The State of Colorado's Babies

STATE OF BABIES YEARBOOK 2023

Where children are born can affect their chances for a strong start in life. Babies need good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences to foster their healthy brain development and help them realize their full potential.

This state profile provides a snapshot of how infants, toddlers, and their families are faring in each of these three policy domains. Within each domain, view data for selected child, family, and policy indicators compared to national averages. The profile begins with a demographic description of the state's babies and families to offer the broadest context for exploring what may be very different experiences of the state's youngest children.

Demographics

Colorado | National Average

Infants and toddlers in Colorado

Colorado is home to 184,008 babies, representing 3.2 percent of the state's population. As many as 32.5 percent live in households with incomes less than twice the federal poverty line (in 2021, about $55,000 for a family of four[1]), placing them at economic disadvantage. The state's youngest children are diverse and are raised in a variety of family contexts and household structures.

1. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. Poverty Thresholds by Size of Family and Number of Children. https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html

Race/ethnicity of infants and toddlers

	Colorado	National Average
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.6%	0.8%
Asian	3.2%	5.5%
Black	4.3%	14.0%
Hispanic	32.7%	26.2%
Multiple Races	5.3%	5.2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.2%	0.2%
White	53.6%	48.2%

Percent Infant Toddler

Colorado	National Average
3.2%	3.3%

Population Infant Toddler

Colorado	National Average
184,008	11,034,857

Poverty status of infants and toddlers

	Colorado	National Average
Above Low-income	67.5%	61.1%
Low-income	19.3%	20.3%
In Poverty	13.2%	18.6%
In Deep Poverty**	6.7%	9.6%

150% SMI

Colorado	National Average
76.1%	78.0%

Infants and toddlers in poverty, by race

	Colorado	National Average
Asian	3.7%	9.7%
Black *	26.5%	35.4%
Hispanic	20.8%	24.8%
Multiple Races	4.8%	17.0%
White	8.8%	11.8%

Family Structure

	Colorado	National Average
Two Parents	78.4%	77.6%
One Parent	19.5%	19.9%
No Parent	2.1%	2.5%

Grandparent-headed households

Colorado	National Average
3.1%	8.1%

Living Outside of a Metro Area

Colorado	National Average
4.9%	8.3%

Parent Work Status

	Colorado	National Average
Working Moms	64.9%	62.0%
No Working Parents	6.4%	6.2%
In poverty, no working parents *	29.5%	24.5%
At least one parent works full time	73.7%	75.8%
In poverty, at least one parent works full time *	30.1%	35.0%

*Numbers are small; use caution in interpreting.

**Subset of "In Poverty"

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

Good Health

How are Colorado's babies faring in Good Health?

Supporting babies' and mothers' physical and mental health provides the foundation for infants' lifelong physical, cognitive, emotional, and social well-being. Babies' brains grow rapidly in the first years of life, and, in these early years, the brain works with other organs and organ systems to set the stage for subsequent development and health outcomes. Equitable access to good nutrition during the prenatal period and first years of life is key to ensure that babies receive the nourishment and care they need for a strong start in life. Strengthening equitable access to integrated, affordable maternal, pediatric, and family health care is also essential to meeting babies' and families' health and developmental needs.

Colorado falls in the Improving Outcomes (O) tier for the Good Health domain. A state's ranking is based on indicators of maternal and child health, including health care coverage, prenatal care, birth outcomes, and receipt of recommended preventive care as well as nutrition and mental health. Colorado performs better than national averages on key indicators, such as the percentage of babies breastfed at six months and babies receiving preventative dental care. The state is performing worse than national averages on indicators such as the percentage of babies born at low birthweight and babies receiving recommended vaccinations.

Key Indicators of Good Health

Colorado | National Avg

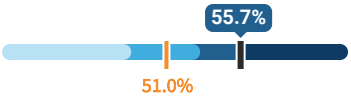
Eligibility limit (% FPL) for pregnant women in Medicaid

Min: 138 Max: 380

Uninsured low-income infants and toddlers

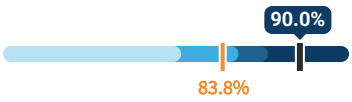
Min: 0.7% Max: 17.9%

Medical home



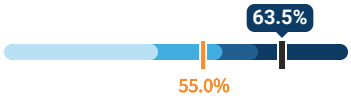
Min: 40.5% Max: 62.6%

Infants ever breastfed NR



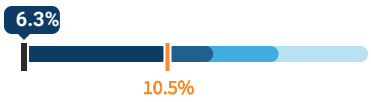
Min: 66.0% Max: 94.0%

Infants breastfed at 6 months



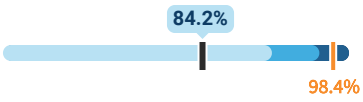
Min: 33.4% Max: 70.7%

High weight-for-length in WIC NR



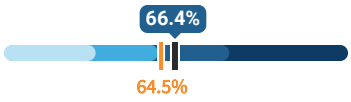
Min: 6.3% Max: 16.3%

WIC coverage for infants *



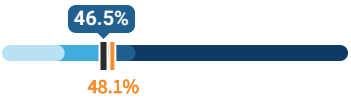
Min: 62.9% Max: 100.0%

WIC coverage for one-year-olds *



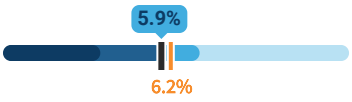
Min: 41.5% Max: 91.9%

WIC coverage for two-year-olds



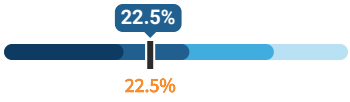
Min: 30.3% Max: 86.3%

Late or no prenatal care received



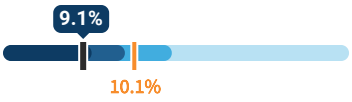
Min: 1.4% Max: 11.3%

Mothers reporting less than optimal mental health



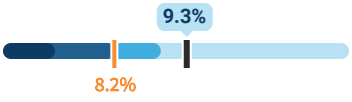
Min: 15.5% Max: 32.1%

Babies born preterm



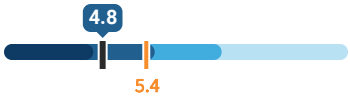
Min: 7.6% Max: 14.2%

Babies with low birthweight



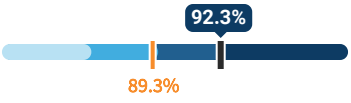
Min: 6.5% Max: 11.8%

Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)



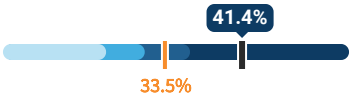
Min: 3.5 Max: 8.1

Preventive medical care received



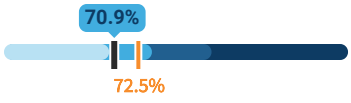
Min: 82.6% Max: 98.0%

Preventive dental care received



Min: 16.8% Max: 52.5%

Received recommended vaccines



Min: 64.0% Max: 85.8%

**Numbers are small; use caution in interpreting.*

Good Health Policy in Colorado

Medicaid expansion state	Yes ✓
CHIP maternal coverage for unborn child option NR	No ✗
Postpartum extension of Medicaid coverage	No law beyond mandatory 60 days
Pregnant workers protection	Limited coverage: State employees and private employees with exceptions
State Medicaid policy for maternal depression screening in well-child visits	Allowed
Medicaid plan covers social-emotional screening for young children	Yes ✓
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services at home	Yes ✓
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services at pediatric/family medicine practices	Yes ✓
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services in early childhood education settings	Yes ✓

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

All Good Health Indicators for Colorado

● State Indicator ● National Avg

Health Care Coverage and Affordability

	State Indicator	National Avg
W Eligibility limit (% FPL) for pregnant women in Medicaid	265.0	200.0
O Medical home	55.7%	51.0%
R Uninsured low-income infants and toddlers	5.4%	5.2%

Nutrition

	State Indicator	National Avg
Infants ever breastfed NR	90.0%	83.8%
High weight-for-length in WIC NR	6.3%	NA
O WIC coverage for one-year-olds	66.4%	64.5%
W Infants breastfed at 6 months	63.5%	55.0%
G WIC coverage for infants	84.2%	98.4%
R WIC coverage for two-year-olds	46.5%	48.1%

Maternal Health

	State Indicator	National Avg
O Late or no prenatal care received	5.7%	6.4%
O Mothers reporting less than optimal mental health	20.2%	21.9%
Maternal mortality rate (deaths per 100,000 live births) NR	NA	23.8

Children's Health

	State Indicator	National Avg
W Babies born preterm	9.1%	10.1%
O Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	4.8	5.4
O Preventive medical care received	92.3%	89.3%
G Babies with low birthweight	9.3%	8.2%
W Preventive dental care received	41.4%	33.5%
R Received recommended vaccines	70.9%	72.5%

Note: N/A indicates Not Available.

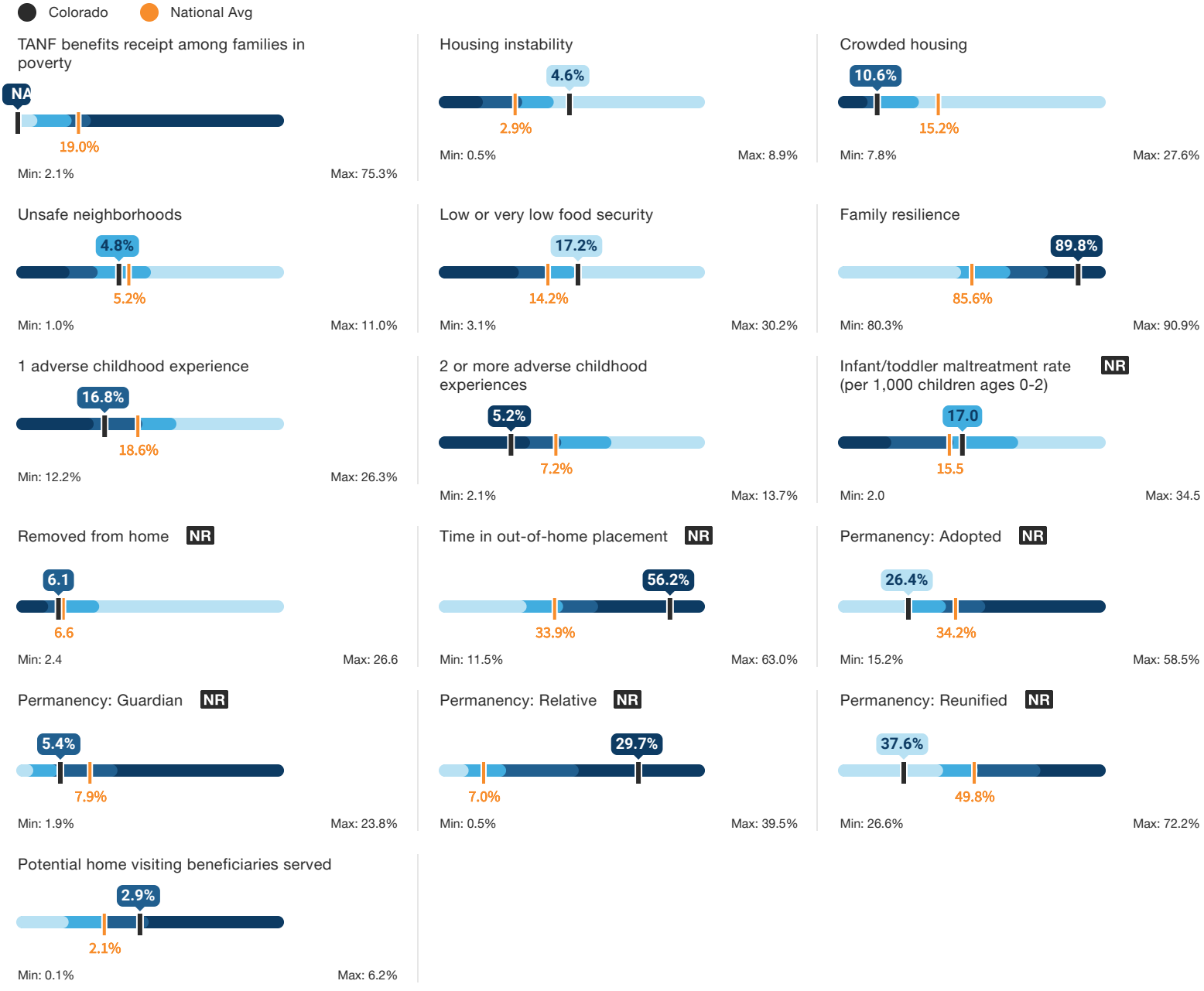
Strong Families

How are Colorado's babies faring in Strong Families?

Young children develop in the context of their families, where stability, safety, and supportive relationships nurture their growth. All families may benefit from parenting supports, but families with low income and in historically marginalized communities of color face additional challenges that impact their babies' immediate and future well-being. Many policies can be designed to address these disparities by race, ethnicity, and income, including the provision of safe and stable housing, home visiting services, family-friendly employer policies, economic support for families with low income, and tax credits that benefit families with young children.

Colorado falls in the Working Efficiently (W) tier of states when it comes to indicators of Strong Families. The state's ranking in this domain reflects indicators on which it is performing better than the national average, such as the percentage of babies who live in families that report being resilient and babies living in crowded housing. Colorado is doing worse than the national average on indicators such as the percentage of babies experiencing housing instability (moved 3 or more times) and babies experiencing food insecurity.

Key Indicators of Strong Families



Numbers are small; use caution in interpreting.

Strong Families Policy in Colorado

Paid family leave	Yes ✓
Paid sick time that covers care for child	Yes ✓
TANF work exemption	No ✗
State child tax credit	Yes ✓
State Earned Income Tax Credit	Yes ✓

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

All Strong Families Indicators for Colorado

● State Indicator ● National Avg

Basic Needs

	State Indicator	National Avg
TANF benefits receipt among families in poverty	NA	19.0%
Crowded housing	10.6%	15.2%
Low or very low food security	17.2%	14.2%
Housing instability	4.6%	2.9%
Unsafe neighborhoods	4.2%	5.0%

Child Well-being and Resilience

	State Indicator	National Avg
Family resilience	89.8%	85.6%
2 or more adverse childhood experiences	5.2%	7.2%
Removed from home NR	6.1	6.6
Permanency: Adopted NR	26.4%	34.2%
Permanency: Relative NR	29.7%	7.0%
Potential home visiting beneficiaries served	2.9%	2.1%
1 adverse childhood experience NR	16.8%	18.6%
Infant/toddler maltreatment rate (per 1,000 children ages 0-2) NR	17.0	15.5
Time in out-of-home placement NR	56.2%	33.9%
Permanency: Guardian NR	5.4%	7.9%
Permanency: Reunified NR	37.6%	49.8%

Note: N/A indicates Not Available.

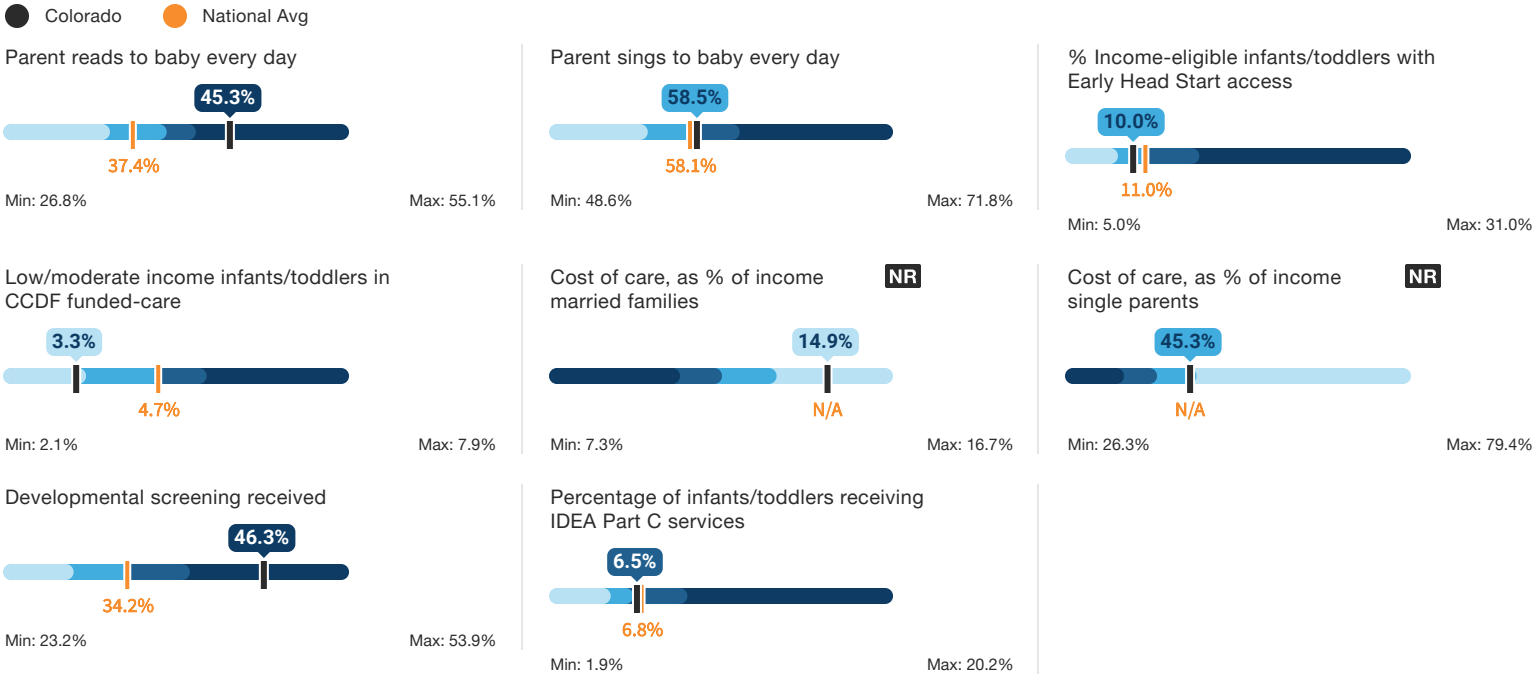
Positive Early Learning Experiences

How are Colorado's babies faring in Positive Early Learning?

Infants and toddlers learn through interactions with the significant adults in their lives and active exploration of enriching environments. The quality of babies' early learning experiences at home and in other care settings can impact their cognitive and social-emotional development as well as early literacy. High-quality early childhood care can strengthen parents' interactions with their children in the home learning environment and support parents' ability to go to work or attend school. Equitable access to high-quality care across factors like race, ethnicity, and income ensures all infants and toddlers have the opportunity for optimal development. However, disparities in access to high-quality care remain across many states and communities in the United States.

Colorado scores in the Reaching Forward (R) tier for Positive Early Learning Experiences. The state's ranking in this domain reflects indicators on which it is performing better than the national average, such as the percentage of infants/toddlers who received a developmental screening in the past year. Colorado is doing worse than the national average on indicators such as the percentage of babies in families with incomes equal to or below 150 percent of the state median income who received a child care subsidy. Beginning with the 2022 profile, infant care costs as a percentage of the state's median income for single and married parents are not factored into the ranking.

Key Indicators of Positive Early Learning Experiences



Numbers are small; use caution in interpreting.

Positive Early Learning Experiences Policy in Colorado

Adult/child ratio	**EHS standards met for 0 of 3 age groups**
Level of teacher qualification required by the state beyond a high school diploma	**No credential beyond a high school diploma**
Group size	**EHS standards met for 0 of 3 age groups**
Infant/toddler professional credential NR	**No** ✕
Families above 200% of FPL eligible for child care subsidy	**NA**
State reimburses center-based child care	**No** ✕
At-risk children included in Part C eligibility definition NR	**No** ✕

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

All Positive Early Learning Experiences Indicators for Colorado

● State Indicator ● National Avg

Activities that Support Early Learning

W Parent reads to baby every day	**45.3%** 37.4%	R Parent sings to baby every day	**58.5%** 58.1%

Access to Early Learning Programs

R % Income-eligible infants/toddlers with Early Head Start access	**10.0%** 11.0%	G Low/moderate income infants/toddlers in CCDF-funded care	**3.3%** 4.7%
Cost of care, as % of income married families NR	**14.9%** NA	Cost of care, as % of income single parents NR	**45.3%** NA

Early Intervention

W Developmental screening received	**46.3%** 34.2%	O Percentage of infants/toddlers receiving IDEA Part C services	**6.5%** 6.8%
Timeliness of Part C services NR	**97.0%** NA		

Note: N/A indicates Not Available.