



## About *State of Babies Yearbook: 2021*

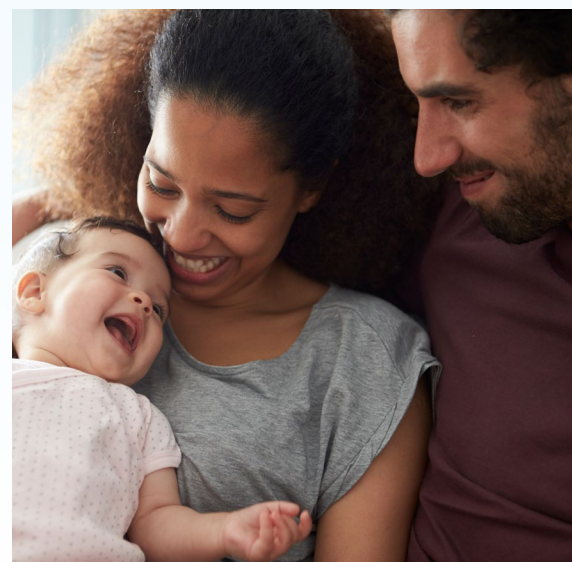
As in the first two editions, the *State of Babies Yearbook: 2021* highlights the demographic factors states must consider when implementing policies to support families with young children. However, because the datasets used are reported retrospectively -- a majority based on data from 2019 -- they do not yet reflect the very consequential disruptions families experienced with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The Yearbook continues to capture the early warning signs of conditions that can undermine babies' healthy development, such as high poverty levels, food insecurity, and crowded housing. Now, more than ever, we must act if we are to ensure that all babies realize the unlimited potential with which they are born. The individual state profile pages on the website provide a snapshot of how babies are faring according to 60 indicators in ZERO TO THREE's policy framework areas: Good Health, Strong Families, and Positive Early Learning Experiences. Expanded disaggregated data in *State of Babies Yearbook: 2021* (by race/ethnicity, income and urbanicity) will allow stakeholders to focus in a deeper way on specific communities where the need is the highest.

## Purpose of this Tool

We encourage you to use this guide to reflect on and analyze the state of your youngest residents. Spending time with your state profile can help you identify areas where your state can work to GROW in each of ZERO TO THREE's policy framework areas. The Yearbook is one source of data, we encourage you to pair it with state and local data as you consider policy priorities.

## Explore

Use the steps below to navigate through the *State of Babies Yearbook: 2021* and the resources available to support you in moving the needle in your state to improve outcomes for infants and toddlers. You may choose to explore the whole profile or select one impact area on which to focus for this activity.



Review the [State of Babies Yearbook: 2021](#) profile for your state:

- In the demographics section, are there any significant differences between your state and the national average?
- In which areas is your state doing well?
- In which areas is there room to GROW?
- Do the areas where you are doing well or need room to grow differ as you look at disaggregated data?

### Explore other states

Review the [Impact Areas Tab](#): There are several state examples of Working Effectively under each impact area. If your state is not listed, review a state of interest. What might you learn from that state's work?

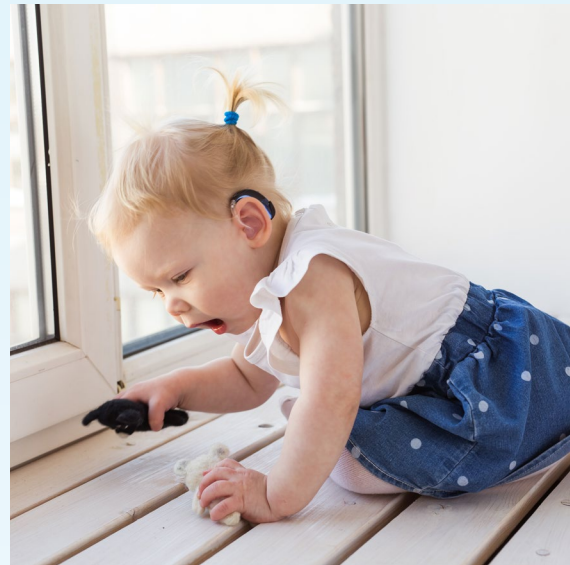
Review the ZERO TO THREE State Initiatives Database: This is a collection of articles highlighting innovative state policies and initiatives that impact infants, toddlers, and their families. There are many examples of how states are tackling the policy priorities identified in the *State of Babies Yearbook: 2021*, which may give you ideas for improving outcomes in your state. You can search by [state](#) or by [elements](#) of the ZERO TO THREE Policy Center's Infant and Toddler Policy Framework.

In addition to the State Initiatives Database, consider exploring these resources for examples of policy strategies states can implement to improve babies' well-being:

[Building Strong Foundations: 13 Core Policies for Infants, Toddlers and Families](#) outlines federal and state policies that comprehensively address the wellbeing of infants, toddlers, and families.

[Innovation in Cross-System Collaboration to Better Support Babies](#) discusses how four states (Colorado, Washington, New Jersey and Illinois) have engaged in cross-system collaboration to improve outcomes for young children.

[Planting Seeds in Fertile Ground: Steps Every Policymaker Should Take to Advance Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health](#) highlights what states can and should be doing to advance infant and early childhood mental health.





## Determine priorities

- a. Are there policy priorities that rise to the top for you? Think about what you or your group would like to work on first. What activities/strategies are already underway in your state to improve indicators? How will these efforts impact equity?
- b. What new opportunities exist? Do new federal funds allow for new opportunities in one or more areas?
- c. What can you do to support your state in moving forward? Who may be your allies in the work in your state?
- d. What technical assistance might be needed to support your work?



## Create a plan

Based on what you have learned, create a plan for moving forward. Remember to include: desired policy solution, current status in the state, and steps to help you reach the goal. What does success look like?

## Check out the Take Action tab

Review the communications resources found in the *State of Babies Yearbook: 2021 Toolkit*. Which resources make the most sense for next steps in improving outcomes for babies in your state?

