



Healthy Beginnings integrates early childhood education and child health services in a coordinated approach for young children and their families enrolled in early learning programs. Using health education and health navigation supports, Healthy Beginnings provides access to health care by connecting families to health insurance coverage, medical & dental homes, and other specialty care in order to support their young child's continuing health and development as they prepare to become successful learners throughout life.

THE ISSUE

In Georgia, 25 percent of children under the age of five live in poverty. These children suffer disproportionately with chronic health conditions, such as asthma and diabetes, and have higher mortality rates than children in affluent communities. Left unaddressed and untreated, these health conditions will persist throughout childhood and even into adulthood, limiting opportunities for learning and overall success.

UNITED WAY'S ROLE

Healthy Beginnings gives kids access to the support they need to build a bright future. Through a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, United Way manages the Healthy Beginnings program via partnerships with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Sheltering Arms Early Education and Family Centers, YMCA Early Learning Programs, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Georgia's Departments of Public Health and Early Care & Learning.

Healthy Beginnings ensures that young children are healthy, developing on track, and thriving both socially and emotionally in order to be ready for school and achieve academic success. The program integrates health supports into childcare and early learning programs through the use of community-based nurse health navigators.

THE RESULTS

Ninety-seven percent of young children enrolled in Healthy Beginnings now have health insurance, are connected to a medical home, and visit their doctor at least annually. In addition, 96 percent of enrolled children were immunized against childhood disease. United Way is now working to scale Healthy Beginnings beyond its original community focus of Mechanicsville in southwest Atlanta to other metro-Atlanta communities.



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