



Action Request

Support the state funding transfer for the provision of early intervention services for children ages birth-to-three, from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to the Department of Children, Youth & Families and the methodology for calculating annual allocations as outlined in the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) Detailed Funding Model report submitted to the Legislature.

Why is Early Support Essential?

The first three years of a child’s life are a critical period for growth and development. Decades of research show that children’s earliest experiences play a critical role in optimal **brain development**.

- Infants and toddlers with delays urgently need services as early as possible while their developing brains can make the greatest gains.
- ESIT services minimize children’s developmental delays and significantly reduce the costs and need for special education services as children with disabilities reach school age. 37 percent of children in King County who received ESIT in FY 2018-2019 were no longer eligible for special education at age three.¹
- Participating families benefit with improved parenting skills, increased responsiveness to their children, and strengthened ability to support their child’s developmental needs.

How many children and families are served?

In King County, 5,157 children were served through ESIT in 2018, a 32 percent increase in the number of children served since 2015.² Many more children are likely eligible.

King County’s Commitment to Equity and Social Justice

In 2018, 55 percent of the children who received ESIT services in King County were children of color and 25 percent were from families whose home language was other than English.³ King County is implementing several initiatives designed to increase our system’s capacity to provide culturally and linguistically relevant services, to improve equitable access to services, and to eliminate any disproportionate child outcomes by race or ethnicity.

Strong Legislative Support

The King County Board for Developmental Disabilities thanks the Legislature for its strong support for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families.

In response to proviso language included in the FY 2021-2022 biennial budget, the Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) submitted a funding model for ESIT services to the Legislature⁴. The report included plans for the transition of the state funding from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to DCYF. The transfer is necessary to align funding and regulatory authority.

Given the need to serve all eligible children, funding must continue to grow on a per child basis. Funding recommendations include:

- Maintain the current methodology for calculating funding per child, to promote stability.
- Include all children with active Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) year-round (as federal law requires year-round services). This ESIT caseload forecast averages four percent higher than the current OSPI funded forecast.
- Sustain cap on 5 percent administration.

Please continue to support critical funding for ESIT to ensure that all eligible infants and toddlers and their families receive high-quality, equitable, comprehensive services.

¹ESIT Data from Department of Early Learning Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) database. Agency Schools Report. Accessed 11.6.19.

²ESIT Data from Department of Early Learning Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) database. Agency Schools Report. Accessed 3.14.19.

³ESIT Data from Department of Early Learning Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) database. Federal CT1 Report. Accessed 2.14.19.

⁴https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/ESIT_Detailed_Funding_Model_Report.pdf