Babies Can’t Wait

Babies Can’t Wait (BCW) is Georgia’s evidence-based, community-centered early intervention program that provides screening, treatment, and support services for certain infants and toddlers (from birth to age 3) with disabilities and developmental delays.

A child’s brain develops extremely rapidly from birth to age three. **This is a critical window of opportunity to detect and address developmental delays before they become significant barriers to healthy development.** BCW staff work with physicians to identify children showing signs of certain degrees of developmental delays so that needed supports can be provided early on – and long-term development challenges can be prevented or mitigated.

**WHO QUALIFIES FOR SERVICES?**

BCW serves children 0-36 months who have a documented developmental delay or chronic health condition that leads to developmental delays.

Services provide support and resources to assist family members/caregivers to enhance children’s learning and development in the child’s natural environment (e.g., home or community setting).

A free developmental evaluation is given to families to determine eligibility for services and supports under the program.

Anyone can refer a child to Babies Can’t Wait:

- Parents
- Childcare Providers
- Doctors

**HOW SERVICES ARE PAID FOR**

First, services are billed to the child’s health insurance (where applicable and with parent permission)

A sliding fee is determined based on income and family size

Services are then paid for by the BCW program as payor of last resort, if needed

**HOW THE PROGRAM IS FUNDED**

BCW is funded by state and federal dollars, and housed within the Georgia Department of Public Health.

**CHILDREN SERVED BY BABIES CAN’T WAIT**

Approximately 19,000 children are served every year in Georgia

The number of children that are referred and eligible is increasing each year.

It’s likely that more children are in need of services than BCW can currently serve, given existing constraints

---

*According to the Georgia Department of Public Health, children must score 2 standard deviations from the mean in one area of development, or 1.5 standard deviations in two areas of development on one of the approved standardized eligibility test tools. If a child does not show a documented delay per the test results, the team can determine eligibility based on informed clinical opinion.

**All children received Service Coordination or case management services to guide them through the program and to assist in developing the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Should a child need additional services determined by the IFSP team, it is added to the plan and coordinated by the Service Coordinator.

www.georgiavoices.org
RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE BABIES CAN’T WAIT PROGRAM

• Assess and address staff retention issues.
• Prioritize coordination and follow-up coordination/communication between referral source (e.g. physician) and program staff.
• Recruit providers to serve in all districts at numbers that meet the demand for services.
• Leverage telehealth for providing services to parents/caregivers where possible.
• Continue to explore whether there are early intervention services provided by the state which could be billed to Medicaid and/or private insurance (e.g. provider-to-provider consultations to coordinate services). If feasible, this would allow greater flexibility for IDEA Part C grant funds to support case management.

Babies Can’t Wait is a federally regulated program under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, specifically, Part C of the law. The program is to be a statewide, coordinated, multidisciplinary inter-agency system that provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers, and coordinates developmental, educational, and community supports for those children. However, eligibility criteria may vary state to state.

Sources available here: https://tinyurl.com/BabiesCantWait
Sources for Babies Can’t Wait

2. Ibid