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# Madalynn

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) is a statewide program for families with children, birth to three, with disabilities and developmental delays. Families and professionals work as a team to plan appropriate services based on the unique needs of the child and family.

Research shows that growth and development are most rapid in the early years of life. Early intervention responds to the critical needs of children and families by:

- promoting development and learning;
- providing support to families;
- coordinating services; and
- decreasing the need for costly special programs.

For more information, visit <http://txchildren.org/ECI>.

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## Early Intervention Works

“Madalynn was born with Proximal Femoral Focal Deficiency,



Femoral Hypoplasia, Bladder Reflux, Acid Reflux, Sleep Apnea and Informalities of the Optical Lobe. We were told that she would never walk without numerous surgeries and that she would encounter blindness, seizures and have an intellectual disability. Nevertheless, we began a journey to find resources, answers, other children with her conditions and any possible information we could find. At 3½ months, Madalynn was enrolled in ECI of North Central Texas.

Madalynn attempted to communicate verbally with us, but it was typically unclear what she was trying to say. ECI’s Specialized Skills Trainer began teaching her sign language and small words to help her communicate.

Madalynn needs a brace and shoe lift. Her ECI Physical Therapist creatively made canes for her because Madalynn’s femur is not connected to her hip, making it difficult for her to distribute weight on her left leg. Now, along with the brace and shoe lift, she has a special powerchair designed specifically for her.

During treatment planning with ECI, Madalynn’s mother passed away. An ECI Licensed Professional Counselor began visits with Madalynn and me to help us cope.

Due to Madalynn’s conditions, it will always be a challenge for her to maintain or even gain weight. Madalynn’s ECI Registered Dietician implemented strategies to help my daughter gain weight and strength.

Madalynn recently turned three and transitioned out of the ECI program, but she is further in life than ever expected. Madalynn and I have resources and tools now that will help her learn and grow.”

*Madalynn’s dad*

ECI goes to families and focuses on working with the child and family in their natural environment, such as at home or in a child care center.

ECI Services must be fully funded in order to sustain a quality system that reaches children with developmental delays who are in need of services.

It is crucial that ECI continues to receive adequate funding to give families the support they need:

- Without increases in funding, ECI services will not keep up with the more than 2,235 new children who will need services between 2012 and 2014.
- If ECI service levels are not sufficiently funded, children in ECI will not receive the hours of service they need each month.

If the ECI system is not strengthened:

- Young children and families will not receive services in time to significantly change the child's trajectory, requiring they access additional, more costly services as the child ages.
- Other systems—such as schools, child welfare, and juvenile justice—will be called on to deal with unaddressed problems that may become more entrenched, difficult, and expensive to treat.
- Texas taxpayers will spend more on interventions, which have less of an impact on a child's future success.

Ensure families' access to developmental services that adhere to ECI's family-focused model by:

- Preserving the ECI model—one that is developmental, evidence-based, family-centered, and cost-effective. Movement towards a medical or clinical service model must be avoided.
- Ensuring ECI is appropriated necessary funds to provide services to all children who are eligible.
- Avoiding further restricting of ECI eligibility by funding Exceptional Items 1 and 2 in the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Legislative Appropriations Request. Ensuring that ECI services keep up with caseload growth and provide children with the hours of service they need is key to making sure children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families can access services shown to alter their developmental trajectory.
- Increasing the average number of ECI service hours children receive to the minimum recommended levels in order to promote early success for children and better prepare them to enter other systems, such as schools.

For more information, visit <http://txchildren.org/ECI>.

It is critical that Texas maintain its ECI system and continue to help Texas children reach their full potential.

