

It's Time For Congress To Invest In Babies

STROLLING THUNDER 10 YEARS

Hi, we're babies

Milo and Malia

This is our story.

Location:

Jamestown, North Carolina

Our Grown Up's Name:

Ashley Robinson

“ Without Medicaid, we would not have had nursing, we wouldn't have been able to handle his supplies. We wouldn't have been able to handle any of it.



Federal policies play a critical role in the health and well-being of both babies and their caregivers, including through Medicaid, early intervention, mental health, and pediatric investments. By investing in the health and well-being of children and their families now, we can set them up for lifelong success, and the future success of our country.

Our story begins...

Three years ago, my son Milo was born weighing 1 pound, 2.7 ounces. My placenta had stopped working, and he stopped growing around 20 weeks. He spent eight months in the NICU. He came home on oxygen, with 17 medications and a feeding tube. He had surgeries on his eyes, bowels, groin and windpipe. He is globally developmentally delayed and autistic. He is also, without question, the happiest kid in any room he enters.

All his medical specialists are an hour from home. He has four different therapies five times a week. I am in the car constantly. I spend about 18 hours a day caring for Milo. I was a high school science teacher. I haven't been able to go back.

When Milo came home from the NICU, Medicaid covered his private-duty nursing. And HealthySteps—a ZERO TO THREE program that connects families with young children to a child development expert and resources—linked us to food, clothes, and community services. Medicaid's CAP-C waiver allowed me to be paid as his caregiver. Without those programs, we would have had to place Milo in a care facility. I am not being dramatic. That is simply the math.

But now CAP-C (which stands for Community Alternatives Program for Children) paid parent caregiver program has experienced cuts, and we've been denied. I'm taking legal action to appeal, at the same crossroads we were at three years ago. Milo deserves to be home with us as a family. These programs made that possible.

IT'S TIME To Make Policy Change

Families like mine are doing everything we can to keep our babies healthy, but it's not always easy to find affordable care or get the support we need. When appointments are delayed or services aren't available, for me or my baby, it affects children for the rest of their lives. That's why I'm asking Congress to invest in programs that make sure caregivers and babies like mine can access reliable care from the very beginning.

We Want Congress to Support Good Health by:

- Opposing cuts to Medicaid to ensure babies and those who care for them can access the care they need for a strong, healthy start.
- Increasing funding for early intervention through Medicaid and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C to ensure young children stay on track.
- Increasing investment in early childhood health and mental health, including through SAMHSA's Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Grant Program and Project LAUNCH, HRSA's Early Childhood Development Expert program and HRSA's Transforming Pediatrics for Early Childhood.

About Think Babies™ and Strolling Thunder™

ZERO TO THREE created Think Babies™ as a call to action for policymakers to prioritize good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences, particularly during the crucial early years of brain development. Strolling Thunder™ is an annual event for families to share their stories with their elected officials in person. [Learn more at www.ThinkBabies.org/StrollingThunder](http://www.ThinkBabies.org/StrollingThunder).