



MAKE THE  
**FIRST FIVE  
COUNT**<sup>SM</sup>



# Facts and Figures

Every year we fail to identify **1.45 million** children under five who are at risk for developmental delays. A similar number of children are eligible for early intervention services, but never receive them due to cuts in federal funding.

Many children have special health care needs and could benefit from screening and services - that number was **13.9 percent** (under 18) in 2010. Stated another way, 1 in 5 households with children have a child with a special health care need.

Approximately **3 million kids** with special healthcare needs under the age of 5 are falling through the cracks.

This includes **vulnerable** children from low-income and minority communities, where there is a higher prevalence of disabilities and developmental delays and more limited access to services.



Children with **autism** are not being diagnosed as early as possible. The average age for an autism diagnosis is four and a half; it's possible to diagnose children as early as 24 months. As many as **1 in 110** children is diagnosed with some form of autism - for boys it's one in every 70 - that's a new diagnosis every 20 minutes.

**But**, Easter Seals is here to help. We serve more than **90,000** children per year through early intervention programs - using therapies that work to strengthen children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual abilities from infancy.

If we invest **\$1** in early diagnosis and treatment now, we will save **\$7** in future

care costs to society.

That's why we're working to achieve **\$100 million** in additional federal funding for early intervention services.

**Then**, the numbers look a little better. More than **11 percent** of children who are identified before age three and enrolled in early intervention services do not need special education.



**Simply put, “early prevention is better and less expensive than later remediation.”**

Children who are in high-quality pre-kindergarten programs are **less** likely to be held back a grade, less likely to need special education and **more** likely to **graduate** high school. They are less involved in crime and delinquency, earn more as adults and are less likely to become dependent on welfare.

**Basically**, early care and education for vulnerable young children keeps kids in school and helps them find jobs; it keeps kids in communities and out of jail.

“Make **greater** investments in young children to see **greater** returns in education, health and productivity.”



If you believe that **all** children should have access to early identification, education and care services that can make a difference in their future and the future of our country, join us.

**Visit our media room for a list of references and additional resources.**

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