

# OCDEL Rate Study Recommends Increased Investments in Pennsylvania's Infant and Toddler Early Intervention Program

## What is Infant/Toddler Early Intervention?

Infant and Toddler EI is a program that provides services to children from birth to their third birthday who have a developmental delay or a high probability of having a developmental delay. Also referred to as Part C EI, these services aim to improve outcomes that are critical to a family's ability to support their child's health, optimal development, educational success, and lifelong well-being.

States are authorized by the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to administer the program, and in Pennsylvania Infant and Toddler EI is overseen by the Department of Human Services with direct administration by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning. Each county also administers the program individually.



## EI Rate Methodology Study Identifies Shortfalls

OCDEL released its first-ever [Early Intervention Rate Methodology Study](#) for rate calculations of early intervention services, including staff, operations, administration, and the calculation of how missed and cancelled visits intersect with an actual cost. The rate study calculated the fiscal impact by using the number of service units provided during FY 2022-23 for Early Intervention services, current Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP), as well as county contributions.

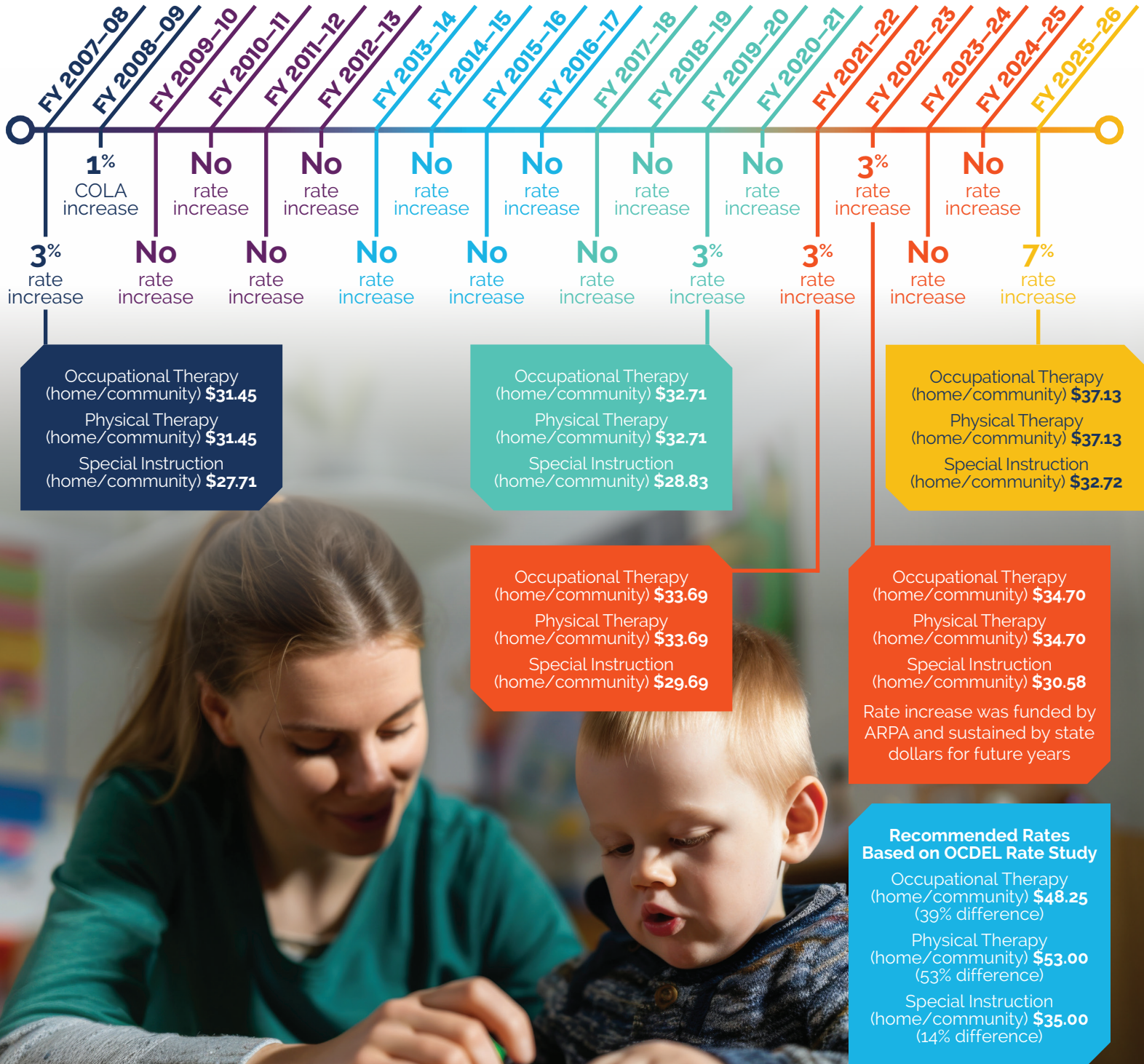
In addition, the rate study recommended:

- Infant and Toddler Early Intervention rate studies occur every three to five years.
- Implementing a rate monitoring program to measure Early Intervention costs annually against payments, factoring in inflation.
- Adjusting Early Intervention rates annually to match the rate of inflation.

**The study found for FY 2022-23, Early Intervention rates were underfunded by more than \$71M, which was 38% of the rates at that time.**

## Rates Have Not Kept Pace for Infant and Toddler Early Intervention Providers

Providers of Early Intervention have not seen rate increases that have kept pace with the rising cost of living, which in turn has impacted the workforce pipeline for therapists to provide the services needed by a growing number of children each year. Over the last 18 years, the top therapies utilized in infant and toddler early intervention, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, and special instruction, have only seen an average rate increase of \$5.46.\*



\* Wages identified represent compensation for one billing unit.

## How Policymakers Can Support Infant/Toddler Early Intervention

Thriving PA supports an increase of \$14 million for the Infant/Toddler Early Intervention program, which is proportional to the 7% increase the program received in FY 2025–26. The funding gap the rate study referenced would require upwards of \$116 million to close, making this request critical in working toward fixing the system. The proposed \$14 million increase is one necessary step toward our broader goal of identifying and serving additional children and advancing the implementation of the rate study's recommendations to address the significant workforce shortage facing Early Intervention providers.

Additionally, Thriving PA recommends rate studies for Early Intervention providers are conducted every 3 years to ensure investments are keeping pace.



  
**Thriving PA**

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Thriving PA is an initiative of the Early Learning Pennsylvania coalition, which advocates for access to voluntary, high-quality early care and education and healthy development opportunities for each child in Pennsylvania.