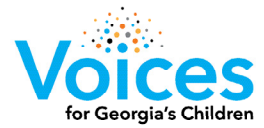


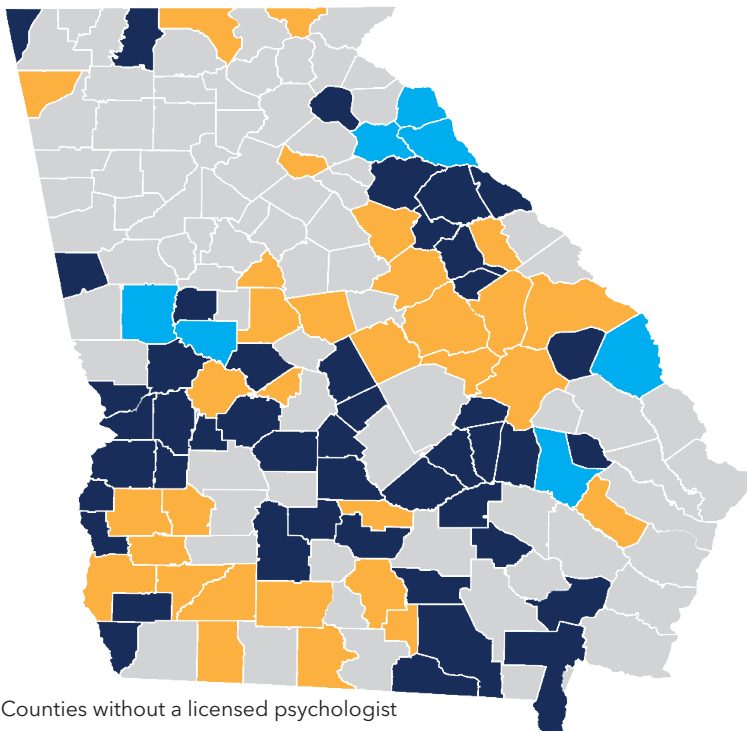
# Georgia's Crisis in Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health



## THE PROBLEM:

**41%** of children ages 3-17 struggle to or are not able to access needed mental health treatment and counseling.<sup>1</sup>

Behavioral health is at the core of the majority of the problems we see in education, juvenile justice, and child welfare. And the challenges don't stop there - they continue into adulthood.



- Counties without a licensed psychologist
- Counties without a licensed social worker
- Counties without both

### Georgia's counties<sup>2</sup>

**78**

do not have a licensed psychologist

**53**

do not have a licensed social worker

**45**

do not have a licensed psychologist **OR** a licensed social worker

## Schools often serve as the primary point of access to behavioral health services and supports.<sup>3</sup>

**Social Workers<sup>4 5</sup>**



**CURRENTLY:**

**1** FOR EVERY **2,475** STUDENTS

**NEEDED:**

**1** FOR EVERY **250** STUDENTS

**School Psychologists<sup>6 7</sup>**



**CURRENTLY:**

**1** FOR EVERY **2,475** STUDENTS

**NEEDED:**

**1** FOR EVERY **700** STUDENTS

**School Nurses**



**CURRENTLY:**

**1** FOR EVERY **1,088** STUDENTS

**NEEDED:**

**1** FOR EVERY **750** STUDENTS

## ALARMING STATS:

**2 in 10 children** have one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions.<sup>12</sup>

- In Georgia, **suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death** among children.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2019, **94%** of Georgia's youth suicide were **preventable**.<sup>2</sup>
- Children with ADHD, autism, or developmental delays are **twice as likely to be chronically absent** compared to kids without these conditions.<sup>10</sup>
- **An estimated 50-70% of youth** in Department of Juvenile Justice long-term facilities have a mental health diagnosis severe enough to require ongoing treatment.<sup>11</sup>

## WHY WE NEED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Untreated behavioral health illness in children and adolescents can lead to:<sup>13 14 15</sup>



Drug and alcohol  
abuse



Violent or self  
destructive behavior



Low educational  
attainment



Much lower rates of  
employment in adulthood

## WHAT WE NEED:

- 1.** Replenish funding for the Georgia Apex Program to continue advances in school-based mental health (\$4 Million for FY2023).
- 2.** Appropriate funding for annual implementation of a Minimum Data Set Survey for behavioral health professionals. (Based on available information, implementation will cost approximately \$300,000 per year.)
- 3.** Promote the Free Your Feels campaign to encourage youth to explore their real feelings and share them fearlessly.

## WHAT NEXT?

We need to fully implement Georgia's comprehensive three-year System of Care State Plan for child and adolescent health and support the work of Behavioral Health Innovation and Reform Commission to develop policy which can improve children's behavioral health outcomes.

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