

Federal Spending & Appropriations

Talking Points



August 2026

After the August recess, Members of Congress will return to Washington, D.C. to make decisions about how to fund the government, including for programs and services that babies need, for Fiscal Year 2027. This process is called appropriations.

Babies need your voice now!

What are Appropriations?

Appropriations is the annual process Congress uses to fund many federal programs for the next Fiscal Year. Programs that impact babies and toddlers that are funded through appropriations include Early Head Start, infant and early childhood mental health programs, early intervention for children with disabilities and developmental delays and many more.

Fiscal Year 2027 begins on October 1, 2026 and ends September 30, 2027.

Prepare a statement.

Preparing a short, clear statement will help you make sure your key message is heard. Start by introducing yourself and your family, then share a short story that demonstrates your experience. Explain why the issue matters to you, your family and your community. Keep your remarks focused and aim to deliver your main message in **2-3 minutes**.

Be sure to include your "ask" about federal funding. Here are some Talking Points that may help:

Your Policy Ask

When you/your boss are making decisions about appropriations for Fiscal Year 2027, you are making important decisions that will impact babies in our community!

Please support babies through federal appropriations! Prioritize strong investments in (name all, one or something in between!):

Child care.

- The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) helps families access and afford child care.
- When child care programs are underfunded, there are fewer options for all parents.
- The CCDBG also provides important support to child care providers, helping them keep the doors open and provide child care.
- CCDBG improves the safety and quality of care in our state and community.
- Fund the CCDBG at \$17.66 billion for Fiscal Year 2027.

Early intervention for children with disabilities and developmental delays.

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C makes sure babies and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities get the early intervention services they need.
- Early intervention connects families and babies to services early – when they are most effective.
- Early intervention helps babies meet milestones and reduce the need for more costly services later.
- Fund IDEA Part C at \$540 million for Fiscal Year 2027.

Infant and early childhood mental health.

- Infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) lays the foundation for children's learning, emotions, behavior and relationships for life.
- IECMH services help parents and other caregivers support the well-being of children, prevent or identify problems early and get babies back on track.
- Project LAUNCH and Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health grants, funded via the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration help prevent mental, emotional and behavioral disorders in little ones and give young children and families the support they need to thrive. One program focuses on building systems of care for IECMH, while the other focuses on funding IECMH services.
- Fund the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Grants at \$17 million and Project LAUNCH at \$25.605 million for Fiscal Year 2027.

Infant-Toddler Court Teams.

- The child welfare system was not built for babies, but children under age 3 make up nearly a third of children in that system.
- Infant-Toddler Court Teams connect families involved in - or at risk of being involved with - child welfare to services, helping keep babies in safe and permanent homes.
- Infant-Toddler Court Teams, funded via the Health Resources and Services Administration, improve outcomes for young children.
- Babies and toddlers supported by Infant Toddler Court Teams spend less time in foster care and are less likely to come back into contact with the child welfare system.
- Fund Infant-Toddler Court Teams at \$22 million for Fiscal Year 2027.

Early childhood specialists in doctors' offices and clinics.

- Children have 12-13 well-child visits in their first three years of life. Early childhood specialists address parents' concerns where they're most likely to seek help, identify problems early to prevent more serious conditions and ensure families get timely support.
- Early Childhood Development Experts in Community Health Centers grants and Transforming Pediatrics Early Childhood, in the Health Resources and Services Administration, fund early childhood specialists in doctors' offices and clinics. Together, these programs make sure that pediatric practices are equipped to meet babies' developmental needs. One program focuses on community health centers, while the other targets additional clinics.
- Fund Transforming Pediatrics Early Childhood at \$12 million and Early Childhood Development Experts in Community Health Centers at \$32 million for Fiscal Year 2027.

Early Head Start.

- Early Head Start, part of the Head Start program, is specifically built to meet the educational needs of babies and toddlers whose families are living in poverty.
- Early Head Start delivers a full package of child care, health checkups and parenting support helping children get a strong start.
- Early Head Start has been shown to get children living in poverty on track. By age 2, children in Early Head Start are more curious, better at using words, more likely to be up-to-date on their vaccinations and show stronger social skills than their peers who aren't in the program.
- Fund Head Start at \$14.27 billion for Fiscal Year 2027.

