

# The State of District of Columbia'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.

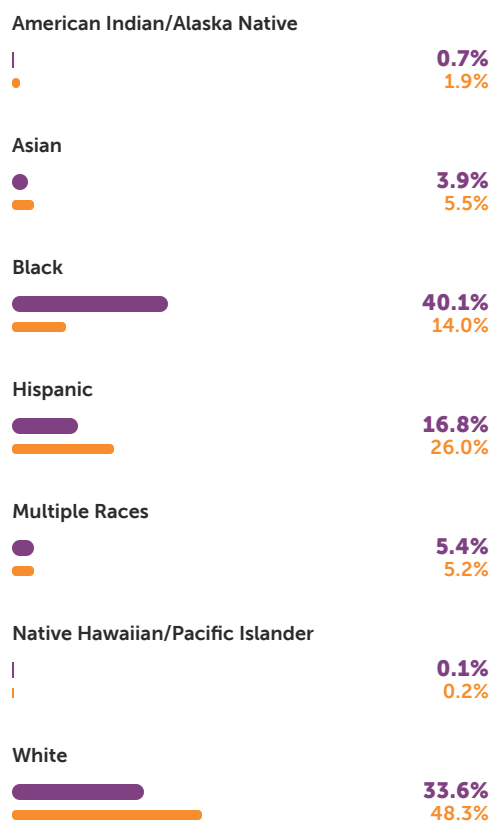
## Demographics

DC National Average

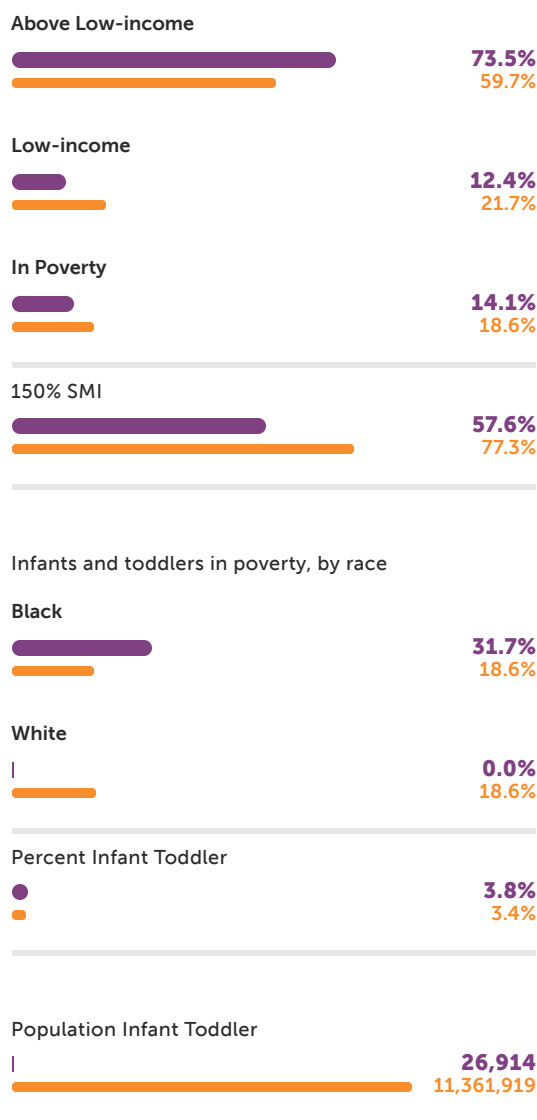
### Infants and toddlers in District of Columbia

The District of Columbia is home to 26,914 babies, representing 3.8 percent of the state's population. As many as 26.5 percent live in households with incomes less than twice the federal poverty line (in 2020, about \$52,400 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.

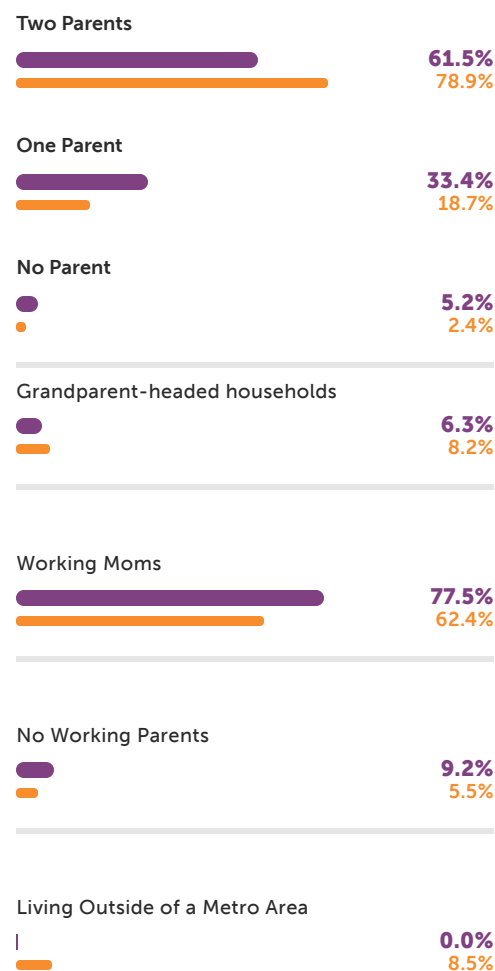
#### Race/ethnicity of infants and toddlers



#### Poverty status of infants and toddlers



#### Family Structure



\*Numbers are small; use caution in interpreting.

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

## How are District of Columbia's babies faring in Good Health?

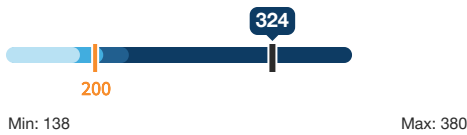
Supporting babies' and mothers' physical and mental health provides the foundation for infants' lifelong physical, cognitive, emotional, and social well-being. Babies' brains grow rapidly in the first years of life, and, in these early years, the brain works with other organs and organ systems to set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

The District of Columbia 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 nutrition and mental health. The District of Columbia performs better than national averages on key indicators, such as the Medicaid income eligibility level for pregnant women and the percentage of uninsured babies in families with low income. The District is performing worse than national averages on indicators such as the percentages of eligible babies participating in WIC and babies born with low birth weight.

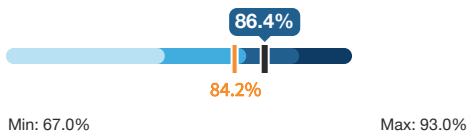
## Key Indicators of Good Health

● DC ● National Avg

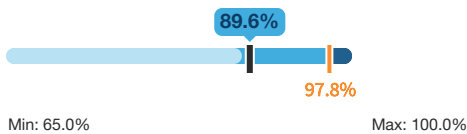
Eligibility limit (% FPL) for pregnant women in Medicaid



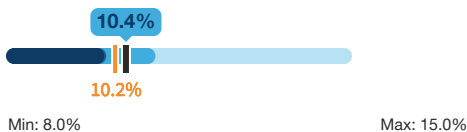
Infants ever breastfed **NR**



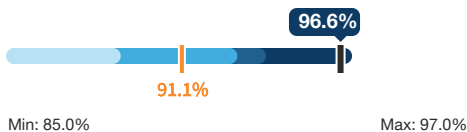
WIC Coverage



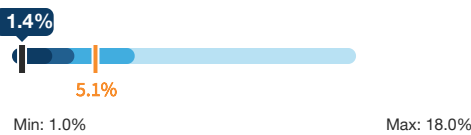
Babies born preterm



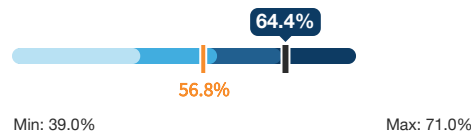
Preventive medical care received



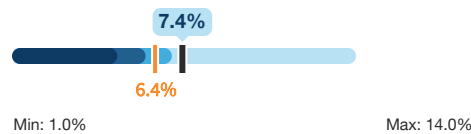
Uninsured low-income infants and toddlers



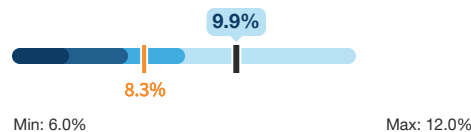
Infants breastfed at 6 months **NR**



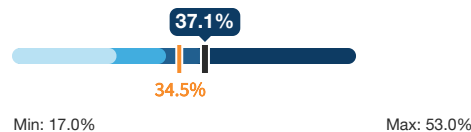
Late or no prenatal care received



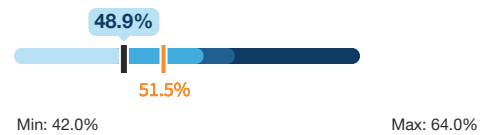
Babies with low birthweight



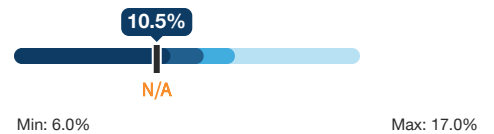
Preventive dental care received



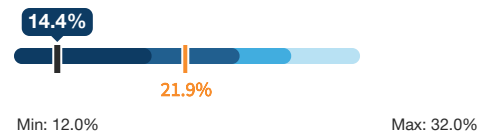
Medical home



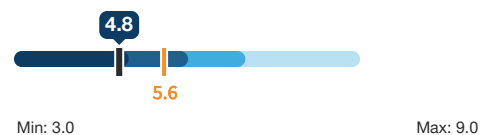
High weight-for-length **NR**



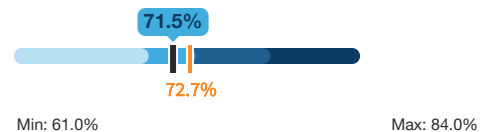
Mothers reporting less than optimal mental health



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



Received recommended vaccines



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

Medicaid expansion state		Yes	
CHIP maternal coverage for unborn child option	NR	No	
Postpartum extension of Medicaid coverage		No law beyond mandatory 60 days	
Pregnant workers protection		All employees covered (private and state)	
State Medicaid policy for maternal depression screening in well-child visits		Recommended	
Medicaid plan covers social-emotional screening for young children		Yes	
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services at home		No	
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services at pediatric/family medicine practices		No	
Medicaid plan covers IECMH services in early childhood education settings		No	

## All Good Health Indicators for DC

*Note: N/A indicates Not Available.*

How are District of Columbia'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.

The District of Columbia falls in the Working Effectively (W) tier of states when it comes to indicators of Strong Families. The District's ranking in this domain reflects indicators on which it is performing better than the national average, such as the percentage of babies experiencing food insecurity and the infant/toddler maltreatment rate. The District of Columbia is doing worse than the national average on indicators such as the percentages of babies living in crowded housing and parents who report living in unsafe neighborhoods.

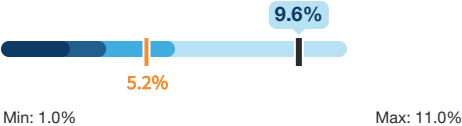
Key Indicators of Strong Families

DC National Avg

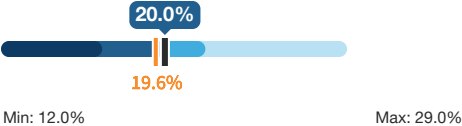
TANF benefits receipt among families in poverty



Unsafe neighborhoods



1 adverse childhood experience



Removed from home NR



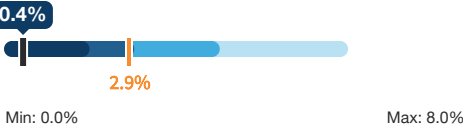
Permanency: Guardian NR



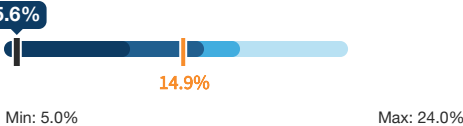
Potential home visiting beneficiaries served



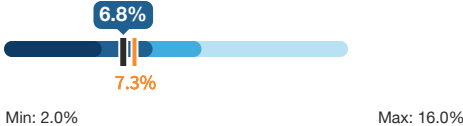
Housing instability



Low or very low food security



2 or more adverse childhood experiences



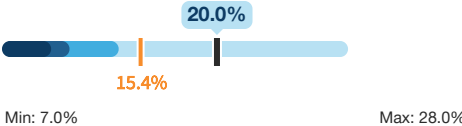
Time in out-of-home placement



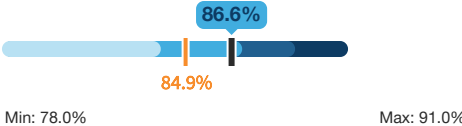
Permanency: Relative NR



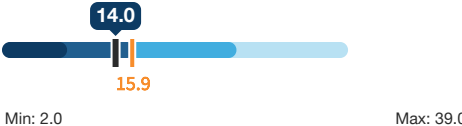
Crowded housing



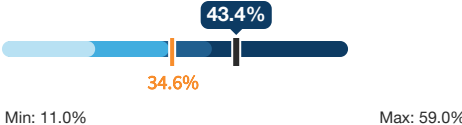
Family resilience



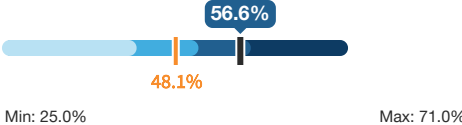
Infant/toddler maltreatment rate (per 1,000 children ages 0-2) NR



Permanency: Adopted NR



Permanency: Reunified NR



\*Numbers are small; use caution in interpreting.

Strong Families Policy in DC

Paid family leave	Yes	✓
Paid sick time that covers care for child	Yes	✓
TANF work exemption	No	✗
State child tax credit	Yes	✓
State Earned Income Tax Credit	Yes	✓

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

All Strong Families Indicators for DC

State IndicatorNational Avg

Basic Needs

TANF benefits receipt among families in poverty	NA 18.5%	Housing instability	0.4% 2.9%
Crowded housing	20.0% 15.4%	Unsafe neighborhoods	9.6% 5.2%
Low or very low food security	5.6% 14.9%		

Child Well-being and Resilience

Family resilience	86.6% 84.9%	1 adverse childhood experience	NR20.0% 19.6%
2 or more adverse childhood experiences	6.8% 7.3%	Infant/toddler maltreatment rate (per 1,000 children ages 0-2)	NR14.0 15.9
Removed from home	NR3.3 7.1	Time in out-of-home placement	NR0.1% %
Permanency: Adopted	NR43.4% 34.6%	Permanency: Guardian	NRNA 8.3%
Permanency: Relative	NRNA 7.8%	Permanency: Reunified	NR56.6% 48.1%
Potential home visiting beneficiaries served	1.3% 2.1%		

Note: N/A indicates Not Available.

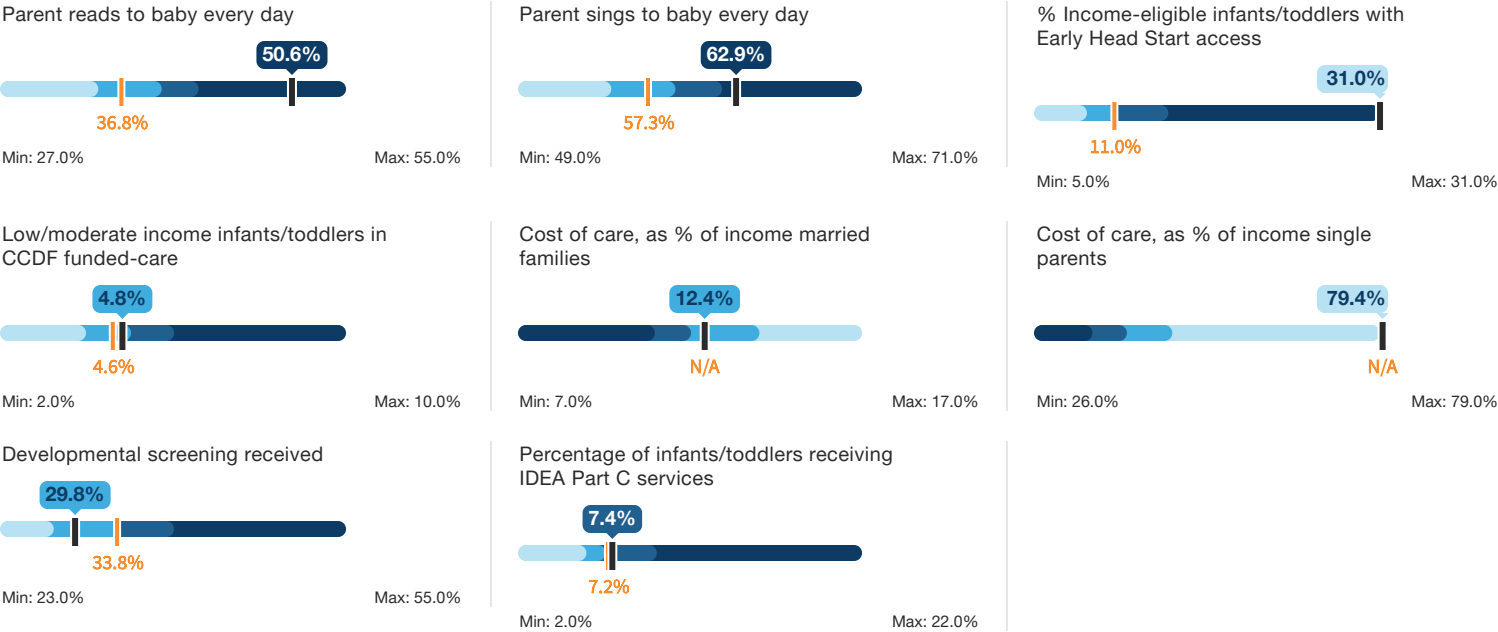
How are District of Columbia's babies faring in Positive Early Learning Experiences?

Infants and toddlers learn through interactions with the significant adults in their lives and active exploration of enriching environments. The quality of 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.

The District of Columbia scores in the Working Effectively (W) tier for Positive Early Learning Experiences. The District’s ranking in this domain reflects indicators on which it is performing better than the national average, such as the higher percentage of babies in families below 100 percent of the federal poverty line with access to Early Head Start. The District of Columbia is doing worse than the national average on indicators such as the lower percentage of infants and toddlers who received a developmental screening. Beginning with the 2022 profile, infant care costs as a percentage of the state’s median income for single and married parents are not factored into the ranking.

Key Indicators of Positive Early Learning Experiences

● DC ● National Avg



\*Numbers are small; use caution in interpreting.

## Positive Early Learning Experiences Policy in DC

Adult/child ratio		EHS Standards met for 2 of 3 age groups
Level of teacher qualification required by the state beyond a high school diploma		No <span>✗</span>
Group size		EHS Standards met for 2 of 3 age groups
Infant/toddler professional credential	NR	No <span>✗</span>
Families above 200% of FPL eligible for child care subsidy		Yes <span>✓</span>
Allocated CCDBG funds		Yes <span>✓</span>
State reimburses center-based child care		No <span>✗</span>
At-risk children included in Part C eligibility definition	NR	No <span>✗</span>

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

## All Positive Early Learning Experiences Indicators for DC

● State Indicator ● National Avg

### Activities that Support Early Learning

<span>W</span> Parent reads to baby every day	50.6% 36.8%	<span>W</span> Parent sings to baby every day	62.9% 57.3%
---	----------------	---	----------------

### Access to Early Learning Programs

<span>W</span> % Income-eligible infants/toddlers with Early Head Start access	31.0% 11.0%	<span>O</span> Low/moderate income infants/toddlers in CCDF-funded care	4.8% 4.6%
Cost of care, as % of income married families	NR	Cost of care, as % of income single parents	NR
	12.4% NA		79.4% NA

### Early Intervention

<span>R</span> Developmental screening received	29.8% 33.8%	<span>O</span> Percentage of infants/toddlers receiving IDEA Part C services	7.4% 7.2%
Timeliness of Part C services	NR		
	95.3% NA		

Note: N/A indicates Not Available.