

# CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

## Babies Can't Wait

### What is the purpose of the program?

To enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of each infant and toddler with disabilities in order to ensure that each young child with developmental disabilities achieves his or her maximum developmental potential.



### What does the program do?

- Every child and family receives evaluation, assessments, and service coordination at no cost in order to develop and implement a plan of care to meet (1) the child's developmental needs, and (2) the family's needs related to improving their child's development.
- The individualized family service plans identify early intervention services such as assistive technology, therapies, psychological services, family training, and special instruction that are necessary to support progress toward each individual child's goals. These services are provided where the child lives, learns, and plays.
- Services are provided in a manner that supports and coaches parents and other primary caregivers in using exercises and activities throughout the child and family's daily activities and routines that will increase learning opportunities for each child.
- Service coordinators help families obtain the services identified in their plans by accessing all known resources. Most services are provided through contracts with private providers.
- Support services, such as respite care, may be available to help families be more independent and keep their child in the community.
- As a part of transition, families are informed about programs and services available to them after their child leaves Babies Can't Wait.
- The program is assisted by a governor-appointed State Interagency Coordinating Council, which consists of legislators, state agency representatives, public and private providers, and families.

### How many people are helped by the program?

11,129 children and families were served in FY 2007.

### Why is the program important?

Early intervention services reduce the need for special services later in life by helping children with developmental disabilities reach their maximum developmental potential. Institutionalization of young children with disabilities has decreased significantly since federal law established early intervention programs in 1986.

### Who is eligible?

Children from birth to three years of age who have significant developmental delays or developmental disabilities regardless of their income

### Where are services located?

Statewide.

### Outcome measures

Increase the percentage of Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) developmental outcomes that are met by children enrolled in BCW.

### Legislative authority:

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) Part C (federal), OCGA 31-1-3

State Office: (404) 657-2726; Toll Free: 1 (888) 651-8224  
For Local Directory Call Parent to Parent: 1 (800) 229-2038  
<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw/>

Georgia Department of Human Resources  
Division of Public Health  
Office of Birth Outcomes

