



**Assessing Infants and Toddlers In Your Area:  
Use Data to Create  
a Community Profile**





## INTRODUCTION

The National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers (NCIT) is committed to advancing policies and programs to ensure all families have the support they need to give their infants and toddlers a strong foundation for success in school and life. An estimated three million of our nation's youngest children are at risk of reaching kindergarten unprepared to learn. Evidence shows that when we invest in the first three years, infants and toddlers become healthy children who are confident, empathetic, and ready for school and life, while our communities, workforce, and economy become stronger and more productive.

Every young child deserves a fair chance to succeed, and the right combination of supports for children and their families will provide them with the tools necessary to reach kindergarten readiness.

The purpose of this tool is to help you hone in on the unique characteristics, strengths, and needs of infants, toddlers, and families in your community. It includes questions designed to help you focus on creating healthy starts at birth, support families with infants and toddlers, and increase access to high-quality infant and toddler child care. We recommend you use this tool in combination with the following publicly available data to inform your understanding of the local landscape:

- [The Census Reporter](#)
- [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

An assessment of local systems that support birth to three should start with data that tells you about the opportunities, experiences, and challenges faced by families in your community. Questions in the profile include recommendations for collecting relevant data that may or may not be available for your local community. Knowing which information is and is not available is a critical step to assessing local capability and assets available to improve outcomes for children birth to three.

## COMPLETING THIS PROFILE

We encourage the following process for creating your community profile:

1. Include a wide variety of stakeholders in the process, including representatives from programs that serve your community's youngest children and their families in the areas of health, family supports and child care. Engage with policymakers, community-based organizations, parents and community leaders. For example:
  - If there is an Early Head Start Grantee serving children and families in your area, know that they will be a tremendous resource in the planning process (and beyond!). They are required to conduct a regular community needs assessment and they may have great data to share with you about pregnant women, babies, and toddlers. Find your local grantee(s) here: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/federal-monitoring/report/grantee-service-profiles>
  - Public and private organizations and coalitions in your community (e.g., public health departments, community action agencies, local government, housing authority, etc.) may have conducted other assessments, perhaps for a grant or planning process. Leverage existing community profiles where you can.



2. Bring a strength-based focus to this profile. Every community has unique features that help it reach and support children and their families. These strengths can help other communities learn.
3. Use the information you collect to create a shared understanding among stakeholders of the number of children and families in your community, their demographics, what services exist now and how accessible they are for those who need them, and what gaps exist.
4. Use this tool to identify which new evidence-based programs are most needed and appropriate for your community.
5. Approach this effort through an equity lens. Are services distributed across communities? Are there clear disparities in access and outcomes for children of color, those with low incomes, or in certain neighborhoods?

## COMMUNITY PROFILE TOOL

The strengths of your local community, key players who can drive resources and change policy, and the parents and advocates who can help make the case for serving your community's youngest children and their families are critical elements of creating robust birth to three systems.

This tool is divided into four sections:

- I. Community Demographic Information
- II. Your Community and its Assets
- III. Existing System-Level Supports for Young Children
- IV. Resources for Young Children
  - A. Healthy Beginnings
  - B. Supported Families
  - C. High Quality Care and Learning

Whether your community has existing services for young children or is starting new programs, the collection and analysis of data from the inception of your strategy for creating change is critical. Not every community will be able to answer each question with complete accuracy. However, to assist with data collection, recommended data sources have been suggested throughout to assist in accessing data required to provide the most accurate answers possible.

### SECTION I: COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Census and other nationwide data sources can help you obtain demographic data, however, to collect some of this information you may need to contact resources in your local community or state. We recommend you collect data for the most recent complete year, if it is available.



SUPPORT	<i>Possible source for this data: Census, though likely 5-year estimates only. Local data resources may provide more detail.</i>
	<b># OF FAMILIES RECEIVING SUPPORT</b>
SNAP (Food Stamps)	
TANF	
Medicaid	
CHIP	
WIC	

FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES	<i>Possible source for this data: The state agencies that administer these programs. These differ in every state. Some data fields can be found through the Census, in the American Community Survey.</i>
	<b>COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE</b>
Families in the past year who have used homeless shelter services (Number)	
Families in the past year that have accessed domestic violence services (Number)	
Refugee families (Number or Percent)	
Immigrant families (Number or Percent)	
Veteran/Military Families (Number or Percent)	
Single Parent Families (Number or Percent)	
Families with linguistic barriers to services or home language other than English (Number or Percent)	
Child Maltreatment Rate (Available at the state-level only)	
Children in Child Welfare system (Number)	



## SECTION II: YOUR COMMUNITY AND ITS ASSETS

Each community working to create robust birth to three systems is unique. It is important to recognize strengths as well as to identify areas in which actions can have a positive impact on young children. This section is designed to help you understand the assets in your community.

- What is important to your community? What are your collective values and goals?

- What are the greatest strengths of your community? What assets do you have that can be used to improve the lives of your youngest children and their families?

- How is quality of life perceived in your community? What makes this a great place to live and raise young children?

- Given the data about your community, what do you perceive as priority areas of need among families that are expecting or have babies or toddlers? Do you have data that shows where the need is greatest?

- Are there neighborhoods/zip codes/cities/populations in your community that are underserved?



### SECTION III: EXISTING SYSTEMS-LEVEL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Every community has a group of leaders and stakeholders who work to ensure that children and families have what they need to thrive. These individuals and groups will be critical to moving a birth to three agenda forward in your community. These questions can help you identify who should be a part of your leadership team.

- Who are the key elected officials or community leaders who champion early childhood in your community? What responsibility or role do they play?

INDIVIDUAL	TITLE/ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY

- What collaborative groups (coalitions, action groups, partnerships) are active in the area of early childhood in your community?

NETWORK/ COALITION/ COLLABORATION NAME	AREA OF FOCUS	STAGE (PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, ETC.)	STRATEGY



- Describe the history and timeline for the work and efforts your community has undertaken in early childhood. When did efforts begin? When were additional supports added?

## SECTION IV: RESOURCES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN IN HEALTHY BEGINNINGS, EARLY LEARNING, AND FAMILY SUPPORTS

Healthy Beginnings, Supported Families, and High Quality Care and Learning are the policy pillars of the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers. When strengthened, these areas are proven to lead to remarkable childhood development progress, kindergarten readiness, and later school success.

### Focus Area 1: Healthy Beginnings

A healthy beginning, including physical and mental health, creates strong foundations for later years. This section asks for data to guide your community’s efforts regarding healthy beginnings for all children.

- Please describe any pre/perinatal programs in your community and the extent of their reach in the following chart:

PRE/PERINATAL PROGRAMS	<i>Possible source for this data: State agencies that administers the MIECHV funds; local health departments</i>	
TITLE OF PRENATAL PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM	# OF WOMEN SERVED



- Does your community have access to information on health and developmental screenings, such as the ability to track resources and referrals given?
- Provide additional information on health and developmental screenings in the following chart:

HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING		<i>Possible source for this data: Local Health Department</i>	
		NUMBER OF CHILDREN SCREENED BEFORE AGE 3	# OR % OF CHILDREN FOUND TO HAVE A NEED IN THIS AREA
Lead paint			
Children with a healthy BMI			
Children in good or excellent health			

By law, early intervention service screenings are available in all communities.

- What is the current eligibility for IDEA Part C in your state?
- Provide more detail on your Part C programs in the following chart:

EARLY INTERVENTION (IDEA PART C)	<i>Possible source for this data: State agency that administers IDEA PART C funds</i>
# of children referred to Early Intervention/Part C services for further evaluation	
# of children identified as eligible for needing services	
# of children who are receiving these services	





- Describe access to medical care in the following chart:

ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE		<i>Possible source for this data: Local health departments</i>	
RESOURCE	# OF PROVIDERS	PRENATAL TO THREE CAPACITY	
Birthing hospitals			
Federally Qualified Health Clinics			
Free Clinics			
Other			

- Has your state opted to provide mental health and substance use disorder treatment services using Title IV-E funds under the Family First Prevention Services Act?

- Which state agency is responsible for the distribution of these funds?

- What other local resources are available in your community or state to support healthy beginnings?

## Focus Area 2: Supported Families

Parents have the greatest impact on their child’s development. Providing families with supports and resources is a goal of the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers. These questions can help your community assess how families are engaged with programs that can help in the earliest years.



- Please describe home-visiting programs in your community and the extent of their reach. Are your home visiting programs supported with state or federal funds, or both?
- Provide more detailed information on your community’s home visiting programs in the following chart:

HOME VISITING		<i>Possible source for this data: State agency administering MIECHV funds (typically state or local health department; local health departments).</i>		
TITLE OF HOME VISITING PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM INCLUDING TARGETED POPULATION	EVIDENCE BASED (Y/N)		# FAMILIES SERVED

- Is there universal maternal depression screening in your community? If not, do family support programs commonly assess for maternal depression?

Empty text box for response to the question about universal maternal depression screening.

- What other supportive resources are available to families in your community? Are there family resource centers or programs (such as Help Me Grow, family support centers, lending libraries, etc.)?

Empty text box for response to the question about other supportive resources.



### Focus Area 3: High-Quality Care and Learning

Early learning is critical to childhood development. Various studies have shown that supports to parents caring for young children in the home, as well as programs such as Early Head Start and quality child care are critical to brain development. These questions can help assess what early learning programs exist in your community, and the need for parents who work outside the home.

- What is the extent of the federally-funded Early Head Start (EHS) program in your community? Use the chart below to provide more detail about EHS programs.

EARLY HEAD START	<i>Possible sources for this data: The Early Head Start grantee(s) in your community are responsible for conducting a community needs assessment on a regular basis. If your state has a Head Start Association it should have these data. If not, the National Head Start Association will have these data.</i>		
# of EHS programs operating in your community			
# of Early Head Start slots age 0-3			

- What are the eligibility guidelines for child care subsidies in your state/local area?

- Provide information on access to child care subsidies in the following chart:

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY	<i>Possible source for this data: State agency administering the Child Care Development Funds</i>		
<b>NUMBER OF CHILDREN RECEIVING A CHILD CARE SUBSIDY</b>			
For children age 0-3			
	# of subsidies in licensed child care centers	# of subsidies in home-based child care (licensed)	# of subsidies in an unregulated or family, friend, and neighbor care
Where do children receive this subsidized care?			



- Do the early learning and development programs in your community participate in a quality rating and improvement system? Please provide information on the quality rating and improvement system in the following chart:

QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM	<i>Possible source for this data: State office of child care.</i>
Name of Quality Rating and Improvement System	
Number and percentage of programs participating in the QRIS	

- Please use the table below to identify what percent of child care facilities are deemed “high quality” according to your community’s Quality Rating and Improvement System:

QUALITY CHILD CARE	<i>Possible source for this data: The state agency that administers Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) should be able to provide data on childcare, including school based care, and if it is licensed or license exempt. The state agency which licenses child care centers should have these data. States differ as to whether they collect data on non-licensed programs (as opposed to exempt). Another possible source are cities, which may require business licenses for child care providers.</i>	
Definition of “High Quality” in your community/state		
Type of child care facility	Estimated capacity or enrollment for children 0–3	# of slots determined to be “High Quality”
Licensed child care centers		
Home-based child care (licensed)		
Home-based child care (non-licensed)		

Early learning can have a great impact on long-term educational outcomes. These data can help your community make the case for investing on your youngest children.

- Describe the historical trend data for each outcome indicator, if available, in the following chart.



EDUCATION OUTCOMES	<i>Possible source for this data: local state educational agencies; local school districts.</i>		
	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017
Kindergarten Readiness (% determined “ready” or other locally defined measure)			
Third Grade Reading (% meeting standards)			
Middle Grade Math (% meeting standards)			

- What other resources are available in your community to support the early learning and development of babies and toddlers?

### NEXT STEPS

- What did you learn? How do your current community priorities compare to the identified gaps?
- How will you work with your partners? Who else needs to be engaged?
- What are your next steps? Based on this community profile, where will you start?

*This Community Profile Tool was created by Sorenson Impact at the University of Utah David Eccles School of Business in partnership with the Pritzker Children’s Initiative (PCI) and National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers (NCIT).*