

# 5 Reasons To Expand Eligibility for Early Intervention



For years early intervention has helped families learn how to be the best teachers for their children with developmental delays or disabilities. Early intervention's evidence-based practice of helping families incorporate intervention strategies into daily routines increases children's rate of growth in key developmental areas, multiplies the opportunities and effects of intervention, and increases the return on every dollar spent.

Discover how early intervention can help the children and families in your community and healthcare practice.

*"Investing in the continuum of learning from birth to age 5 not only impacts each child, but it also strengthens our country's workforce today and prepares future generations to be competitive in the global economy tomorrow."*  
**Professor James Heckman, University of Chicago**

## 1 Reduces Need for Special Education

The National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study (NEILS) Special Education and Part C Programs tracked children with a developmental delay and found 46% did not need special education by the time they reached kindergarten as a result of early intervention services.

**36%**

had no disability, and were not receiving special education services.

**10%**

were reported to have a disability, but were not receiving special education.



## 2 Positive Results for Children

Studies found that children who participate in high-quality early intervention/early childhood development programs tend to have:

- Less need for special education and other remedial work.
- Greater language abilities.
- Improved nutrition and health.
- Experienced less child abuse and neglect.



## 3 Works with Brain Development

Neural circuits create the foundation for learning, behavior and health. These circuits are most flexible from birth to three.

Early social/emotional development provides the foundation upon which cognitive and language skills develop.

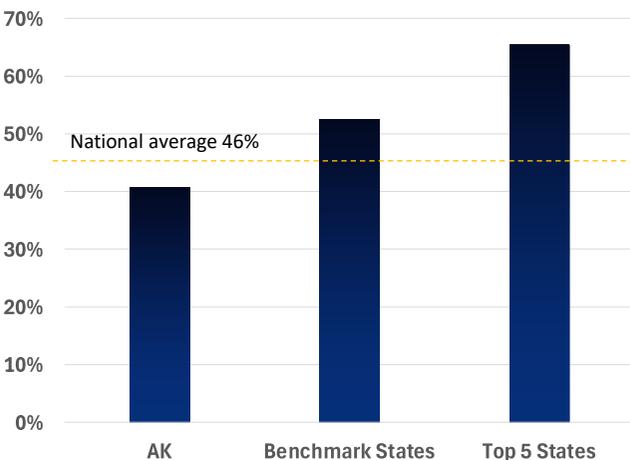
High-quality early intervention services can change a child's developmental trajectory and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.

Intervention is likely to be more effective and less costly when it is provided earlier in life rather than later.



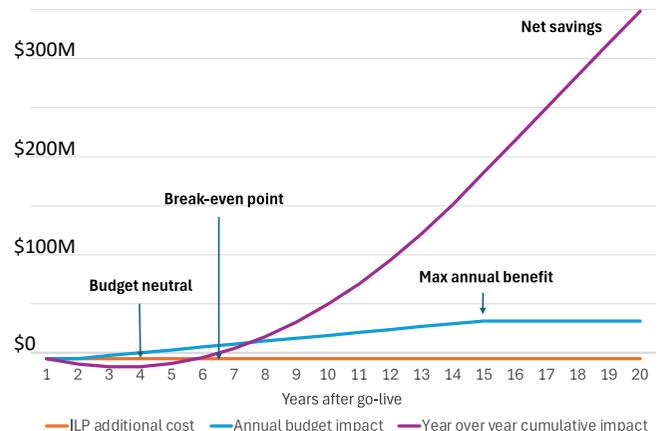
## 4 Because of Restrictive Eligibility, Alaska Trails Behind Other States

States with less restrictive eligibility help more children meet developmental age expectations at age 3 as a result of early intervention services.



## 5 Substantial Savings That Can Be Used for Other Education Needs

The state could save up to **\$229k** for each child that doesn't need special education due to expanded ILP services. Further savings from other services such as juvenile justice and adult Medicaid services are expected, but not easily quantified.



### ASK:

**Support SB 178** - Expand Eligibility for the Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program (ILP) from 50% to 25% developmental delay and increase their annual funding by \$5,716,865 (77%).

### WHY:

- Alaska has the most restrictive eligibility criteria for early intervention services in the nation. Currently to qualify for ILP services, a child must exhibit a 50% delay in one developmental area. In other words, a 2-year-old must be functioning at a 1-year-old level to qualify for services.
- Expanding eligibility from a 50% delay to a 25% delay will align eligibility for ILP services with eligibility for K-12 special education eliminating an inequity of services.
- A child's brain develops the most from birth to age 5. Expanding eligibility and funding for the ILP we will ensure the services for these children are provided at a time when they will have the most impact rather than delaying services until later years. National benchmarking predicts this will
  - lead to a 77% increase in children eligible for ILP in Alaska.
- Medicaid can be leveraged and billed for ILP services *in addition to the funding increase if*
  - "developmental therapies" becomes a billable service.

### FISCAL INVESTMENT = POSTIVE FISCAL IMPACT:

- Investment in early intervention can lead to substantial cost savings over the course of a child's education. According to national data, 46% of children who receive early intervention services meet developmental age expectations by age 3 and do not require special education when they enter Kindergarten.
- Each of those children represents a potential savings of \$229,071 over the course of their public education, when comparing the cost of 3 years of early intervention with 13 years of special education.
- With expansion, the projected additional number of children who would not require special education is 152 each school year, representing a potential annual cost savings of \$34,888,837\*.
  - \* It will take 2-3 years to develop the ILP system for expanded eligibility and another 6-7 for the initiative to break even. After that, net savings begin to accumulate, with full continual annual impact around 15 years after changes are implemented.

### ADDITIONAL ANTICIPATED BENEFITS AND COST SAVINGS:

- **Reinforce funding** after 12 years of flat funding which has made programs vulnerable to inflation.
- **Reduced need for adult home and community-based Medicaid services.**
- **Reduced Crime and Victimization:** Fewer children entering the Juvenile Justice system = less burden on child protective services, public safety, and corrections.
- **Reduced need for special needs daycare:** Allow parents to re-enter the workforce while lowering burden on public assistance programs.
- **Increase future workforce:** More high school graduates ready to enter post-secondary or vocational programs or to enter the workforce directly and contribute positively to society.