



MAKE THE
**FIRST FIVE
COUNT**[®]

State of Early Intervention: Illinois

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 Illinois.

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 Ivy.



Ivy, age 6

Easter Seals DuPage & the Fox Valley Region (Chicago)

At four months, Ivy was diagnosed with hemiparesis, or weakness in the muscles on her right side. An MRI and CT scan showed Ivy had a stroke before she was born. At Easter Seals, Ivy received physical therapy at six months, occupational therapy at eight months and was walking by age one. Ivy was a chatterbox after just nine months of speech therapy.

But without early intervention, her parents know Ivy wouldn't be where she is today—a busy, active little girl taking therapeutic riding and swimming lessons and tap dance classes.

“We don't know what we would have done if we didn't go to Easter Seals,” said Ivy's mom.

With the early intervention services she's received, Ivy is now able to take the bus to preschool, where she still receives physical, occupational and speech therapy. She's also taking ballet and even performed at her last recital without an aide!





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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, Illinois receives \$17.4 million from the federal government to support early intervention services under Part C. This is an increase of \$160,000 from the previous year.
- **State funding:** Illinois allocates \$160 million in funding for early intervention. This remained unchanged from 2012 to 2013.

The Numbers in Illinois

- There are 540,688 kids in Illinois ages 0-3.
- On average, fewer than 20% of young children are properly screened to identify their special need, or approximately 108,137 Illinois children.
- In Illinois, 70,289 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 33,829 are currently receiving early intervention services through Part C of IDEA.

Funding for Part C will help kids like Garrison.



Garrison, age 6

Easter Seals Peoria-Bloomington-Normal & Decatur

Garrison started receiving speech therapy from Easter Seals when he was 18 months old. During his time at Easter Seals, staff realized he had other developmental delays. He demonstrated frequent behavior outbreaks with extreme aggression towards himself and others. His family couldn't take him to stores or restaurants.

When Garrison was diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder at age three, Easter Seals helped him improve his social and communication skills.

He has made significant progress since then. While he still receives some specialized services, Garrison entered kindergarten ready to learn alongside his peers. Now, he's speaking in sentences, plays T-ball and loves to bowl. He loves to play with friends and go out to eat.

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

Sources:

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