

INFANT and CHILD HEALTH

Children 1st

What is the purpose of *Children 1st*?

To ensure that all children reach age five healthy and ready for school by helping families

1. access appropriate health and community services,
2. receive education about the importance of a child's early years, and
3. find support for providing a nurturing environment for their children.



What does *Children 1st* do?

Children 1st identifies and screens children (ages birth to five) at risk for poor health and developmental outcomes, refers them to appropriate services and monitors their health status. Children needing assistance are offered in-home family assessments by health professionals, such as nurses and social workers, to identify strengths and needs and to provide information about health, child development, parenting resources, and are linked to primary health care providers. *Children 1st* professionals periodically monitor the child's health status through contact with the primary health care provider. *Children 1st* helps to link families to community resources to meet their needs. Information regarding family needs assists public health and community collaborative groups with planning and setting priorities.

How many children are helped by *Children 1st*?

During fiscal year 2007:

- 64,364 newborns/children identified as at risk for needing medical and/or developmental services.
- 17,374 assessments were completed on at-risk children; 10,434 were conducted in the home.
- 11,394 children were linked to a primary health care provider (private and public).
- 41,574 children were monitored for health and developmental status (duplicated count).

Why is *Children 1st* important?

The earliest years in life are critical in a child's development. Early nurturing, good health, and stimulating experiences yield dramatic, positive results on how a child develops and functions in school. *Children 1st* provides family support and addresses conditions in a child's environment that may negatively impact that child's overall well being. Without the screening, professional assessments, and linkages to services provided through *Children 1st*, fewer five-year-old children would enter school with their health care needs met.

Who is eligible?

Children birth to age five, who are identified to be at risk for poor health and developmental outcomes, are assessed and linked to services.

Where are services located?

Statewide – through the public health district or county health departments.

Outcome measures

- Increase the number of births identified for risk conditions
- Increase the number of children receiving an in-home assessment after identified for risk conditions
- Increase the number of assessed children who are linked with a primary health care provider
- Increase the number of assessed children who are monitored until age five
- Increase the number of children linked to public health and community resources

Legislative Authority

Official Code of Georgia (OCGA) 31-12-6, 31-12-7, 31-1-3.2

Contact: Children 1st
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<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/childrenfirst/>

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