Policies that Help Infants and Toddlers Thrive

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Policies that help infants and toddlers thrive

Support parent well-being

High quality early learning environments

Access to health and mental health care

Interventions and developmental surveillance for exceptionally vulnerable children
How are infants and toddlers faring?

Large number live in families experience financial hardship¹

- 45 low-income (200% or below FPL)
- 23 percent in poverty (100% or below FPL)
- 11 percent in deep poverty (50% or below FPL)
- 11 percent in families where parent(s) lack a high school degree

State Variation in Percent US Children Under Age 9 in Deep Poverty

Source: NCCP analysis of data from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2011-2013.
The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Scores for 4th Grade Math and Reading: School Lunch Eligible Children and Non-Eligible Children

Math Score: 249 (Proficiency), 229 (School lunch eligible), 253 (Non-Eligible)
Reading Score: 238 (Proficiency), 209 (School lunch eligible), 237 (Non-Eligible)

www.nccp.org
Policies that support parent well-being

Family economic security is the foundation

**EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit)**

- 14 states introduced legislation in past 2 years; 5% - 120% of federal EITC³
- Reduced poverty, parent stress; improved parent health, birth outcomes, child school achievement⁴

**TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families):** by itself, leaves families in deep poverty in every state

- Ensure linkage to SNAP, WIC
- Increase the TANF benefit for infants and toddlers⁵
Maternal Depression Screening and Response

11 states pay for depression screening of parents/guardians under child’s Medicaid during a well-child visit. 

[Map of the United States showing states that cover services for maternal depression screening and response, with different colors representing states that cover services, do not cover services, and states not included in the survey.]
High quality early learning environments

Home Visiting Programs

- Expand to serve larger number of infants and toddlers at risk of poor health and learning outcomes
- Ensure an early learning across all HV programs; training, use of newer digital resources to promote parent engagement (Vroom and Ready Rosie⁷)

Early Head Start – expand with state supplement/child care partnerships
High quality early learning environments

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- Title 1 funds: improve quality or extend the day or number of days of preschool programs serving children 0 – 5
  - In state preschool, Head Start, child care, home visiting
  - Direct services, professional development, parent engagement

Legislator led convenings could help states examine options for strengthening infant/toddler early learning opportunities through ESSA in coordination with other state early childhood policies.
Access to Health and Mental Health Care

- Participation in Medicaid/CHIP at 91% nationally\(^9\)
- Children’s health care linked to parents’ coverage

**Medicaid Coverage for three I-ECMH Services\(^{10}\)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>States Covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic (parent-child) treatment</td>
<td>6 states, 8 states, 24 states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services provided by an early childhood mental health specialist/clinician to address a child’s mental health needs in child care and early education programs</td>
<td>16 states, 16 states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting programs designed to help parents of young children promote children’s social-emotional development and address child mental health needs*</td>
<td>2 states, 5 states, 5 states</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers: 38, 34, 12
Interventions and developmental surveillance for exceptionally vulnerable children

Infants and toddlers
- in deep poverty
- have or are at risk of disabilities
- are homeless
- involved in foster care/child welfare, experienced other forms of trauma
- have multiple family risk factors (e.g., mental illness, substance abuse, low parent education)

These children would benefit from a state plan that creates a continuum of supports for their well-being and healthy development.
Interventions and developmental surveillance for exceptionally vulnerable children

Monitor and Support Development

Help Me Grow

Evidence-based programs for highest risk infants/toddlers

Child First

Developmental/SE Screening in primary care
Centralized phone assistance links families to community resources
Service providers network, coordinate and work to expand services

Child First benefits:
Improved parent and child mental health, reduced CWS involvement, language skills (80% vs. 36% language skills competent for CF vs. control group)
Part C Early Intervention

✔ Capacity to address children’s social-emotional development

✔ Strength of parent engagement practices

Child Welfare Supervised Children (in foster care or home)

✔ Ensure that CWS children are placed in high quality early care and education settings (Early Head Start)\textsuperscript{14}
NCCP Resources

Early Childhood State Policy Profiles:  
www.nccp.org/profiles/earlychildhood.html

Young Child Risk Calculator:  www.nccp.org/tools/risk/

Child Care and Early Education Research Connections:  
www.researchconnections.org/childcare/welcome

National Center for Children in Poverty  website:  www.nccp.org

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Thank you!
References

1 Data from NCCP’s Young Child Risk Calculator, http://www.nccp.org/tools/risk/
References, cont.

8Non-Regulatory Guidance Early Learning in the Every Student Succeeds Act Expanding Opportunities to Support our Youngest Learners


10See #6 above.

12Help Me Grow  http://helpmegrownational.org/

13First  http://www.childfirst.org/