The State of Pennsylvania'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

Pennsylvania | National Average

Infants and toddlers in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania is home to 399,126 babies, representing 3.1 percent of the state's population. As many as 36 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

	Pennsylvania	National Average
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.1%	0.8%
Asian	4.2%	5.5%
Black	12.5%	14.0%
Hispanic	15.0%	26.2%
Multiple Races	4.6%	5.2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.2%
White	63.5%	48.2%

Percent Infant Toddler

Pennsylvania	National Average
3.1%	3.3%

Population Infant Toddler

Pennsylvania	National Average
399,126	11,034,857

Poverty status of infants and toddlers

	Pennsylvania	National Average
Above Low-income	64.0%	61.1%
Low-income	16.9%	20.3%
In Poverty	19.1%	18.6%
In Deep Poverty**	9.6%	9.6%

150% SMI

Pennsylvania	National Average
78.2%	78.0%

Infants and toddlers in poverty, by race

	Pennsylvania	National Average
Asian	11.0%	9.7%
Black	38.5%	35.4%
Hispanic	29.8%	24.8%
Multiple Races	22.1%	17.0%
White	12.8%	11.8%

Family Structure

	Pennsylvania	National Average
Two Parents	82.4%	77.6%
One Parent	15.6%	19.9%
No Parent	2.0%	2.5%

Grandparent-headed households

Pennsylvania	National Average
6.4%	8.1%

Living Outside of a Metro Area

Pennsylvania	National Average
7.5%	8.3%

Parent Work Status

	Pennsylvania	National Average
Working Moms	68.7%	62.0%
No Working Parents	5.9%	6.2%
In poverty, no working parents *	18.7%	24.5%
At least one parent works full time	73.6%	75.8%
In poverty, at least one parent works full time *	45.7%	35.0%

Numbers are small; use caution in interpreting.

**Subset of "In Poverty"*

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

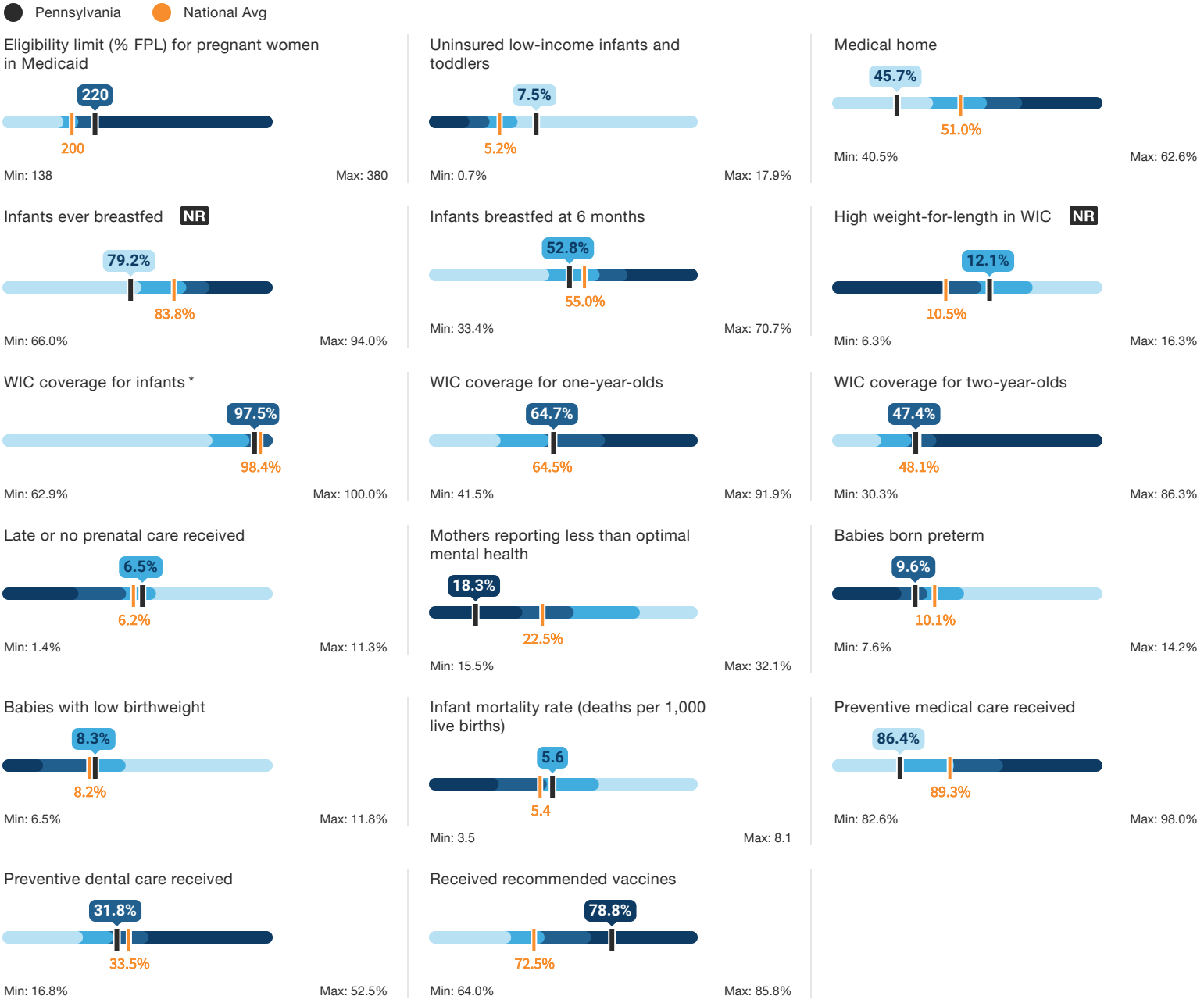
Good Health

How are Pennsylvania'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.

Pennsylvania 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. Pennsylvania performs better than national averages on key indicators, such as the percentage of mothers reporting less than favorable mental health and babies receiving recommended vaccinations. The state is performing worse than national averages on indicators such as the percentage of babies receiving preventive medical care and the percentage of babies with a medical home.

Key Indicators of Good Health



Numbers are small; use caution in interpreting.

Good Health Policy in Pennsylvania

Medicaid expansion state	Yes ✓
CHIP maternal coverage for unborn child option NR	No ✗
Postpartum extension of Medicaid coverage	**Law covering all pregnant people for 1 year post-partum**
Pregnant workers protection	**No protections**
State Medicaid policy for maternal depression screening in well-child visits	**Required**
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 Pennsylvania

● State Indicator ● National Avg

Health Care Coverage and Affordability

O Eligibility limit (% FPL) for pregnant women in Medicaid	**220.0** 200.0	G Uninsured low-income infants and toddlers	**7.5%** 5.2%
G Medical home	**45.7%** 51.0%		

Nutrition

Infants ever breastfed NR	**79.2%** 83.8%	R Infants breastfed at 6 months	**52.8%** 55.0%
High weight-for-length in WIC NR	**12.1%** NA	O WIC coverage for infants	**97.5%** 98.4%
O WIC coverage for one-year-olds	**64.7%** 64.5%	O WIC coverage for two-year-olds	**47.4%** 48.1%

Maternal Health

R Late or no prenatal care received	**6.9%** 6.4%	Maternal mortality rate (deaths per 100,000 live births) NR	**NA** 23.8
W Mothers reporting less than optimal mental health	**18.8%** 21.9%		

Children's Health

O Babies born preterm	**9.6%** 10.1%	R Babies with low birthweight	**8.3%** 8.2%
R Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	**5.6** 5.4	O Preventive dental care received	**31.8%** 33.5%
G Preventive medical care received	**86.4%** 89.3%	W Received recommended vaccines	**78.8%** 72.5%

Note: N/A indicates Not Available.

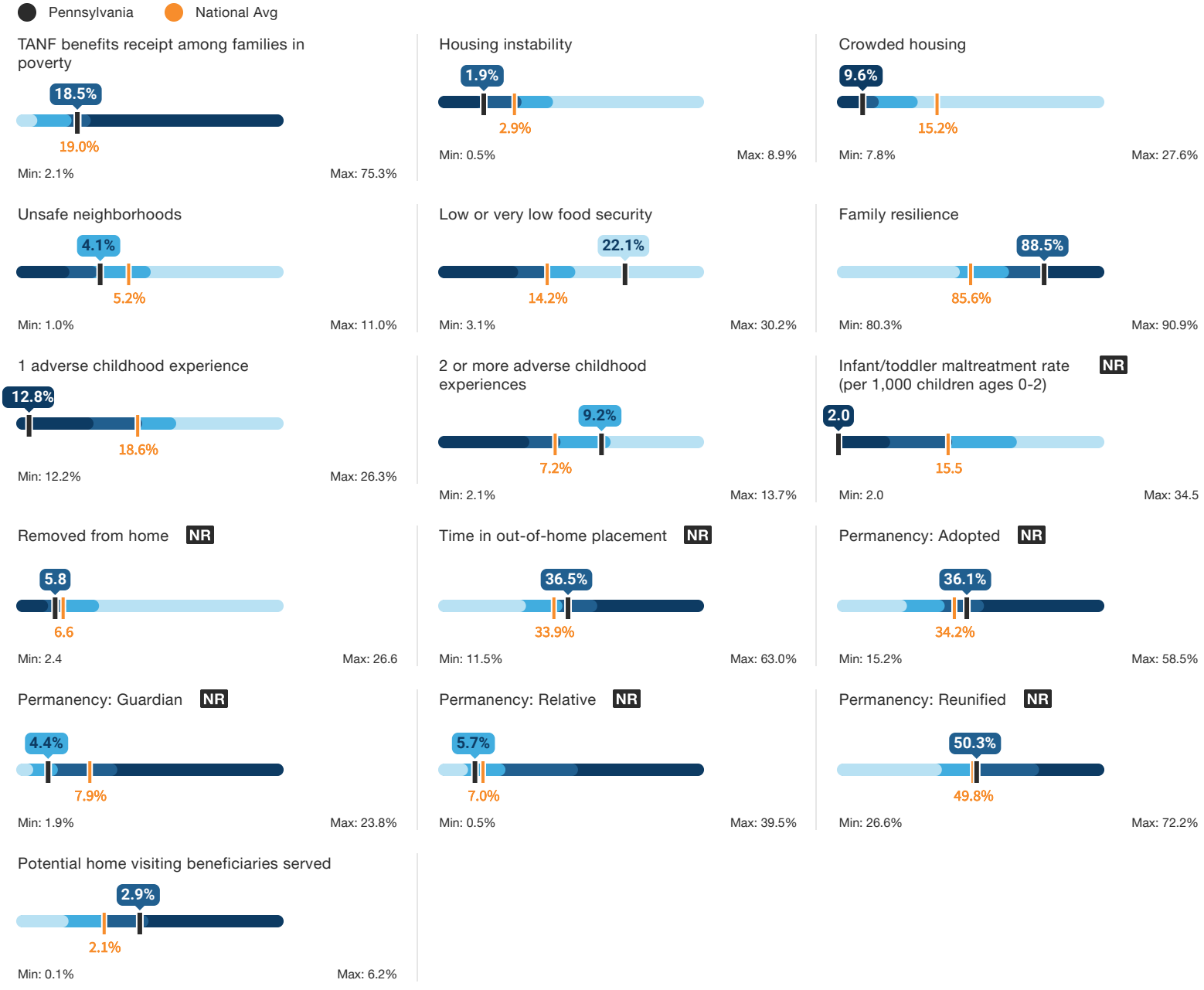
Strong Families

How are Pennsylvania'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.

Pennsylvania falls in the Reaching Forward (R) 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 living in crowded housing and babies experiencing housing instability (moved 3 or more times). Pennsylvania is doing worse than the national average on indicators such as the percentage of babies who have had two or more adverse experiences and babies experiencing housing instability (moved 3 or more times).

Key Indicators of Strong Families



Numbers are small; use caution in interpreting.

Strong Families Policy in Pennsylvania

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

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

All Strong Families Indicators for Pennsylvania

State Indicator National Avg

Basic Needs

	State Indicator	National Avg
TANF benefits receipt among families in poverty	18.5%	19.0%
Crowded housing	9.6%	15.2%
Low or very low food security	22.1%	14.2%
Housing instability	1.9%	2.9%
Unsafe neighborhoods	3.7%	5.0%

Child Well-being and Resilience

	State Indicator	National Avg
Family resilience	88.5%	85.6%
2 or more adverse childhood experiences	9.2%	7.2%
Removed from home NR	5.8	6.6
Permanency: Adopted NR	36.1%	34.2%
Permanency: Relative NR	5.7%	7.0%
Potential home visiting beneficiaries served	2.9%	2.1%
1 adverse childhood experience NR	12.8%	18.6%
Infant/toddler maltreatment rate (per 1,000 children ages 0-2) NR	2.0	15.5
Time in out-of-home placement NR	36.5%	33.9%
Permanency: Guardian NR	4.4%	7.9%
Permanency: Reunified NR	50.3%	49.8%

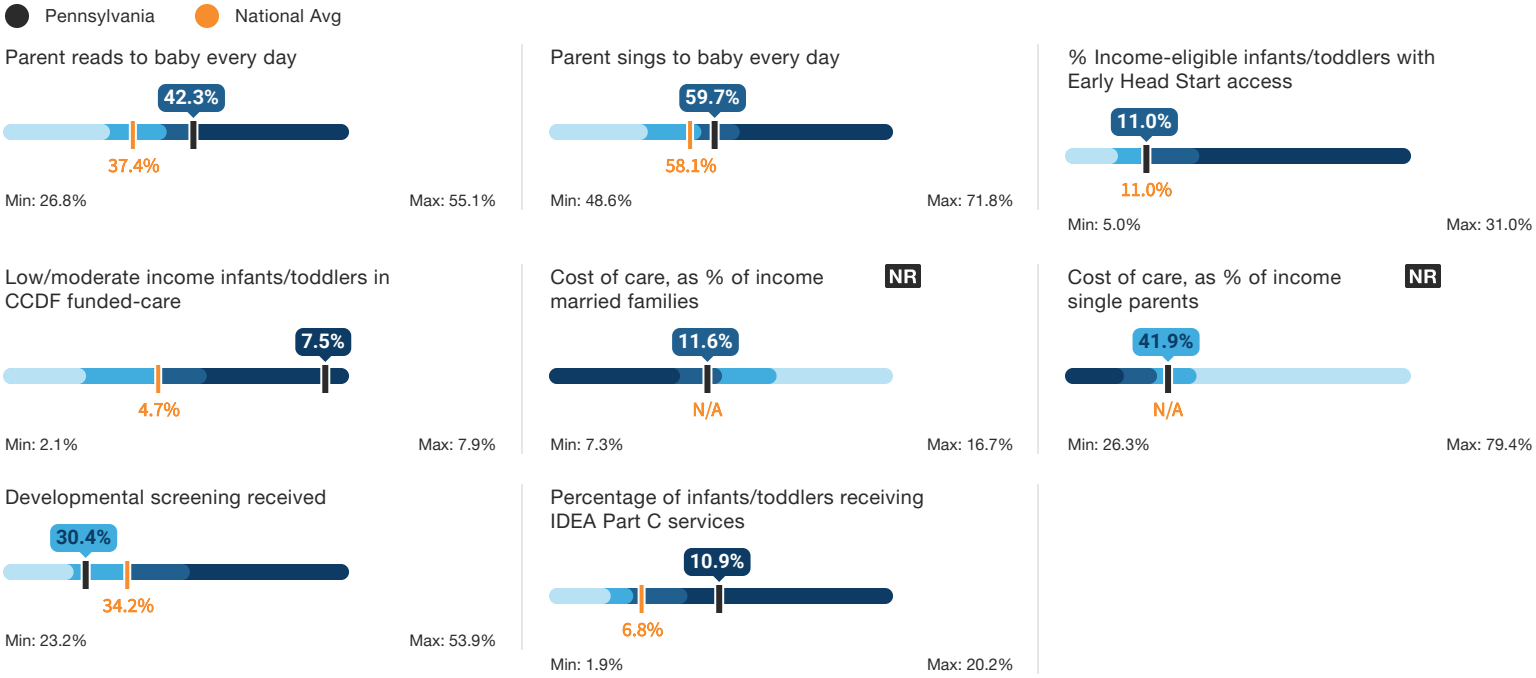
Positive Early Learning Experiences

How are Pennsylvania'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.

Pennsylvania scores in the Improving Outcomes (O) 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 and toddlers who received Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C services. Pennsylvania is doing worse than the national average on indicators such as the percentage of infants and toddlers who received a developmental screening in the past year. 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 Pennsylvania

Adult/child ratio	**EHS standards met for 1 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 1 of 3 age groups**
Infant/toddler professional credential NR	**No** ✕
Families above 200% of FPL eligible for child care subsidy	**No** ✕
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 Pennsylvania

● State Indicator ● National Avg

Activities that Support Early Learning

O Parent reads to baby every day	**42.3%** 37.4%	O Parent sings to baby every day	**59.7%** 58.1%

Access to Early Learning Programs

R % Income-eligible infants/toddlers with Early Head Start access	**11.0%** 11.0%	W Low/moderate income infants/toddlers in CCDF-funded care	**7.5%** 4.7%
Cost of care, as % of income married families NR	**11.6%** NA	Cost of care, as % of income single parents NR	**41.9%** NA

Early Intervention

R Developmental screening received	**30.4%** 34.2%	W Percentage of infants/toddlers receiving IDEA Part C services	**10.9%** 6.8%
Timeliness of Part C services NR	**99.6%** NA		

Note: N/A indicates Not Available.