Critical Issues for Infants and Toddlers

A Child Trends Perspective

Prepared for the Communities of Hope Convening

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A Sampling of Child Trends’ Work on Infants and Toddlers

The Youngest Americans: A Statistical Portrait of Infants and Toddlers in the United States

The Youngest Illinoisans: A Statistical Look at Infants and Toddlers in Illinois
State Policy: A Framework

Critical Areas for Policy

- Health
- Family Support
- Learning

Critical Foundations to Implement Policy

- Standards
- Assessment Practices
- Accountability Systems
Health

• Evidence confirms “critical periods” for particular health outcomes
• Early poor health compromises subsequent development, in part by reducing adaptability (resilience), and constraining opportunities
• However, neither risk nor protective factors ensure poor or improved outcomes across domains or for all children
Family Support

- The family is the child’s *first developmental context*: material, social, and emotional
- *Poverty, low parental education,* and *stress* can compromise the quality of family relationships and the child’s involvement in experiences that enrich development
- *Family support programs* act to increase family engagement, and parents’ knowledge of child development, and reduce stress; provide work supports; and help them access health and nutrition services, job training, or treatment for substance abuse
Learning

• The achievement gap opens early, and is predictive of academic trajectories through later schooling
• Children who get high-quality early care and education experiences have better outcomes across multiple developmental domains
• The early care and education workforce and early-grades teachers play a critical role in providing quality; however, poor workplace conditions erode their potential contributions
• Training and professional development opportunities vary greatly and are poorly coordinated
Infants & Toddlers: Fact Check

• Number of infants & toddlers in the U.S.:  
  >13 million

• Poverty rate, infants & toddlers:  
  25 percent >3.3 million  
  (Poverty rate, all children: 22 percent)

• Number of neural connections formed in the brain during the first three years of life:  
  700 per second
Infants & Toddlers: Fact Check

- In regular non-parental care each week: about 50%
- Number of infants & toddlers receiving child care subsidies each month: >400,000
- Average cost of full-time infant care: $4,560 to $16,006, depending on location and type of care
- Average hourly wage of center-based teachers and caregivers serving children 0-3 Years: $10.40
- States with early learning standards or developmental guidelines for infants & toddlers: 44
- Child maltreatment rate, infants & toddlers: 16.1 per thousand
  (Child maltreatment rate, all children: 9.4 per thousand)
Children, Ages 4 Months Through Two Years, With Developmental Risk,* Total and by Race/Hispanic Origin: 2011/12

Source: Child Trends’ analysis of the National Survey of Children’s Health.
Children, Ages Birth through Two, Who Had A Family Member Read, Sing, or Tell Them Stories Everyday in the Past Week, Total, and by Race/Hispanic Origin: 2011/12

Source: Child Trends’ analysis of the National Survey of Children’s Health.
Children, Ages Birth through Five, Exposed to Violence in the Past Year: Percentages by Child's Age, 2011

- Physical assault: 44% (0-1 years), 13% (2-5 years)
- Sexual victimization: 1% (0-1 years), 1% (2-5 years)
- Maltreatment: 10% (0-1 years), 6% (2-5 years)
- Witness violence: 14% (0-1 years), 8% (2-5 years)
- Witness family assault: 7% (0-1 years), 6% (2-5 years)
- Indirect exposure to violence: 3% (0-1 years), 0% (2-5 years)

Parents of Children, Ages Birth Through Two, Who Reported Two or More Depressive Symptoms During the Past 30 Days: 2001-2011

Source: Child Trends’ analysis of data from the National Health Interview Survey.
Percentage of Mothers Breastfeeding, by Birth Year of Infant, 2000-2012

- Ever Breastfed (goal: 81%)
- Breastfed at 6 months (goal: 61%)
- Breastfed at 12 months (goal: 34%)

* Data for 2009 and later includes cell phones in the sample.

Victims of Substantiated Child Maltreatment: Infants and Toddlers

- Age <1
- Age 1-2
- Age <1-2

Source: Children’s Bureau, ACF, DHHS.
Developing a Strengths-Based Perspective on Well-Being

Evidence-based protective/promotive factors (at a child level):

- Easy-going temperament
- Self-efficacy
- Intelligence
- Flexibility, cognitive reframing
- Planfulness
- High self-esteem
- Good self-control
- Effective coping skills
- Positive relationships with non-parental adults
National Survey of Children’s Health: Indicators of “Flourishing”

(ages birth to 5 years) How often child . . .
• Is affectionate and tender with you
• Bounces back quickly when things don’t go his/her way
• Shows interest and curiosity in learning new things
• Smiles and laughs a lot

(ages 6 to 17) How often child . . .
• Finishes the tasks he/she starts and follows through with what she/he says they will do
• Stays calm and in control when faced with a challenge
• Shows interest an curiosity in learning new things
• Cares about doing well in school
• Does all required homework
Children, Six Months through Two Years, by Number of "Flourishing" Items,* by Parental Education: 2011/12

*Source: Child Trend's analysis of National Survey of Children's Health.
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See infant and toddler reports at: Childtrends.org