

My name is Cassandra Trout from Springfield. I am here today because of my son Ben who is now 4 and a half years old, and was born with a very rare genetic disorder. Our family began receiving early intervention services when Ben was just a few months old. Every week I had someone at our home helping me create strategies and techniques I could use that would work for him. Our services have grown with us and been individualized at every step to meet his needs, which are significant. He didn't begin walking until he was three years old. He still can't speak or understand much of what is said to him, but because of the dedicated team that has worked so long with us, he has made significant progress.

I am sure you have heard that the parent is the child's first and best teacher. They learn so much by watching us and interacting with us and listening to us, but when you have a child who can't hear you because he has hearing loss, isn't watching you because he's more interested in his hands than anything else you want to show him, and doesn't even want to make eye contact with you let alone interact with you, you can feel lost as a parent.

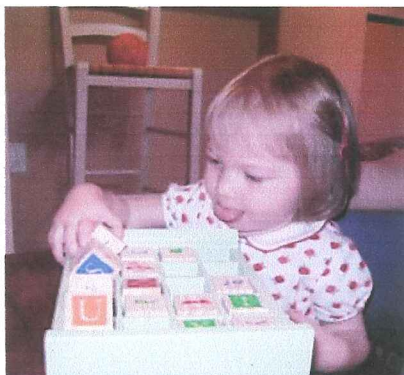
Early intervention and early childhood special education is about giving families the tools they need to be able to be their child's first and best teacher. Our specialists made a difference for Ben because of what they taught my husband and me, not because of what they were able to do in the very short two hours each month that we saw them.

In Oregon, of the children with the most significant needs, like Ben, less than 2% are actually receiving the service levels recommended by research and best practices. As enrollment has increased without funding keeping up, service levels have had to go down, our services went down.

Evidence shows that if we invest in children now when they are young, we save so much when they go to formal schooling. **We invested in EI/ECSE services in order to change the lives of these children and families; we need to actually invest enough to be able to provide service levels that have been proven to be effective in making those changes!**

EI/ECSE Services

Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education



Early Intervention & Early Childhood Special Education work together to provide special education services for babies, toddlers and preschoolers with developmental delays and disabilities

Who receives EI/ECSE Services?

- Eligible children from birth through five years of age with disabilities.
- These children may have conditions such as: genetic disorders, cerebral palsy, autism, communication disorders, hearing or vision impairments, and other health issues.

FAST FACTS

- ❖ **Over 13,424 Oregon children receive EI/ECSE Services.**
- ❖ **These services are mandated by state and federal law.**
- ❖ **In the past decade, as EI/ECSE enrollment increased, funding and services decreased. This can substantially lower program effectiveness.**
- ❖ **Current funding covers only 68% of evidence-based recommended service levels.**

What are EI/ECSE Services?

- Parent education, consultation and support
- Speech & language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy
- Behavior and social skills training
- Specialized instruction in preschool settings
- Specialized equipment and materials

What are the benefits?

- Thanks to early detection and intervention 1 out of every 3 children who begin in EI/ECSE services, are able to graduate from services functioning within normal age expectations!
- 1 out of every 2 showed substantial improvement in functioning.
- Families report having more confidence in knowing how to help their children succeed!
- High quality early education has a high return on investment. For every \$1 we invest now, we will save \$8 in the future.

Why Do We Care?

- **Oregon has invested in an excellent system for finding and assessing the needs of children with delays and disabilities**
- **Yet, as enrollment has increased, Oregon service levels have decreased and are now below proven recommendation levels for "high quality" EI/ECSE because of previous budget cuts.**
- **We have found these children and understand what they need to be successful, now we need to invest in them!**

Data: Oregon Department of Education

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For more information visit us on the web!

<http://www.oregonaei.org>

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!
For Believing I Can Succeed!



For investing
in my
future!

For
advocating
for me!

For knowing
I'm worth
every penny!