

January 26, 2026

Baby Watch: Sustaining early intervention services

Social Services Appropriations
Subcommittee



Utah Department of
Health & Human
Services

Contributor
Noël Taxin

Contributor
Lisa Davenport

Contributor
Brandi Peterson



Baby Watch Purpose

Baby Watch helps infants/toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities catch up to same-age peers, reducing the need for future special education (PreK-12) and community services.

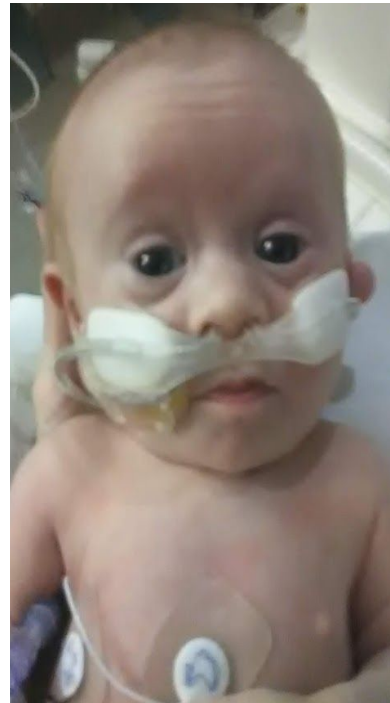
Learn more at: babywatch.utah.gov



"There were times when the providers would show up when I was so close to tears, not knowing how I was feeling. They encouraged me and provided me with the support to care for our son. Early Intervention not only helped our son learn to walk, and talk, they supported us emotionally. Today at the age of 5, he is talking, can count to 10 with help and runs all around!"

— Amy, parent of child

Beckett





Quinn



"In one year, his growth has been incredible, and we are deeply grateful for this resource in not only helping our son reach age-appropriate milestones, but for enabling him to exceed expectations."

— Cailey & Seth, parents of child



Baby Watch at a Glance

- Special education for infants and toddlers (birth-3), including in-home services provided by multidisciplinary teams.
- 14 local programs serve 15,000+ children per year.



Key benefits & returns

1. Cognitive, Communication, Motor, & Social Skills
2. Health
3. Labor market
4. Reduced costs

Why is early intervention important:

Early intervention improves developmental milestones and return on investment for the future due to improved long-term outcomes:

Education, health, employment, savings in special education, crime, and other social services.

“Approx. 1 in 6 children in the US has a developmental delay/disorder/disability, Zero to Three, 2025).”



Baby Watch Early Intervention Program

Budget request

\$1.5 million one-time FY27 General Fund



The problems

- Sustainability to meet federal grants Maintenance of Effort (MOE).
- Inadequate funding to provide ongoing services and compensation for providers to meet developmental needs of the children.
- Medicaid unwinding has led to a significant increase in services for children paid for with State General funds in the past 3 years.





How will this request help solve the problem?

One-time funding in the amount of \$1.5 million will allow Baby Watch to:

- Meet its Maintenance of Effort (MOE) federal grant requirement.
- Continue to fund local programs in FY27 at the current level of visits per child per month.



