



Recommendations to the Study Committee on Infant and Toddler Social and Emotional Health

Parents face many challenges when trying to find and use mental and behavioral health services for their child. Such obstacles can be even greater for parents of children under the age of five, where expertise is more limited and barriers to insurance coverage and payment are increased.

Please visit the following link to better understand the four pathways within which families can access services. <https://georgiavoices.org/videos/four-pathways-of-access/> And, see the back of this page for the tables that explain those pathways.

State-Level Policy Recommendations for Infant and Toddler Mental Health:

1. **Collect data on the mental health workforce at licensure (and renewal)**, like Georgia does with physicians via the Georgia Board for Health Care Workforce. This will help illustrate what clinicians and specialized services are available and where, and determine how Georgia can focus workforce development efforts.
2. **Increase capacity of the Department of Public Health's Babies Can't Wait (BCW) program**
 - a. Conduct an in-depth evaluation of the strengths and challenges of the program, including but not limited to:
 - i. Adequacy of provider network
 - ii. Barriers within the reimbursement structure
 - iii. Proactive maximization of all BCW funding within private and public insurance
3. **Adopt the mental health diagnostic codes specific to young children.** This would allow the Department of Community Health to provide a more effective pathway for mental health providers to obtain reimbursement from private and public insurance for services delivered to children 5 and younger ([DC: 0-5 codes](#); for more information, visit: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1954-dc-0-5-crosswalk-a-briefing-paper>).
4. **Enact 12-month eligibility for new mothers** by extending postpartum Medicaid from 60 days to a year. This would help ensure access to services to meet physical health challenges, such as pre-eclampsia, and mental wellbeing, such as treatment for postpartum depression.

Early Screening and Services

AGES COVERED	STATUS	POPULATION SERVED	PROGRAM NAME	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY
0-2 Years	Developmental Delays	Open to All	Babies Can't Wait	Department of Public Health
0-2 Years	Developmental Delays	Income Based	Early Head Start	Federal Head Start Office
0-4 Years	Children First Screening	Open to All	Children First	Department of Public Health
0-18 Years	No Developmental Delay	Open to All	Your Pediatrician	Health Insurance / Self Pay

Education Systems Services

AGES COVERED	STATUS	POPULATION SERVED	PROGRAM NAME	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY
0-5 Years	No Developmental Delay	Income Based	Head Start	Federal Head Start Office
3-5 Years	Developmental Delays	Open to All	Preschool Special Education	GA Department of Education/Local School
3-21 Years	Behavior or Learning Challenges	Open to All	Psycho-educational Evaluation (IEP or 504 Plan)	Local School System
Pre-K to High School	Positive Behavior Training	Open to All (Where Implemented)	Positive Interventions and Supports	GA Department of Education
Elementary – High School	School Based Health Center	Open to All (Where Implemented)	Federally Qualified Health Centers/Local Hospital/Local Pediatricians/etc.	Local School System
Elementary – High School	On-site Mental Health Providers	Open to All (Where Implemented)	Georgia Apex	Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
Elementary – High School	None of the Above	Open to All	Ask School Personnel	Local School System

Health Care Coverage

AGES COVERED	COVERAGE PROVIDER	POPULATION SERVED	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY
0-18 Years	Medicaid	Income Based	Department of Community Health
0-18 Years	PeachCare for Kids	Income Based	Department of Community Health
0-26 Years	Private Insurance	Open to All	Office of Insurance Commissioner
Foster Care	Medicaid using Amerigroup	All Foster Care	Department of Community Health
Juvenile Secure Detention	State Funded DJJ Staff and contracted providers	Detained by State	Department of Juvenile Justice

No Insurance or Low Income Disabled

AGES COVERED	COVERAGE PROVIDER	POPULATION SERVED	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY
0-21 Years	None	Uninsured	Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
0-21 Years	Medicaid	Low Income Disabled	Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities