Facts about Children, Youth, and Traumatic Brain Injury

A traumatic injury can affect anyone at any stage of life. An injury may be mild, may appear to be mild, or may be very significant. The teamwork of family, friends, medical professionals, community resources and schools, builds a foundation for children to flourish and fulfill their potential.

Brain injury in particular requires careful attention. As children grow and develop, they begin to use parts of their brain in new ways. Therefore, the extent of a brain injury sustained in childhood may not be fully apparent for several years, until the child reaches the stage of development at which the affected part(s) of the brain would be expected to be available for learning or performing, yet appear to be compromised.

Georgia’s Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission endorses injury prevention efforts, access to age-appropriate treatment and services, and the full participation of injured youth in school and community.

TBI Emergency Room Treatment for Ages 24 and Under – Georgia, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Youth Treated for TBI</th>
<th>Most Common Causes of Injury</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 4 years</td>
<td>9,223</td>
<td>Falls, Motor Vehicle, Accidental Strike Against An Object (e.g. Bathtub, Fence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9 years</td>
<td>4,113</td>
<td>Falls, Motor Vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14 years</td>
<td>3,569</td>
<td>Falls, Motor Vehicles, Head Struck During Sports (e.g. baseball, hockey puck)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 24 years</td>
<td>9,538</td>
<td>Falls, Motor Vehicles, Sports, Assault/Violence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TBI Hospitalization for Ages 24 and Under – Georgia, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Hospitalizations with TBI</th>
<th>Most Common Causes of Injury</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 4 years</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>Falls, Assault/Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9 years</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Motor Vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14 years</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>Motor Vehicles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 24 years</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>Motor Vehicles, Falls, Assault</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are the effects of a brain injury?

TBI may experience problems/changes with the following:
- Vision
- Walking
- Speech
- Learning new information/skills
- Personality changes
- Excessive sleepiness
- Reduced ability to concentrate
- Increased sensitivity to noise and/or light

Every brain injury is very different and some are much more serious than others. Some people who sustain brain injuries seem to get better very quickly. For other people, the effects of a brain injury can last throughout their entire lifetime. [http://www.biausa.org/Pages/for_kids.html]

How can brain injuries be prevented?

Wear a bike helmet when riding a bicycle – bike helmets, when worn correctly, are 85% effective in preventing brain injuries [http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr4401.pdf]

Use your seat belt when riding in a car – according to the NHTSA, over the past 10 years, safety belts have prevented approximately 55,600 deaths, 1,300,000 injuries and saved more than $105 billion in economic costs. [http://www.nhtsa.gov/Research/Human+Factors/Seatbelt+and+Child+Seat+Use]


Put infants in a car seat, and be sure the car seat is in the back seat of the car – [http://www.cdc.gov/MotorVehicleSafety/Child_Passenger_Safety/CPS-Factsheet.html]

**Car seats are available to low-income Georgians who qualify for assistance – please contact your local Health Department for additional information.

Check your playground – make sure the ground under each piece of playground equipment has protective surfacing – wood chips, mulch, etc. Insure that there is always adult supervision when children are playing on equipment. [http://www.cdc.gov/SafeChild/Falls/]

Award Categories for Children and Youth

Since 2002, the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission has awarded over $960,000 to children and youth who have survived a traumatic brain and/or spinal cord injury. These awards have been for goods and services to help them remain integrated into the community and to reach maximum, age-appropriate independence.

The top award categories for children and youth are:
- Transportation
- Personal Support (e.g. attendant care)
- Home Modifications
- Durable Medical Equipment

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Resources:

- Brain Injury Association of Georgia, www.braininjurygeorgia.org - (404) 712-5504
- National Brain Injury Information Center (BIAA), www.biausa.org - (800) 444-6443
- Parent to Parent of Georgia, www.parenttoparentofga.org  Central Office, 3905 Presidential Parkway, #207, Atlanta, GA 30340  (770) 451-5484  (800) 229-2038
- Georgia Department of Education (DOE): Please call your county DOE to request the contact information for administrators in your county who are knowledgeable about brain injury.
- National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY), www.nichcy.org
- Families and Advocates Partnership for Education (FAPE), www.fape.org

The Trust Fund

The mission of the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is to enhance the lives of Georgians with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. Guided by the aspirations of people with traumatic injuries, the Commission supports lives of meaning, independence, and inclusion. As the state’s Lead Agency on Traumatic Injuries, we:

- Administer the Central Registry to identify those who are injured
- Distribute resources through the Trust Fund, and
- Advocate for improvements in statewide services.

The Trust Fund has provided over $13 million to more than 2,000 Georgians with brain and/or spinal injuries since 2002.

To learn more about the Trust Fund, or to find additional information on TBI and read about important legislative issues and upcoming initiatives for people with traumatic injuries, visit the Commission’s Web site at www.bsitf.state.ga.us.