



**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

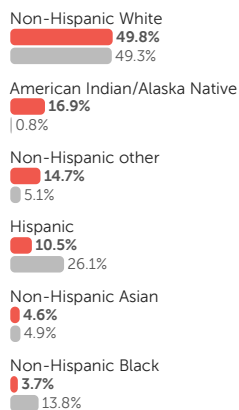
### Infants and toddlers in Alaska

#### Overview

Alaska is home to 32,631 infants and toddlers, representing 4.4 percent of the state's population. As many as 41 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.

ALASKA NATIONAL AVERAGE

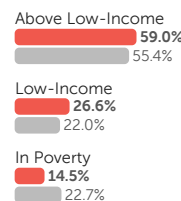
#### Race/ethnicity of infants and toddlers



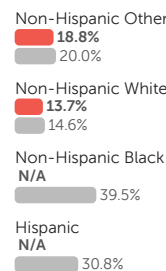
#### Working moms



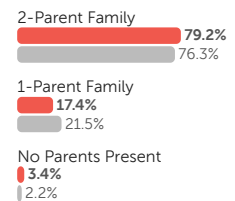
#### Poverty status of infants and toddlers



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



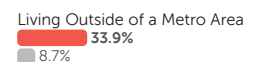
#### Family structure



#### Grandparent-headed households



#### Rural/Non-metro area



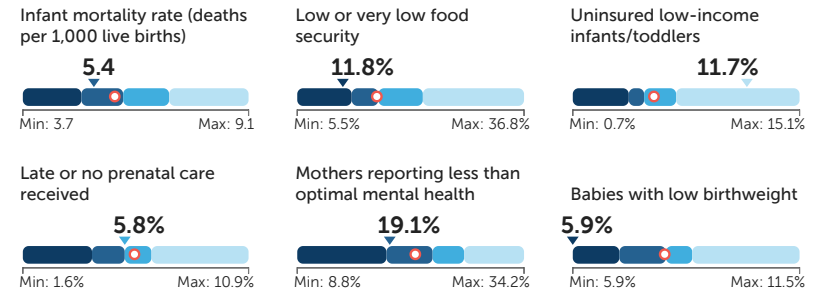
### What is Good Health?

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.

Alaska falls in the Reaching Forward (R) 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 and children's health, such as preventive medical care and recommended vaccines received among infants and toddlers. However, young children in Alaska experience greater food security in comparison to those in other states, which puts Alaska in the Working Effectively (W) tier for this indicator. Alaska's Medicaid plan covers early childhood mental health services in home settings, but not in pediatric/family medicine practices or in early care and education programs.

### Six Key Indicators of Good Health

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



### Good Health Policy in Alaska

Medicaid expansion state	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
State Medicaid policy for maternal depression screening in well-child visits	No policy
Medicaid plan covers social-emotional screening for young children	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services at home	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services at pediatric/family medicine practices	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services at ECE programs	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

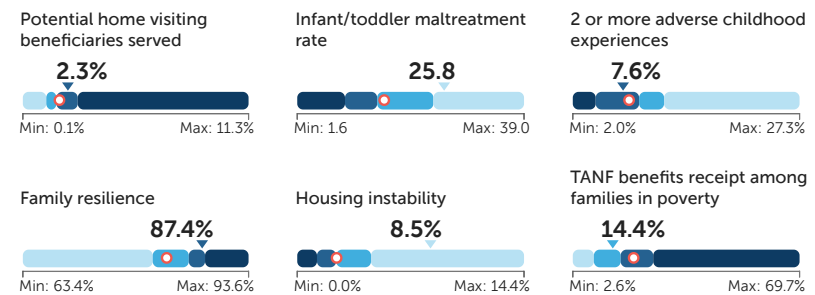
### What Defines Strong Families?

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.

Alaska 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 primarily reflects indicators of access to basic needs and supports, such as TANF benefits for families living in poverty. However, Alaska has, for example, a relatively lower prevalence of adverse childhood experiences, and higher prevalence of resilient families, compared to national averages, which puts it in the Improving Outcomes (O) tier for these indicators.

### Six Key Indicators of Strong Families

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



### Strong Families Policy in Alaska

Paid sick time that covers care for child	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Paid family leave	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



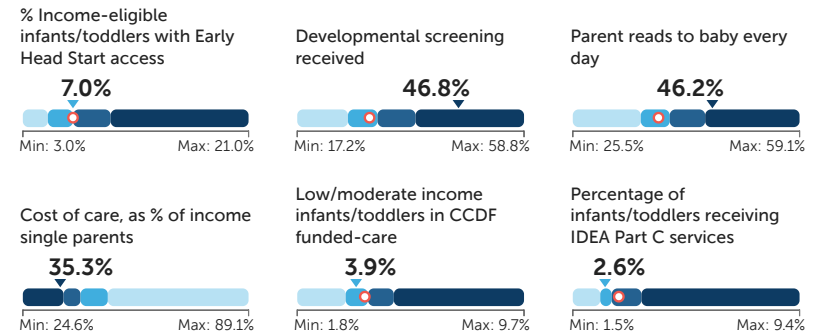
## What Defines Positive Early Learning Experiences?

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.

Alaska scores in the Improving Outcomes (O) tier of states when considering key indicators related to early care and education and early intervention for infants and toddlers. The state's high ranking in the Positive Early Learning Experiences domain primarily reflects that Alaska is in the Working Effectively (W) tier for the percentages of parents who report reading or singing songs to their babies every day. However, Alaska is in the Reaching Forward (R) tier when it comes to the percentage of income-eligible children with access to Early Head Start and the percentage of young children receiving IDEA Part C services.

## Six Key Indicators of Positive Early Learning Experiences

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



## Positive Early Learning Experiences Policy in Alaska

Families above 200% of FPL eligible for child care subsidy Yes

## All indicators for Alaska

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

### Good Health

<b>O</b> Eligibility limit (% FPL) for pregnant women in Medicaid	<b>205.0</b>	National average: 200.0	<b>G</b> Uninsured low-income infants/toddlers	<b>11.7%</b>	National average: 5.8%
<b>W</b> Low or very low food security	<b>11.8%</b>	National average: 16.5%	<b>W</b> Infants ever breastfed	<b>93.1%</b>	National average: 83.2%
<b>W</b> Infants breastfed at 6 months	<b>69.2%</b>	National average: 57.6%	<b>R</b> Late or no prenatal care received	<b>5.8%</b>	National average: 6.2%
<b>O</b> Mothers reporting less than optimal mental health	<b>19.1%</b>	National average: 22.0%	<b>G</b> Preventive medical care received	<b>87.1%</b>	National average: 90.7%
<b>O</b> Preventive dental care received	<b>31.1%</b>	National average: 30.0%	<b>W</b> Babies with low birthweight	<b>5.9%</b>	National average: 8.2%
<b>O</b> Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	<b>5.4</b>	National average: 5.9	<b>R</b> Received recommended vaccines	<b>68.8%</b>	National average: 70.7%

## Strong Families

<b>G</b> Housing instability	<b>8.5%</b> <i>National average: 2.5%</i>	<b>G</b> Crowded housing	<b>18.6%</b> <i>National average: 15.6%</i>
<b>R</b> TANF benefits receipt among families in poverty	<b>14.4%</b> <i>National average: 20.6%</i>	<b>G</b> Infant/toddler maltreatment rate	<b>25.8</b> <i>National average: 16.0</i>
<b>O</b> Unsafe neighborhoods	<b>2.6%</b> <i>National average: 6.3%</i>	<b>O</b> Family resilience	<b>87.4%</b> <i>National average: 82.6%</i>
<b>W</b> 1 adverse childhood experience	<b>14.4%</b> <i>National average: 21.9%</i>	<b>O</b> 2 or more adverse childhood experiences	<b>7.6%</b> <i>National average: 8.3%</i>
<b>G</b> Infants/toddlers exiting foster care to permanency	<b>93.9%</b> <i>National average: 98.4%</i>	<b>O</b> Potential home visiting beneficiaries served	<b>2.3%</b> <i>National average: 1.9%</i>

## Positive Early Learning Experiences

<b>W</b> Parent reads to baby every day	<b>46.2%</b> <i>National average: 38.2%</i>	<b>O</b> Parent sings to baby every day	<b>62.3%</b> <i>National average: 56.4%</i>
<b>R</b> % Income-eligible infants/toddlers with Early Head Start access	<b>7.0%</b> <i>National average: 7.0%</i>	<b>R</b> Cost of care, as % of income married families	<b>12.1%</b> <i>National average: N/A</i>
<b>W</b> Cost of care, as % of income single parents	<b>35.3%</b> <i>National average: N/A</i>	<b>R</b> Low/moderate income infants/toddlers in CCDF funded-care	<b>3.9%</b> <i>National average: 4.2%</i>
<b>W</b> Developmental screening received	<b>46.8%</b> <i>National average: 30.4%</i>	<b>R</b> Infants/toddlers with developmental delay	<b>1.4%</b> <i>National average: 1.1%</i>
<b>R</b> Percentage of infants/toddlers receiving IDEA Part C services	<b>2.6%</b> <i>National average: 3.1%</i>		