



MASSACHUSETTS ADVOCATES *for* CHILDREN

**We are requesting a funding increase of \$500,000 for the
Children's Autism Medicaid Waiver
(total for Waiver \$5.5 million – line item total of \$ 7.4 million)**

FY20 Budget Request for Children's Autism Medicaid Waiver -- # 5920-3010 (Division of Autism/DDS)

Funding history for Children's Autism Medicaid Waiver:

- FY18 budget provided \$4.5 million for the Waiver (line item total \$6,474,349)
- FY19 budget provided \$5 million for the Waiver (line item total \$6,974,349)
- FY20 Governor's budget H.1 level funding (line item total \$6,974,349)

- With an increase of \$500,000 the Waiver will be able to serve an **additional 25 young children** with autism at risk of institutionalization who require intensive in-home services, with a **total of over 300 children** being served at one time. The Commonwealth will receive federal reimbursement for approximately 50% of the cost of these critical Waiver services.
- During the 2018 annual open enrollment period for the Waiver, DDS received nearly 900 applications for services. The program has been at full capacity and there are only openings when children age out of the program, resulting in a lengthy wait list.
- The number of children enrolled in Early Intervention with an autism diagnosis continues to increase rapidly. Between FY12 and FY16 there was a 41% increase in children with autism being served by Early Intervention.¹
- The Commonwealth's Autism Commission, established by the legislature, has repeatedly recognized the critical importance of the Children's Autism Medicaid Waiver to meet the needs of young children with autism. In its initial 2013 report and again in February of 2017, the Commission recommended increasing Waiver capacity.
- Research demonstrates that children with autism who receive intensive in-home services can make *substantial progress and in some instances acquired skills within typically developing ranges* in areas of social skills, language acquisition, nonverbal communication, and reductions in challenging behaviors.
- Cost-benefit analysis has shown that if children with autism receive intensive services at a young age, the savings are significant. Recent studies have found that the provision of intensive services (such as Applied Behavioral Analysis), at early ages can result in ***estimated cost savings ranging from \$187,000 to \$203,000 per child ages 3-22 years***, and a total lifetime savings range of 1 to 2 million dollars.

Mass Advocates for Children 3/1219

¹ Information obtained from Department of Public Health. (in FY12 there were 1,497 children receiving specialty services for Autism and in FY 16 there were 2,105.)