

We all know
a Child





ABRAZOS

Family Support Services

www.abrazosnm.org

- Legislative Health and Human Services Presentation 10.22.24



ABRAZOS
Family Support Services

Objectives

- Introduction to Abrazos
- Early Intervention
 - Challenges
 - Call to Action

Abrazos Mission:

To enhance the quality of life for individuals with developmental delays and disabilities by providing specialized family-centered, community-based services.



Abrazos Service Area



Sandoval County

- Algodones
- Bernalillo
- Corrales
- Cuba
- Jemez Valley
- Placitas
- Rio Rancho
- 7 Indian Pueblo Tribes/Reservations
- Parts of the Navajo Nation

Bernalillo County / NW ABQ

- Eagle Ranch
- Paradise Hills
- Taylor Ranch
- Ventana Ranch



- Founded in 1978
- 501(c)(3) non-profit entity
- Located in the Town of Bernalillo
- Served over 600 children and their families last year
- 1/3 of our staff have a personal attachment to the mission



Embracing Our Community,
One Family at a Time

Abrazos' Programs

Early Intervention

Families with children,
birth to 3 years



Respite

Short-term break for
caregivers of loved ones
with disabilities



Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

Specialized therapy for
people with autism



Family Living Services

Full time care for
adults in their home

Early Intervention (EI)

EI provides support for families of children ages birth to 3 years who have or are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities



Referrals

- Pediatricians and PCPs
- Parents (self-refer)
- Other Professionals
- Hospitals / NICUs
- Childcare providers
- CYFD/ CPS





#1 in the Nation

Early Intervention Eligibility



- Any child, birth to 3 years, is eligible to receive an evaluation
- For ongoing services, the child must meet at least one of these criteria:
 - 25% delay in at least one area of development
 - Established condition (e.g., Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy)
 - Medical/Biological risk (e.g., hearing or vision loss)
 - Environmental risk

Early Intervention Coaching Model

- Children learn best when interacting with family and caregivers
- Families learn to support their child's development during daily routines and activities
- Families learn to advocate for their child to improve long-term outcomes
- Families become skilled in identifying and accessing resources to support their child and family
- Our team works together to coach and consult toward positive outcomes





Home and Community- Based Services

Services are provided in the child's natural environment. This can include:

- the family home
- childcare center
- another natural caregiver (i.e., Grandma's home)
- in the community
- center-based setting



Services are provided by Early Childhood Specialists

- Developmental Specialists
- Family Service Coordinators
- Occupational Therapists
- Speech/Language Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- Infant Mental Health Specialists/ Social Workers
- Nutritional Consultants

What Can Early Intervention Look Like?

Johnny- 6 months old, Diagnosed with Down Syndrome

- Services provided in the family home
- Family Service Coordination- monthly services- 1 hr
- Developmental Instruction- weekly
- Physical Therapy- 2x month
- Speech Therapy- monthly

Annie- 18 months old, Diagnosed with a Speech delay

- Services provided in a home daycare setting
- Family Service Coordination- monthly services- 30 min
- Developmental Instruction- bi-weekly
- Speech Therapy- bi-weekly

Transition

- Early Intervention supports families learn how to access resources and services for their children when they transition out of the program at 3 years old, or no longer need EI services, or move to another community or state.
- Our team assists families to determine options for continued services in the schools, home visiting, etc.
- Requests to expand Early intervention to better support children past the age of 3



Early Intervention Logistics



- Early Intervention is 1 of ECECD's essential programs
- Early Intervention and Family Infant Toddler Program
- Federally regulated and mandated
- Funded through the ECECD with a Medicaid match
- Every dollar invested in EI results in a return of over \$17.
- No cost to families

IDEA-Part C, Sec.631 Findings and Policy

- (a) Findings.--Congress finds that there is an urgent and substantial need--
- (1) to enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities, to minimize their potential for developmental delay, and to recognize the significant brain development that occurs during a child's first 3 years of life;
 - (2) to reduce the educational costs to our society, including our Nation's schools, by minimizing the need for special education and related services after infants and toddlers with disabilities reach school age;
 - (3) to maximize the potential for individuals with disabilities to live independently in society;
 - (4) to enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities; and
 - (5) to enhance the capacity of State and local agencies and service providers to identify, evaluate, and meet the needs of all children, particularly minority, low income, inner city, and rural children, and infants and toddlers in foster care.
- (b) POLICY.—It is therefore the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance to States—
- (1) to develop and implement a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency system that provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families;
 - (2) to facilitate the coordination of payment for early intervention services from Federal, State, local, and private sources (including public and private insurance coverage);
 - (3) to enhance their capacity to provide quality early intervention services and expand and improve existing early intervention services being provided to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families; and
 - (4) to encourage States to expand opportunities for children under 3 years of age who would be at risk of having substantial developmental delay if they did not receive early intervention services.

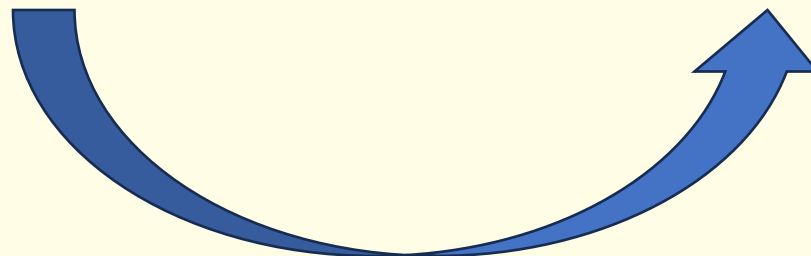
If You Didn't Need Us, You May Not Know Us

Home Visiting

- Preventative
- Optional to provide
- Curriculum-based services
- Services provided by “friendly experts”
- Serves around 5,000 children in NM annually

Early Intervention

- Intervention
- Federally Mandated to provide
- Individualized services
- Services provided by degreed professionals
- Serves around 16,000 children in NM annually





CHALLENGES

Federal Mandates

- All children must receive a comprehensive multi-disciplined evaluation conducted by two professionals of different expertise (i.e. a speech therapist and a developmental therapist), using the state-assigned protocol, which includes the developmental assessment, vision screening, hearing screening, autism screening, and review of medical records.
- All children determined to be eligible must have an individualized service written plan within 45 days of referral
- Services identified in the family's plan must be provided within 30 days
- All children receiving ongoing services must have their plan reviewed every 6 months and their developmental progress must be re-assessed annually
- Preparation for transition, including into the school system, begins at enrollment and continues until the child's 3rd birthday.





Provider Required Purchases

- Multiple Testing Protocols
- OAE- Hearing screening instrument (including annual calibration and maintenance)
- Reflective Supervision- one hour monthly for each direct service employee
- Language Acquisition- interpretation/translation into the family's native language

Staffing Challenges

- Lack of higher education
- On the job learning
- Vehicles
- Isolation
- Uncontrolled environments
- Schedules
- Low Pay



Requirements to Work as a Developmental Specialist

- 75 documented hours of cont. education every 3 years
- Individual Professional Development Plans
- Ability to assess developmental strengths and needs
- Administer, score, and interpret formal testing instruments and summarize results
- Advanced training/education to work closely with SLPs, OTs, PTs, etc. who are required to have masters and doctorate degrees
- Work with the most vulnerable children



Early Childhood Personnel
with Specialized
Training (Developmental
Specialist)

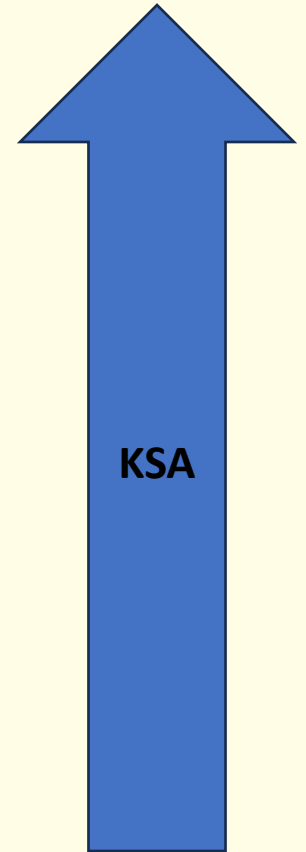
Infants & Toddlers with
Developmental Delays
& Disabilities

Early Childhood Personnel
with Advanced Training (ex.
Home Visitor)

Infants & Toddlers with
risk conditions

All Early Childhood
Personnel (ex. Day
Care)

All Infants & Toddlers



Average Pay for Dev.
Specialist:
\$45,000

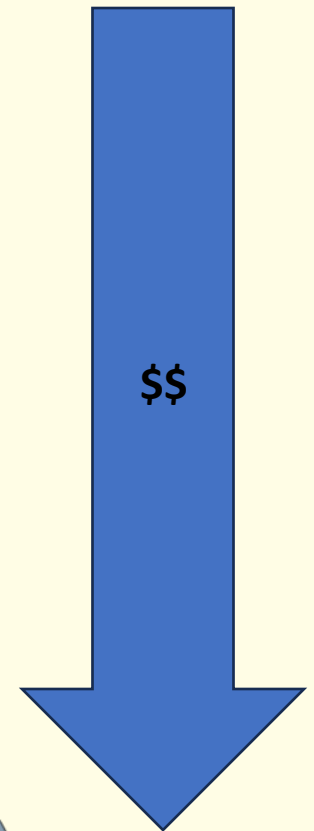
Infants & Toddlers with
Developmental Delays
& Disabilities

Average Pay for Home
visitor:
\$50,000

Infants & Toddlers with
risk conditions

Pay Parity for
Daycare worker:
\$55,000

All Infants & Toddlers



Where We Still Fail at Being #1

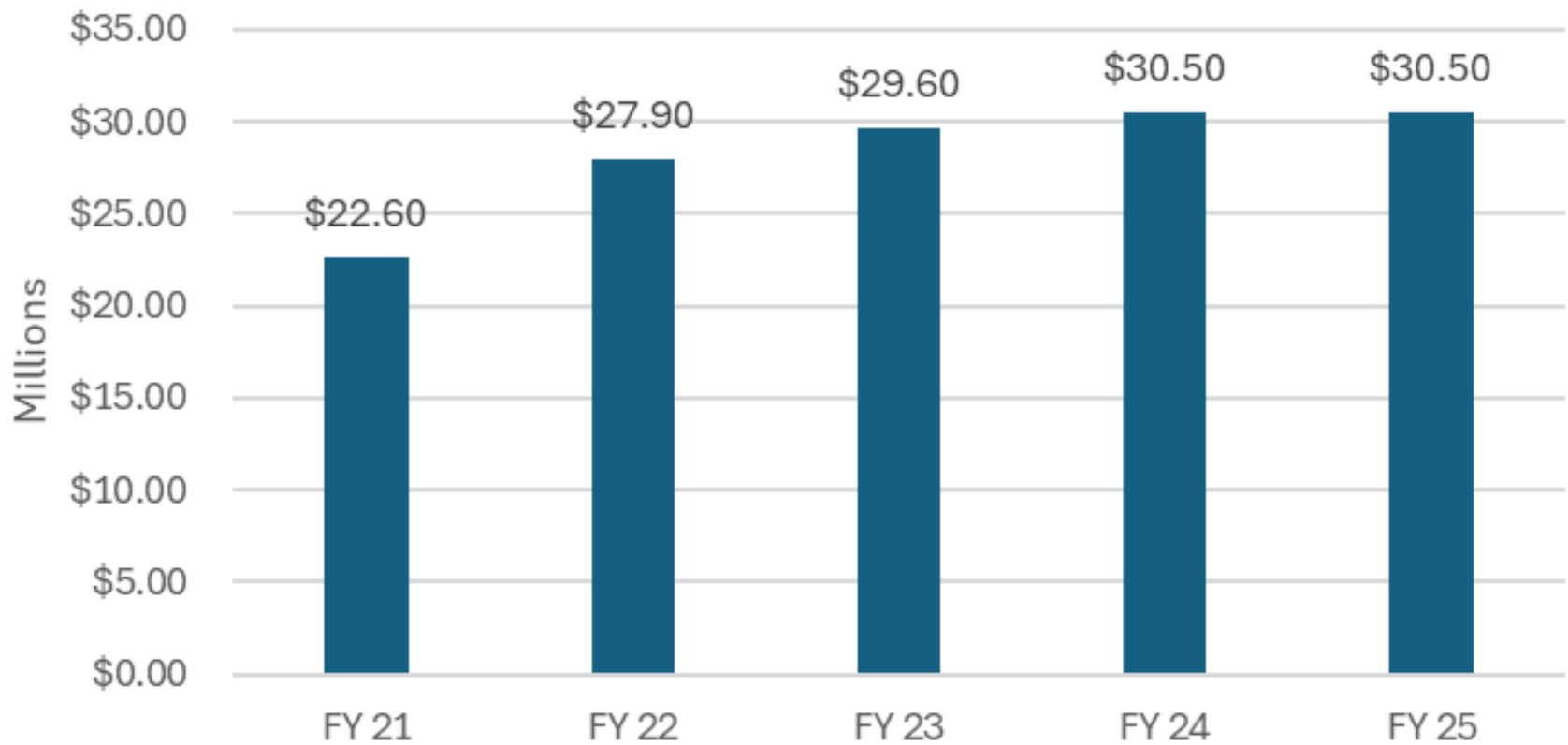
We are great at identifying children.



We struggle to provide needed services in a timely manner.

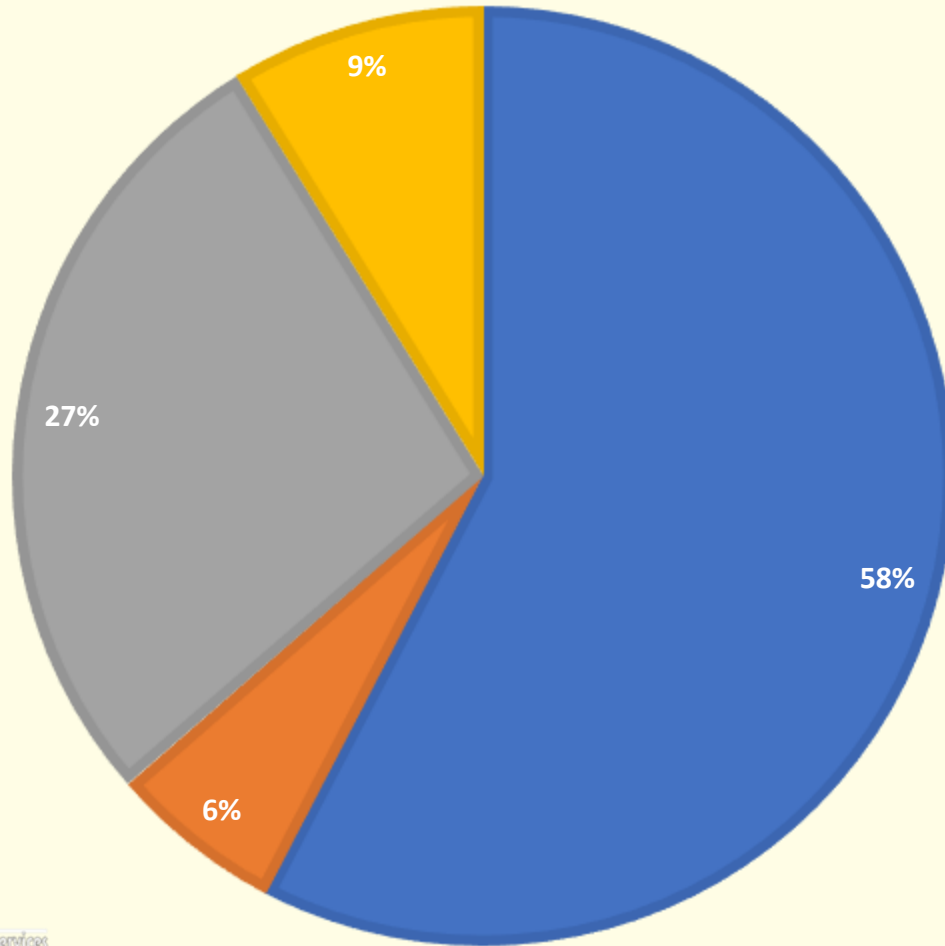


FIT Budget History (State Funds Only)



ECECD BUDGET REQUEST

■ Childcare ■ Home Visiting ■ Pre-K ■ Early Intervention



Is this “a cohesive, equitable and responsive prenatal to 5 early childhood system”?



Call to Action: Fund Early Intervention



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