The Need
Nearly one in six children in the United States is at-risk of developmental deficiencies due to poverty or other parental factors. A lack of access to emotional supports and educational resources during the key early years can impede a child's ability to fully develop and succeed in school (Rand, 2005). Early intervention services made available to vulnerable families through home visiting greatly improves health, well-being, and education outcomes for at-risk children. Evidence-based interventions such as home visiting proved to be cost-effective and represented a positive return on investment to society through savings in public expenditures, such as reduced emergency room visits and public benefits, and increased tax revenues from working parents (HHS, 2017).

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program
Congress created the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in 2010 to support the healthy development of children by providing pregnant women and at-risk families with the necessary resources and skills they need to raise their infants and toddlers. Through the program, states receive federal funding to deploy evidence-based home visiting models and promising approaches to help families from at-risk communities with high concentrations of poverty, crime, unemployment, substance abuse, high school drop-outs, and infant mortality. The program provides states and other MIECHV grantees with the flexibility to design their programs to address local needs. The number of parents and children who benefit annually from home visiting has grown from 34,000 in 2012 to more than 160,000 during the past recorded year. Nearly 1 million home visits were made nationwide through the MIECHV program during its last recorded year, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Easterseals Assists Young Families through Home Visiting Best Practices
Easterseals is among the nation’s leading providers of inclusive early education services and early intervention supports to children with and without disabilities. Easterseals affiliates in Alabama, Arizona, Illinois, Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin partner with their states to provide specialized home visiting supports to help families through evidence-based best practices, including Parents as Teachers, Nurse-Family Partnership, and the Teen Family Support Program. Through the models, Easterseals specialists provide specialized supports to families to help them hone the skills they need to raise healthy and happy children. The strategies have resulted in improved maternal and newborn health, school readiness and achievement, and family economic self-sufficiency.

Easterseals MIECHV Program Public Policy Requests
Easterseals urges Congress to expand availability of home visiting and early intervention services for young families by supporting the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program.

- Fully fund the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program in fiscal year 2020 at the authorized level of $400 million.