

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Governor Proposes Expansion of Early Intervention Services for Children Budget proposal would increase age of TEIS eligibility to age 4

NASHVILLE—Gov. Bill Lee is proposing extending critical early intervention services through the Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS) to children with disabilities and developmental delays in his FY23 budget.

Currently TEIS provides services to eligible infants and toddlers from birth until the age of 3. The services are voluntary and are free to the family. Services include developmental therapies, such as occupational, speech and physical therapy, to help children reach their optimal development.

“We know the first years of life are critical to a child’s development,” said Gov. Lee. “Early intervention through TEIS provides critical services to children and families and provides tools to ensure that every child has the chance to reach their potential.”

Under the current proposal, children enrolled in TEIS would have the option to remain on the program until their 4th birthday or choose to transition to special education services within their local school district.

“Early intervention works, and this expansion will help remedy the learning loss created by the pandemic,” said Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) Commissioner Brad Turner. “We want to make sure children across the state have the chance to succeed in school and in life and making sure they have access to these supports during these important developmental years will help make that happen.”

After seeing a decline in 2020 because of the COVID pandemic, TEIS received a record number of referrals in 2021. The program provided services to more than 17,600 infants and toddlers across Tennessee in the calendar year.

This proposal is subject to approval by the Tennessee General Assembly and U.S. Department of Education before it can take effect.

Learn more about TEIS here: <https://www.tn.gov/didd/for-consumers/tennessee-early-intervention-system-teis.html>

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About the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) is the state agency responsible for oversight of services and support to Tennesseans with intellectual and



developmental disabilities. Every day, the department strives to support approximately 12,000 people to live rewarding and fulfilling lives through Medicaid waiver Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), state operated ICF/IIDs, and the Family Support Program. DIDD also provides services to children ages birth up to age three with disabilities or developmental delays through the Tennessee Early Intervention System (TEIS), and children under the age of 18 with disabilities or complex medical needs through the Katie Beckett Program. The department supports all Tennesseans with intellectual and developmental disabilities live the lives they envision for themselves by ensuring people are free to exercise rights, engage with their broader communities and experience optimal health. DIDD is the first state service delivery system in the nation to receive Person-Centered Excellence Accreditation from the Council on Quality and Leadership. It has also been recognized as a national leader in its efforts to increase competitive, community-based employment outcomes for people with disabilities and its commitment to enhancing independence through Enabling Technology.