



national collaborative for infants & toddlers

Every child deserves a strong start in life. The foundation we provide for them shapes their future and the future of our communities. We have to get it right.

Babies' brains develop fastest from birth to age three, and their early experiences—both positive and negative—build the foundation for brain and body architecture that will support their ability to learn, their behavior, and their overall health.

We must act now to ensure that children grow into socially, emotionally, and physically healthy kids who are confident, empathetic, and ready for school and life.

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What do Voters Think?

We can all agree on the need for Healthy Babies, Toddlers and Families.



of voters believe that **creating equitable opportunities for children to get a strong start in life should be one of the highest priorities for government**—and they are willing to raise their own local taxes to make those opportunities possible



of voters **rank maternal and infant health services as a top priority.**



The majority of voters in every region of the country **want to see their tax dollars used to give all children a strong start in life, regardless of a child's family income, education, skin color, or where a child lives**

Visit www.childrensfundingproject.org to find out more about this poll.

Where is your state and district? Are babies in your area on track for success in school and in life? Do we have the needed policies to create a community-wide foundation for success for every baby and toddler? For your district's data, reach out to information@ncit.org

Infants and toddlers must be our highest priority; they need our investment now because they only get one chance at a strong start.

Below are Policies in Detail to be used to customize fact sheet. Simply copy and paste applicable sections into customizable areas on page 1. Local advocates can also write their own blurb to be included that highlights a current policy ask.

Healthy Beginnings

Access to health care is essential to a healthy pregnancy and healthy babies. Policies that support healthy pregnancies and healthy births include: Extending Postpartum Medicaid Coverage, Protecting and Expanding Medicaid, Increasing Enrollment in Health Care Coverage (Easy Enrollment), Funding to Support Access to Care and paid family and medical leave.

A healthy beginning for a child starts before birth with a healthy mother. To improve chances for a strong start in life, all expectant mothers need access to comprehensive prenatal and postnatal care, screenings and services to ensure infants are born safely and continue to thrive.

Supportive Families

Policy approaches help improve the health and wellness of your district and provide stability and support for families. Poverty is associated with poor health outcomes for both infants and families. Strategies to increase economic security can improve perinatal health include: State Minimum Wage, State Earned Income Tax Credit, State Support for SNAP, Child Care Subsidies and Paid Family and Medical Leave.

For healthy development, infants and toddlers need quality health care, stimulating learning opportunities, and nurturing, responsive relationships. A system of supports for families should be in place to reach every parent and child at or before birth with needed information, assessments and referrals that offer each child a strong start.

High Quality Care & Learning

High-quality child care must be accessible and affordable for every family that needs it. Whether it's in a child care center or with home-based providers, stimulating learning opportunities and nurturing, responsive relationships are crucial to support healthy brain development. Policies to support include: Early Care and Education Standards, Appropriations and Child Care Subsidies, Increasing Access to Head Start and Early Head Start, Supporting Child Care Providers, Evidence-based Home Visiting Programs and Early Intervention Funding.

Specific Policy Examples

SNAP

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a national program that reached more than 41 million people in 2021, nearly half of which are under 18. Research suggests that caregivers and children who participate in SNAP have improved birth outcomes, reduced childhood food insecurity, increased healthcare use among children, and improved long-term child health. SNAP policies that you can support within your state include: Reducing Administrative Burden for SNAP, Increasing SNAP Access as well as SNAP Incentive and Produce Prescription Program Funding.

Paid Family Leave

Working families need Paid Family and Medical Leave to bond and respond to medical needs. Paid Family and Medical Leave is associated with fewer infant deaths and low-birthweight babies, fewer hospitalizations, higher rates of breastfeeding for the infant and better mental health and physical health for parents.