APPROPRIATIONS

Overview

Infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and/or gifts and talents participate in and benefit from all federal public education and early childhood programs. A strong federal investment in programs that provide targeted support is critical to ensuring success in the early years, in school, and beyond, as well as increasing opportunities for all. Unfortunately, these programs are consistently and woefully underfunded, straining the entire education system. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the number of children with disabilities served under IDEA continues to grow, reaching an estimated high of 7.75 million during the 2023- 2024 school year. Stagnant federal funding, a rise in the number of eligible children, a growing shortage of personnel, and an increase in the price of services create significant budgetary challenges.

In Fiscal Year 2025, Members of Congress are Urged to:

**Invest no less than $16.2 billion in IDEA Part B State Grants (Sec. 611):** The U.S. Department of Education estimates that fully funding IDEA could support 400,000 additional special educators and specialized instructional support personnel. Congress must put the IDEA on the first step of a 10-year glidepath to full funding in FY 2025 to enable districts to better support people with disabilities and hire more fully prepared special education personnel.

**Invest $932 million in IDEA Part C; Invest $503 million in IDEA Part B (Sec. 619):** IDEA’s early childhood programs serve approximately 1.4 million children with disabilities and their families annually. A national longitudinal [study](https://www.sri.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/neils_finalreport_200702.pdf) found that because of early interventions, more than 40 percent of Part C recipients did not need IDEA services in kindergarten.

**Invest $300 million in IDEA Part D personnel preparation (Sec. 662):** To serve infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities,a well prepared and qualified workforce is essential. Sec. 662 is critical to addressing pervasive personnel shortages across the nation and supports building a diverse pipeline into the profession.

**Invest $70 million National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER):** NCSER is the primary driver of special education and early intervention research in the nation and identifies evidence-based practices for classroom teachers and early intervention practitioners that benefit all children. Despite the practical solutions developed through NCSER investments, it continues to be underfunded, hampering support for ongoing and new research.

**Invest $32 million in the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Grants:** A significant “excellence gap” exists at the top achievement levels between students of color and white students, and between low-income students and their more advantaged peers. The Javits Act—the sole federal initiative supporting students with gifts and talents- promotes research and programs to identify and serve high-ability students from underserved backgrounds.

**Invest $250 million in School-Based Mental Health Professionals:** The School-Based Mental Health Services Professional Demonstration Grant program and the School-Based Mental Health Services Grant program address severe shortages of school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors. These programs are designed to shore up the school mental health workforce to meet current mental health needs.

FUNDING FAST FACTS

* Without a significant increase for the IDEA grants to states program in FY 2025, the federal share will be 10.3% or one quarter of “full funding” (U.S. Department of Education)
* Filling the $31 billion gap between current funding and “full funding” could support more than 400,000 special education jobs (U.S. Department of Education)
* Students of color, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities show persistent underrepresentation in gifted and talented education programs or other advanced or accelerated learning opportunities (U.S. Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection)
* For the 2023-24 school year, 43 States, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia projected a shortage of qualified teachers in special education, more than for any other teacher shortage area by an eight state margin (U.S. Department of Education)
* An estimated 70-80 percent of children with mental health disorders go untreated (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK559784/)