



Save Early Steps

Florida anticipates ending Early Steps services unless the State Legislature approves 6.9 million dollars in new funding this session.

ABOUT THIS FUNDING CRISIS

Almost annually, Early Steps faces a financial crisis due to increasing enrollment and flat state funding allocations.

When the current, national economic emergency began, Early Steps had to rely on temporary federal stimulus funds to maintain services. Those funds ended in 2011, resulting in contract cuts for many regional programs.

The Department of Health, Children's Medical Services, which administers Early Steps, has now announced that unless **\$6,861,026** in new, recurring funding is appropriated, Florida will be unlikely to re-apply for the federal Part C grant in 2012. Florida would then become the first state in the nation to end Part C services and would lose almost **\$24 million dollars** in federal funds.

This would leave more than **45,000** Florida infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities and delays without services.

ABOUT EARLY STEPS

Early Steps serves children, ages birth to 36 months, who have medical conditions such as autism, Down Syndrome, cerebral palsy, hearing / vision impairment, as well as children with significant developmental delays. Each year, Early Steps helps these children achieve critical developmental milestones, starting them on a path toward success at home and at school.

Early Steps services include:

- Identification of developmental delays
- Multidisciplinary evaluations
- Service coordination
- Individualized family support plans
- Intervention services, therapy and support
- Hearing and vision services

Early intervention programs:

- Reduce the need for special education
- Lower the number of students repeating a grade
- Increase high school graduation rates
- Reduce future healthcare costs

You Must Act NOW!

Thousands of contacts are needed to save the program

1. Log on to Facebook @ "Save Early Steps" and explain what these services mean to your child and family;
2. E-Mail the message, "Save Early Steps" to: Senator Negron – Negron.joe.S28@flsenate.gov
Senator Rich – Rich.nan.S34@flsenate.gov
Representative Hudson – matt.hudson@myfloridahouse.gov
3. Inform friends and family and ask them to advocate for Early Steps as well.
4. Check with your local Early Steps for more information and recommendations.