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## State of Early Intervention: New Jersey

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 New Jersey.

Through *Make the First Five Count*<sup>®</sup>, 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 Armaun.**



### Armaun, age 16

#### Easter Seals New Jersey

At a young age, Armaun faced challenges in addition to those presented by his cerebral palsy. He endured the loss of his mother and the illness of his grandmother which landed him in foster care. But Armaun came to school ready to learn because of the supports he received when it mattered most.

Easter Seals New Jersey's Camp Merry Heart was a huge player in making Armaun the mature young man he is today. Unlike the urban neighborhood to which he's accustomed, Camp Merry Heart provided Armaun the experience of fellowship and camaraderie with other kids facing similar challenges, all in a safe and supportive environment.

And now, Armaun is doing great things. Others describe him as "charming," "courageous" and "an eloquent speaker." He's already spoken twice at fundraisers for the organization that runs Camp Merry Heart for children with disabilities in Hackettstown. In February, he spoke to officials of the CVS drug store chain.

He was admitted to St. Benedict's Prep in Newark where he is finishing his first year as a residential student and hopes to attend the University of Notre Dame.

"I believe I have an advantage because of my disability," he said, "because I know I have to work harder."





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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, New Jersey receives \$10.8 million from the federal government to support early intervention services under Part C. This is an increase of almost \$9,000 from the previous year.
- **State funding:** New Jersey allocates \$88.4 million in funding for early intervention. This amount represents a decrease of \$4.2 million from 2012 to 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 New Jersey

- There are 334,709 New Jersey kids ages 0-3.
- On average, fewer than 20% of young children are properly screened to identify their special need, or approximately 66,941 New Jersey children.
- In New Jersey, 43,512 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 21,292 are currently receiving early intervention services through Part C of IDEA.

### Sources:

[http://www.ideadata.org/tables34th/AR\\_C-2.xls](http://www.ideadata.org/tables34th/AR_C-2.xls)  
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[http://www.nectac.org/~xls/IDEA/PartC\\_2012\\_allocations.xlsx](http://www.nectac.org/~xls/IDEA/PartC_2012_allocations.xlsx)  
State funding information provided by a state government official is available upon request.

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