

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission



**Early Intervention Services
For Virginians With
Autism Spectrum Disorders**

Senate Finance Subcommittees on Education and
Health and Human Resources

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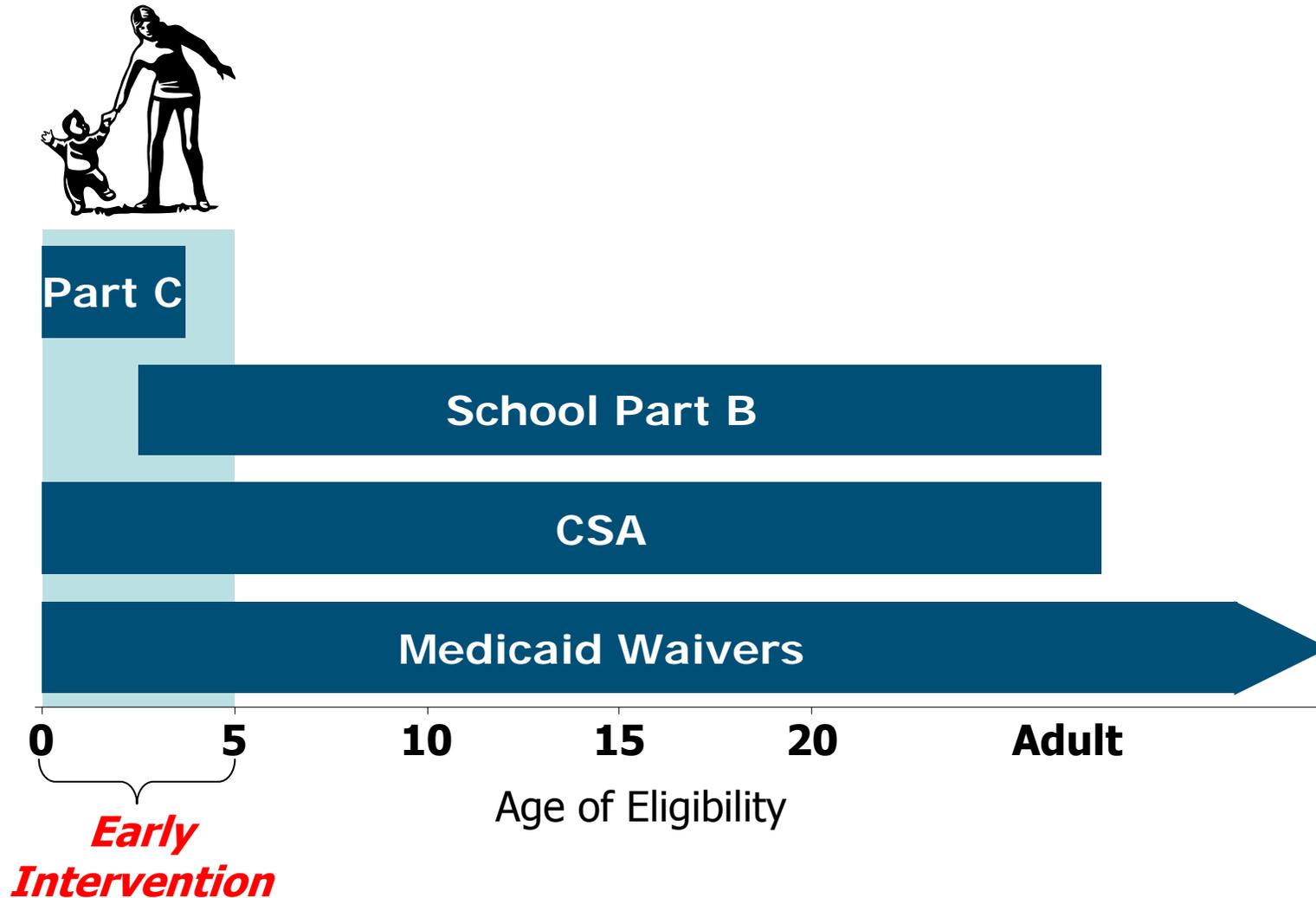
Intensive Early Intervention Services Can Generate Positive Outcomes and Cost Savings

- Easier to shape outcomes at young age
- Studies have demonstrated up to 90% of young children with ASDs improved after intensive interventions
 - 50% reached normal or near-normal functioning
- States can achieve savings in education costs with early intensive treatment programs
 - Other states estimate \$187K to \$209K savings per child

Effective Early Intervention Programs for Children With ASDs Share Common Elements

Key Component	Description
Early start	< age 3
Intensity	> 20-25 hours/week, all year, for 2-3 years
Structured environment	Predictable and low child-to-staff ratios
Specialized ASD curriculum	Designed to address core deficits of ASDs
Systematic instruction	Logically planned, consistently implemented, and adjusted based on data measuring child progress
Family involvement	Structured to involve families in planning and implementing interventions
Individualized services	Based on child's abilities and needs
Qualified staff	Carried out by highly-trained personnel
Research-based	Scientifically proven to be effective or promising

Four Programs Can Provide Early Intervention Services to Virginia Children With ASD



Overview of Part C Program

Key Characteristics	Description				
Program Goal	Provides services and coaches parents to increase child participation in everyday activities				
Services Available	Screening, case management, individual services, family services				
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 0-3 • Exhibiting or at-risk of developmental delay 				
State Administration	Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services				
Local Administration	40 offices operated primarily by community services boards (CSBs)				
Individuals Served (FY 08)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11,351 total • 460 with ASDs 				
Funding (FY 08)	<u>Total</u> \$33 M	Federal 34%	State 26%	Local 26%	Other 14%

Issues Limiting Effectiveness of Part C Program For Virginia Children Under Age 5

- Majority of caregivers report marginal impact on outcomes
 - No meaningful improvements – 60%
 - No reduced need for special education services – 80%
- Program not designed to provide intensive services
 - Children with ASDs typically receive 3 or fewer hours of services/week from Part C providers
- Limited staff training on ASD-specific interventions
- Many children not eligible for program because of delayed diagnosis (> age 3)

Overview of Part B Program

Key Characteristics	Description				
Program Goal	Provides services and supports to afford students with disabilities an appropriate education and prepare them for adulthood				
Services Available	Screening, case management, individual services				
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 2-21 • Disability impacting capacity to receive an appropriate education 				
State Administration	Department of Education				
Local Administration	134 local educational agencies				
Individuals Served (FY 08)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 169,538 total • 7,850 with ASDs 				
Funding (FY 08)	<u>Total</u> \$2,024 M	Federal 13%	State 23%	Local 64%	Other 0%

Issues Limiting Effectiveness of Part B Program For Virginia Children Under Age 5

- Preschools unable to provide services necessary to minimize need for special education later – 50%
- Many preschool programs lack recommended intensity and structure
 - 30% of preschools are part-time for students ages 2-5
 - Child-to-staff ratios usually exceed recommended 1:1 or 2:1
- Teachers lack knowledge to identify and apply effective strategies
- Limited reliance on data to measure outcomes
- Goal of program is to provide appropriate, not optimal, services

Overview of Comprehensive Services Act

Key Characteristics	Description				
Program Goal	Provides comprehensive, preferably community-based services for children requiring cross-agency involvement				
Services Available	Screening, case management, individual services, family services, community supports				
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 0-21 • Exhibiting serious emotional or behavioral problem • Services mandated if on IEP or child is in/at-risk of foster care 				
State Administration	Office of Comprehensive Services				
Local Administration	131 local CSA offices receiving guidance from CPMT and FAPT interagency teams				
Individuals Served (FY 08)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18,195 total • 831 with ASDs 				
Funding (FY 08)	<u>Total</u> \$384 M	Federal 0%	State 64%	Local 36%	Other 0%

Issues Limiting Effectiveness of CSA Program For Virginia Children Under Age 5

- Services are generally mandated only if included in individualized education plan (IEP)
- Limited non-mandated funds available to provide additional services

Overview of Medicaid Waivers

- Provide community-based care to individuals who would otherwise require institutional placement
- Intellectual Disabilities (ID) waiver can offer comprehensive services to Virginians with ASDs under age 5
- Day Support and Elderly or Disabled with Consumer Direction (EDCD) waivers provide limited supports
 - Generally used while on waiting list for ID waiver

Overview of Intellectual Disabilities Waiver

Key Characteristics	Description										
Program Goal	Provides home- and community-based care to individuals who would otherwise require placement in facility for persons with mental retardation										
Services Available	Case management, individual and family services, community supports, employment services										
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any age with intellectual disability • Under age 6 with developmental disability 										
State Administration	Departments of Medical Assistance Services and Behavioral Health and Developmental Services										
Local Administration	40 community services boards (CSBs)										
Individuals Served (FY 08)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7,295 total (4,375 on wait list) • 837 with ASDs 										
Funding (FY 08)	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Total</th> <th>Federal</th> <th>State</th> <th>Local</th> <th>Other</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>\$430 M</td> <td>50%</td> <td>50%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Total	Federal	State	Local	Other	\$430 M	50%	50%	0%	0%
Total	Federal	State	Local	Other							
\$430 M	50%	50%	0%	0%							

Issues Limiting Effectiveness of Intellectual Disabilities Waiver for Virginia Children \leq Age 5

- Usually still on waiting list past age 5
 - Average wait = 3 years
 - Only 11 children \leq age 5 enrolled in 2008
- Enrolled children may not fully utilize intensive early intervention services
 - Intensive services (i.e. ABA) covered indirectly, but not by waiver
 - Few requests for ABA-based services through EPSDT*
- Providers not required to receive ASD training

* Early periodic screening, diagnosis, and treatment



Potential Short-Term Options to Improve Early Intervention Services for Virginia Children With ASDs

- Increase ASD expertise
 - Expand number of ABA specialists embedded in preschool classrooms by building upon partnerships (Commonwealth Autism Service, Faison School, etc.)
 - Create division-level ASD expert positions on a pilot basis
 - Provide incentives for preschool teachers to obtain ASD credentials by adding ASD certificate and ABA certification to Certification Incentive Reward Program and Fund
 - Work with Virginia Autism Council to design and make available ASD training for Part C and Medicaid providers

Potential Short-Term Options to Improve Early Intervention Services for Virginia Children With ASDs

- Maximize resources
 - Facilitate expansion of regional special education programs
 - Maximize Medicaid reimbursements for school-based ASD services
 - Identify grant opportunities for preschool programs
- Require quantifiable outcomes to be included in IEPs of all children with ASDs
- Consider prioritizing waiver slots for young children