



**W**here 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 fact sheet provides a snapshot of how infants, toddlers, and their families are faring with respect to these three developmental domains. For each domain, selected child or family indicators and policy indicators are highlighted and compared to national averages. Important demographic information is also included. A summary table of all indicators is provided on the last page, for reference.



## Demographics

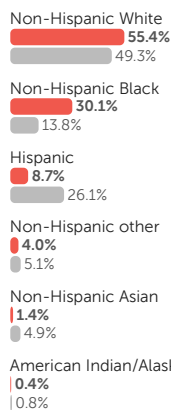
### Infants and toddlers in Alabama

#### Overview

Alabama is home to 176,395 infants and toddlers, representing 3.6 percent of the state's population. As many as 49 percent live in households with incomes less than twice the federal poverty line (in 2017, about \$50,000 a year for a family of four), placing them at economic disadvantage. America's youngest children are diverse and are raised in a variety of family contexts. A broad array of policies and services are required to ensure that all of them have an equitable start in life.

ALABAMA NATIONAL AVERAGE

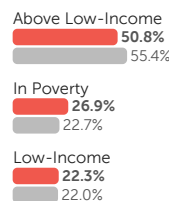
#### Race/ethnicity of infants and toddlers



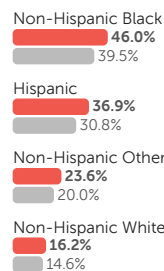
#### Working moms



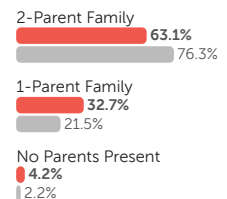
#### Poverty status of infants and toddlers



#### Infants and toddlers in poverty, by race



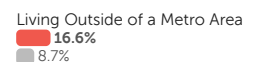
#### Family structure



#### Grandparent-headed households



#### Rural/Non-metro area





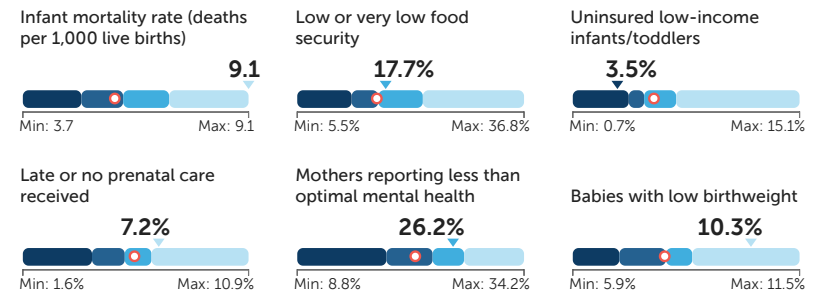
## What is Good Health?

Good physical and mental health provide the foundation for babies to develop physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially. The rate of brain growth is faster in the first 3 years than at any other stage of life, and this growth sets the stage for subsequent development. Access to good nutrition and affordable maternal, pediatric, and family health care are essential to ensure that babies receive the nourishment and care they need for a strong start in life.

Alabama falls in the Getting Started (G) tier of states when it comes to the overall health of infants and toddlers. The state's low ranking in the Good Health domain primarily reflects indicators of maternal health, food security, and nutrition, such as the percentage of infants ever breastfed. However, Alabama is doing better than national averages when it comes to the percentage of low-income infants and toddlers who are uninsured, and the percentage of infants and toddlers who had a preventive dental visit in the past year. Alabama's Medicaid plan covers early childhood mental health services in home settings, pediatric/family medicine practices, and early care and education programs.

## Six Key Indicators of Good Health

**KEY** ← Range of all state values → ▼ Alabama ○ National average  
G Getting Started R Reaching Forward O Improving Outcomes W Working Effectively



## Good Health Policy in Alabama

Medicaid expansion state	No ❌
State Medicaid policy for maternal depression screening in well-child visits	Allowed
Medicaid plan covers social-emotional screening for young children	No ❌
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services at home	Yes ✅
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services at pediatric/family medicine practices	Yes ✅
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services at ECE programs	Yes ✅



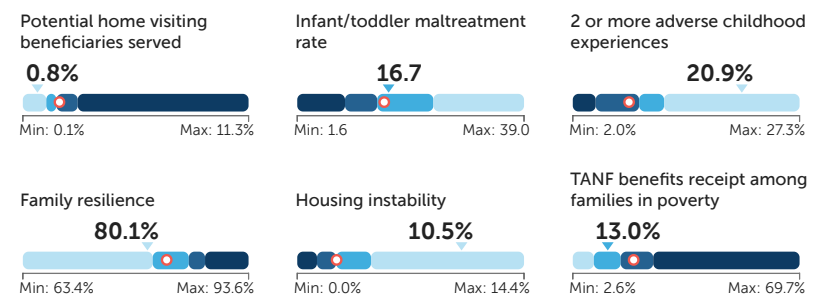
## What Defines Strong Families?

Young children develop in the context of their families, where stability and supportive relationships nurture their growth. All families of infants and toddlers benefit from support with parenting, and many—particularly those challenged by economic instability—need access to resources that help them meet their children's daily and developmental needs. Important supports include home visiting services, child welfare systems that are responsive to young children's needs, and family-friendly employer policies that provide paid sick and family leave.

Alabama falls in the Getting Started (G) tier of states when it comes to indicators of Strong Families. The state's low ranking in this domain reflects the relatively higher percentage of young children experiencing housing instability and adverse childhood experiences, compared to other states. However, Alabama is doing better than the national average in terms of crowded housing. Alabama does not require employers to offer paid sick days that cover care for children. The state does not have a paid family leave program.

## Six Key Indicators of Strong Families

**KEY** ← Range of all state values → ▼ Alabama ○ National average  
G Getting Started R Reaching Forward O Improving Outcomes W Working Effectively



## Strong Families Policy in Alabama

Paid sick time that covers care for child	No ❌
Paid family leave	No ❌



# Positive Early Learning Experiences

In Alabama



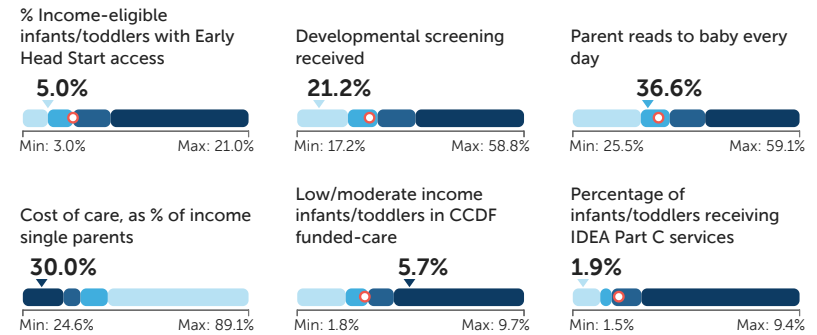
## What Defines Positive Early Learning Experiences?

Infants and toddlers learn through play, active exploration of their environment, and, most importantly, through interactions with the significant adults in their lives. The quality of babies' early learning experiences at home and in other care settings has a lasting impact on their preparedness for life-long learning and success. Parents who require child care while they work or attend school need access to affordable, high-quality care options that promote positive development.

Alabama scores in the Reaching Forward (R) tier of states when considering key indicators related to early care and education and early intervention for infants and toddlers. The state's low ranking in the Positive Early Learning Experiences domain primarily reflects its scores in early intervention and prevention services, such as the percentage of infants and toddlers receiving developmental screenings. However, in comparison to other states, Alabama's average infant care costs as a percentage of single parents' and married parents' incomes are less burdensome.

## Six Key Indicators of Positive Early Learning Experiences

KEY ← Range of all state values → ▼ Alabama ○ National average  
G Getting Started R Reaching Forward O Improving Outcomes W Working Effectively



## Positive Early Learning Experiences Policy in Alabama

Families above 200% of FPL eligible for child care subsidy No ❌

## All indicators for Alabama

G Getting Started R Reaching Forward O Improving Outcomes W Working Effectively

### Good Health

G Eligibility limit (% FPL) for pregnant women in Medicaid	146.0	National average: 200.0	W Uninsured low-income infants/toddlers	3.5%	National average: 5.8%
R Low or very low food security	17.7%	National average: 16.5%	G Infants ever breastfed	68.1%	National average: 83.2%
G Infants breastfed at 6 months	39.1%	National average: 57.6%	G Late or no prenatal care received	7.2%	National average: 6.2%
R Mothers reporting less than optimal mental health	26.2%	National average: 22.0%	G Preventive medical care received	87.7%	National average: 90.7%
W Preventive dental care received	41.7%	National average: 30.0%	G Babies with low birthweight	10.3%	National average: 8.2%
G Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	9.1	National average: 5.9	W Received recommended vaccines	77.3%	National average: 70.7%

## Strong Families

<b>G</b> Housing instability	<b>10.5%</b> <i>National average: 2.5%</i>	<b>W</b> Crowded housing	<b>8.9%</b> <i>National average: 15.6%</i>
<b>R</b> TANF benefits receipt among families in poverty	<b>13.0%</b> <i>National average: 20.6%</i>	<b>R</b> Infant/toddler maltreatment rate	<b>16.7</b> <i>National average: 16.0</i>
<b>O</b> Unsafe neighborhoods	<b>3.4%</b> <i>National average: 6.3%</i>	<b>G</b> Family resilience	<b>80.1%</b> <i>National average: 82.6%</i>
<b>W</b> 1 adverse childhood experience	<b>14.7%</b> <i>National average: 21.9%</i>	<b>G</b> 2 or more adverse childhood experiences	<b>20.9%</b> <i>National average: 8.3%</i>
<b>R</b> Infants/toddlers exiting foster care to permanency	<b>97.6%</b> <i>National average: 98.4%</i>	<b>G</b> Potential home visiting beneficiaries served	<b>0.8%</b> <i>National average: 1.9%</i>

## Positive Early Learning Experiences

<b>R</b> Parent reads to baby every day	<b>36.6%</b> <i>National average: 38.2%</i>	<b>G</b> Parent sings to baby every day	<b>53.7%</b> <i>National average: 56.4%</i>
<b>G</b> % Income-eligible infants/toddlers with Early Head Start access	<b>5.0%</b> <i>National average: 7.0%</i>	<b>W</b> Cost of care, as % of income married families	<b>7.6%</b> <i>National average: N/A</i>
<b>W</b> Cost of care, as % of income single parents	<b>30.0%</b> <i>National average: N/A</i>	<b>W</b> Low/moderate income infants/toddlers in CCDF funded-care	<b>5.7%</b> <i>National average: 4.2%</i>
<b>G</b> Developmental screening received	<b>21.2%</b> <i>National average: 30.4%</i>	<b>G</b> Infants/toddlers with developmental delay	<b>2.6%</b> <i>National average: 1.1%</i>
<b>G</b> Percentage of infants/toddlers receiving IDEA Part C services	<b>1.9%</b> <i>National average: 3.1%</i>		