



## CASE FOR SUPPORT

Enduring support from our community has made Easterseals a leader among nonprofits serving children and families in Georgia.

For 70 years, Easterseals North Georgia has strengthened the health and development of more than 1 million children with disabilities, their families, and the greater community.

But, it is not enough. We need your support to expand our impact, ensuring equity, inclusion, and access for all of Georgia's children.

## OUR WORK

***Easterseals North Georgia, Inc. strengthens children and families at the most critical time in a child's development, their first five years. We work to make profound, positive differences in the daily lives of children and their families through early education, early intervention, and family support services.***



Serving 44 counties across North Georgia

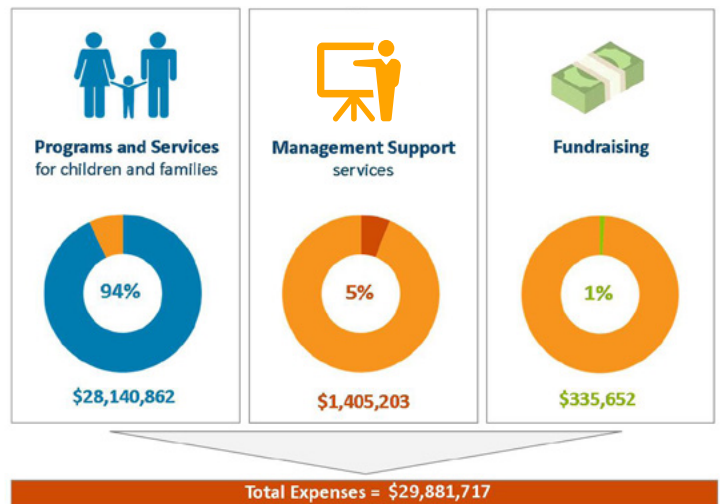


19 Development Centers



Over 5,000 Children per year

## Expense Allocation



## Programs

- Early Education
- Early Intervention
- Early Childhood Mental Health
- Autism Services
- Champions for Children
- Foster Grandparent

**The scope of problems impacting Georgia's Children and families is great. Georgia again ranks 38th in the nation in child and family well-being.<sup>1</sup>**

**152,000**

children 0-5 years are living in poverty.

**73,000**

children 0-5 years living in poverty are not in school.

**1 in 44**

children in the U.S. is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Most children are diagnosed after age 4, though Autism can be reliably diagnosed as early as age 2. Early intervention affords the best opportunity to support healthy development and deliver benefits across the lifespan.

**Only 38%**

of children under 6 received a developmental screening.

**9-14%**

of children under 5 have a mental health challenge. An estimated 126,000 of Georgia's children ages 0-6 may need mental health services. Currently, there is no Medicaid reimbursement for children under the age of 4 years needing mental health intervention.

**58,815**

Children in Georgia under the age of 3 are at risk of developmental delays or disabilities that will set them back when they start school, yet only 11,947 are currently receiving early intervention services.

<sup>1</sup> 2021 KIDS COUNT® Data Book, released June 21 by The Annie E. Casey Foundation

***Easterseals North Georgia is uniquely positioned to address the needs facing children with disabilities and other special needs so they can thrive in their communities.***

## Early Education

***Easterseals North Georgia believes all families, regardless of income, disability, or national origin, deserve access to high-quality, affordable early care and education programs. Our Early Education and Care Program serves over 2,000 children and their families- most of whom face challenges due to poverty or disability and sometimes both.***

We provide high-quality, comprehensive early education for young children who live at or below the federal poverty level in metro Atlanta and Northeast Georgia. Our 16 nationally accredited child development centers ensure children learn in a developmentally appropriate environment while also receiving comprehensive services addressing:

- Nutrition
- Medical
- Dental
- Disability
- Mental Health

ESNG's Early Education Program takes a two-generation approach. We believe that our families are their child's first and most important teachers and advocates. Our Family Service Advocates partner with families to help them reach their goals.

## TWO-GENERATION SERVICES ADDRESSING FAMILY NEEDS

- 283 Parents received job training to address unemployment
- 282 Parents participated in adult education classes
- 166 Parents enrolled in ESL classes
- 1,371 Parents attended health, parent, and marriage education classes
- 41 Families moved from homelessness to housing
- 326 Families received housing support such as rental assistance
- 150 Families received emergency or crisis directed services, including domestic violence referrals, child support issues, and substance abuse supports
- 12 Families with incarcerated parent(s) received support services to continue ongoing parent-child connections
- 13 Families (identified) with children in Foster Care or Child Welfare involved received ESNG services
- 898 Parents receiving emergency food/supplies/diapers/clothing support



## EXPERIENCED, INNOVATIVE, EARLY LEARNING PROVIDER

- First Inclusive Early Education Provider in Georgia
- 30 years of experience providing comprehensive Early Education and Care Service
- 16 high-quality Early Learning Centers serving 2,000 children living in Georgia's urban and rural communities
- Accredited and Quality Rated Centers
- Inclusive classes: 30% of children have disabilities, 50% of children are English Language Learners
- Published Early Childhood STEM Curriculum

## EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

- 92% of children entering kindergarten meet or exceed developmental expectations
- 90% of all children served meet or exceed developmental expectations

## CHILD-HEALTH OUTCOMES

- 1,255 Children received preventative and ongoing medical services
- 1,295 Children received ongoing oral health education and dental services
- 115 Total Asthma Plans for children
- 103 Total Individual Health Plans developed with families to address severe health issues
- 22 Points of service to address child chronic health issues including anemia and high lead levels, diabetes, hearing difficulties, and vision problems



## Early Intervention



***The early identification and treatment of children with disabilities is critical to their future success. Early Intervention services help young children with disabilities achieve their cognitive, social/emotional, communicative, adaptive, and physical development goals.***

By providing screening, evaluation, and treatment for children with disabilities plus education and support for their family members, we ensure that children with disabilities have increased independence and will be prepared to meet with success when they enter school.

Treatment is provided in a child's natural environment - their homes or other community environments such as their child care center. Services include physical, occupational, speech therapy, special instruction, and service coordination to children ages birth to three.

### **LARGEST PROVIDER OF EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES**

- 2,689 children with disabilities, ages 0-3 years, living in Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale counties received early identification and treatment
- Services provided in a child's home
- Outcome-Driven, 80% of children with disabilities improved their developmental skills as measured by achieved goals on their Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP).



## Early Childhood Mental Health

***For more than 20 years, Easterseals North Georgia has understood the importance of Early Childhood Mental Health.***

Sound mental health provides an essential foundation of stability that supports all other aspects of human development – from forming friendships and the ability to cope with adversity to achieving success in school, work, and community life. Disruptions to this developmental process can impair a child's capacities for learning and relating to others – with lifelong implications. By improving children's relationships and experiences early in life, society can address costly problems, including incarceration, homelessness, and the failure to complete high school.

ESNG's Early Child Mental Health Program is based on the Pyramid Framework. ESNG provides evidence-based preventative, consultative, and group and individualized treatment to children and their families.

Infants and toddlers with mental health conditions are likely to miss out on critical learning and developmental experiences during the first three years and beyond. These children are at risk of entering kindergarten lacking key school readiness competencies. One study found that social-emotional skills measured at kindergarten entry predicted a range of long-term outcomes, including educational achievement in high school and adult employment, substance use, mental health, and criminal activity.

### **EXPERIENCED PROVIDER OF EVIDENCE-BASED EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH**

- 2,000 children received mental health screenings
- 126 children received mental health services



## Autism Services



***ESNG has been providing high-quality services to children with disabilities and other special needs and their families living in Georgia since 1950.***

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) participate in ESNG's programs, including our Early Intervention & Therapy Services and Early Education & Care Program. Treatment plans for children with ASD are customized to the individual.

### **INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FOR CHILDREN DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM**

- Treatment plans for children with ASD are customized to the individual.
- ESNG offers a suite of services for children and families with ASD, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and evidence-based treatments such as the PLAY Project, Applied Behavioral Analysis and RUBI Parent Training.
- Collective approaches increase children's ability to be successfully included in early childhood education programs.



## Champions For Children



***Easterseals North Georgia, Inc. strengthens children and families at the most critical time in a child's development. We work to make profound, positive differences in the daily lives of children and their families through early education, early intervention, and family support services.***

Champions for Children provides direct financial assistance and support services for Georgia's medically fragile and special needs children and their families who do not meet the eligibility requirements for the EFRA/Katie Beckett Medicaid program. This support provides life-saving medication, therapies, and adaptive equipment.

- Provided financial support to 265 families to assist with life-saving medication, therapies and adaptive equipment.



## Foster Grandparents



**The Foster Grandparent program was authorized by Congress in 1965 as a way to enable low-income persons 45 and older to receive benefits while serving children with special needs. Volunteers help guide students to higher academic achievement.**

Our Foster Grandparents are role models, mentors, and friends. They help our children learn to read, provide one-on-one tutoring, and guide the children at a critical time in their lives. Put simply they help give the kind of comfort and love that sets a child on the path toward a successful future.



# HELP US TODAY

**Your Support is Critical to  
Sustain our Impact and Grow our  
Programs to Better Serve North  
Georgia's Children.**





## HELP US TODAY

***Easterseals North Georgia's Strategic Plan supplies the framework to sustain and expand our impact. We want more children to receive the necessary services to start school healthy and ready to meet with success. Families are resilient and prepared to be their child's first and most important teacher and advocate.***

### EARLY EDUCATION

Easterseals North Georgia is among the largest providers of Early Education and Care in Georgia. One hundred percent of the children enrolled are living at 100% of the Federal Poverty Level, 30% have a disability, and 45% are English Language Learners. The program was expanded in 2020 and now serves more than 2,000 children in 16 locations, plus five partner locations. Services are provided in Fulton, Gwinnett, DeKalb, Walton, Barrow, Jackson, and Madison counties.

**The Need:** The cost to provide high-quality, accredited childcare that includes comprehensive services to the vulnerable population we serve is \$15,842 per child. Each year, ESNG must raise \$688,277 to bridge the funding gap. ESNG's cost per child is lower than costs cited in the June 2021 research, "The True Cost of High-Quality Childcare," which notes the true cost of care in Georgia is \$21,300 per child.

**Sustainability Funding: \$688,277 (per year)**

**Capital Funding: \$870,000 (\$10,000 per Classroom)** The cost to replace 20-year-old furniture and equipment, such as shelving, cots, tables, chairs, cubbies, and manipulatives for 87 classrooms.



### SUCCESS STORY • HUDSON



Hudson entered our Early Education program as a cheerful, energetic, and sweet two-year-old boy who had just been diagnosed with Autism. His mother, Ayesha, had many questions; she was worried about her sweet little boy's future. During his two-year-old checkup, Hudson's pediatrician expressed concerns about his speech. He was not verbal - only making sounds, not understandable words. Suspecting that Hudson had Autism, his doctor originally referred his mom to the Marcus Autism Center. Due to volume, Hudson could not be evaluated at the Marcus Autism Center for a year and half. At this point, Ayesha was panicking. Thankfully, Hudson's pediatric team introduced her to Easterseals North Georgia.

ESNG provided the **Early Education** Hudson needed and his mother learned strategies to work with him at home. Today, Hudson is a five-year-old boy who just started Kindergarten and lights up every room he walks into. He is learning to speak in two different languages, loves to sing the itsy-bitsy spider, is excelling in spelling, and knows his sight words. He is currently still building on his development in the K-5 Autism program at school and is slowly being integrated into the classrooms with his peers without disabilities. He rides the school bus, counts by 10s and 100s, and enjoys being a typical five-year-old.

## AUTISM SERVICES

### The Need:

Easterseals North Georgia offers innovative programs that provide training and support for families of children diagnosed with Autism. The programs aim to improve communication, social and academic skills and can reduce problematic behaviors.

ESNG plans to expand our Autism services to serve an additional 300 children diagnosed with ASD over three years. ESNG offers a suite of services for children and families with ASD, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and evidence-based treatments such as the PLAY project and Applied Behavioral Analysis Funds will be used to expand our Applied Behavioral Analysis Services to children living in metro Atlanta and Northeast Georgia.

### Program Expansion: \$365,000

ABA Service Expansion: Two Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) therapists and 8 registered Behavioral Technicians.



## SUCCESS STORY • JAMEIS



Jameis is a non-verbal student with Autism enrolled at one of ESNG's inclusive Early Childhood Development Centers. He loves to eat, play with his friends on the playground, and is always smiling and laughing. This year, he is learning to communicate using sign language and practices with his peers and teachers daily. Some of his familiar signs are "please", "thank you", and his favorite sign is "more" especially during breakfast time.

The other children in Jameis' class have quickly picked up the signs and often encourage and practice with him. In fact, the first time Jameis made a sign independently, the children at his table cheered with excitement.

Working with his teachers in an inclusive environment has helped Jameis learn to communicate his wants and needs. The inclusive classroom has been a tremendous learning experience for both Jameis and his classmates.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH

Easterseals pioneered early childhood mental health services in Georgia. For over 20 years, ESNG has provided services to meet the social-emotional needs of children birth to 6 years through education, training, small group, and individualized treatment. ESNG provides treatment to 150-250 children and their families annually in metro Atlanta and Northeast Georgia using evidence-based treatments implemented by licensed clinicians.

### The Need

ESNG proposes to expand our Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) program by providing intensive individualized treatment to an additional 200 children over the next three years. Children with significant concerns such as anxiety disorders, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, conduct disorder, depression, post traumatic stress disorders will be served through our 16 locations serving Fulton, Gwinnett, DeKalb, Walton, Barrow, Jackson, and Madison counties.

Currently, Georgia Medicaid does not reimburse for mental health services to children under four years. Easterseals North Georgia must raise \$300,000 annually from donations to expand our services to children in need.

### Program Expansion: \$300,000

Early Childhood Mental Health Expansion: Three licensed Mental Health Clinicians to provide individualized mental health treatment.



## MENTAL HEALTH



Extra stress in the COVID-19 pandemic caused by income loss and lack of ability to pay for housing and food exacerbated intimate partner violence in the communities Easterseals serves in Georgia. Many families sought assistance from ESNG Mental Health Clinicians to help them and their children “speak about the unspeakable.” Evidence-based Child-Centered Play Therapy (CCPT) has been very effective for both the parent and child who witnessed the violence. Sammy\*, age 5, witnessed his dad hurt his mom. He became very withdrawn and started to self-harm by cutting his fingers. He expressed anger and stated that he hated everyone and everything. He refused to attend school and only was interested in video games. CCPT sessions allowed Sammy to lead his therapist through play where themes are created and anxiety expressed in a safe, non-judgemental environment. Playing through scenarios opened up Mom’s eyes to the child’s specific fears. Each week, the therapist sees healing in both Mom and Sammy. Sammy has completely stopped his self-harm and is coming to school consistently. Treatment is ongoing, but Sammy and Mom are hopeful for the future.

*\*To protect the privacy of the family, actual names and images were not used.*



**Thousands of children like Hudson, Jameis, Lillianne, and Ethan benefit from Easterseals North Georgia's programs, services and supports every day. Your support makes that possible.**



## SUCCESS STORY • LILLIANNE



Lillianne has an incredible sense of humor and at the age of ten has found her passion... the stage and acting. Lillianne was born with spina bifida, a condition that affects the spinal cord and commonly causes paralysis in the lower body. Her family believed that with the right supports and resources, she would be able to accomplish anything. Lillianne has endured multiple surgeries, medical visits, therapies, and specialized equipment throughout her young life. Easterseals' **Champions for Children Program** supports Lillianne and her family by providing financial assistance for therapies, medical supplies and equipment that are not covered by insurance. Lillianne has made great progress. Today, she enjoys participating with her friends in many activities. Her favorites are swimming, biking, and of course, acting.

Lillianne is pictured above in costume just before taking the stage in her school play. Her mom and dad said, "while it may not seem like a big deal to some, it took a lot of work to get there, and they couldn't be prouder."



## SUCCESS STORY • ETHAN



At 18 months, Ethan had not spoken his first words. His mother confided her concerns to a friend who told her about Easterseals North Georgia's **Early Intervention Program**. Ethan's family got in touch and soon he began receiving Speech Therapy from one of our Pediatric Specialists, Mary Ann. Mary Ann worked with Ethan and his parents in their home, providing tips for the family to use to improve Ethan's attention and self-regulation while also encouraging Ethan's language development.

When Ethan spoke his first word, "Mama", it was music to his mother's ears. Both his mom and therapist were tearful, but Ethan just grinned at his accomplishment and gave mom a big bear hug. By age three, Ethan knew 500 words. Now, there is no stopping him. He is speaking in full sentences to everyone who will listen! Because of Easterseals North Georgia, Ethan can not only communicate and keep up with his peers, but is now the star student at his school! The tools Ethan acquired from speech therapy extend beyond vocabulary and will benefit him for his lifetime.

Easterseals North Georgia (ESNG) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that has been providing high-quality services to children with disabilities and special needs – as well as their families – living in Georgia since the 1930s. ESNG covers 44 counties, including metropolitan Atlanta and northeast Georgia.

## WAYS TO SUPPORT

- Annual Giving
- Monthly Giving
- Pillar Partner
- Adopt a Classroom
- Fundraiser Participation

We thank you for partnering with us in creating a world where children are 100% included, 100% empowered, and 100% prepared to reach their full potential.

Organization Name per IRS: Easterseals North Georgia | Entity Type: 501(c)(3) | Federal Tax ID#: 58-1919768

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