Meet Jaycee

Jaycee’s Story, written by her mother, Theresa

When Jaycee turned two she was still unable to speak or communicate. In December 2018, her pediatrician sent in a referral for evaluation. Jaycee qualified for speech, occupational therapy and special education. At the time I was unsure if these Early Intervention services would help. To my delight Jaycee has done well with these services.

Unfortunately in April 2019 speech services stopped abruptly and Jayce was placed on the capacity list. As a result, Jaycee has a hard time with her articulation and pulling things from her brain to let people know what’s wrong, what’s going on, or even how to express her feelings. This makes it very difficult for us and others to understand her as well.

Early Intervention services are very important to children and are needed in our communities. These therapists work hard to make a difference in a child’s and family’s life. They are all over worked and very underpaid for what they take on. The county and state need to understand when you are putting so many restrictions on these services you are taking away from the development of children and their futures.

I am very grateful for the services my daughter receives because I know it makes a difference in her life. These programs are important in our communities.
The New York State Budget’s Impact on Early Childhood Developmental Services

The New York State Fiscal Year 2021 Final Enacted Budget consists of the following:

**Early Intervention**: The approved budget reduces funding for the state’s Early Intervention program from $173 million last year to $164.9 million in FY21, a reduction of $8.1 million. It does not include the covered lives assessment, a mechanism which would draw in revenue from commercial insurers who currently reject most Early Intervention claims.

We are investigating whether this spending cut will result in fewer Early Intervention services or if it was a result of regulatory changes, and there’s even more uncertainty given the reduction of services that is resulting from COVID-19.

**Preschool Special Education**: The Final budget contains no changes in reimbursement rates for the Preschool Special Education program.

**Teletherapy Services**

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a cease to in-person service delivery for both Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Services.
In the interim, both programs have been approved to provide telehealth service delivery in accordance with the child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)/Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Telehealth service is the remote delivery of Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Services via technology.

Parents interested in finding out if telehealth services are appropriate for their child should contact their Early Intervention provider or the chairperson of their local school district's Committee on Preschool Special Education.

When contacting the appropriate person please be sure to let them know if you are in need of a device and/or service to participate in teletherapy.

Click here to take a glimpse into an Early Intervention teletherapy session.

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You can now keep up to date with the Kids Can't Wait Campaign via the new Facebook page. Check it out, engage, like it, share and invite friends.

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The photo above is an excerpt from Raising NY’s poll assessing the impact of the pandemic on families with children birth to three in New York State.

Learn more at [www.raisingnewyork.org/coronavirus](http://www.raisingnewyork.org/coronavirus)
The Kids Can't Wait Campaign would like to hear the experiences you are having with Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education during COVID-19.

To share your experiences please email Kristen Rogers at kristen@thechildrensagenda.org