



Therapist Shortages Far and Wide in Early Intervention -



and what Up Wee Grow is doing about it!



Nationwide, there is a significant shortage of therapists to provide services in the Early Intervention Program that has been thoroughly documented in the ITCA Annual Survey: State Challenges and Responses – 2018 (<https://www.ideainfanttoddler.org/pdf/2018-ITCA-State-Challenges-Report.pdf>)



Therapist Shortages Far and Wide, and in Big Numbers



- 91% of states have therapist shortages
(Question 22: Is your state experiencing shortages in qualified providers? 40 out of 44 states that responded)
- 88% of states have shortages of Speech-Language Pathologists
- 78% of states have shortages of Physical Therapists
- 70% of states have shortages of Occupational Therapists
- 45% of states have shortages of Special Educators
(Question 23: What type of providers are you experiencing shortages in? 40 states responded; and these numbers have worsened from the 2017 data; <https://www.ideainfanttoddler.org/pdf/2017-ITCA-State-Challenges-Report.pdf>)



Providers are Leaving Because of Fiscal Problems



41% of states had agencies/individuals decline to continue in the Early Intervention Program because of fiscal constraints. (Question 17: If your state uses contractors - agencies/individuals - to provide direct services, did any of those contractors decline to continue because of fiscal restraints? 15 out of 36 states that responded <https://www.ideainfanttoddler.org/pdf/2018-ITCA-State-Challenges-Report.pdf>)



More Paperwork = More Costs = Less Time for Therapy Sessions



In 2013, New York State significantly increased billing and insurance requirements and responsibilities for providers. Presently, it is estimates that in a 50-hour work week Early Intervention Therapists can spend just 43% of their time with clients, 37% on paperwork, and 19% on travel time:

Category	Hours	Percent of Work Hours
Time Treating Clients in Sessions	21.7 hours	43% of therapist's time in sessions
Billing, Paperwork, Business Activities	18.6 hours	37% of therapist's time on paperwork
Travel and Miscellaneous Time	9.7 hours	19% of therapist's time traveling
Total Hours Worked	50 hours	

(<https://thechildrensagenda.org/publications/2018-valuing-early-childhood-developmental-services/> 4/5/2018)



NEW YORK MUNICIPALITIES

RESPOND TO EI PROVIDER SHORTAGES



NY State Notes Provider Shortages

New York State has noted the shortage of providers in the Early Intervention Program, “*Capacity is an issue in this program not only in NYS, but across the country as indicated by recent data in an Infant Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA) Report*” at the NY State Early Intervention Coordinating Council meeting (EICC Minutes – 12/12/2018).

NY State Collects Data on Delayed Services and Services Not Provided

7.8% of children had delays in their service initiation (81% of which was due to capacity issues)

10.2% of children did not have any service initiated (85% of which was due to capacity issues)

(EICC PowerPoint: Early Intervention Data and Program Evaluation Update, March 13, 2019)

New York State Rate Increase

Rates in the Early Intervention Program were flat since the early 2000’s, and then New York State cut Early Intervention funding across the board, 10% in 2010 and then another 5% in 2011. A large number of providers shut down across the state and city. In the 2019 NY State budget, a 5% increase was approved for three types of Early Intervention providers (OT, PT, and SLP).

New York City Early Intervention Program: Academic Partnerships

To enhance workforce capacity the *New York City Bureau of Early Intervention* has formed academic partnerships with Brooklyn College, Hunter College, Lehman College, Queens College, and SUNY Downstate (NYC List of Resources to Support Quality and EI Best Practices - 3/20/2019).

Long Island: Outreach to Providers

The *Suffolk and Nassau County* Early Intervention Programs frequently distribute comprehensive Services-In-Need lists to all providers.

Long Island Therapists and the Number of Sessions They Provide per day

At a recent LEICC meeting the following data indicated how a majority of EI Therapists work very much on a part-time basis in the EI Program.

Nassau EI has a total of 1367 therapists

- 62% (877) of therapists provide **less than 2 services** per day
- 19% (257) of therapists provide **2 to 4 services** per day
- 17% (233) of therapists provide **4 or more services** per day

Suffolk EI has a total of 1252 therapists

- 73% (912) of therapists provide **less than 2 services** per day
- 15% (194) of therapists provide **2 to 4 services** per day
- 12% (146) of therapists provide **4 or more services** per day

Monroe County: Policy Research and Recommendations

The Children’s Agenda in *Monroe County* has published a comprehensive paper on provider shortage in the EI program. The paper compares the EI reimbursement with others settings (e.g., hospitals, public schools, rehabilitation facilities), and Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Speech-Language Pathologists in the Early Intervention Program make substantially less money than their peers in other settings (22% less, 24% less, and 12% less, respectively). On page 21, the paper calls for significant increases in the 60-minute EI Reimbursement Rates in the EI program of 53% for Occupational Therapists, 70% for Physical Therapists, and 46% for Speech-Language Pathologists. The papers recommends significant increases in CPSE rates of 26%, 41%, and 21%, respectively.

<https://thechildrensagenda.org/publications/2018-valuing-early-childhood-development-services/> 4/5/2018)



Up Wee Grow



RESPONDS to E.I. PROVIDER SHORTAGES

In response to the State-wide Early Intervention therapist shortage, Up Wee Grow is a responsible, collaborative, and innovative leader, focused on our mission to deliver therapeutic services to children and families in the Early Intervention Program:



>> Payday >> Right Away

In an effort to minimize pay lags to therapists, Up Wee Grow has created an extremely rapid-payment system called >>Payday >> Right Away, where therapists are paid within 5 business days of submitting their electronic billing.



Electronic Billing Platform

Up Wee Grow has made learning our Electronic Billing system fast and simple, with our user-friendly [Tutorial Videos](#), Up Wee Grow's Electronic Billing Live and Recorded Webinars, our Printed User-Guide, and One-on-One Lessons with Up Wee Grow Staff. Electronic Billing is **easy** (especially with training and support from Up Wee Grow staff), **accurate** (eliminating errors and omissions, making record keeping easy, and allowing excellent audits), and **efficient** (paperless, drop-down menu-driven, no more hand-writing, no more mailing).



Therapist and Parent Training

Up Wee Grow is a provider of Continuing Education Units through the American Speech-Language Hearing Association, and we provide seminars aimed at both training new therapists and enhancing professional development among veteran therapists. We also provide specific training and supervision for teachers of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) for children on the autism spectrum. We also have written F.E.A.T.S., the **Family-friendly Evaluation and Teaching System**, a free, comprehensive system to empower parents and therapists to promote growth with six developmental charts, realistic guidelines, F.E.A.T.S. Techniques (teaching tips), family-friendly fact-sheets, developmentally appropriate routines-based activities, printable interactive activities to be shared by children and caregivers, and educational videos for parents and children. Our "F.E.A.T.S.™ Techniques" are specifically designed to be not only effective, but easy to implement and fun within the context of day-to-day routines with children.



Up Wee Grow Keeps Costs Down

New York State's Executive Order #38 requires Health and Human Service Organizations to keep their Administrative Expenses ("Overhead costs") at or below 15%. At Up Wee Grow, we proudly keep our Administrative Expenses much, much lower than what is required (Up Wee Grow's Administrative Expenses were just 6% in 2018).



Up Wee Grow Works Collaboratively with Other Agencies

Up Wee Grow has Service Coordinators in all seven boroughs where we provide service. Our Service Coordinators actively engage with Early Intervention Official Designees from the counties, as well as with Providers and Ongoing Service Coordinators from other agencies, in their continual effort to expand their network of competent, dedicated professionals to serve the children on their caseload in the Early Intervention Program. For well over 10 years, one of the Up Wee Grow directors has served on the Board of ACTS, Agencies for Children's Therapy Services, a group that works collaboratively with families, professionals, EI agencies, government administrators, and politicians for the betterment of services within the Early Intervention Program.



Up Wee Grow Actively Recruits New Therapists

- Up Wee Grow actively recruits new therapists through advertising (e.g., Indeed.com, Facebook), our website's careers page (<https://www.upweegrow.com/careers/>), with staff recruiters, and through our on-going "Refer-a-Colleague" program.
- Up Wee Grow is certified as a Woman-owned Business Enterprise.
- Up Wee Grow, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or protected Veteran status.