



ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

Budget Priorities #3, Third of a 3-part series

The Need

Families in Massachusetts have predominantly chosen to keep their children with disabilities at home. This decision has never been fully supported by the service system or resource allocations. This account “for respite services and intensive family supports” is reserved for flexible family support that keeps families together. This limited support (most families receive less than \$3, 000) keeps families out of crisis and their sons and daughters out of far more costly residential placements.

This program serves the largest number of families who juggle meager family support dollars to fund therapies, respite care, ramps, transportation or training for their sons and daughters. These families require sufficient dollars because the limited support it buys are pivotal to protecting their decision to keep their children with complex and multiple disabilities at home.

Why investments make a difference

- When funds are available for behavior programs in the home, families can thrive with their child with autism at home (Autism Division)
- When recreation programs are funded for long summers and cold February vacations, families can imagine a life of keeping their family together (Family Support)
- When we help families avoid residential school placements children benefit by adjusting to their community and benefit from nurturance provided by parents

The waiting lists for DOE/DMR children grow, while **the funds have not gone up in three years.**

We need your help to restore the \$4 M. in Turning 22/Residential cuts and invest in the unmet needs by funding essential services that make a difference. See more on these programs at arcmass.org/StateHouse/Budget.

| Line Item | Services | House 2 | Unmet Needs | Total |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 5920-3000 | FAMILY SUPPORT The <i>most</i> cost-effective service | \$55, 044, 228 | \$3, 000, 000 | \$58,044,228 |
| 5920- 3010 | AUTISM DIVISION Social, behavioral and communication services needed | \$3, 277,672 | \$2, 000, 000 | \$5,277,672 |
| 5948-0012 | DOE-DMR Address wait list | \$8, 000, 000 | \$1, 000, 000 | \$9,000,000 |

Family Support

This DMR funded program serves an unduplicated count of 13,247 families (estimated April 2007). That count included 4,600 adults and 8,647 children under 18. Although the most cost-effective program, Family Support has received only one increase (outside of Turning 22 re-allocations) of 500,000 in the past seven years. A 3000 family wait list is estimated by state officials. An investment of \$3,000,000 will reach a minimum of 1500 families, half of the existing wait list.

AUTISM DIVISION

There is a growing population of children with autism. Early supports in the home increase development and skill learning. This includes training in communication, social skills and behavioral support. By helping children early before they reach 10 years old we can help children have productive lives in their community as teens and adults.

DOE-DMR

Children with challenging behaviors can end up in residential schools away from family and community. The DOE-DMR program provides options within a child's own community. This program is funded through chargebacks from the Department of Education (DOE) through account 7061-0012. The program has not had increased funding in more than 3 years and some families cannot wait. The \$1 Million will allow DMR to address the wait list and hopefully prevent the separation of children from families.