As your team begins to explore specific areas of the State Infant Toddler Policy Self-Assessment Tool, you will likely find the need to better understand policy implications and implementation efforts. The resources and examples below are not comprehensive but should help you begin your journey into understanding policy recommendations found in the Self-Assessment Tool. Note: This list is intended to be dynamic, please check back often to get the most up-to-date resources on issue areas. For additional assistance, please reach out to your ZTT Technical Assistance specialist or email us at policycenter@zerotothree.org.

Contents

**Equitable Policy Implementation** .......................................................................................................................... 3

**Good Health** .......................................................................................................................................................... 3

State Medicaid Eligibility, Enrollment, Coverage and Implementation ................................................................. 3
Partnership with Families, Communities, and Providers .......................................................................................... 4
General State Health Policies .................................................................................................................................... 4
Comprehensive Screening and Referral .................................................................................................................. 5
Early Intervention ...................................................................................................................................................... 6
Food Security and Nutrition ..................................................................................................................................... 7
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health ........................................................................................................... 7
Workforce ......................................................................................................................................................... 8

**Strong Families** .................................................................................................................................................. 9

Economic Security .................................................................................................................................................... 9
Paid Family and Medical Leave and Paid Sick Days .............................................................................................. 11
Continuum of Culturally Responsive Family Support Programs ........................................................................... 12
Child Welfare .......................................................................................................................................................... 15
Partnership with Families, Communities and Practitioners .................................................................................. 15

**Positive Early Learning Experiences** .................................................................................................................. 16

ECE Funding ......................................................................................................................................................... 16
Partnership with Families, Communities and Providers .................................................................................. 16
Building for Babies Self-Assessment Resources and State Examples

Workforce................................................................................................................................................ 17
Access and Family Choice........................................................................................................................ 18
Supply...................................................................................................................................................... 19
Quality..................................................................................................................................................... 20
Early Head Start....................................................................................................................................... 21
Collaboration and System-Building............................................................................................................ 22
Governance............................................................................................................................................. 22
Comprehensive and Coordinated System................................................................................................ 23
Partnership with Families, Communities, and Infant-Toddler Professionals........................................ 23
Data......................................................................................................................................................... 24
Workforce................................................................................................................................................ 24
Equitable Policy Implementation
States need to recognize disparities, take concrete steps to reform policies, and invest in communities where resources are unequal. As a nation, we must ensure equity is at the forefront of every policy conversation to promote positive outcomes for our increasingly diverse population of young children.

- Building Strong Foundations: Racial Inequity in Policies that Impact Infants, Toddlers, and Families by ZERO TO THREE and the Center for Law and Social Policy explores racial disparities, and the policies that drive them, among infants, toddlers, and their families.

Good Health
This section of the self-assessment tool includes policy recommendations that ensure families with infants and toddlers have access to and coverage for health care; support nutrition; embed child development and family support in primary pediatric care; and promote social-emotional health through coverage of maternal depression screening in well-child visits, social-emotional screening of babies, and delivery of IECMH services in various settings.

State Medicaid Eligibility, Enrollment, Coverage and Implementation

- Kaiser Family Foundation Status of State Medicaid Expansion Decisions: Interactive Map: This site tracks state actions related to adoption of the ACA Medicaid expansion. For non-expansion states, they include actions toward potential adoption. For expansion states, information includes summaries of when and how late-adopting states took up the expansion as well as notes on state attempts to place limits or requirements on the expansion population.
- National Conference of State Legislatures Medicaid Toolkit: The Medicaid Toolkit is a collection of information about the Medicaid program designed for legislators and legislative staff. States legislatures play a key role in Medicaid financing, regulation, oversight and innovation. This toolkit provides information on all aspects of the program from the fundamentals to in-depth policy information on current topics.
- Prenatal to 3 Policy Impact Center Access to Perinatal Health Insurance: This policy lever checklist covers the following components of policies to improve access to perinatal health insurance: Medicaid income eligibility criteria, postpartum Medicaid extension, CHIP and additional populations.

State Examples
Texas Governor Signs 12 Month Medicaid Postpartum Coverage Bill: Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed legislation that will allow pregnant women in the state to keep their health coverage for 12 months after their pregnancy.
The New Year Brings New Medi-Cal Benefits to California Families: California’s Medicaid health care program adds dyadic services and doula coverage.

Louisiana Makes Strides for Babies and Families: 2021 Louisiana Legislative Session adjourned in June with several exciting wins for babies and families including Earned Income Tax, removal of taxes from diapers and menstrual hygiene products, Medicaid expansion, midwife and doula additions and workplace protections for pregnant and lactating mothers.

State-Funded Health Coverage for Immigrants as of July 2023: This KFF report highlights progress in states in Medicaid and CHIP coverage for immigrant children.

Partnership with Families, Communities, and Providers

- Promoting Maternal and Child Health Through State Medical Coverage for Doula Care: Program success requires that lawmakers seek out and listen to stakeholders from the communities who will both provide and benefit from doula services as well as the existing organizations. This ZERO TO THREE brief shares how some states are addressing this issue as well as considerations for policymakers approaching doula legislation and implementation.

General State Health Policies

- State Policies to Improve Perinatal Health Outcomes: To support a range of stakeholders and interested parties informing policymaking at the national, state, and community levels, these maps and data by The Commonwealth Fund and Institute for Medicaid Innovation offer a state-by-state look at both Medicaid and non-Medicaid state-led perinatal health policies and initiatives.

- State of Babies Yearbook Brief-Racism Creates Inequities in Maternal and Child Health, Even Before Birth: This ZERO TO THREE brief aims to explore why there are disparities in maternal and child health: what disparities exist, and for whom; and how policymakers and practitioners can promote racial and ethnic equity to improve maternal and child health.

- Black Mamas Matter-In Policy and Practice: A policy agenda for the black maternal health, rights, and justice movement. This resource is Black Mamas Matter Alliance’s comprehensive, issues and values-based policy agenda. As an Alliance of Black women-led organizations and multidisciplinary professionals, BMMA sees the development of a policy agenda as a unique opportunity to build consensus and articulate priorities that come from those doing work within their own communities.
• **Flourishing Children, Healthy Communities and a Stronger Nation:** The U.S. Early Years action plan identifies opportunities for states and other entities to be a part of the solution. This report offers several recommendations to state leaders to help ensure the health and well-being of families.

• **Bright Futures Guidelines:** The Bright Futures Guidelines provide theory-based and evidence-driven guidance for all preventive care screenings and health supervision visits. Bright Futures content can be incorporated into many public health programs such as home visiting, child care, school-based health clinics and many others. Materials developed especially for families are also available.

### State Examples

**Minnesota Launches Dignity in Pregnancy and Childbirth Act Black Birthing Modules:** New law addresses inequities in maternal health care and includes a requirement for hospitals with obstetric care and birth centers to develop or access a continuing education course on anti-racism training and implicit bias.

**Colorado Stabilization Funds Address Air Quality in Child Care Facilities:** Recognizing the growing need for filtered indoor air, highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased frequency of wildfire smoke in Colorado because of climate change, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Colorado Department of Early Childhood distributed Improving Indoor Air Quality grants to child care programs across the state.

### Comprehensive Screening and Referral

• **Recommendations on Developmental Screening Follow-up Practices and Policies for Federal, State, and Community Level Stakeholders:** This paper, jointly developed by ZERO TO THREE and the National Institute for Children’s Health Quality explores challenges of the early childhood service delivery system and offers recommendations for policy and system change, including examples of bright spots in specific states, to ensure children and families receive help when developmental concerns are present.

• **Strengthening Families with Infants and Toddlers: A Policy Framework for States:** This report from ZERO TO THREE is designed to reframe the role of child welfare from preventing harm to children toward strengthening families and the communities where they live. The policy framework includes 11 recommendations for states and communities that aim to advance equitable outcomes supporting the health and well-being of very young children and their families, including those who are in or are at risk of entering the child welfare system.

• **AAP Clinical Report-Promoting Optimal Development: Identifying Infants and Young Children with Developmental Disorders Through Developmental Surveillance and Screening:** This paper highlights effective process and procedures and includes both policy and advocacy recommendations.
State Examples

Delaware Bill Ensures Access to Developmental Screening for All: Delawares HB202 expands access to developmental screenings for all young children attending licensed child care programs across the state.

Early Intervention

- The State(s) of Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education: Looking at Equity: This report from the National Institute for Early Education Research looks state-by-state at the two federally funded programs for young children with disabilities. The report focuses on the 2020-2021 school year and also includes data beginning with the 2005-2006 school year. It explores four types of variation in early intervention (EI) and early childhood special education (ECSE) services: impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, race and ethnicity, gender, and the state in which a child lives.
- Increasing Equity in Early Intervention: In this Education Trust report, strengths of state approaches and opportunities for increasing equity in providing early intervention services are explored.
- Supporting A Strong Start for Children with Disabilities: New America’s blog series that will examine early intervention and early childhood special education throughout 2024. The series will share recent research findings, interview experts, and address questions like the following: What can states do to make EI and ECSE more equitable for children of color and children from families with low incomes? How can policymakers address challenges in meaningful ways? How can we better connect awareness to action?
- Advancing Equity and Inclusion for Young Children with Disabilities and Delays: To aid state public sector leaders and advocates in advancing equity and inclusion for young children with disabilities and developmental delays, this Start Early report articulates key state policy opportunities.

State Examples

Illinois General Assembly Approves Budget Increases for Early Intervention Program: Illinois legislators approved the state’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 budget, including an almost 34.5 percent budget increase from the FY23 budget for the Illinois Early Intervention (EI) Program.

Wisconsin is Leveraging American Rescue Plan Act Funding to Address the Needs of Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families: Using ARPA funds, Wisconsin introduced the Inclusive Birth to 3 Child Care Pilot, a partnership with IDEA Part C to make families with an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) eligible to receive 12 months of child care subsidy, regardless of family income or work status. In addition to improving services directly for participating families, the pilot also aims to build the capacity and skill of providers to serve families receiving Part C services. The pilot includes funding to serve approximately 1,300 children.
Food Security and Nutrition

- **Annual State of WIC Report**: This National WIC Association report offers a blueprint for stronger WIC services. Includes recommended policy actions and individual profiles for the funded 50 States, 33 Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs), 5 Territories, and the District of Columbia.
- **The Importance of the Federal Nutrition Programs for Infants and Toddlers**: This Food Research and Action Think Babies resource provides a brief overview of the importance of early nutrition; briefly summarizes the harmful impacts of food insecurity on infants and young children; and highlights research demonstrating the effective role of the federal nutrition programs during early childhood in improving food and economic security, dietary intake, health, and development.
- **The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Infants and Toddlers**: This State of Babies Yearbook highlight includes data and an infographic to support advocacy efforts.
- **State Policy Lever Checklist-Reduced Administrative Burden for SNAP**: This checklist from the Prenatal-to3 Policy Impact Center covers the following policy levers, which can impact the administrative burden for SNAP: recertification, reporting requirements, online services, maximizing benefits.
- **Untapped Potential: License-Exempt Home-Based Child Care Providers and the Child and Adult Care Food Program**: Designed to address food insecurity amongst children, the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) reimburses child care providers for some or all of the costs of feeding children in child care settings. This New Urban Institute research finds that more children could get needed nutritional supports if license-exempt home-based child care providers were allowed and encouraged to participate in CACFP.
- **Five Ways States Can Make CACFP More Accessible and Equitable**: This Urban Institute brief highlights five key takeaways from our research on how states can make the Child and Adults Care Food Program (CACFP) more accessible and equitable for license-exempt home-based child care (LEHBCC) providers.

State Examples

**Getting More Bang for the Buck in Oklahoma’s Food Security Initiative**: This National Academy for State Health Policy Q&A provides details on Oklahoma’s initiative for states interested in exploring similar approaches to address food insecurity, increase access to nutritious foods, and improve the health and well-being of mothers, children, and families.

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

- **ZTT Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Policy Resource Page**: ZERO TO THREE works directly with policy leaders across the country to advance policies that improve access to developmentally appropriate mental health promotion, prevention, and treatment services. This
Building for Babies Self-Assessment Resources and State Examples

collection of resources highlight innovative approaches to policies that ensure our youngest children and their families have the support they need.

- **Medicaid Policies to Help Young Children Access Key Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health Services: Results from a 50-State Survey**: This report presents results of a 50-state policy survey conducted by the National Center for Children in Poverty, Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy Center for Children and Families, and Johnson Policy Consulting. The survey asked state Medicaid agency leaders about Medicaid policies related to screenings and services designed to identify, prevent, and treat infant-early childhood mental health problems. The results and recommendations presented in this report can help mental health and early childhood leaders take stock of current Medicaid policies and their potential to support infant-early childhood mental health.

- **PRiSM: Promoting Research-informed State IECMH Policies and Scaled Initiatives**: This National Center for Children in Poverty project promotes efforts to achieve positive outcomes for infants and young children by highlighting research-informed infant-early childhood mental health (IECMH) state policies and scaled initiatives.

- **Cost-Effectiveness of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Treatment**: This brief, a resource of the Infant & Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, provides an overview of the positive outcomes of evidence-based treatment for very young children and their families, examples of evidence-based treatments, the return on investment for mental health treatment, and the cost to taxpayers and employers of not intervening.

### State Examples

**Tennessee is Using American Rescue Plan Act Funds to Expand Access to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation**: Tennessee leveraged American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars to support expansion of infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) consultation for home visitors.

**Wisconsin is Leveraging American Rescue Plan Act Funding to Address the Needs of Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families**: Following the allocation of funding for IECMH consultation by the state legislature, the Department of Children and Families released a Request for Proposals seeking a vendor to administer a statewide consultation system. The Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health (WI-AIMH) was selected, and WI-AIMH and the Department are now working in partnership to move forward with implementation.

### Workforce

- **Promoting Maternal and Child Health Through State Medical Coverage for Doula Care**: This ZERO TO THREE brief shares how some states are addressing this issue as well as considerations for policymakers approaching doula legislation and implementation.

- **Expanding the Perinatal Workforce through Medicaid Coverage of Doula and Midwifery Services**: This National Academy for State Health Policy resource is designed to assist state health officials in improving maternal and infant health outcomes and the health systems that support care delivery for pregnant and postpartum people and their infants. Medicaid coverage of doula and
midwifery services has the potential to improve birth outcomes especially for low-income individuals and people of color. The toolkit outlines key Medicaid policy considerations for implementing doula and midwifery services perinatally and postpartum.

- **Community-Based Doulas**: This Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center resource provides a complete evidence review and summary paper on doulas as a proven solution to improve perinatal outcomes.

### State Examples

**Louisiana Makes Strides for Babies and Families**: HB190 requires all healthcare plans offering maternal care in Louisiana to cover the cost of midwifery care, and establishes a state registry board for doulas in order to facilitate later work with insurance companies to cover doula care as well.

**Rhode Island Cross-Sector Compensation Report Drives Legislative Action**: The Rhode Island Early Educator Investment Act calls for the children’s cabinet to create and implement a plan to improve compensation of the early childhood workforce. One of the primary suggestions is the creation and utilization of a cross-departmental target wage scale for all early educators, including child care educators, Part C early intervention specialists, home visitors, and Pre-K teachers.

### Strong Families

This section of the self-assessment tool includes policies that promote families’ economic security and inclusion, provide equitable access to paid family and medical leave and paid sick days, support a continuum of culturally responsive family support services, and meet the unique developmental needs of young children involved with the child welfare system.

### Economic Security

- **Pathways to Prosperity: Report from a Convening on Economic Security for Families with Infants and Toddlers**: In October 2021, ZERO TO THREE and the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) convened a two-day virtual event for Building Strong Foundations state teams and other advocates, administrators, and stakeholders who receive technical assistance from CLASP or ZTT to better understand economic security policy and the intersections with early childhood policies; learn about best practices in states that reflect needs of families and communities; plan for and support effective implementation of relevant federal policy; and understand the role of early childhood stakeholders for promoting policies that support economic security for families with infants and toddlers. This paper highlights the themes that emerged from the convening as well as key takeaways from each topical area.
• **Strengthening Families with Infants and Toddlers: A Policy Framework for States**: This report from ZERO TO THREE is designed to reframe the role of child welfare from preventing harm to children toward strengthening families and the communities where they live. The policy framework includes 11 recommendations for states and communities that aim to advance equitable outcomes supporting the health and well-being of very young children and their families, including those who are in or are at risk of entering the child welfare system.

• **Black Mamas Matter-In Policy and Practice**: A policy agenda for the black maternal health, rights, and justice movement. This resource is Black Mamas Matter Alliance’s comprehensive, issues and values-based policy agenda. As an Alliance of Black women-led organizations and multidisciplinary professionals, BMMA sees the development of a policy agenda as a unique opportunity to build consensus and articulate priorities that come from those doing work within their own communities.

• **Infants and Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness**: SchoolHouse Connection and Poverty Solutions at the University of Michigan analyzed data from twenty states that have formed broad-based coalitions to move prenatal-to-3 priorities forward. This report describes the prevalence of homelessness among infants and toddlers in these twenty states; gaps in access to early learning programs; and recommendations for increasing enrollment and support.

• **Cash Transfers Support Infant and Toddler Development**: This Child Trends brief summarizes the evidence base on cash transfers and illustrates how these policies can support infant and toddler development and narrow the income gaps in early childhood experiences. The brief also offers recommendations to inform federal, state, and local cash transfer policies that support infant and toddler development and well-being.

• **Starting Sooner: Should Cash Payments Begin During Pregnancy?**: This publication from the Columbia University Center on Poverty and Social Policy provides a review of the literature cataloging the benefits of beginning cash payments during pregnancy.

• **State policy progress on earned income tax credits in 2023**: The recently updated Prenatal-to-3 State Policy Roadmap provides insight into the core policy levers and further illustrates their interplay through vivid graphics, showcasing the variation in EITC policies across states.

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**State Examples**

**New Mexico Legislature Addresses Family Economic Security**: In addition to substantial early learning wins of over 210 million additional dollars in funding for child care, PreK, home visiting, and other programs for New Mexico’s youngest children, state legislators introduced and passed important family economic security bills in 2023.

**Louisiana Makes Strides for Babies and Families**: The 2021 Louisiana Legislative Session adjourned in June with several exciting wins for babies and families across early childhood sectors. Among others, HB678 will extend the state’s 5% Earned Income Tax Credit until 2030 and HB7 removes the sales tax from diapers and menstrual hygiene products.
Kentucky Benefits Cliff Task Force to Develop Recommendations: To help rectify this problem for Kentucky families, a new legislative task force in the state will begin to evaluate the cliff and its impact on families. The group will develop recommendations to smooth Kentucky families’ transitions from benefits.

Baby Steps: Economic Inclusion Gains in States: As state 2022 legislative sessions across the country closed, new gains in economic inclusion policies will benefit babies and their families in several states.

Hawaii HB954 (Act 163) Gives $104 Million of Income Support to Local Taxpayers: The bill doubles the size of the Earned Income Tax Credit for five years, providing $50 million in additional support. The bill also doubles the amount of the Food Excise Tax Credit, and families who struggle to pay for child or dependent care will receive a refundable credit of up to $3,000.

Paid Family and Medical Leave and Paid Sick Days

- Paid Family Medical Leave in States: Progress and Considerations: PFML offers resiliency, especially to families who live at or near the poverty threshold. It is a relatively small investment in the first months of life that allows families to adjust to the vast changes a baby can bring. Research has shown that PFML supports babies’ health and development and families’ well-being. This ZERO TO THREE brief gives a point-in-time look at progress states have made in advancing PFML.
- State Paid Family Leave Laws Across the U.S.: This Bipartisan Policy Center resource captures legislation status across states and the District of Columbia as well as features of each states program.
- State Policy Lever Checklist-Paid Family Leave: This Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center resource covers the following components of a paid family leave program: program characteristics, eligibility criteria, wage replacement, administration, and funding.

State Examples

Paid Family Medical Leave in States: Progress and Considerations: This paper gives a point-in-time look at progress states have made in advancing PFML.

Minnesota Celebrates Wins for Young Children and their Families: HF 02 will provide 12 weeks of paid leave through a 0.7% payroll tax paid by both the employer and employee. The weekly partial wage replacement will be based on income level and average earnings of a typical work week.
Expanding Paid Family Leave in Rhode Island a 2023 Priority: Rhode Island was among the first states in the nation to show its commitment to working families and young children by establishing paid family leave through the Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) program, signed into law in 2013 and expanded in 2021. Unfortunately, Rhode Island’s TCI program has not kept pace with emerging research and best practices over the past decade. ZERO TO THREE recently partnered with advocates in the state to create this brief to help bring the program up to date.

South Carolina Will Provide Paid Family Leave to State Employees: S. 11 provides state employees with paid family leave for the birth of a child, adoption of a child or for fostering a child. The law went into effect in October 2022 and provides six weeks of paid leave for an employee who gives birth or is a primary caregiver of a child, and two weeks for an employee who does not give birth or is not the primary caregiver but is a new parent. Additionally, the law provides up to two weeks of leave for employees who foster a child.

Brief: State policy progress on paid family leave in 2023: The recently updated Prenatal-to-3 State Policy Roadmap provides insight into the core policy levers and further illustrates their interplay through vivid graphics, showcasing the variation in paid family leave policies across states.

Continuum of Culturally Responsive Family Support Programs

- **Hand in Hand**: This ZERO TO THREE resource highlights a community framework for early childhood collaboration developed by the Model Convening Project. To create this tool, leaders of four national early childhood models came together to develop Hand in Hand, a silo-busting, trust-building framework for community collaboration that achieves positive, equitable outcomes for all young children and their families.

- **Strengthening Connections-State Approaches to Connecting Families to Services**: This ZERO TO THREE brief describes approaches being taken by the five states at both the statewide and community levels. It highlights innovative partnerships with existing programs and initiatives to maximize linkages and assist families in accessing resources to meet their needs. Finally, the brief offers some questions for states to consider as they design and implement strategies to strengthen families’ connections to services and supports.

- **AMCHP Roadmap for Collaboration among Title V, Home Visiting and Early Childhood Systems Programs**: AMCHP designed and pilot tested a framework for collaboration among Title V, MIECHV, and other ECS programs that is centered in systems building and provides practical tools for staff from each of the programs to utilize in strategically aligning their program goals and resources towards a common early childhood goal. The Roadmap includes additional background information about this project, recommendations for improved alignment among early childhood programs at the state and local level, and case studies from four states/jurisdictions.

- **Identifying Community Assets and Resources**: A Community Tool Box resource, this inventory assists with understanding and building community capacity maps.
• **Pregnancy and Shackles: Birth Behind Bars Marked by a Patchwork of Policies and Neglect**: This article by Early Learning Nation explores conditions of pregnant people who are incarcerated. Article includes additional resources to explore.
State Examples

Home visiting expansion resources highlight state accomplishments: In 2022, ZERO TO THREE released a suite of materials designed to inspire, motivate and inform state and local home visiting expansion efforts. An infographic is the anchor of the resources, and is supported by key questions and considerations and a video playlist. The videos, voiced by advocate leaders in four different states, describe approaches to growing home visiting according to each state’s unique vision and collaborative process.

Idaho Builds on Success in Home Visiting: Idaho celebrated several important achievements for home visiting during the 2022 legislative session. The Department of Health & Welfare (DHW) budget included continuation of an annual $1 million of state general revenue funds for home visiting first secured in 2018.

Connecticut Uses American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds for Universal Nurse Home Visiting Pilot: In a June 2021 special session Connecticut legislators allocated $8 million of the state’s ARPA funds to support a Universal Nurse Home Visiting pilot in the Greater Bridgeport Region through its passage of SB 1202.


Delaware Prioritizes Home Visiting: In 2019 Delaware passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 50 (SCR 50) requiring the Department of Health and Social Services – in collaboration with the Department of Education and Delaware Home Visiting Community Advisory Board – to produce an annual report on home visiting programs throughout the state.

Bill Adds State Funds for Community-based Home Visiting Models in Minnesota: In 2021 Minnesota passed HF 2128, an omnibus health and human services finance bill that included $4.5 million in state funds to significantly expand voluntary home visiting for pregnant people and families with young children.

Alabama Increases Funding for Home Visiting in 2021: In April 2021, Alabama passed The Education Trust Fund budget SB 189, which included many increases in funding for programs serving children and families.

New Jersey to offer home visiting to every family with a newborn: In June 2021 New Jersey passed S690 which will provide all New Jersey residents access to at least one, and up to three, post-partum home visits by a specially trained registered nurse for the parent and infant at no cost to the family.

Louisiana Home Visiting Capacity Study: This report from Build Initiative’s Prenatal-to-Three Capacity Building Hub and the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children documents the history of voluntary home visiting in Louisiana, summarizes current home visiting efforts, and provides information on key elements in moving forward to assure that all families who want to participate in home visiting can do so.
Child Welfare

- **Strengthening Families with Infants and Toddlers: A Policy Framework for States**: This report from ZERO TO THREE is designed to reframe the role of child welfare from preventing harm to children toward strengthening families and the communities where they live. The policy framework includes 11 recommendations for states and communities that aim to advance equitable outcomes supporting the health and well-being of very young children and their families, including those who are in or are at risk of entering the child welfare system.

State Examples

*Using the Family First Act to Grow and Nurture Support Systems for Families of Young Children: A look at promotion, prevention, and Family First Act implementation in six states*: This report by Child Trends and Safe Babies™, a program of ZERO TO THREE, presents findings from interviews with various child- and family-serving agencies and organizations across six states (Colorado, Michigan, Nebraska, New York, South Carolina, and Washington).

*Washington is Using American Rescue Plan Act Resources to Address Needs of Families with Infants and Toddlers*: Washington is expanding funding for community-based parenting supports, family resource centers, and initiated new funding for a tribal fatherhood initiative. All three of these initiatives were funded through a competitive application process, prioritizing funding for geographic and demographic groups most impacted by child welfare system involvement, including families with American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, families with young children and communities with historically highest rates of child welfare system involvement.

Partnership with Families, Communities and Practitioners

*Parents at the Table: The National Home Visiting Network Welcomes Parent Leaders and Benefits From Their Perspectives*: This brief shares the story of how the Network brought parents into the Network’s Advisory Committee.
Positive Early Learning Experiences

This section of the self-assessment tool includes policy recommendations to help ensure that families with infants and toddlers have access to high quality, affordable child care that offers their children a safe environment, nurturing relationships with caring adults, and positive early learning experiences. While it’s important to note that funding is foundational to a comprehensive infant and toddler early care and learning system, all components listed here are equally essential to ensure that babies in your state thrive.

ECE Funding

- **The State of Child Care for Babies: The Need to Do Better for Our Youngest Children**: This ZERO TO THREE brief draws on data reported in the 2020 Yearbook to highlight how a lack of public investment in child care leads to high costs for families. The first section of the report focuses on data related to children’s access to child care and state policies impacting the quality of care available. The second section highlights specific state strategies working to enhance children’s access to quality child care,
- **Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG) State Fact Sheets**: This First Five Years Fund resource explains how CCDBG funding is foundational in every state and why increased federal funding is necessary to reach all eligible families who need care.

State Examples

**Wisconsin is Leveraging American Rescue Plan Act Funding to Address the Needs of Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families**: Wisconsin approached the issue of addressing child care with ARPA dollars from the perspective of three categories of investment: providing immediate relief to families and providers; piloting collaborative and innovative approaches; and building long term infrastructure for a stronger system than what existed before COVID.

Partnership with Families, Communities and Providers

- **Addressing Bias and Advancing Equity in State Policy**: This ZERO TO THREE article explores the many ways in which states can and are addressing racial equity in problem solving and policymaking. The authors explore national data that make the case for addressing bias and advancing equity in state policy; share strategies and best practices for engaging families and communities; and provide examples of policies that can disrupt and dismantle institutional racism, promote equity, and ensure all babies get a strong start in life.
- **Engaging Families in Policy Change**: Recognizing the expertise of families based on their lived experience and providing the resources and support to enable them to participate fully in the
policymaking process are critical components of effective efforts to disrupt systemic racism and advance equity through improved policies for babies and their families. This brief provides an overview of strategies for engaging families in the policy change process.

- **How State Leaders Can Promote Meaningful Family Engagement at the State and Program Level:** This brief provides an overview of research-based practices and policies that state leaders can use to support meaningful family engagement in children’s early learning, which ultimately improves child and family outcomes. State leaders’ actions can influence family engagement at both the state and program levels.

### State Examples

- **Colorado Is Leveraging American Rescue Plan Funds for Babies:** Addressing the needs of infants, toddlers and their families emerged as a key component of Colorado’s approach to utilizing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) resources. One of the factors leading to this robust focus on babies was Colorado’s commitment to intentional and meaningful engagement of stakeholders, including families and providers, to inform decisions about how best to use ARPA dollars.

- **Reimagining Parent Leadership in Early Childhood Advocacy in New Jersey:** This brief focuses on the evolution, impacts, and future of family leadership in advocacy for young children in New Jersey.

- **Breaking the Silence and Bringing Good Noise: Parents and Advocates Come Together to Center Lived Experiences:** This paper highlights some of the experiences and lessons learned from five states as they worked to develop sustainable parent partnership models with shared power and reexamine methods of early childhood advocacy with a more intentional equity lens.

### Workforce

- **Improving Child Care Compensation Backgrounder 2021:** The Improving Child Care Compensation Backgrounder 2021 provides tactical information to help leaders better understand the policy levers available to support early educator compensation, which is so critical right now when we can finally address this critical problem.

- **Equitable Compensation for the Child Care Workforce—Within Reach and Worth the Investment:** This Bank Street brief outlines concrete ideas and innovative strategies to help advance early educator compensation at the local, state, and federal levels and, in turn, support the development and care of our nation’s youngest learners.

- **A Look at Salary/Wage Scales for the Early Childhood Educator Workforce:** This T.E.A.C.H Early Childhood National Center white paper examines salary scales – what they are and what to consider when planning one. Specific state examples are offered, as well as a general discussion of the elements and characteristics of a salary schedule.
Building for Babies Self-Assessment Resources and State Examples

- **The Early Educator Workforce Crisis-How Legislators Can Make a Difference for Kids, Families, and Educators**: This Center for the Study of Child Care Employment fact sheet provides legislators with key issues facing the ECE workforce, state-based solutions, and four action steps to take to champion workforce policies.

- **Career Pathways and Wage Ladders: A Key Opportunity for Improving Quality**: This Bank Street policy brief closely examines the potential of career pathways and wage ladders to serve as the foundation for transformative change for the early care and education workforce.

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### State Examples

**Kentucky Offers Early Care Staff Protected Status for Child Care Subsidies**: In an effort to stabilize programs, encourage staffing, and help child care staff who simply do not receive adequate compensation for the work they do, Kentucky leaders have added child care employees as a protected population to the Child Care Assistance program.

**Rhode Island Cross-Sector Compensation Report Drives Legislative Action**: The 2022 Rhode Island Early Educator Investment Act calls for the children’s cabinet to create and implement a plan to improve compensation of the early childhood workforce.

**Maine Invests in Monthly Stipends for Early Care and Education Providers**: Maine Governor Janet Mills signed a bipartisan budget bill that includes $12 million in state general funds to provide $200 monthly stipends for direct early care and education (ECE) workers.

**Policy Brief: DC Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund**: In this new policy brief, DC Action provides an overview of and recommendations for the District of Columbia’s Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund.

**HealthCare4ChildCare**: In 2023, advocates in the Washington D.C. B-3 coalition won the creation of HealthCare4ChildCare, which will provide free or reduced health care plans to staff in child care centers and homes.

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### Access and Family Choice

- **Conceptualizing and Measuring Access to Early Care and Education**: This OPRE research brief documents the extent to which current research and policy efforts have expanded beyond measures of the availability of ECE slots and affordability to also include measures of the availability of ECE information, quality of ECE programs, provision of services that support both the child’s development and the family’s needs, and the removal of structural barriers to ECE for socially or economically disadvantaged or at-risk populations.

- **Expanding Access to Child Care Assistance: Opportunities in the Child Care and Development Fund**: This Center for Law and Social Policy brief offers states ways to improve child care access
within the confines of the current system. It focuses on policies surrounding financial assistance for child care.

- **Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG) State Fact Sheets**: These First Five Years Fund state fact sheets give a state specific view of how federal funds are utilized and how many eligible children are not served due to a lack of sufficient funding.

- **Places for All Babies: Home-Based Child Care is an Essential Part of the Solution**: This ZERO TO THREE policy brief highlights the value of increasing and strengthening both of these child care options. It also includes examples of state strategies and recommendations that policymakers can explore in building a truly robust mixed delivery system that embraces both FCC and FFN as essential components in an array of high quality options for all families of infants and toddlers.

- **Hurting Families That Need It Most**: This brief outlines why states should strongly consider removing any child support enforcement requirements from state child care assistance policies.

## State Examples

**Maryland Makes Advances in Child Care for Infants and Toddlers**: In recognition of a child care system that burdens families and providers, state leaders recently announced they will move to paying child care programs in advance of serving children, and in monthly increments. This new policy acknowledges upfront costs, the risk of unenrollment, and the time needed to fill a slot when a child exits a program.

**Hurting Families That Need It Most**: This brief outlines why states should strongly consider removing any child support enforcement requirements from state child care assistance policies.

### Supply

- **Using Child Care Subsidy Payment Rates and Practices to Incentivize Expansions in Supply**: This Urban Institute research report explores the use of CCDF child care subsidy payment rates and practices to try to expand the supply of specific types of child care that are in shorter supply and focuses in particular on one of the most common policy levers—increasing the per child subsidy payment (also known as “differential” or “tiered” rates) paid to providers for children receiving these types of care.

- **Contracting in the Child Care System-Key Steps to Support Equity and Accountability**: This Urban Institute brief identifies eight questions state administrators should consider when developing a plan for a contracted approach. It additionally outlines what a successful contracting plan should consider, including timelines, needs and definitions, roles and responsibilities, transparency, capacity, performance-based contracting, targeted contracting goals, data systems, and reporting requirements.
• **The Shifting Supply of Regulated Family Child Care in the U.S.**: This Erickson Institute literature review and conceptual model examine research on the factors that may contribute to the decrease of regulated FCC supply. The research literature primarily focuses on challenges and demands that FCC providers face which we hypothesize that, over time, may lead to decisions to close their programs.

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### State Examples

- **New Economic Development Bill to Help Massachusetts Families and Child Care Programs**: A new bill aimed at supporting economic development in Massachusetts was signed into law by Governor Charlie Baker last month. The law adds 150 million dollars to the initial 250 million dollars in the Fiscal Year 2023 budget to continue the state’s Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) Stabilization Grants.

- **Michigan Uses American Rescue Plan Act Funds to Pilot Innovation**: With 12.5 million dollars in federal American Rescue Plan Act funding, the ECIC Child Care Innovation Fund has opened applications to communities across the state seeking funding for one of three child care innovation opportunities.

- **Dept. of Children and Youth Grants to Support Vital Early Child Care Programs Throughout Ohio**: The Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY) offers $15 million in Infant and Toddler Infrastructure Grants that allows licensed programs to expand, creating more access to early childhood education for families with infants and toddlers.

- **Maryland Makes Advances in Child Care for Infants and Toddlers**: Two newly developed child care data tools allow parents and legislators to better understand the landscape for child care in Maryland.

- **South Dakota Child Care Landscape**: South Dakota's child care mapping helps policymakers to better understand the current supply of child care throughout the state. The maps also show Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

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### Quality

- **Achieving Quality with Equity: Recognizing and Supporting High-Quality Practices and Professionals in Low-Resource Communities**: In efforts to promote equitable access to programs and services for young children and families, concepts and measures of quality rely heavily on the “counting” of both material and professional resources (e.g., facility and curricula, degrees and credentials). This ZERO TO THREE article explores looking for high-quality practices in unexpected places—with people and in communities whose limited access to such resources necessitates human resourcefulness—is a reminder to dive deeper and discover what really “counts” about the human capacity to care. To nurture and grow such potential is the important task in the quest to achieve quality with equity.
Quality for Whom? Supporting Diverse Children and Workers in Early Childhood Quality Rating and Improvement Systems: This Migration Policy Institute report examines how diverse providers access QRIS and the processes built around them, what indicators can be used to better capture program elements that are valuable to immigrant and refugee families, and how the rollout of QRIS in different states has affected these communities.

State Examples

New Economic Development Bill to Help Massachusetts Families and Child Care Programs: The law adds 150 million dollars to the initial 250 million dollars in the Fiscal Year 2023 budget to continue the state’s Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) Stabilization Grants. Grants can be used for a variety of expenses for child care programs as outlined by federal regulations including compensation, professional development, supplies, rent or mortgage, and COVID supplies.

Early Head Start

- Early Head Start Policy Recommendations: Policymakers must recognize and respond to the resources and service gaps in each community by reaffirming their commitment to Early Head Start’s unique mission of providing high-quality child development and comprehensive services to young children and families who are most in need. This ZERO TO THREE resource identifies five key ways they can do this.
- A Roadmap for Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships: This Bipartisan Policy Center series highlights the promising work of the EHS-CCPs to date, particularly related to pandemic recovery and stabilization. States can play many roles in establishing and expanding their own EHS-CCPs, including using Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five funding and aligning CCDF quality funding with supports to implement the Early Head Start model.
- State Investments in Head Start Support At-Risk Children and Families: This National Head Start Association fact sheet provides an overview of how states are contributing funding to expand and improve services via EHS.

State Examples

Parents and Advocates Come Together to Center Lived Experiences: From May 2021 to June 2022, five state teams (Maine, New Jersey, North Carolina, Texas, and Washington) set out to identify policy and advocacy priorities to increase access to Early Head Start and Head Start, placing special emphasis on partnering with families and promoting equity.
Collaboration and System-Building

If infants and toddlers are to reach their full potential, it is essential that state policies and systems provide equitable access to a comprehensive range of services and supports that honor the needs and choices of families for their children. Services are most effective when they are coordinated and accessible through systems that center equity and are built through collaboration, both across service areas and between government, families and communities. This section of the tool includes policy recommendations for developing and implementing such systems.

Governance

- **Creating an Integrated Efficient Early Care and Education System to Support Children and Families: A State-by-State Analysis**: Information collected by Bipartisan Policy Council was used to generate individual state fact sheets. In addition, BPC created a simple scoring system to enable cross-state comparisons of program integration. The scoring system was used to rank states in terms of their relative success across a number of measures: consolidating program administration, establishing advisory councils, implementing quality measures, and deploying available funds.

- **The Nuts and Bolts of Building Early Childhood Systems through State/Local Initiatives**: This paper, an update of a 2014 version, highlights the significant benefits of developing a statewide community-level infrastructure as a core component of a statewide early childhood system. It provides an overview of the key lessons BUILD team members and systems-building partners have learned over the years.

- **Early Childhood Governance-A toolkit of Curated Resources to Assist State Leaders**: This toolkit of curated resources from the PDG B-5 TA Center contains introductory information for those who are initially considering a focus on governance by providing definitions, a short overview, and materials about key facets of governance including varying approaches and models. For those who are already considering governance reforms, there are more in-depth materials that include a guide for those looking at governance structures and deeper dives examining different aspects of governance in states.

- **Early Childhood Governance Decision Guide** and **Report**: These tools from Foresight Law and Policy discuss early childhood governance and offers a series of questions to guide thinking about making changes.

State Examples

**Missouri to Launch New Office of Childhood**: The consolidation is an effort to bring together previously fragmented early care and education programs delivered by multiple state agencies. Programs under the new organization will include child care, home visiting, early learning, and Part C early intervention.
Comprehensive and Coordinated System

- **Putting the Pieces Together for Families with Young Children: Aligning State Health and Human Services, Nutrition, Child Care, and Paid Family and Medical Leave**: To improve economic, social, and health outcomes for our country’s youngest children and their families, CLASP set out to explore the value and importance of integrating or aligning programs that support families with infants and toddlers.

- **Strengthening Families with Infants and Toddlers: A Policy Framework for States**: This report from ZERO TO THREE is designed to reframe the role of child welfare from preventing harm to children toward strengthening families and the communities where they live. The policy framework includes 11 recommendations for states and communities that aim to advance equitable outcomes supporting the health and well-being of very young children and their families, including those who are in or are at risk of entering the child welfare system.

- **Strengthening Connections-State Approaches to Connecting Families to Services**: This ZERO TO THREE brief describes approaches being taken by the five states at both the statewide and community levels. It highlights innovative partnerships with existing programs and initiatives to maximize linkages and assist families in accessing resources to meet their needs. Finally, the brief offers some questions for states to consider as they design and implement strategies to strengthen families’ connections to services and supports.

- **Envisioning Your Home Visiting Expansion Infographic**: This home visiting expansion infographic and companion resources are designed to help you engage in a collaborative and inclusive planning effort to: envision home visiting expansion in your state or community, ensure your home visiting expansion centers equity and community voice and determine next steps toward expansion.

- **Hand in Hand**: This ZERO TO THREE resource highlights a community framework for early childhood collaboration developed by the Model Convening Project. To create this tool, leaders of four national early childhood models came together to develop Hand in Hand, a silo-busting, trust-building framework for community collaboration that achieves positive, equitable outcomes for all young children and their families.

- **Building Strong Foundations: Advancing Comprehensive Policies for Infants, Toddlers, and Families**: ZERO TO THREE and the Center for Law and Social Policy’s (CLASP) Building Strong Foundations: Advancing Comprehensive Policies for Infants, Toddlers, and Families project seeks to promote federal and state policies that comprehensively address the well-being of infants, toddlers, and families. This set of resources are guided by a Policy Framework, which is comprised of four principles describing the needs of infants and toddlers and their families based on a large body of developmental research.

Partnership with Families, Communities, and Infant-Toddler Professionals

- **Engaging Families in Policy Change**: Recognizing the expertise of families based on their lived experience and providing the resources and support to enable them to participate fully in the policymaking process are critical components of effective efforts to disrupt systemic racism and advance equity through improved policies for babies and their families. This brief provides an overview of strategies for engaging families in the policy change process.
• **Breaking the Silence and Bringing Good Noise: Parents and Advocates Come Together to Center Lived Experiences**: This ZERO TO THREE paper highlights some of the experiences and lessons learned from five states as they worked to develop sustainable parent partnership models with shared power and reexamine methods of early childhood advocacy with a more intentional equity lens.

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**State Examples**

- **Colorado Is Leveraging American Rescue Plan Funds for Babies**: Addressing the needs of infants, toddlers and their families emerged as a key component of Colorado’s approach to utilizing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) resources. One of the factors leading to this robust focus on babies was Colorado’s commitment to intentional and meaningful engagement of stakeholders, including families and providers, to inform decisions about how best to use ARPA dollars.

- **Reimagining Parent Leadership in Early Childhood Advocacy in New Jersey**: From the beginning, engaging families of young children has been a priority in New Jersey’s P-3 advocacy. This brief focuses on the evolution, impacts, and future of family leadership in advocacy for young children in New Jersey.

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**Data**

- **State of Babies Yearbook**: The ZERO TO THREE State of Babies Yearbook bridges the gap between science and policy with national and state-by-state views of how America’s babies and their families are faring.

- **Addressing Bias and Advancing Equity in State Policy**: This ZERO TO THREE article explores the many ways in which states can and are addressing racial equity in problem solving and policymaking. The authors explore national data that make the case for addressing bias and advancing equity in state policy; share strategies and best practices for engaging families and communities; and provide examples of policies that can disrupt and dismantle institutional racism, promote equity, and ensure all babies get a strong start in life.

- **Dual Language Learner Data Gaps: Takeaways for State Policy Leaders**: This is the fifth and final post in New America’s blog series, DLL Data Gaps, and summarizes key findings and recommendations for state policy leaders.

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**Workforce**

- **The National ECE Workforce Center Website**: The National Early Care and Education (ECE) Workforce Center is a joint research and technical assistance center. This center builds on the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) broader efforts to support the early childhood workforce by identifying effective policies and strategies through research and evaluation, translating lessons from research for practice, and supporting innovations in states and communities through technical assistance.