The State of Mississippi's Babies G

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

Mississippi | National Average

Infants and toddlers in Mississippi

Mississippi is home to 107,969 babies, representing 3.7 percent of the state's population. As many as 55.5 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

	Mississippi	National Average
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.8%	1.9%
Asian	1.0%	5.5%
Black	42.7%	14.0%
Hispanic	5.6%	26.0%
Multiple Races	3.1%	5.2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.2%
White	47.0%	48.3%

Poverty status of infants and toddlers

	Mississippi	National Average
Above Low-income	44.5%	59.7%
Low-income	22.3%	21.7%
In Poverty	33.2%	18.6%
150% SMI	81.7%	77.3%

Infants and toddlers in poverty, by race

	Mississippi	National Average
Black	52.7%	18.6%
Hispanic	39.0%	18.6%
White	18.1%	18.6%

	Mississippi	National Average
Percent Infant Toddler	3.6%	3.4%

	Mississippi	National Average
Population Infant Toddler	107,959	11,361,919

Family Structure

	Mississippi	National Average
Two Parents	58.0%	78.9%
One Parent	37.8%	18.7%
No Parent	4.1%	2.4%
Grandparent-headed households	16.4%	8.2%
Working Moms	65.9%	62.4%
No Working Parents	9.8%	5.5%
Living Outside of a Metro Area	52.6%	8.5%

**Numbers are small; use caution in interpreting.*
Note: N/A indicates Not Available

Good Health

How are Mississippi'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.

Mississippi falls in the Getting Started (G) 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. Mississippi performs better than national averages on key indicators, such as the percentages of women receiving late or no prenatal care and uninsured babies in families with low income. The state is performing worse than national averages on indicators such as the infant mortality rate and percentage of babies born preterm.

Key Indicators of Good Health

Mississippi · National Avg

Eligibility limit (% FPL) for pregnant women in Medicaid
Mississippi: 199 · National Avg: 200 · Min: 138 · Max: 380

Uninsured low-income infants and toddlers
Mississippi: 4.1% · National Avg: 5.1% · Min: 1.0% · Max: 18.0%

Medical home
Mississippi: 48.2% · National Avg: 51.5% · Min: 42.0% · Max: 64.0%

Infants ever breastfed NR
Mississippi: 70.1% · National Avg: 84.2% · Min: 67.0% · Max: 93.0%

Infants breastfed at 6 months NR
Mississippi: 39.1% · National Avg: 56.8% · Min: 39.0% · Max: 71.0%

High weight-for-length NR
Mississippi: 12.7% · National Avg: N/A · Min: 6.0% · Max: 17.0%

WIC Coverage
Mississippi: 100.0% · National Avg: 97.8% · Min: 65.0% · Max: 100.0%

Late or no prenatal care received
Mississippi: 5.0% · National Avg: 6.4% · Min: 1.0% · Max: 14.0%

Mothers reporting less than optimal mental health
Mississippi: 29.6% · National Avg: 21.9% · Min: 12.0% · Max: 32.0%

Babies born preterm
Mississippi: 14.6% · National Avg: 10.2% · Min: 8.0% · Max: 15.0%

Babies with low birthweight
Mississippi: 12.3% · National Avg: 8.3% · Min: 6.0% · Max: 12.0%

Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)
Mississippi: 9.1 · National Avg: 5.6 · Min: 3.0 · Max: 9.0

Preventive medical care received
Mississippi: 88.1% · National Avg: 91.1% · Min: 85.0% · Max: 97.0%

Preventive dental care received
Mississippi: 27.1% · National Avg: 34.5% · Min: 17.0% · Max: 53.0%

Received recommended vaccines
Mississippi: 73.4% · National Avg: 72.7% · Min: 61.0% · Max: 84.0%

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

Good Health Policy in Mississippi

Medicaid expansion state	No ✗
CHIP maternal coverage for unborn child option NR	No ✗
Postpartum extension of Medicaid coverage	No law beyond mandatory 60 days
Pregnant workers protection	No protections
State Medicaid policy for maternal depression screening in well-child visits	Required
Medicaid plan covers social-emotional screening for young children	Yes ✓
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	Yes ✓

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

All Good Health Indicators for Mississippi

State Indicator · National Avg

Health Care Coverage and Affordability

	State Indicator	National Avg
R Eligibility limit (% FPL) for pregnant women in Medicaid	199.0	200.0
G Medical home	48.2%	51.5%
O Uninsured low-income infants and toddlers	4.1%	5.1%

Nutrition

	State Indicator	National Avg
Infants ever breastfed NR	70.1%	84.2%
G Infants breastfed at 6 months	39.1%	56.8%
High weight-for-length NR	12.7%	NA
O WIC coverage	100.0%	97.8%

Maternal Health

	State Indicator	National Avg
O Late or no prenatal care received	5.0%	6.4%
Maternal mortality rate (deaths per 100,000 live births) NR	NA	20.1
G Mothers reporting less than optimal mental health	29.6%	21.9%

Children's Health

	State Indicator	National Avg
G Babies born preterm	14.6%	10.2%
G Babies with low birthweight	12.3%	8.3%
G Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	9.1	5.6
G Preventive dental care received	27.1%	34.5%
G Preventive medical care received	88.1%	91.1%
O Received recommended vaccines	73.4%	72.7%

Note: N/A indicates Not Available.

Strong Families

How are Mississippi'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 families with low income and in historically marginalized communities of color face additional challenges that impact their babies' immediate and future well-being. 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.

Mississippi falls in the Reaching Forward (R) 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 living in crowded housing and parents who report living in unsafe neighborhoods. Mississippi is doing worse than the national average on indicators such as the percentages of families in poverty with babies who receive TANFand the infant/toddler maltreatment rate.

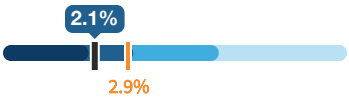
Key Indicators of Strong Families

Mississippi National Avg

TANF benefits receipt among families in poverty

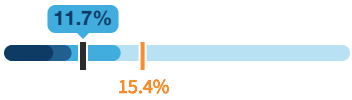
Min: 3.0% Max: 66.0%

Housing instability



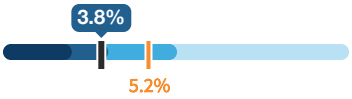
Min: 0.0% Max: 8.0%

Crowded housing



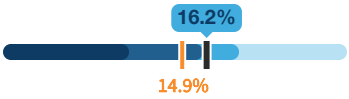
Min: 7.0% Max: 28.0%

Unsafe neighborhoods



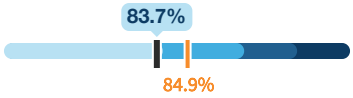
Min: 1.0% Max: 11.0%

Low or very low food security



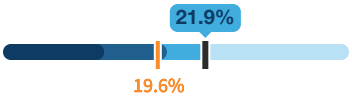
Min: 5.0% Max: 24.0%

Family resilience



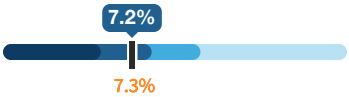
Min: 78.0% Max: 91.0%

1 adverse childhood experience



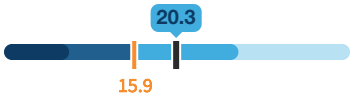
Min: 12.0% Max: 29.0%

2 or more adverse childhood experiences



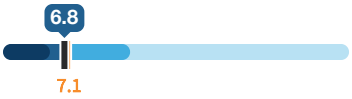
Min: 2.0% Max: 16.0%

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



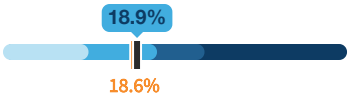
Min: 2.0 Max: 39.0

Removed from home NR



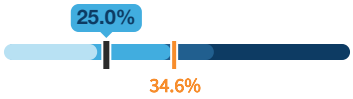
Min: 3.0 Max: 25.0

Time in out-of-home placement



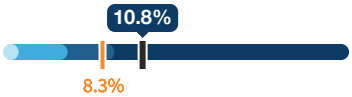
Min: 5.0% Max: 41.0%

Permanency: Adopted NR



Min: 11.0% Max: 59.0%

Permanency: Guardian NR

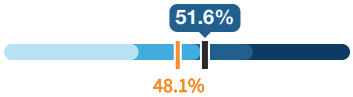


Min: 2.0% Max: 24.0%

Permanency: Relative NR

Min: 1.0% Max: 47.0%

Permanency: Reunified NR



Min: 25.0% Max: 71.0%

Potential home visiting beneficiaries served

Min: 0.0% Max: 8.0%

Numbers are small; use caution in interpreting.

Strong Families Policy in Mississippi

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

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

All Strong Families Indicators for Mississippi

● State Indicator ● National Avg

Basic Needs

	State Indicator	National Avg
G TANF benefits receipt among families in poverty	5.7%	18.5%
R Crowded housing	11.7%	15.4%
R Low or very low food security	16.2%	14.9%
O Housing instability	2.1%	2.9%
O Unsafe neighborhoods	3.8%	5.2%

Child Well-being and Resilience

	State Indicator	National Avg
G Family resilience	83.7%	84.9%
O 2 or more adverse childhood experiences	7.2%	7.3%
Removed from home NR	6.8	7.1
Permanency: Adopted NR	25.0%	34.6%
Permanency: Relative NR	11.9%	7.8%
G Potential home visiting beneficiaries served	0.6%	2.1%
1 adverse childhood experience NR	21.9%	19.6%
Infant/toddler maltreatment rate (per 1,000 children ages 0-2) NR	20.3	15.9
Time in out-of-home placement NR	0.2%	%
Permanency: Guardian NR	10.8%	8.3%
Permanency: Reunified NR	51.6%	48.1%

Positive Early Learning Experiences

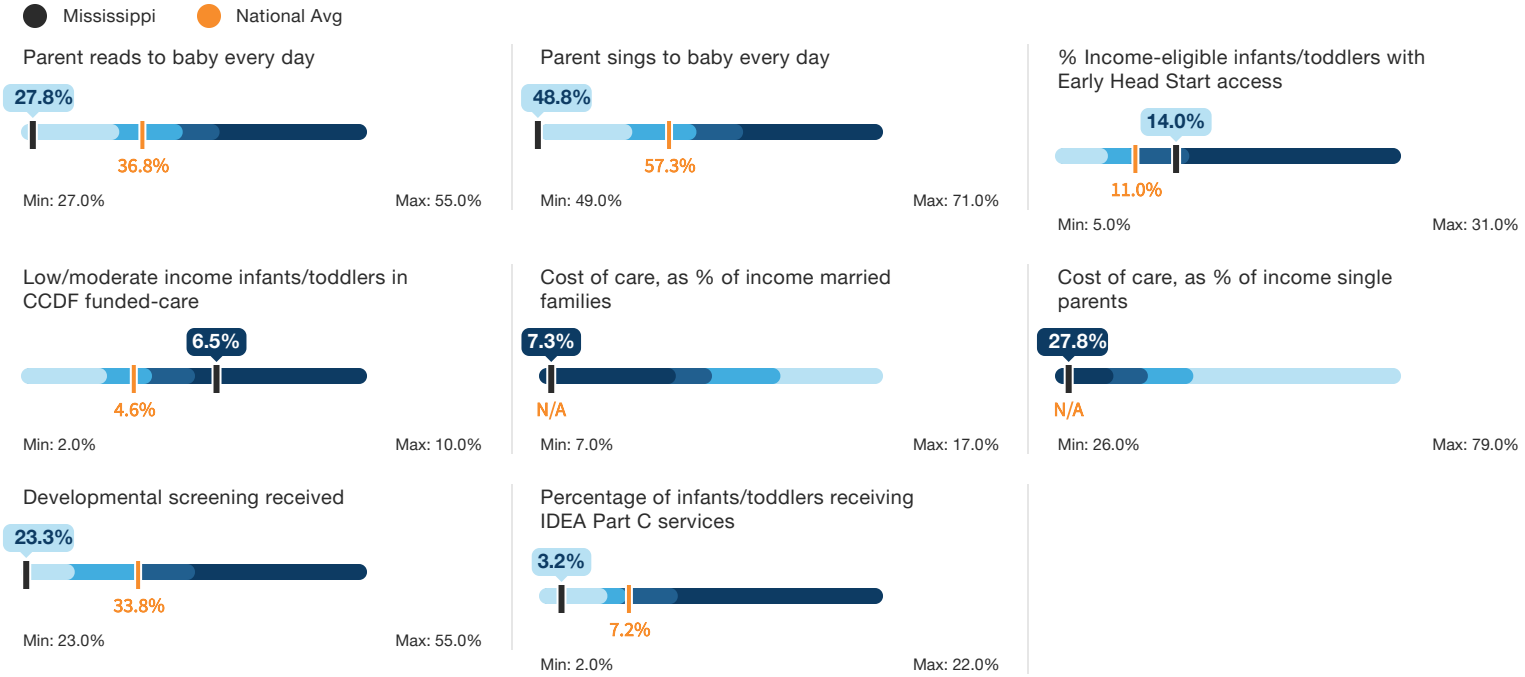
GROW

How are Mississippi'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.

Mississippi scores in the Getting Started (G) 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 babies in families below 100 percent of the federal poverty line with access to Early Head Start. Mississippi 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



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

Positive Early Learning Experiences Policy in Mississippi

Adult/child ratio	EHS Standards met for 0 of 3 age groups
Level of teacher qualification required by the state beyond a high school diploma	No ✗
Group size	EHS Standards met for 0 of 3 age groups
Infant/toddler professional credential NR	No ✗
Families above 200% of FPL eligible for child care subsidy	Yes ✓
Allocated CCDBG funds	Yes ✓
State reimburses center-based child care	No ✗
At-risk children included in Part C eligibility definition NR	No ✗

Note: N/A indicates Not Available

All Positive Early Learning Experiences Indicators for Mississippi

● State Indicator ● National Avg

Activities that Support Early Learning

G	Parent reads to baby every day	27.8% / 36.8%
G	Parent sings to baby every day	48.8% / 57.3%

Access to Early Learning Programs

O	% Income-eligible infants/toddlers with Early Head Start access	14.0% / 11.0%
W	Low/moderate income infants/toddlers in CCDF-funded care	6.5% / 4.6%
	Cost of care, as % of income married families NR	7.3% / NA
	Cost of care, as % of income single parents NR	27.8% / NA

Early Intervention

G	Developmental screening received	23.3% / 33.8%
G	Percentage of infants/toddlers receiving IDEA Part C services	3.2% / 7.2%
	Timeliness of Part C services NR	88.8% / NA

Note: N/A indicates Not Available.