

The Promise of Medicaid: Helping Children Thrive Since 1965

Medicaid has covered children from low-income families with health insurance since 1965. Medicaid is an incredibly effective program for children. It is proven to help them grow up to be healthy, educated, and employed adults.



How Medicaid became a crucial program for children

In 1964, an influential report highlighted the significant rate of disabilities in young military draftees. The majority of their disabilities could have been prevented through simple preventive care in childhood. Around the same time, Head Start teachers were reporting high numbers of preschoolers with preventable health issues. As a result, the Medicaid program expanded in 1967 to include a ground-breaking benefit for children. Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) ensures children can get regular check-ups and early treatment for any health conditions identified.

Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment



Children have access to regular well-child checks in addition to other visits as needed



Providers conduct periodic screenings during well-child checks



Children have access to any **medically necessary** treatment

What is EPSDT?

Early & Periodic: Children are offered regularly scheduled well-child check-ups. These include a comprehensive physical exam, immunizations, and anticipatory guidance for parents.

Screenings: At these well-child visits, providers (in collaboration with parents) conduct routine assessments of health and development. These may include physical health (hearing and vision, for example), behavioral health, and developmental screenings. Children also have access to screenings on an as-needed basis.

Diagnostic: Children must have access to diagnostic services in order to identify health conditions.

Treatment: Any treatment that is deemed medically necessary to address, ameliorate, or cure health problems must be provided. The standard of medical necessity is to prevent disabilities and promote health and development.