



MAKE THE
**FIRST FIVE
COUNT**[®]

State of Early Intervention: Florida

Every year, we as a nation fail to identify more than one million young children at risk for developmental delays or disabilities—children who will enter school already far behind other kids their age. But with the right treatment and therapy before the age of five, we can change the state of early intervention for thousands of kids in Florida.

Through *Make the First Five Count*[®], Easter Seals is raising awareness and activating the American public to demand that all young children get the support they need before the age of five. Make life better for children in your community—those at risk for autism, developmental delays and other disabilities—and help us achieve \$100 million in additional federal funding for Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This is the federal program that provides critical services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and to their families.

Funding for Part C will help kids like Kelly.



Kelly, age 7

Easter Seals Florida, Orlando

Kelly first arrived at Easter Seals in Tampa, Florida when she was just two months old and recently discharged from the neonatal intensive care unit. Born at 35 weeks gestation and weighing only 4lbs 8oz, Kelly was referred to the program due to global delays related to a diagnosis of Down syndrome. Though Kelly continued to have medical setbacks throughout her three years of Easter Seals care, the early intervention staff remained her constant—continuing to work on her development in order to ensure that she reached all of her milestones.

Thanks to the help of a supportive family and a dedicated Easter Seals team, Kelly was able to qualify for speech therapy from the school system. She now has only minor delays and made significant developmental progress.





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The State of Funding

Today, it's harder than ever for families to access care, because essential programs to treat young children with disabilities are chronically underfunded and in danger of being scaled back even further this year and in 2014.

Through *Make the First Five Count*, Easter Seals is calling on Congress to protect and grow funding for Part C by \$100 million, for a total of \$539 million, in the years to come.

- **Federal funding:** Currently, Florida receives \$22.7 million from the federal government to support early intervention services under Part C. This is an increase of \$20,000 from the previous year.
- **State funding:** Florida allocates \$23.3 million in funding for early intervention. This amount represents an increase of \$6.8 million between 2012 and 2013.

Investing in early diagnosis and treatment now will save in future care costs—there is no better investment than in our children.

The Numbers in Florida

- There are 703,919 Florida kids ages 0-3.
- On average, fewer than 20% of young children are properly screened to identify their special need, or approximately 140,783 Florida children.
- In Florida, 91,509 kids under the age of 3 are at risk of developmental delays or disabilities that will set them back when they start school, yet only 13,158 are currently receiving early intervention services through Part C of IDEA.

Sources:

http://www.ideadata.org/tables34th/AR_C-2.xls

<http://mchb.hrsa.gov/nsch/07main/moreinfo/pdf/nsch07child.pdf>

https://www.ideadata.org/arc_toc12.asp#partcCC

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/statetables/12stbyprog/am.pdf>

http://www.nectac.org/~xls/IDEA/PartC_2012_allocations.xlsx

State funding information provided by a state government official is available upon request.

To learn more, log onto
MaketheFirstFiveCount.org today!