




First Connections Staff are First Responders

First Connections is a **voluntary, free, state-wide** home visiting program that serves over 2,700 families a year in Rhode Island.

First Connections is the **most utilized children's safety net**, and child find entity designed to catch all children under age 3 from falling through the cracks.

The *First Connections Program* receives thousands of referrals a year to help find and support young children and their families who need to be connected to **life-saving and life-altering supports**. The program ensures that all families receive equitable access to these supports.



Families usually have between one to three (3) culturally competent and thorough home visits conducted by **registered nurses, community health workers, and social workers**.

First Connections **aligns with the state's other priorities**. Last year, almost 90% of Rhode Island families with infants exposed to substances were contacted by *First Connections*, with almost half accepting a visit.

All Rhode Island families enrolled in *First Connections* receive education and counseling on **safe sleep practices**.

First Connections Saves Lives

Without a Permanent Rate Increase, *First Connections* will End in July 2024!

What are possible outcomes without the First Connections Program?



- An increase in ER visits for children.
- An increase in longer-term DCYF involvement
- An increase in families needing to rely on DHS benefits long-term
- An increase in developmental delays for children that will not be discovered until pre-k
- An increase in undiscovered and unmitigated lead exposure
- An increase in sleep-related deaths
- An increase in untreated postpartum depression and anxiety among mothers
- An increase in Domestic Violence
- An increase in homelessness



- A decrease in timely pediatric visits
- A decrease in exclusive breastfeeding and/or a decrease in access to formula for newborns
- A decrease in immunizations for children
- A decrease in referrals to Early Intervention

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**Ensure First Connections Stays Open:
Make the Current Medicaid Rate
Permanent and Enact a Yearly COLA
Adjustment**