



Early Intervention

for Infants & Toddlers with Developmental Delays & Disabilities

August 2023

The Need

Young children across New York are not receiving timely and comprehensive early childhood developmental services. There is a shortage of providers because they have been underfunded for many years.

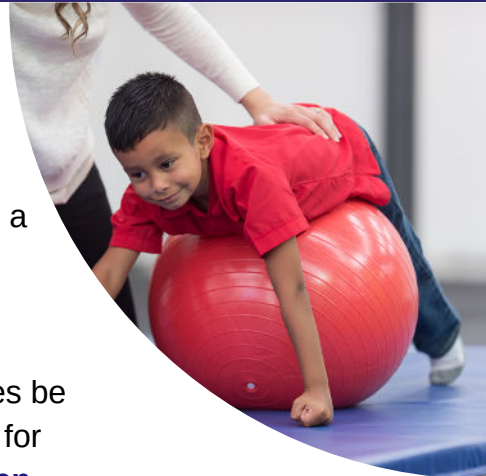
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires services be delivered in a timely manner -- within 30 days for children who qualify for speech, occupation, physical and other therapies. **New York has fallen behind on delivering rights guaranteed in federal and state law.**

"My son spent 8 months waiting for speech therapy. It was a lot of frustration and tears." -- Dally, mom to two year old Gideon

The Solution

- Increase Early Intervention reimbursement rates to **ensure providers are there when kids need them.** The 2024-25 state budget should include, at a minimum, an 11% increase in Early Intervention rates for services delivered in person.
- Commission a cost study so we know the true cost of Early Intervention services and can **plan for how to fund the program now and into the future.**
- Create a loan forgiveness program for recent graduates who agree to deliver services in medically underserved areas of New York state **to ensure all children have access to services.**

"Early Intervention literally saved my child's life. He is now 9 and thriving. He walks, talks (nearly non-stop), attends school full time and has a great sense of humor." -- Brittney, mom to Caulder



Why It Matters



There has been a **27% decline** in children who received **timely services** since 2017. **With every year that passes with no investment in Early Intervention, the program collapses and children suffer.**

EQUITY

Black and Hispanic children in New York are less likely to be referred at a young age and have services initiated within the legally required 30 days. **When speech, physical, occupational and other therapies begin early in life, children have the best shot at growing and thriving.**



Reimbursement rates for most Early Intervention services are lower now than when the program began in 1994. When taking into consideration inflation, **providers are making 140% less** than they were in 1994. This discourages provider recruitment and retention, **leaving families and children waiting for -- and sometimes never receiving -- life changing interventions.**

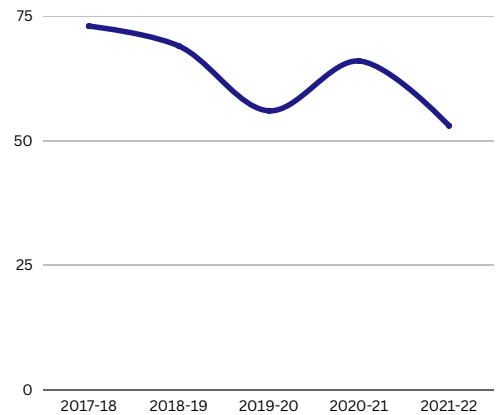
Effective and Equitable Services

Children who need in-person services are too often limited to remote, telehealth delivery because no provider is available to travel to them.

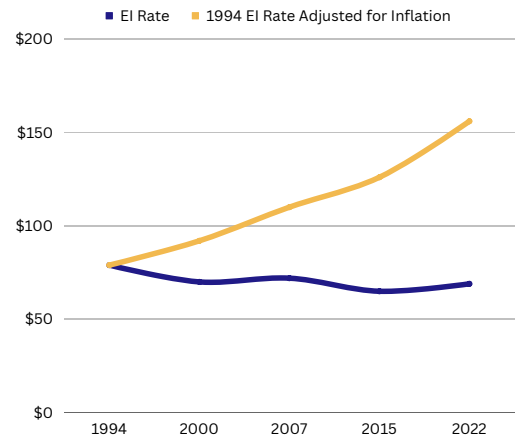
In-person vs. telehealth should be based on **the most effective method of service, the needs of the child, and parent preference** -- not provider availability. **Low-income, communities of color** are more often offered services only over a screen while their peers receive the benefit of in-person therapies.

New York has a legal obligation to ensure children who need **in-person services have access to them, and professionals who deliver face-to-face services should be compensated for the extra costs they incur**, including transportation and travel time.

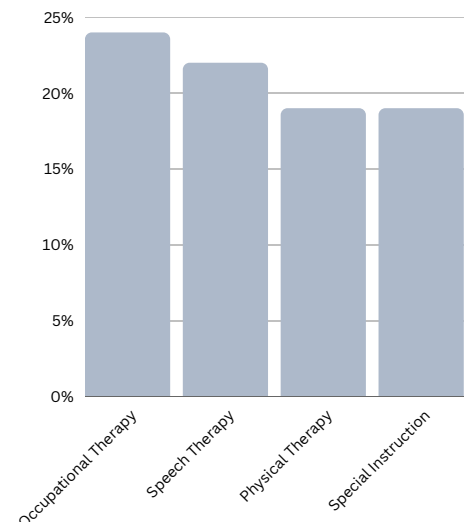
Percentage of NY Children Receiving Early Intervention on Time



Early Intervention Basic Services Average Statewide Rate



Services Delayed Because No In-Person Provider Available and Family Declined Telehealth



For data sources, click on underlined passages for links