



Infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities can't wait.

The Baby Watch Early Intervention Program is a statewide special education program that provides support and services to families with infants and toddlers who have developmental delays, disabilities or diagnosed conditions, such as Down syndrome and Autism. Early Intervention (EI) is provided in accordance with the 1986 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which requires states to provide services to all eligible children with no wait list.

Infants and toddlers are referred to EI programs by parents, medical professionals and early childhood programs. Highly qualified, well-trained EI professionals provide in-home therapy and parent training to close the developmental gap and minimize the impact of disabilities for infants and toddlers.

Referrals for services are increasing, yet state funding for direct services is flat and EI was excluded from the Governor's SFY17 Budget Recommendations.

- From SFY13 to SFY15, referrals to EI programs increased by 12%.
- A growing number of children would benefit from EI services. In SFY15, 4% of Utah's birth-to-3 population received EI services. Research indicates that as many as 13% of birth-to-3 year olds have delays that would make them eligible for services.¹
- An independent evaluation found that the cost of operating the state-wide Early Intervention program in SFY2014 was 10% greater than the funding provided.²
- **In the first 6 months of SFY16, referrals have increased by 38%. By end of year, a projected 2,365 more children will be referred for EI services** (including 17% CAPTA referrals).

Speech Therapy	Comprehensive Evaluations
Physical Therapy	Occupational Therapy
Hearing and Vision Screening	Nursing
Feeding and Nutrition	Social Work

Family-Centered Services

Why should we fund early intervention services for infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities?

85%	• 85% of brain development occurs by age three. It is critical to intervene early when a child's brain is most capable of change.
1 out of 54	• Utah has one of the highest rates for children diagnosed with Autism—1 out of 54. EI programs conduct universal screening for Autism Spectrum Disorder to improve outcomes through early treatment.
35%	• 35% percent of children exiting the Baby Watch Early Intervention Program in the last three years made enough progress that they did not require preschool special education services.
77%	• 77% of children enrolled in EI services from SFY12-14 showed improvement in their knowledge and skills, and their development moved closer to typically developing children of the same age.

Utah's Early Intervention Providers are committed to providing the highest quality direct services at the lowest cost.

Without additional direct-service staff to serve the growing number of children in EI, the opportunity to improve developmental outcomes will be lost:

- The amount and quality of direct services will decrease and long-term outcomes and benefits of school readiness, social growth and ultimately, independence, are less likely to be achieved.
- Fewer infants and toddlers may be determined eligible, restricting eligibility to children with the most severe disabilities. (Utah's eligibility criteria was changed in 2003, eliminating premature infants at risk of delay).
- Social, educational and economic consequences are simply deferred to the future, when they are most costly and less effective.

[Increase state investment in the Baby Watch Early Intervention Program.](#)

[Reinstate the \\$2.5M budget request!](#)

1. Rosenberg, S., Zhang, D. & Robinson, C. (2008) Prevalence of developmental delays and participation in early intervention services. Pediatrics, 121(6) e1503-c1509. doi:10.1542/peds.2007-1680
2. Goetze, L. Ph.D., Tran, H. (2015) Baby Watch Early Intervention Cost Study.