



Alaska's Early Intervention/ Infant Learning Program (EI/ILP)

What is EI/ILP?

- EI/ILP is a coordinated system of education, therapies and other support services for infants and toddlers with special needs and their families.
- Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) requires all states to ensure access to these services for infants and toddlers, birth to three years, who experience disabilities or delays.
- Services are delivered in the child's home and other natural settings, and are tailored to the family's needs and priorities for their child.
- Services are provided by 18 regional grantees and 2 statewide programs with grant funding from the Department of Health and Social Services.

Who is Eligible?

- Families with children, ages 0-3, who experience developmental delays and/or disabilities, or an identified condition likely to result in delays/disabilities.
- Part C: Children who experience developmental delays of 50% or greater (such as Down Syndrome, Autism, FAS) or who experience a diagnosed or identified condition likely to result in delays/disabilities are entitled to services.
- Non-Part C: Children who experience developmental delays of less than 50% or are at risk for delay may be eligible for services based on availability of resources.

Why is EI/ILP Important?

- Brain research confirms that during the first three years of life an important foundation is created for a lifetime of health and development.
- For a young child with developmental delays or disabilities, early intervention provides necessary services and supports to families to promote their child's highest level of developmental competence.
- When children do not receive early intervention services, there is a decline in performance on developmental measures and learning, a huge impact on their families, and society bears the consequences.



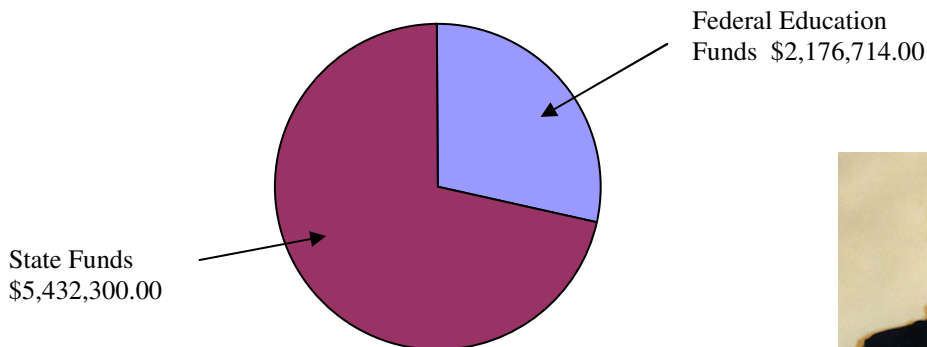
How many Infants are Served?



*approximately 1,800
children were served
in FY06 at an
average cost of \$5,500*



Funding Sources



“Born with a cleft palate, Katie received Early Intervention/ Infant Learning Program services including coordination of services such as oral surgery, dental and orthodontic care, and speech therapy.”

“...any proposed economic development list should have early childhood development at the top. The return on investment is extraordinary, resulting in better working public schools, more educated workers and less crime.” “...return on investment ranges from \$4-\$17.”

Source: Rob Grunewald, Regional Economic Analyst and Art Rolnick, Director of Research at Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis (fedgazette March 2003)

The Alaska Infant Learning Program Association, the Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education and Key Coalition are focused on the following:

Providing High Quality Services

There continues to be a strong emphasis at the federal level on Child Outcomes as a way to ensure that children are benefiting from the services they receive. Alaska's program continues to grow and find new ways to pilot improvements in many areas including:

- infant mental health screening
- billing Medicaid for services
- surveying and reviewing family input
- identifying costs of providing services

EI/ILP providers gather twice a year for professional development and to share effective practices.

Ensuring Highly Qualified Personnel

In order to recruit and retain qualified early intervention personnel, it is critical that Alaska's EI/ILP be able to keep up with "outside" or other in-state salaries for similar positions. Stable funding assures retention of experienced, qualified staff and ongoing recruitment to fill vacancies when they occur. Funding also allows continuation of personnel training to assure consistent quality of services in this highly specialized field. There continues to be a shortage of speech and other specialized therapists.

Diversifying Funding

Sufficient, stable funding is critical in order to provide necessary services to families. The cost of running a program has greatly increased over the years due to increased health insurance costs, travel expenses to outlying areas, facility expenses and general inflation. Funding has not increased to keep up with these increased costs of running a program.

Federal IDEA assures that states are responsible for maintenance of effort in providing ongoing, consistent funding for early intervention programs to receive federal Part C funding. Lack of state support for ILP can result in the loss of federal dollars.

**For more information please contact the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education
Toll free in Alaska 1-888-269-8990 (907)269-8990**

