

Puerto Rico's Babies

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 new profile provides a brief summary description of the demographics of Puerto Rico's infants and toddlers; and a snapshot of how they and their families are faring in each of the three policy domains wherever the data are available in the Yearbook's sources. Within each domain, view data for the available child and family indicators compared to U.S. national averages. Although currently limited data are available for Puerto Rico's profile, the indicators of well-being and policies offer context for exploring what may be very different experiences of the territory's youngest children; and highlight the need for better data collection and reporting on all of America's babies and families.

Demographics

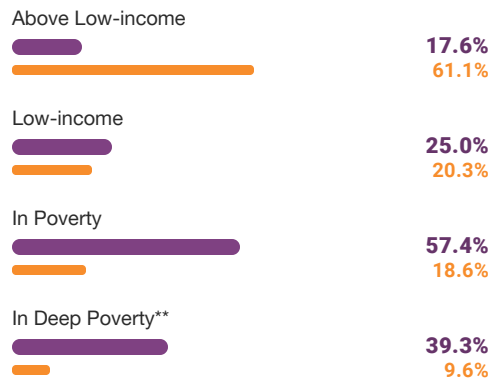
■ Puerto Rico ■ National Average

Infants and toddlers in Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico is home to 59,865 babies, representing 1.8 percent of the territory's population. As many as 82.4 percent live in households with incomes less than twice the federal poverty line (in 2021, about \$55,000 for a family of four¹), placing them at economic disadvantage.

1. Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. Census Population Estimate for 2021. Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Single Year of Age and Sex for Puerto Rico Commonwealth: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2021 (PRC-EST2021-SYASEX). <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/pepst/2020s-detail-puerto-rico.html>

Poverty status of infants and toddlers



150% SMI



Living Outside of a Metro Area*



Infants and toddlers in poverty, by race



*Numbers are small; use caution in interpreting.

**Subset of "In Poverty"

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

Good Health

How are Puerto Rico's babies faring in Good Health?

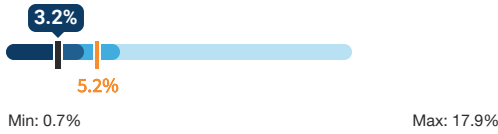
Supporting babies' and mothers' physical and mental health provides the foundation for infants' lifelong physical, cognitive, emotional, and social well-being. Babies' brains grow rapidly in the first years of life, and, in these early years, the brain works with other organs and organ systems to set 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.

There are few indicators on which Puerto Rico's health data can be compared to states because they are not reported in the Yearbook's data sources. Therefore, the territory is not ranked for the Good Health or other domains. Among the available indicators of maternal and child health, Puerto Rico performs better than national averages on the percentage of uninsured babies in families with low incomes and babies ever breastfed. The territory is performing worse than national averages on the percentage of babies breastfed at 6 months and babies receiving recommended vaccinations.

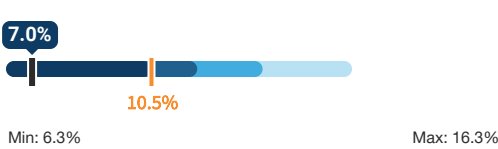
Key Indicators of Good Health

● Puerto Rico ● National Avg

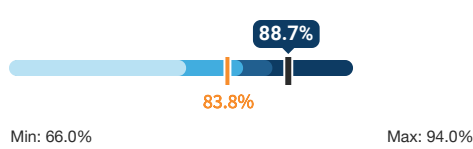
Uninsured low-income infants and toddlers



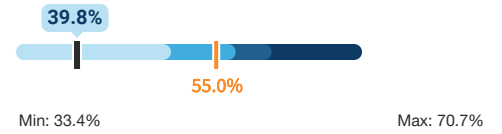
High weight-for-length in WIC **NR**



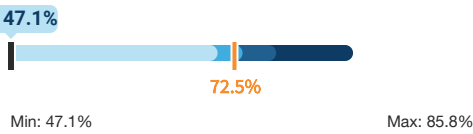
Infants ever breastfed **NR**



Infants breastfed at 6 months



Received recommended vaccines



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

Good Health Policy in Puerto Rico

Medicaid expansion state	NA
CHIP maternal coverage for unborn child option NR	NA
Postpartum extension of Medicaid coverage	NA
Pregnant workers protection	NA
State Medicaid policy for maternal depression screening in well-child visits	NA
Medicaid plan covers social-emotional screening for young children	NA
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services at home	NA
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services at pediatric/family medicine practices	NA
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services in early childhood education settings	NA

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

All Good Health Indicators for Puerto Rico

● State Indicator ● National Avg

Health Care Coverage and Affordability

Eligibility limit (% FPL) for pregnant women in Medicaid	NA 200.0	Uninsured low-income infants and toddlers	3.2% 5.2%
Medical home	NA 51.0%		

Nutrition

Infants ever breastfed NR	88.7% 83.8%	Infants breastfed at 6 months	39.8% 55.0%
High weight-for-length in WIC NR	7.0% NA	WIC coverage for infants	NA 98.4%
WIC coverage for one-year-olds	NA 64.5%	WIC coverage for two-year-olds	NA 48.1%

Maternal Health

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

Children's Health

Babies born preterm	NA 10.1%	Babies with low birthweight	NA 8.2%
Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	NA 5.4	Preventive dental care received	NA 33.5%
Preventive medical care received	NA 89.3%	Received recommended vaccines	47.1% 72.5%

Note: N/A indicates Not Available.

Strong Families

How are Puerto Rico's babies faring in Strong Families?

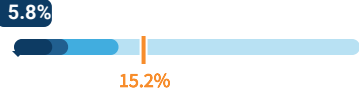
Young children develop in the context of their families, where stability, safety, and supportive relationships nurture their growth. All families may benefit from parenting supports, but families with low income and in historically marginalized communities of color face additional challenges that impact 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.

There are only two indicators in the Strong Families domain on which Puerto Rico's data can be compared to states because they are not reported in the Yearbook's data sources. Therefore, the territory is not ranked in this or other domains. For these two indicators, Puerto Rico performs better than national averages on the percentage of babies living in crowded housing and the infant/toddler maltreatment rate. Data are not available to identify indicators on which Puerto Rico is performing worse than national averages.

Key Indicators of Strong Families

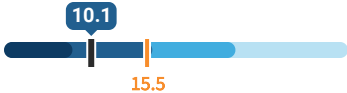
● Puerto Rico ● National Avg

Crowded housing



Max: 27.6%

Infant/toddler maltreatment rate (per 1,000 children ages 0-2) **NR**



Min: 2.0

Max: 34.5

Strong Families Policy in Puerto Rico

Paid family leave	NA
Paid sick time that covers care for child	NA
TANF work exemption	NA
State child tax credit	NA
State Earned Income Tax Credit	NA

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

All Strong Families Indicators for Puerto Rico

● State Indicator

● National Avg

Basic Needs

TANF benefits receipt among families in poverty	NA 19.0%	Housing instability	NA 2.9%
Crowded housing	5.8% 15.2%	Unsafe neighborhoods	NA 5.0%
Low or very low food security	NA 14.2%		

Child Well-being and Resilience

Family resilience	NA 85.6%	1 adverse childhood experience	NR 18.6%
2 or more adverse childhood experiences	NA 7.2%	Infant/toddler maltreatment rate (per 1,000 children ages 0-2)	NR 10.1 15.5
Removed from home	NR NA 6.6	Time in out-of-home placement	NR NA 33.9%
Permanency: Adopted	NR NA 34.2%	Permanency: Guardian	NR NA 7.9%
Permanency: Relative	NR NA 7.0%	Permanency: Reunified	NR NA 49.8%
Potential home visiting beneficiaries served	NA 2.1%		

Note: N/A indicates Not Available.

Positive Early Learning Experiences

How are Puerto Rico'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.

There are only two indicators in the Positive Early Learning Experiences domain on which Puerto Rico's data can be compared to states because they are not reported in the Yearbook's data sources. Therefore, the territory is not ranked in this or other domains. For these two indicators, Puerto Rico performs worse than national averages on 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 and babies in families below 100 percent of the federal poverty line with access to Early Head Start. Data are not available to identify indicators on which Puerto Rico is performing better than national averages.

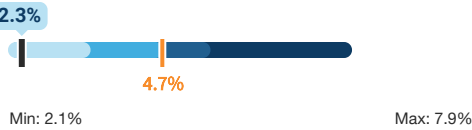
Key Indicators of Positive Early Learning Experiences

● Puerto Rico ● National Avg

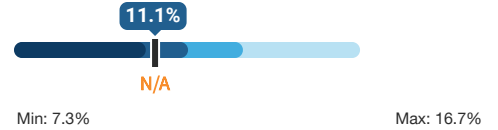
% Income-eligible infants/toddlers with Early Head Start access



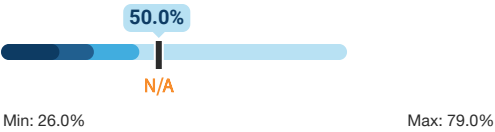
Low/moderate income infants/toddlers in CCDF funded-care



Cost of care, as % of income married families



Cost of care, as % of income single parents



Positive Early Learning Experiences Policy in Puerto Rico

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

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

All Positive Early Learning Experiences Indicators for Puerto Rico

● State Indicator ● National Avg

Activities that Support Early Learning

Parent reads to baby every day	NA 37.4%	Parent sings to baby every day	NA 58.1%
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Access to Early Learning Programs

% Income-eligible infants/toddlers with Early Head Start access	10.0% 11.0%	Low/moderate income infants/toddlers in CCDF-funded care	2.3% 4.7%
Cost of care, as % of income married families NR	11.1% NA	Cost of care, as % of income single parents NR	50.0% NA

Early Intervention

Developmental screening received	NA 34.2%	Percentage of infants/toddlers receiving IDEA Part C services	NA 6.8%
Timeliness of Part C services NR	100.0% NA		

Note: N/A indicates Not Available.

a. Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. Census Population Estimate for 2020. Index of /programs-surveys/popest/datasets/2010-2020/state/totals and U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. Census Vintage Population Estimates for 2020. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/technical-documentation/research/evaluation-estimates/2020-evaluation-estimates/2010s-detail-puerto-rico.html>

b. Source: Census Bureau, 2021, Quick Facts: Puerto Rico. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/PR>