



WHAT IS FIRST CONNECTIONS?

The First Connections Program is a statewide system of services to assist infants and toddlers and their families. Children grow, learn, and develop at different rates and in different ways. Just as children are all individuals, families also have different abilities and needs. The First Connections Program works with families on a individualized basis to assist in locating and coordination services and assistance to enhance not only the child's abilities but those of the family to assist their child.

The First Connections Program is authorized and partially funded through Part C of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act. The Department of Health & Human Services (DHS) is the Lead Agency for the Program. The Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) is the division within DHS, which has administrative responsibility for implementation of the program.

WHO CAN BE A PART OF THE PROGRAM?

Children ages birth to thirty-six months who:

- Have a developmental delay in one or more areas of development. This delay must be 25% or more of their chronological age.

Or

- Have a medical diagnosis that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay.

WHAT CAN THE PROGRAM DO TO HELP?

The program helps locate, coordinate, and fund an array of 16 services to assist the child in developing to his or her fullest potential. These include:

- Assistive Technology
- Health Services
- Medical Diagnostic Services
- Speech Therapy
- Social Work Services
- Psychological Services
- Physical Therapy
- Nutritional Services
- Nursing Services
- Occupational Therapy
- Transportation
- Audiological
- Special Instruction
- Vision Services
- Family Training Counseling & Home Visits
- Service Coordination

- Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation
- Respite

The program also provides supportive services to families to assist them in understanding their child's developmental abilities and helping to assist their child in developing.

Services provided through the First Connections Program are:

- Free to eligible infants & Toddlers and their families
- Voluntary on the part of the family
- Provided by qualified professionals who meet state licensing requirements