlers with Disabilities & Delays – And Saves Taxpayer Money

The Texas Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) program provides home-based comprehensive therapies and supports for more than 50,000 babies and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays. By working with family members at home to replicate needed services, and intervening early to increase each child's ability to reach developmental milestones, ECI is extremely effective and reduces the need for costly special education services when participating children enter elementary school.

Past Legislative Actions Are Leaving Thousands of Children Behind

The lack of full funding for ECI since 2011 has caused 18 non-profit ECI contractors to drop out of the program in the last eight years and thousands of babies and toddlers to miss out on critical supports when they are most effective. In some parts of the state, ECI enrollment has dropped more than 30 percent since 2011. During that same period, the population of children under three grew by more than four percent. Texas now ranks 47th in the nation for the percentage of children under age three served in ECI.

HHSC made clear to the Legislature that an additional \$72.6 million is needed to sustain this federal-state program. The House added the \$72.6 million, but the Senate only added \$17 million. As Texans Care for Children documented in a recent report, state funding for ECI has already fallen from \$484 per child in 2012 to \$412 in 2018.

We urge the budget conference committee to provide the full \$72.6 million to strengthen and sustain ECI. This investment will ensure little Texans get the early intervention supports they need to get on a strong developmental track and be ready for school.



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