

# The State of New Jersey'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 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

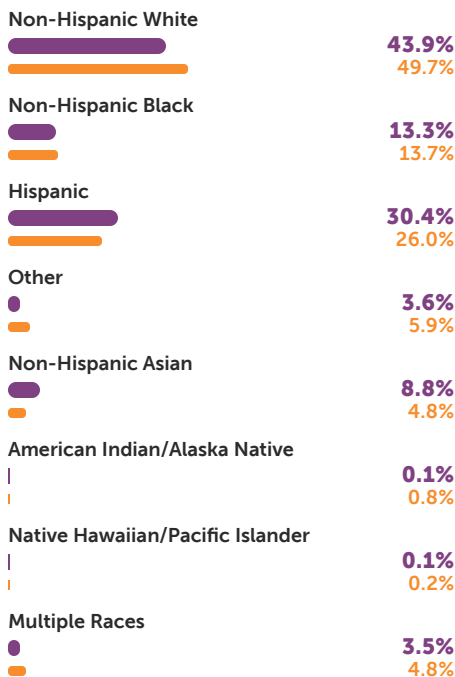
New Jersey National Average

### Infants and toddlers in New Jersey

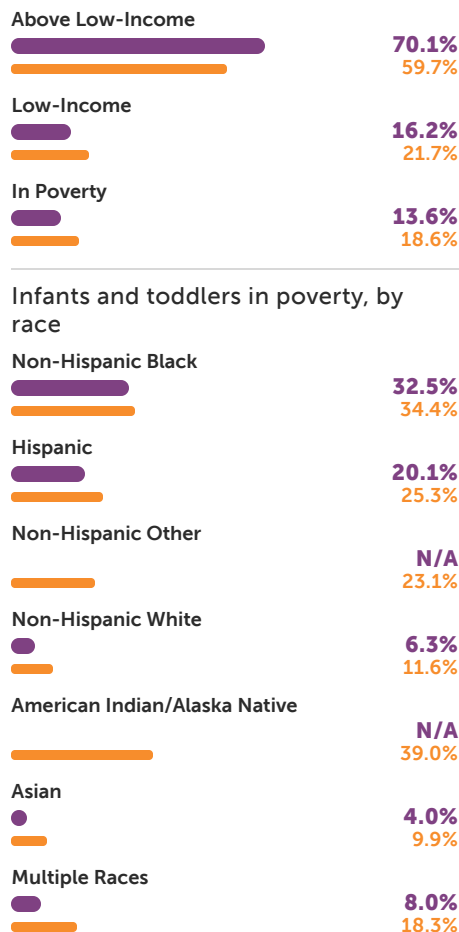
New Jersey is home to 304,425 babies, representing 3.4 percent of the state's population. As many as 29.9 percent live in households with incomes less than twice the federal poverty line (in 2019, about \$51,500 a year for a family of four), placing them

at economic disadvantage. The state's youngest children are diverse and are raised in a variety of family contexts and household structures.

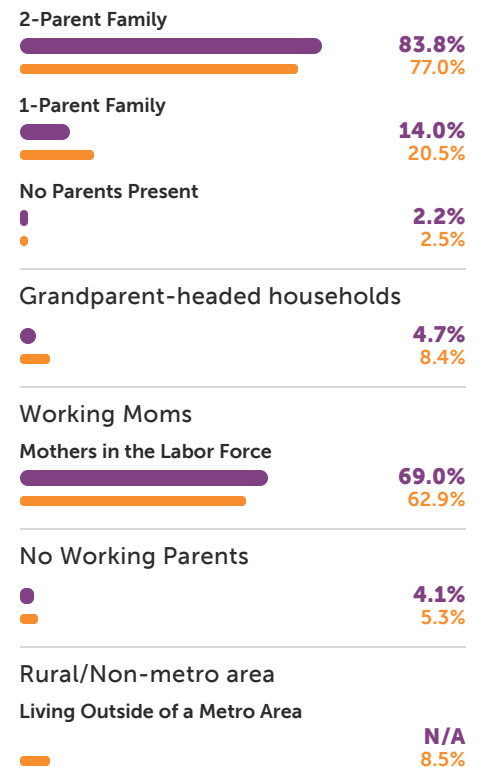
#### Race/ethnicity of infants and toddlers



#### Poverty status of infants and toddlers



#### Family structure



Note: N/A indicates Not Available

## How are New Jersey's babies faring in Good Health?

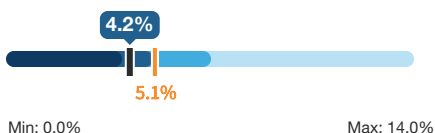
Supporting babies' and mothers' physical and mental health provides the foundation for infants' lifelong physical, cognitive, emotional, and social well-being. Babies' brains grow rapidly in the first years of life, and, in these early years, the brain works with other organs and organ systems to set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

New Jersey 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 food security, nutrition, and mental health. New Jersey performs better than national averages on key indicators, such as the infant mortality rate and the percentage of mothers reporting less than favorable mental health. The state is performing worse than national averages on indicators such as the percentages of babies receiving preventive dental care and babies receiving recommended vaccinations.

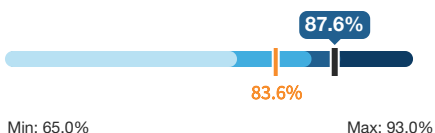
## Key Indicators of Good Health

● New Jersey ● National Avg

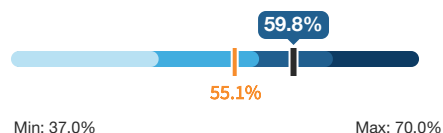
Uninsured low-income infants/toddlers



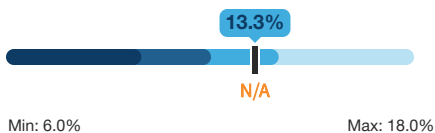
Ever breastfed



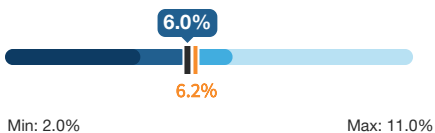
Infants breastfed at 6 months



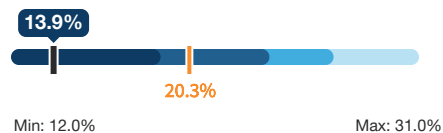
High weight-for-length†



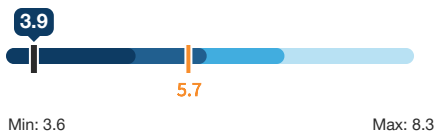
Late or no prenatal care received



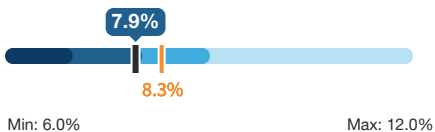
Mothers reporting less than optimal mental health



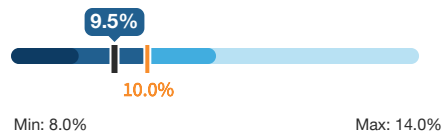
Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)



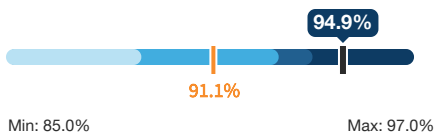
Babies with low birthweight



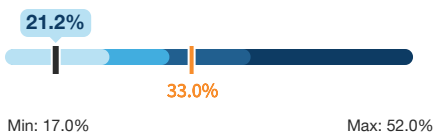
Preterm births†



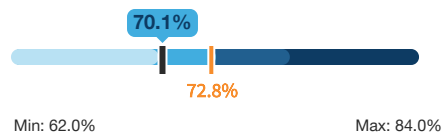
Preventative medical care received



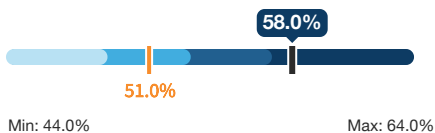
Preventative dental care received



Received recommended vaccines



Medical home†



## Good Health Policy in New Jersey

Medicaid expansion state	Yes	✓
State Medicaid policy for maternal depression screening in well-child visits	No Policy	
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 in early childhood education settings	No	✗
Pregnant workers protection†	All employees covered (private and state)	
Postpartum extension of Medicaid coverage†	Law covering either some women but not all, or all women but for less than 1 year	

†This indicator is not factored into the GROW tier rankings.

Note: N/A indicates Not Applicable

## All Good Health Indicators for New Jersey

● State Indicator

● National Avg

<b>R</b> Eligibility limit (% FPL) for pregnant women in Medicaid	<b>199</b> 200	<b>O</b> Uninsured low-income infants/toddlers	<b>4.2%</b> 5.1%
<b>R</b> Low or very low food security	<b>14.7%</b> 13.7%	<b>O</b> Infants ever breastfed	<b>87.6%</b> 83.6%
<b>O</b> Infants breastfed at 6 months	<b>59.8%</b> 55.1%	<b>O</b> WIC coverage†	<b>79.4%</b> 79.3%
<b>R</b> High weight-for-length†	<b>13.3%</b> N/A	<b>R</b> Late or no prenatal care received	<b>6.0%</b> 6.2%
<b>W</b> Mothers reporting less than optimal mental health	<b>13.9%</b> 20.3%	<b>W</b> Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)†	<b>3.9</b> 5.7
<b>O</b> Babies with low birthweight	<b>7.9%</b> 8.3%	<b>O</b> Preterm births†	<b>9.5%</b> 10.0%
<b>W</b> Preventive medical care received	<b>94.9%</b> 91.1%	<b>G</b> Preventive dental care received	<b>21.2%</b> 33.0%
<b>R</b> Received recommended vaccines	<b>70.1%</b> 72.8%	<b>W</b> Medical home†	<b>58.0%</b> 51.0%
Maternal mortality	<b>N/A</b> 17.4		

†This indicator is not factored into the GROW tier rankings.

Note: N/A indicates Not Available.

## How are New Jersey'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 children and families of color face numerous challenges as a result of racism that impact their everyday life, which are exacerbated even more for children and families living in households with low income. 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.

New Jersey falls in the Improving Outcomes (O) 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 percentages of babies who have had one adverse experience and families who report being resilient. New Jersey is doing worse than the national average on indicators such as the percentages of parents who report living in unsafe neighborhoods and babies living in crowded housing.

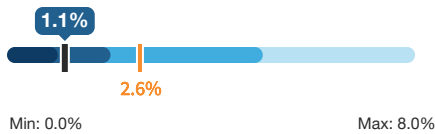
## Key Indicators of Strong Families

● New Jersey ● National Avg

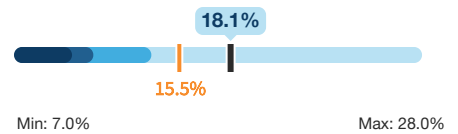
TANF benefits receipt among families in poverty



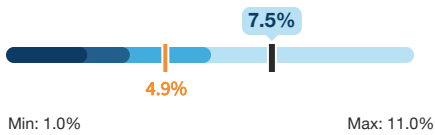
Housing instability



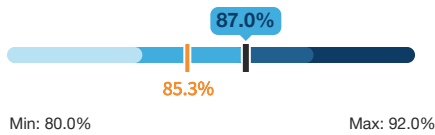
Crowded housing



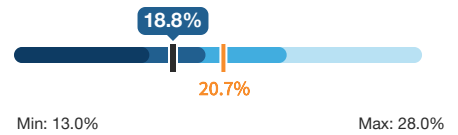
Unsafe neighborhoods



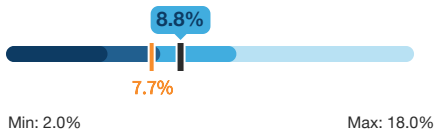
Family resilience



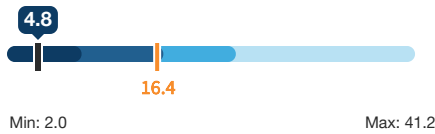
1 adverse childhood experience



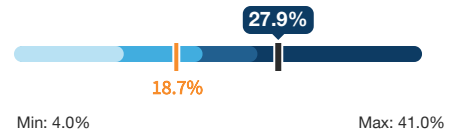
2+ adverse childhood experiences



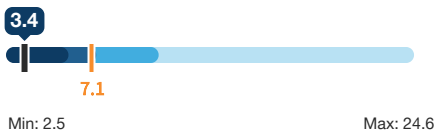
Infant/toddler maltreatment rate<sup>†</sup>



Time in out-of-home placement<sup>†</sup>



Removed from home (per 1,000 infants/toddlers)<sup>†</sup>



# Strong Families

## Strong Families Policy in New Jersey

Paid family leave	Yes	✓
Paid sick time that covers care for child	Yes	✓
TANF Work Exemption†	No	✗
State Child Tax Credit†	No	✗
State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)†	Yes	✓

†This indicator is not factored into the GROW tier rankings.

Note: N/A indicates Not Applicable

## All Strong Families Indicators for New Jersey

● State Indicator      ● National Avg

<b>R</b> TANF benefits receipt among families in poverty	<b>13.2%</b> 21.7%	<b>W</b> Housing instability	<b>1.1%</b> 2.6%
<b>G</b> Crowded housing	<b>18.1%</b> 15.5%	<b>G</b> Unsafe neighborhoods	<b>7.5%</b> 4.9%
<b>R</b> Family resilience	<b>87.0%</b> 85.3%	<b>O</b> One adverse childhood experience	<b>18.8%</b> 20.7%
<b>R</b> Two or more adverse childhood experiences	<b>8.8%</b> 7.7%	Infant/toddler maltreatment rate†	<b>4.8</b> 16.4
<b>W</b> Out of home placements†	<b>27.9%</b> 18.7%	Permanency Achieved: Reunified†	<b>57.4%</b> 48.1%
<b>O</b> Potential home visiting beneficiaries served	<b>2.5%</b> 2.0%	Permanency Achieved: Relative†	<b>7.1%</b> 7.8%
Infants/toddlers exiting foster care to permanency†	<b>99.3%</b> 98.8%	Permanency Achieved: Guardian†	<b>1.6%</b> 8.3%
Removed from home†	<b>3.4</b> 7.1	Permanency Achieved: Adoption†	<b>33.1%</b> 34.6%

†This indicator is not factored into the GROW tier rankings.

# Positive Early Learning Experiences

## How are New Jersey's babies faring in Positive Early Learning Experiences?

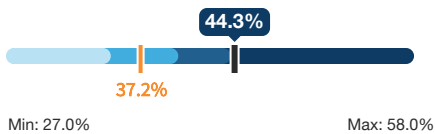
Infants and toddlers learn through interactions with the significant adults in their lives and active exploration of enriching environments. The quality of infant and toddlers' early learning experiences at home and in other care settings can impact their cognitive and social-emotional development, as 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.

New Jersey scores in the Working Effectively (W) 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 higher percentage of parents who report singing songs or telling stories to their infants and toddlers every day. New Jersey has no indicators on which it ranks worse than the national average. Infant care costs as a percentage of the state's median income for single and married parents also contribute to the ranking.

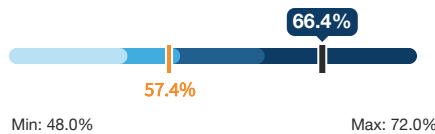
## Key Indicators of Positive Early Learning Experiences

● New Jersey ● National Avg

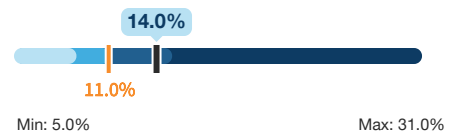
Parent reads to baby every day



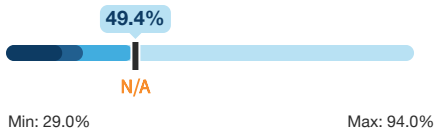
Parent sings to baby every day



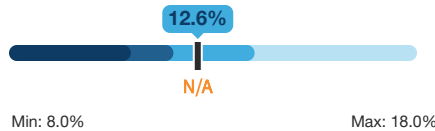
Percentage of income-eligible infants/toddlers with Early Head Start access



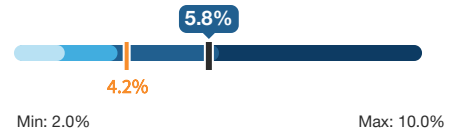
Cost of care, as % of income single parents



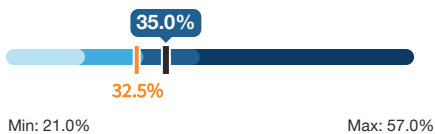
Cost of care, as % of income married families



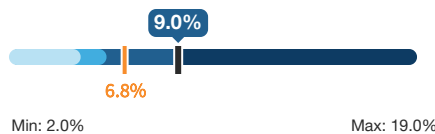
Low/moderate income infants/toddlers in CCDF funded-care



Developmental screening received



Percentage of infants/toddlers receiving IDEA Part C services



# Positive Early Learning Experiences

## Positive Early Learning Experiences Policy in New Jersey



Infant eligibility level for child care subsidy above 200% of FPL	_____	No	✗
Allocated CCDBG funds†	_____	No	✗
Group size requirements meet or exceed EHS standards†	_____	0 of 3 age groups	
Adult/child ratio requirements meet or exceed EHS standards†	_____	0 of 3 age groups	
Level of teacher qualification required by the state†	_____	No credential beyond a high school diploma	
Infant/toddler credential adopted†	_____	Yes	✓
State reimburses center based child care at/above 75th percentile of market rates†	_____	No	✗
State includes "at-risk" children as eligible for IDEA Part C services or reports that they serve "at-risk" children†	_____	Yes	✓

†This indicator is not factored into the GROW tier rankings.  
 Note: N/A indicates Not Applicable

### All Positive Early Learning Experiences Indicators for New Jersey

● State Indicator      ● National Avg

<p><b>O</b> Parent reads to baby every day <b>44.3%</b> 37.2%</p> <p><b>O</b> Percentage of income-eligible infants/toddlers with Early Head Start access <b>14.0%</b> 11.0%</p> <p><b>G</b> Cost of care, as % of income single parents <b>49.4%</b> N/A</p> <p><b>O</b> Developmental screening received <b>35.0%</b> 32.5%</p> <p><b>O</b> Percentage of infants/toddlers receiving IDEA Part C services <b>9.0%</b> 6.8%</p>	<p><b>W</b> Parent sings to baby every day <b>66.4%</b> 57.4%</p> <p><b>R</b> Cost of care, as % of income married families <b>12.6%</b> N/A</p> <p><b>O</b> Low/moderate income infants/toddlers in CCDF funded-care <b>5.8%</b> 4.2%</p> <p>Infants/toddlers with developmental delay† <b>1.2%</b> 1.1%</p> <p><b>W</b> Timeliness of Part C services† <b>99.7%</b> N/A</p>
--	---

†This indicator is not factored into the GROW tier rankings.  
 Note: N/A indicates Not Available.