

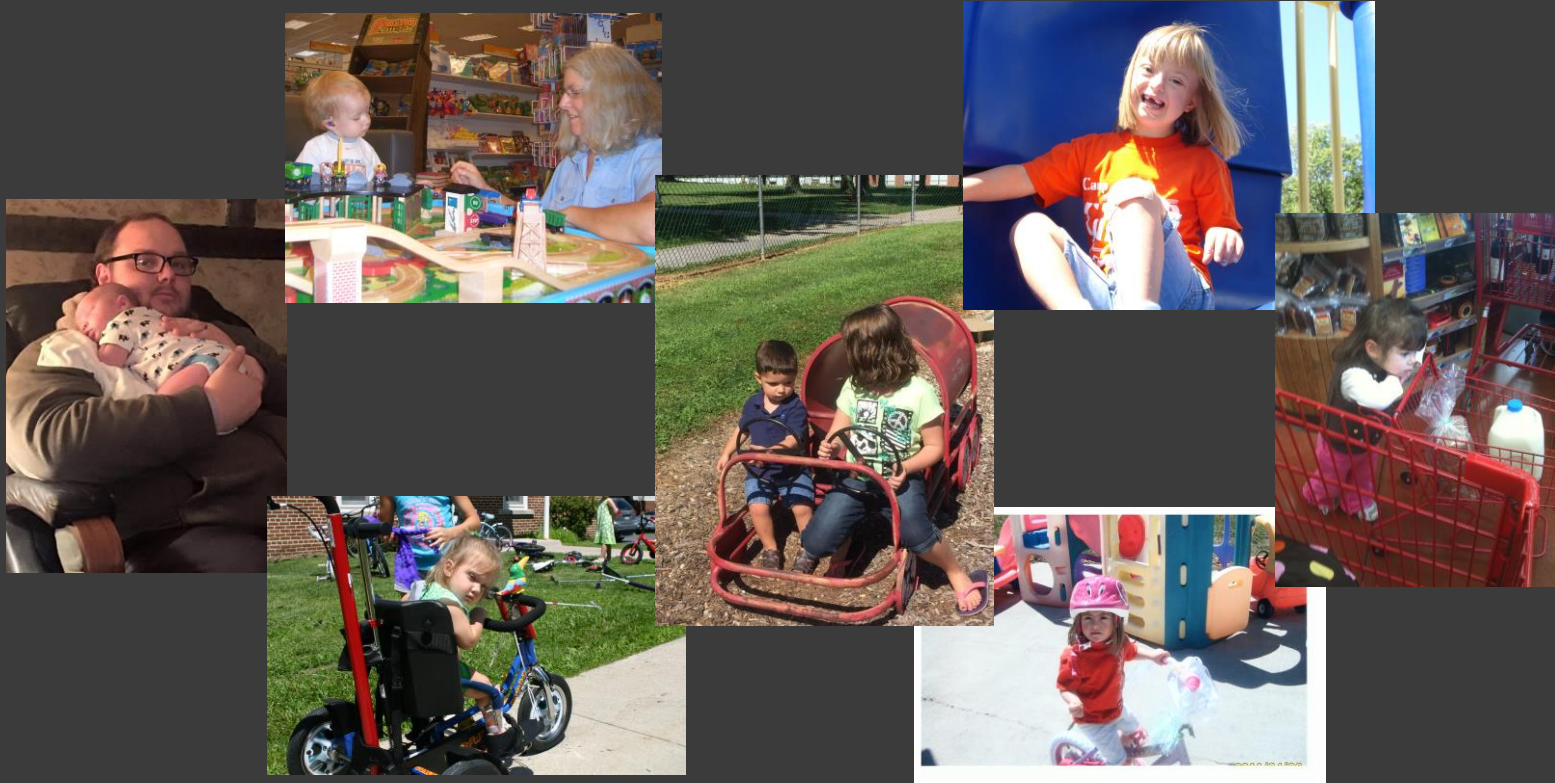


**WV Children And Families
Thank You
For Your Continued
Support**

2019



In West Virginia, Our Most Important Natural Resources Are Our Children.



Special thanks to the families who shared their experiences with WV Birth to Three and pictures of their children.

Contents

What is WV Birth to Three4

WV Family Stories7

Who Do We Serve15

For additional information18



Every Child Deserves A Good Start



WV Birth to Three is a statewide system of services and supports for children under age three who have a delay in their development, or may be at risk of having a delay, and their family.

WV Birth to Three is administered through the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health, Office of Maternal, Child, and Family Health in partnership with the WV Early Intervention Interagency Council to assure that family centered and community based early intervention services are available to all eligible children and families.



Who is Eligible?

An infant or toddler under the age of three can be experiencing:

- Medical or developmental diagnosis (i.e., Down Syndrome); and/or,
- Developmental Delays:
 - Cognitive - thinking and learning
 - Physical - moving, seeing and hearing
 - Social/emotional - feeling, coping, getting along with others
 - Adaptive - doing things for him/herself
 - Communication- understanding and communicating with others; and/or
- Be at risk of possible delays due to biological and/or family stressors
- There are no financial requirements for eligibility.



Benefits of Early Childhood Intervention Progress

Decades of research show that children’s earliest experiences play a critical role in brain development. High quality supports and services provided through the WVBTT system benefit children, families and society as well. (Importance of Early Intervention for Infants & Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families, NECTAC, 2011)

Young Children	Families	Society
<p>Positive improvements in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Language & communication • Cognition • Social/emotional development <p>Impacts are long lasting, demonstrating positive results into the early education years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better able to meet the needs of their child presently and in the future • Increased ability to maintain employment and earnings • Increased confidence as parents and decreased levels of stress • Improvement in overall well-being for the family 	<p>Decreased economic costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special & other remedial education • Emergency & health care • In criminal justice system • Increased work site productivity • Decreased employee absenteeism and turnover

{The Economics of Early Childhood Investments, Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2014}

Cost Benefit of WV Birth to Three Services and Supports

Intervention is more effective the earlier in life it can be provided. Research has estimated that for every dollar spent on early intervention there is a \$7.00 savings for public education; which, translates to an approximate 13% return on investment, per child, in the first year of life. (Effectiveness of Early Childhood Programs, ECTAC, 2018, 13% ROI Research Kit, Heckman Equation, 2017)



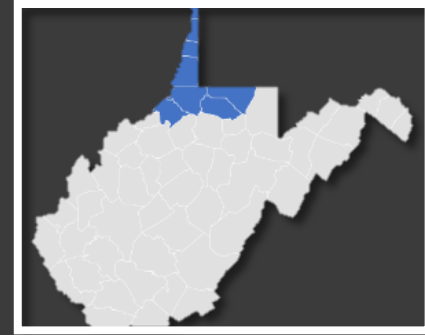
Region 1

My son, Camden, was born on a rainy Thursday afternoon in April at just over 35 weeks gestation. Despite making his arrival earlier than we had expected, he joined our family at home with his big sister just two days later. As Cam's 1st birthday drew near, we began to notice that he was no longer meeting milestones for a child his age. He held his left arm stiff and straight at his side, with his wrist flexed and his hand clenched tightly into a fist. His vocabulary was limited to just two repetitive sounds, causing him to frequently be frustrated and upset at home because he couldn't play like his big sister. Despite multiple visits to his pediatrician, I was assured that he would "grow out of" his delays. After a frank discussion with the director of his daycare program, I requested a referral to Birth to Three, a decision that I will never regret.

Cam's referral to Birth to Three was made when Cam was 22 months old. Less than a week after the referral was made, I described Cam's abilities and my concerns with our Interim Service Coordinator. She immediately focused on the positive and assured me that if Cam was found eligible, this program could help him. After his initial assessments were completed, Cam was found eligible to receive services to help with a fine motor delay and significant communication delay. Within two weeks, he began receiving physical, occupational, developmental, and speech therapies.

Cam's 3rd birthday gave me so many mixed emotions – I was thankful that because of the services he received, and the tremendous progress he had made, but I was sad that we would be leaving our BTT family behind. Before his birthday, our BTT Team facilitated a meeting between the school system, and we were able to discuss Cam's abilities and where we felt he still needed to receive support, and his IEP was drafted and put in to effect immediately.

As a parent, I can tell you that the difference our program makes is real and priceless. WVBT is the reason that Cam is able to run and jump in puddles, to eat ice cream with a spoon, and to say "I love you, Mommy." While he stills receives speech therapy and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Cam is able to keep up and play with his friends and his classmates. He is no longer frustrated or upset because his body limited his ability to be a child and his ability to communicate his wants and needs.



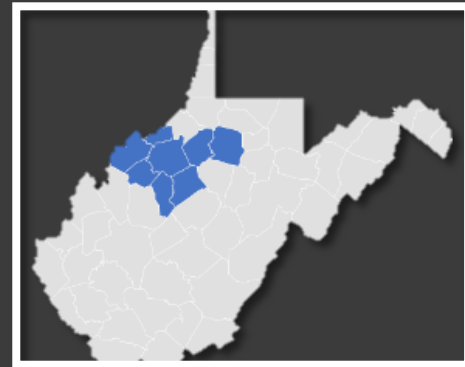
Region 2

Shared by Sheena Farrah (Mom) (Harrison County)

When my son, Croix, was 4 months old he started having chronic ear infections. After the third infection within two months I started to get worried. Finally at 8 months old Croix received his first set of tubes. When he turned a year old he still wasn't talking and I decided I wanted to refer him to WV Birth to Three to see if we were able to receive help and support.

When we first started speech therapy he hated it. He wasn't responding the way I was anticipating he should be. Our therapist really went the extra mile to encourage him, get him interested and gave us a lot of ideas on things we should be doing at home. After a few months Croix really started to respond and was excelling. He went from not talking at all and now he's saying words and using sign language. We've been in the program for 8 months now and it has been the best thing I could have ever asked for!

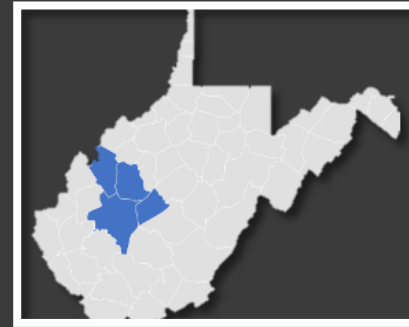
Our family has had such a great experience with WV Birth to Three. When you have therapists that are compassionate about their job and helping the children they work with it really makes a difference. We look forward to working with our team throughout the remainder of our time in the program!



Region 3

Our family was introduced to WV Birth to Three services when our daughter was nearly a month old. Gracie suffered an in-utero stroke resulting in significant damage to the right hemisphere of her brain and mild damage on the left hemisphere, as well. The cause of her stroke is un-known, and doctors were only able to give us a list of delays and troubles that might come from such damage to her central nervous system. This has resulted in an official diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy. Since my husband and I had the opportunity to begin our family through adoption we had wonderful direction and support getting Gracie proper medical care. We were quickly referred to the WV Birth to Three program. In a very short time we had an excellent team of practitioners that provided Gracie with excellent service and care. Throughout Gracie's first three years she steadily progressed and made strides that no one could have predicted. At 6 months old, I remember her neurologist being amazed at the progress Gracie had made. Our team was wonderful about educating us on how to maintain and provide activities to help Gracie in our everyday lives. They gave us tools to use at home and in our community. Any of our therapists were always a phone call away with any questions we had. While transitioning to preschool, our entire team stayed with us to ensure transition from home to school was smooth and positive. We were encouraged to become educated about having a child with special needs enrolled in the public-school system. Having the proper education, as her parents, ensure Gracie has the proper services at school that will help her to succeed. Now at 6 years old Gracie has progressed past many of the "what if's" and "maybe's" that were told to us. In every aspect of Gracie's life, she continues to make strong progress. She is a talkative, bright and sweet little girl who loves to learn. Gracie is an excellent reader and loves music. Even though her Cerebral Palsy is a part of her everyday life and still comes with big challenges. I believe the services provided by WV Birth to Three played an important role in Gracie's development in all areas. The teamwork between our WV Birth to Three team and our family is something that will affect Gracie in a positive way for years to come.

Sherill Hoffman

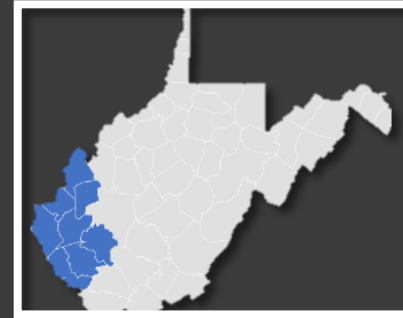


Region 4

Our journey with the WV Birth to Three program was beneficial and life changing for Benson. He entered the program at about a year and a half old with deficits in many areas for his age group. By age two he was completely non-verbal and rejected most foods, he didn't show love and affection to close family, and had no interest in playing with other kids, among many other obstacles.

We were lucky enough to be paired with an amazing team of therapists that provided our family with tools and knowledge needed to implement into our daily lives to help Benson be more successful and catch up to what was typically expected of his age. Our team was not only wonderful with Benson, but they also understood and acknowledged the need for parent and family support and involvement to help develop plans and strategies that worked for us.

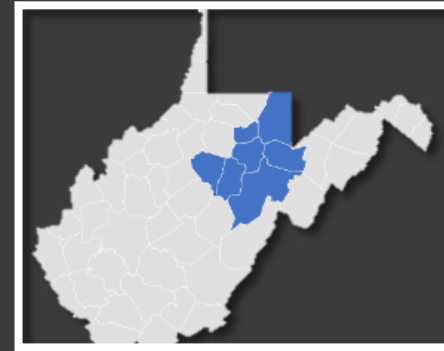
When it came time to transition into the school system when Benson aged out of Birth to Three, our team was very supportive and helpful in navigating the process and helping us advocate for what we felt was best for Benson. The impact that Birth to Three had on our child and family is immeasurable. Benson left the program much more confident and happy in life, with some verbal and sign language communication abilities, a willingness to show love to the people around him, and smarter than ever. He has now at almost four years old overcome many of those obstacles that were placed on him, and we know most of it is because of the groundwork and effort made by our Birth to Three team and their commitment to working with us for Benson's success.



Region 5

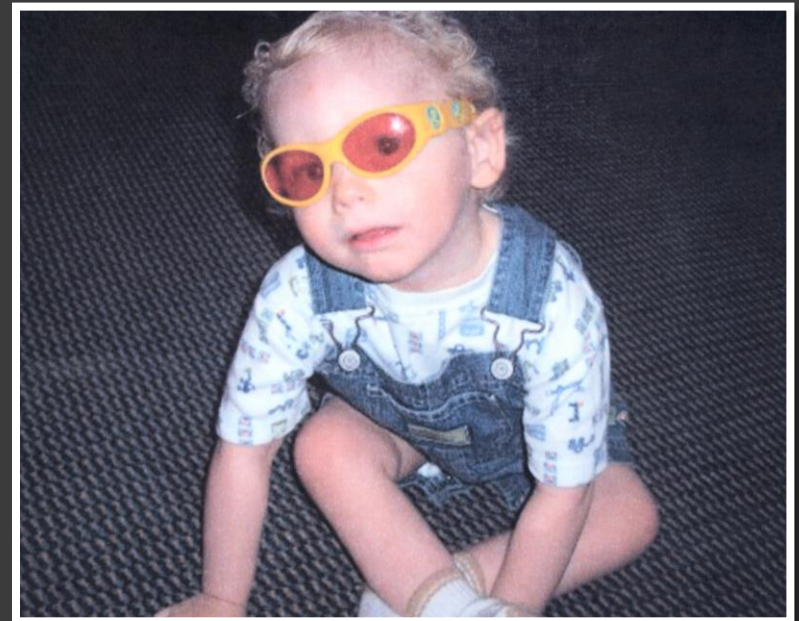
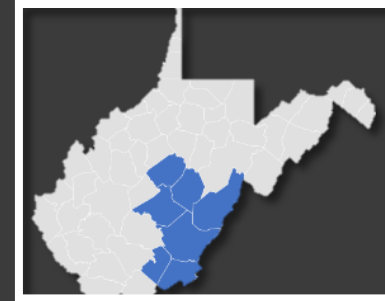
I am a parent of a former BTT participant. ZiHeir, 3, has the most severe case of autism and is almost completely nonverbal. Before the help and support of his team, Sam, Mary Kay, Anita, Jennifer, and Joy I struggled to find techniques to make life easier, more accessible and most importantly enjoyable for him. He is now enrolled in school. No longer has outbursts in public and shows me affection (which was one of my biggest fears I thought he'd never overcome) please continue to support this amazing program with funding it is much needed and deserved. I'm sure it's more than meaningful to the children and from personally experience a life changer for me.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration,
Kathy Wall-Hudson, wife and mother of 4 of Barbour County, WV.



Region 6

Birth to Three was a wonderful experience for us. We started with them when my son, Simon, was close to 2 years old. He wasn't talking other than saying "dada" which he applied to everything. He wasn't communicating with those around him and it was leading to multiple tantrums every day because we didn't know what he wanted. Evaluations were done and it was determined that he needed speech therapy. Every other week, for over a year, a speech therapist came in to our home and worked with him and us. She would work with him on sounds and go over techniques for me to use with him. On the weeks that she didn't come visit, a developmental specialist came. She would work with Simon on his speech as well as helping him understand how to interact with the world around him. There was improvement every week, sometimes huge amounts, sometimes only a little, but always steps going forward in learning to communicate. It was amazing watching the week to week progress. Knowing that just a few days ago he hadn't been able to do something that he was now perfecting was so encouraging. The individuals on our team became our friends. We stop and talk if we see them out somewhere. They truly enjoy what they do and it showed in their interactions with my family. I'm so thankful that we had Birth to Three as an option. Simon learned so much about communicating and I learned so much about understanding him and helping him communicate. I couldn't have asked for a better experience than what we got.



Region 7

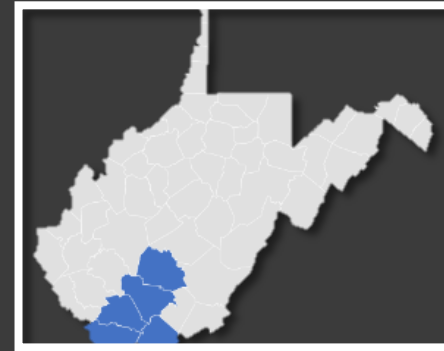
Jade came into our lives on April 30th, 2010 and we were amazed, overwhelmed, excited, and totally in love with our 6lb, 4oz 19in diva.

We took all the classes, read all the books and interviewed pediatricians, yet when Jade started having 'spasms' at two weeks old and covering her eyes at three months, and not sitting at four months...we still missed it. The spasms grew more intense lasting 10-12 hours, and the milestones were not being met, yet 'all babies are different' and there is no true 'normal'. No one would listen. I was a new mother and she was 'too alert' for there to be an issue. Jade was not sitting - was not even close- at seven months and I demanded help - we finally heard the term low tone. I reached out to Birth to Three and we were eligible for supports and services.

My nurse Donna Velie saw a 'spasm' and helped me get a neurological referral - that day changed our lives forever. Jade is a rare child who suffers from infant migraines, spasmodic torticollis, and low tone. It all made perfect sense. Three weeks of MRI's and EEG's ruled out brain tumor and cancer and gave us peace of mind for the first time in a year.

When Jade was a beautiful 21 month she was often seen in fashionable hats and sunglasses to help ward off the migraines. We were waiting on the independent steps due to her low tone, but every milestone was celebrated right alongside our BTT team. They helped Jade's physical delays, but I have always said they helped our emotional hearts as well. Our team has cried alongside us, sent cards, made phone calls, and encouraged me when I didn't think I was strong enough to face any more doctors. But most importantly when Dr.'s told me to 'go home and relax...you're just a new mommy...' they told me to trust my instinct ---Thank God I did. We finally had weeks with no infant migraines - and Jade was on her way to her first independent steps.

Thank you - we love BTT.
MeriBeth Clagg Underwood



Region 8

When I look back at the path that brought me to where I am today I know I am exactly where I'm meant to be. My name is Katie Heidel and I am the Parent Partner at Birth to Three Region 8.

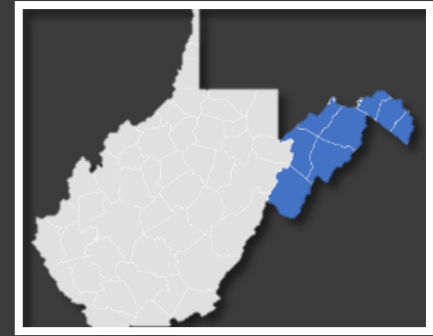
I graduated from WVU in 2004 with a degree in Child Development and Family Studies and an emphasis in Child Hospital Life. Fast forward through life a bit and I married my college sweetheart, bought a house, adopted a puppy, and had a beautiful daughter. We were living the dream, but something was still missing. And then along came Jacob...

When Jacob was 3 months old he was diagnosed with a brain tumor and our happy little life was turned upside down. He spent many months at the hospital battling post-op complications, seizures, and just trying to heal his tiny little body. I felt safe at the hospital, surrounded by the people who saved my little baby's life, but eventually it was time to come home. And that was terrifying.

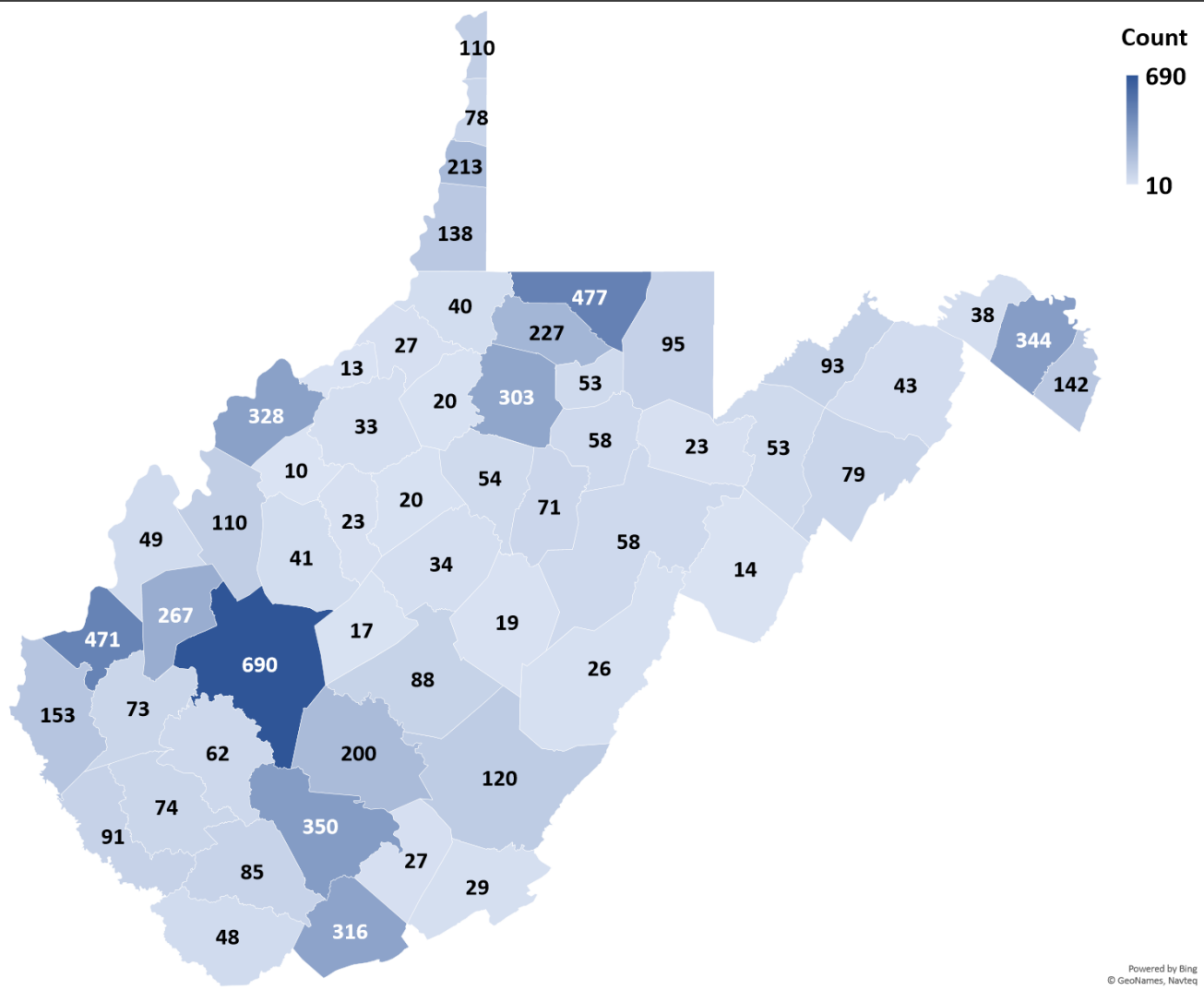
When Jacob was referred to Birth to Three I had to laugh. This was one of those full circle moments for me. Not only had I known all about Birth to Three from my WVU days, but I had even been a practitioner myself shortly after we moved to Martinsburg. Now I needed these services for my son.

We opened our home and hearts to these beautiful strangers who quickly became friends and our closest allies in the fight for Jacob's childhood and development. They helped get Jacob back on track developmentally. They helped me rebuild my confidence that I was, in fact, the best person for the job of being his mom. We worked together and eventually Jacob was walking, communicating (non-verbally) his wants and needs, and showing interest in the things and people around him. The hospital wasn't our safe haven anymore, home was. And our amazing Birth to Three practitioners are to thank for that.

Jacob is now in 1st Grade with an IEP in place and the most wonderful set of teachers we could ask for. Our daughter, Preslyn, is in 5th Grade. She has such a gentle, caring soul and truly is the best big sister ever. My husband and I realize this isn't the life we asked for or expected, but we are so very thankful for the life we were given. I am beyond excited and grateful for my new opportunity with Birth to Three.



Who Do We Serve?



WV Birth to Three provided services to 6,718 infants & toddlers during the 2016 to 2017 reporting period.

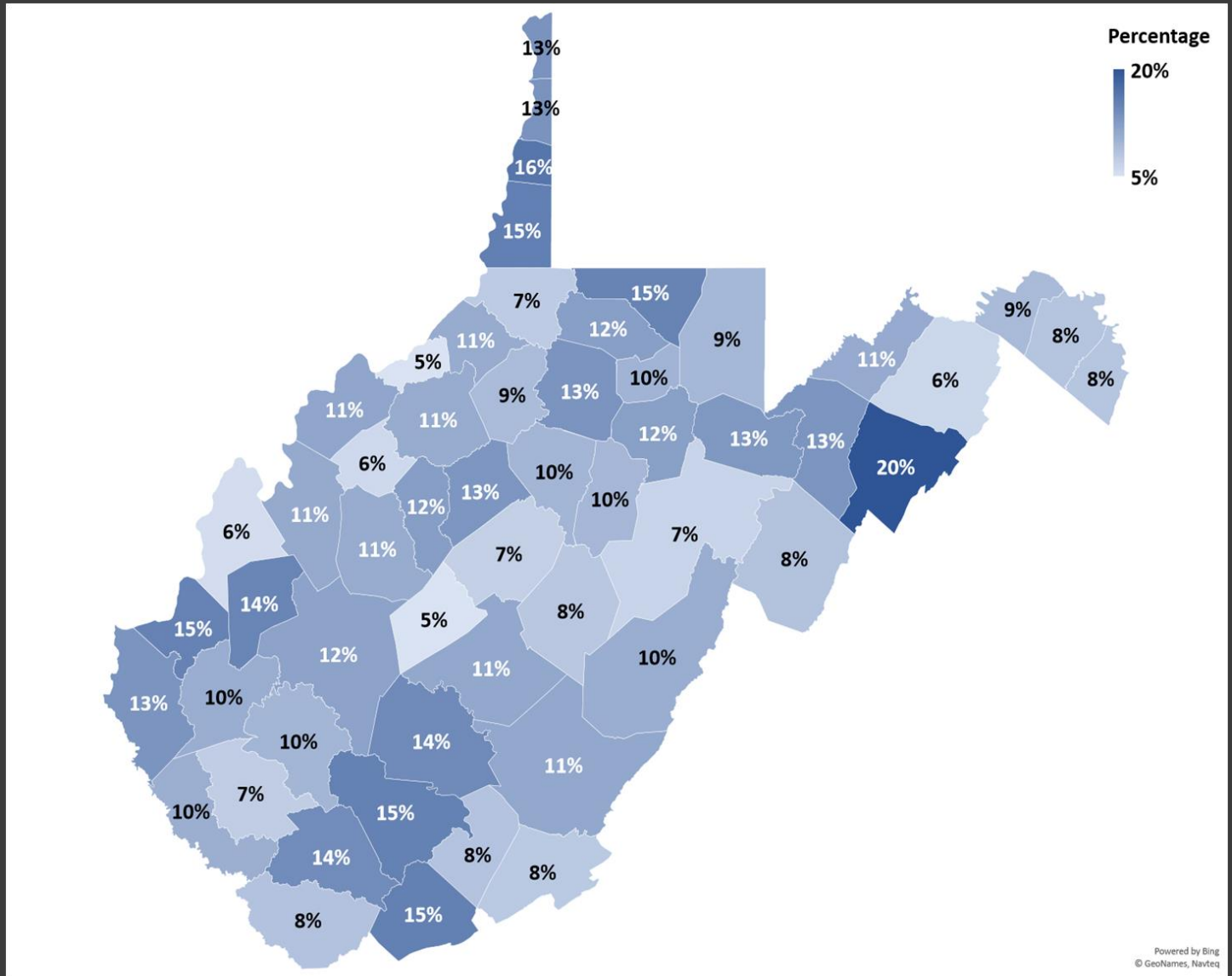
Shown here is the number of infants & toddlers in each county who received services.

Powered by Bing
© GeoNames, Navteq

Source: WV Department of Health and Human Resources, WV Birth to Three State Database. "Children with Active IFSPs during December 2, 2016 through December 1, 2017". Data extracted January 30, 2018.

That was equivalent to 12% of our infant & toddler population here in WV.

Shown here is the percentage of the population in each county under the age of three who received services.



Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. "Bridged-Race Population Estimates". 2018. Available from CDC WONDER Online Database. Accessed on December 12, 2018.

THANK YOU

For your historic and future support –
we could not do it without you!



To Learn More About Our Work, Please Visit:



<http://www.wvdhhr.org/birth23/>



<http://www.wveiicc.org>



The Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health, Office of Maternal Child and Family Health administers the WV Birth to Three system in cooperation with the WV Early Intervention Interagency Coordinating Council, as required under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.