



Request

Serve all infants and toddlers eligible for Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) services by adequately funding the program.

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.
- Early services minimize children’s developmental delays and reduce the costs and need for special education services as children with disabilities reach school age.
- ESIT is so successful that 36 percent of children in King County who received services in FY 2017-2018 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.

What are the Unmet Needs in King County?

An estimated 13 percent of infants and toddlers have delays that would make them eligible for ESIT, but only half accessed services in King County in Fiscal Year 2017-2018.²

| Children 0-3 Years | % of Cohort | # of Children |
|--|-------------|---------------|
| Total Need / Likely Eligible for Services^{2,3} | 13% | ~ 10,000 |
| Total Served with ESIT¹ | 6.49% | 5,039 |
| Unmet Needs / Likely eligible children not served | 6.51% | ~ 5,000 |

King County’s Commitment to Equity and Social Justice

In 2017, 55 percent of the children who received Early Intervention services in King County were children of color and 27 percent were from families whose home language was other than English.¹ King County is implementing several initiatives designed to increase our system’s capacity to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services, to improve equitable access to services, and to eliminate any disproportionate child outcomes.

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.

Last session, the Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6257. This bill required the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families to develop a funding model for Early Intervention services and submit a plan to the Office of Financial Management and the Legislature.

Given the need to serve all eligible children, funding must continue to grow on a per child basis. **Please continue to support adequate funding and policies for ESIT to identify and serve more infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families.**

¹ESIT Data from Department of Early Learning Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) database. Agency Schools Report. Accessed 11.9.18.

²Rosenberg, S., Zhang, D. & Robinson, C. (2008). Prevalence of developmental delays and participation in early intervention services for young children. *Pediatrics*, 121(6) e1503-e1509. doi:10.1542/peds.2007-1680.

³Population estimates from Washington State Office of Financial Management, Forecasting Division, single year intercensal estimates 2001-2017, Community Health Assessment Tool (CHAT), February 2018.