

Recommended Legislative and Regulatory Action

The Infant Service/Early Intervention (ITC) Program: The Commonwealth's Responsibility, the Commonwealth's Failure.

This program needs your unequivocal support to make the Commonwealth live up to its promises and responsibilities to provide therapeutic services addressing developmental delays or disabilities in children. Innumerable studies have shown that the return on investment for these services is enormous. Yet, at present, the Commonwealth has under-funded this program by more than \$8 million statewide in FY 2013. Local governments need the Commonwealth to fund this program fully to avoid delaying or disrupting these services. The effect of the Commonwealth's irresponsibility is to create growing waiting lists, losing the window of opportunity to correct children's developmental issues when the time is most propitious.

Over the past several years this program has grown considerably, stressing even further local budgets, which can no longer fund what the Commonwealth fails to appropriate. The children eligible for the ITC program in Fairfax, for example, grew 16% percent in FY 2012 – from 988 on average children a month receiving services to 1144 children on average a month.

This issue is a statewide problem, not just one that affects only Fairfax County or northern Virginia. We suggest, therefore, that the following steps might be appropriate for the Board of Supervisors to consider:

Notify both the Virginia Association of Counties and the Virginia Municipal League that Fairfax County wants their legislative agendas to request sufficient funds for the ITC program through budget amendments if the Governor does not add these funds to his introduced budget for both FY 2013 and 2014; and

Send a letter directly to Governor McDonnell explaining the consequences of the Commonwealth's inaction and requesting that he address the Commonwealth's responsibility in his introduced budget in December, 2012.

It will be a sorry failure if the Commonwealth will not live up to its obligations to support the ITC program, one that we will never be able to explain to the children who could have been helped but were not.