



Action Request

Invest in coordinated efforts across systems to support child and family needs, including eliminating family out-of-pocket costs for Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT).

Eliminate families' out-of-pocket costs at the federal level while allowing providers to bill private insurance

Washington state is one of only two states in the country that requires parents to pay out-of-pocket for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C (ESIT) services. In this state, families may either allow access to insurance for ESIT services or be placed on a sliding fee scale. The out-of-pocket costs for ESIT services are an inequitable barrier to participation for many families. Not having access to ESIT puts children with delays and/or disabilities at a huge disadvantage. Ensure ESIT eligible children get the services they need by removing financial barriers for families and eliminating families' out-of-pocket costs at the federal level, while also allowing providers to continue billing private insurance to prevent funding loss.

Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for developmental services

Medicaid reimbursement rates are significantly below the costs of providing a continuum of developmental services and contribute to the chronic underfunding of ESIT and many other developmental services for children and families. Increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates helps to ensure that developmental service providers are equitably and fully funded to provide the array of services under the federal IDEA.

Fully fund special education services

Special education services are required under IDEA and state law. Increasing the Basic Education Allocation (BEA) multiplier for state special education funding to fully cover the cost of services will support the 147,000-plus students ages 3-21 who receive special education in Washington state.¹ Families report huge challenges in their transitions from ESIT to school district services. Children exiting ESIT services and newly referred 3- and 4-year-olds are experiencing long delays for school district evaluations, resulting in dropped and delayed access to services. Schools must have adequate staffing and resources to meet their legal obligations.

Fully fund Complex Needs grants for childcare in Fair Start for Kids

Childcare is not accessible for most children with delays and/or disabilities. Childcare centers and licensed family homes are often willing but unable to properly support children with disabilities or complex medical needs. Childcare providers operate under thin margins, so hiring additional staff to support children with delays and disabilities is often not possible without external funding. Additionally, the Americans with Disabilities Act states that privately owned childcare businesses must provide accessibility, and most childcare providers do not have the funds for these improvements. The Complex Needs grants under Fair Starts for Kids enable licensed childcare programs to improve childcare and early learning accessibility. In its first round of applications, the state only had enough funding to provide \$7.35 million when providers had requested a total of \$86 million.² Fully funding the Complex Needs grants will effectively support children with delays and disabilities and their families.

¹ [Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Fully Funding Special Education Services 2023-25 Biennial Operating Budget Decision Package](#)

² [Washington State Department of Children, youth & Families; Child Care Complex Needs Fund](#)