



## National Center for Children in Poverty

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# UNITED STATES EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFILE

State policies that promote health, education, and strong families can help the early development and school readiness of America's youngest citizens. These state policies are especially important to low-income families whose young children lack access to the kinds of supports and opportunities that their more affluent peers receive. It takes at least twice the official federal poverty level (FPL), or \$36,620 for a family of three in 2009, for families to provide the basic necessities that their young children need to thrive.<sup>1</sup> Nationally, 10 million children under the age of 6 live in families earning twice the federal poverty level or less.<sup>2</sup> The National Center for Children in Poverty's Improving the Odds for Young Children project shines a spotlight on state variation in the policy commitment to low-income young children and families.

This national profile aggregates the policy choices of the 50 states and the District of Columbia alongside other contextual data related to the well-being of young children. The first page presents demographic information on children younger than age 6, and subsequent pages profile the policy context related to their: (1) health and nutrition, (2) early care and education, and (3) parenting and economic supports. State specific profiles are also available.

Complete source citations and endnotes are included with this profile. For easy reference, the year of the data appears in brackets. To show the range of variation among states, some graphs identify the states with the highest and lowest percentages alongside the national average.

In addition to the state and national profiles, the project includes:

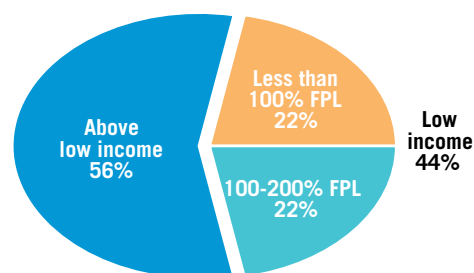
- Data tables that allow for comparisons across states on each policy choice
- A national report summarizing the research base for policies that promote early childhood development and key findings from the state profiles.

*Updated: March 23, 2010*

*Send updates on your state's profile to : [ITO@nccp.org](mailto:ITO@nccp.org)*

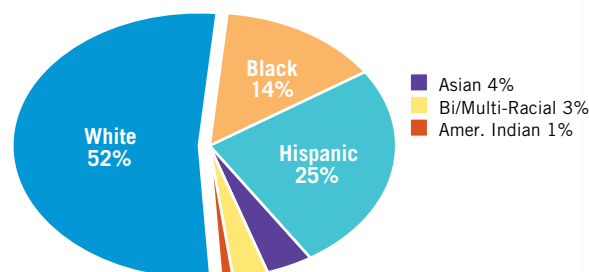
## Young children (under age 6)<sup>2</sup>: 25,111,504

### Young children by income, 2008<sup>2</sup>

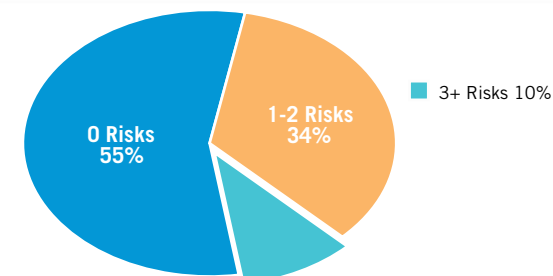


Among young low-income children, 10.4% live in extreme poverty (less than 50% FPL).

### Young children by race/ethnicity, 2008<sup>2</sup>



### Exposure to multiple risk factors\* among young children, 2008<sup>3</sup>



\* Risk factors include any combination of the following: single parent, living in poverty, linguistically isolated, parents have less than a high school education, and parents have no paid employment.

## HEALTH AND NUTRITION

### State Choices to Promote Access

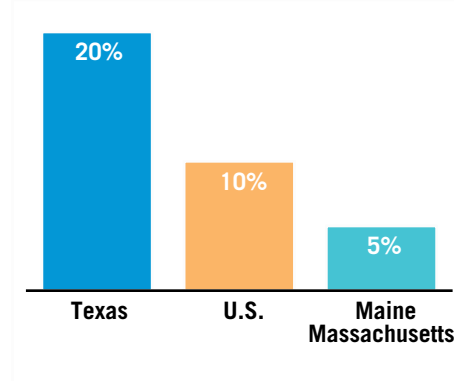
- **47** states set the income eligibility limit for public health insurance (Medicaid/SCHIP) at or above 200 percent of the federal poverty level for children ages birth to 5 [2009]<sup>4</sup>
- **24** states set the income eligibility limit for public health insurance (Medicaid/SCHIP) at or above 200 percent of the federal poverty level for pregnant women [2009]<sup>4</sup>
- **12** states set the income eligibility limit for public health insurance (Medicaid/SCHIP) at or above 200 percent of the federal poverty level for immigrant children 0-1yr [2009]<sup>4</sup>
- **6** states set the income eligibility limit for public health insurance (Medicaid/SCHIP) at or above 200 percent of the federal poverty level for immigrant children 3-5yrs [2009]<sup>4</sup>
- **18** states set the income eligibility limit for public health insurance (Medicaid/SCHIP) at or above 200 percent of the federal poverty level for immigrant pregnant women [2009]<sup>4</sup>
- **35** states provide temporary coverage to pregnant women under Medicaid until eligibility can be formally determined. [2009]<sup>4</sup>
- **15** states provide temporary coverage to children under Medicaid or CHIP until eligibility can be formally determined. [2009]<sup>4</sup>
- **13** states include at-risk children in the definition of eligibility for IDEA Part C. [2009]<sup>5</sup>
- **32** states do not require redetermination of eligibility for Medicaid/CHIP more than once a year [2009]<sup>4</sup>

### State Choices to Promote Quality

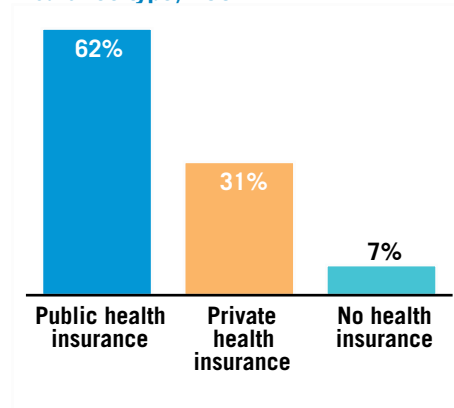
EPSDT screening periodicity schedule meets recommendations of American Academy of Pediatrics [FY 2008]<sup>7</sup>

- **5** states 7 Screenings for children <1 year
- **39** states 4 Screenings for children 1-2 years
- **48** states 3 Screenings for children 3-5 years
- **36** states require newborn screening for hearing deficiencies. [2009]<sup>8</sup>
- **41** states require newborn screening for the 28 metabolic deficiencies/disorders recommended by the March of Dimes. [2009]<sup>8</sup>

Young children who lack health insurance, 2008<sup>2</sup>



Percent of low-income children with a medical home, by insurance type, 2007<sup>6</sup>



## EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

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### State choices to promote access

- **17** states set the income eligibility limit for child care subsidies at or above 200% FPL. [2009]<sup>9</sup>
- **8** states child care subsidy reimbursement rate meets the recommended 75th percentile of the market rate for two consecutive years [2009]<sup>9</sup>
- **22** states redetermine the eligibility for child care subsidies no more than once per year [2008]<sup>10</sup>
- **17** states supplement Early Head Start with state or other federal funds. [2008]<sup>11</sup>
- **43** states fund a pre-kindergarten program and/or supplement Head Start. [2008]<sup>12</sup>

### State choices to promote quality

- **15** states require one adult for every 10 4-year-olds, and a maximum class size of 20 in child care centers. [2007]<sup>13</sup>
- **8** states require one adult for every four 18-month-olds, and a maximum class size of eight in child care centers. [2007]<sup>13</sup>
- **22** states allocate state or federal funds for a network of infant/toddler specialists that provide assistance to child care providers. [2009]<sup>14</sup>
- **30** states have early learning standards or developmental guidelines for infants and toddlers. [2009]<sup>15</sup>
- **14** states have an infant/toddler credential. [2009]<sup>16</sup>
- **23** states require through regulation that infants and toddlers in child care centers be assigned a consistent primary caregiver. [2008]<sup>17</sup>
- **19** states have implemented a statewide Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) [2009]<sup>18</sup>

## PARENTING AND ECONOMIC SUPPORTS

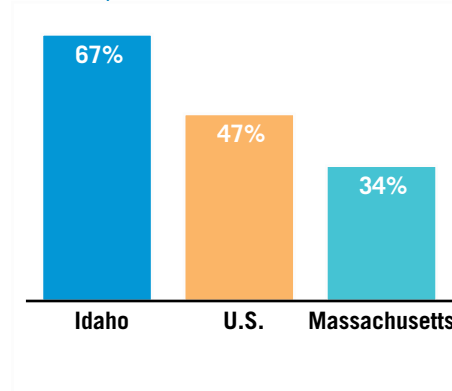
### State choices to promote effective parenting

- **27** states provide option to extend Medicaid coverage for family planning to otherwise ineligible low-income women [2009]<sup>19</sup>
- **23** states exempt single parents on TANF from work requirements until the youngest child reaches age 1. [2008]<sup>20</sup>
- **29** states reduce the TANF work requirement to 20 hours or less for single parents with children under age 6 [2008]<sup>20</sup>
- **32** states operate a statewide home visiting program. [2007]<sup>21</sup>

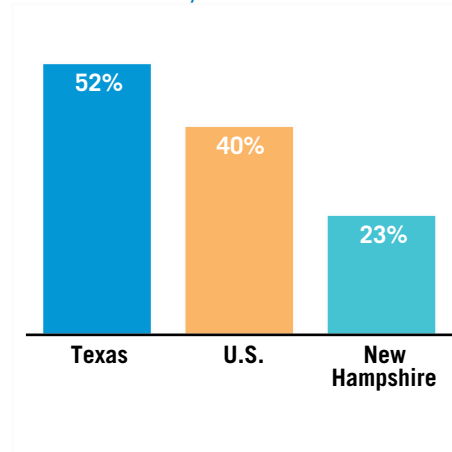
### State choices to support family economic security

- **15** states establish a state minimum wage that exceeds the federal minimum wage (\$7.25/hr). [2009]<sup>22</sup>
- **39** states exempt single-parent families of three below the poverty level from personal income tax. [2009]<sup>23</sup>
- **18** states offer a refundable state Earned Income Tax Credit. [2008]<sup>24</sup>
- **13** states offer a refundable state dependent care tax credit. [2007]<sup>25</sup>
- **16** states keep copayments for child care subsidies below 10% of family income for most families. [2008]<sup>10</sup>
- **26** states allow families on TANF to receive some or all of their child support payment without reducing TANF cash assistance. [2009]<sup>26</sup>
- **11** states offer exemptions and/or extensions of the TANF benefit time limit for women who are pregnant or caring for a child under age 6. [2008]<sup>27</sup>

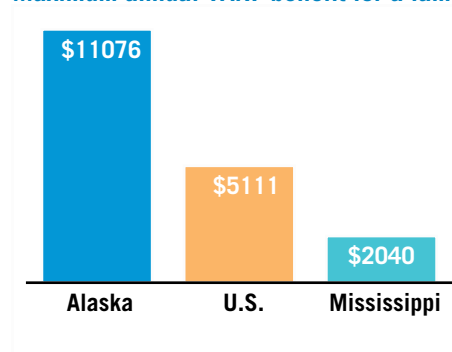
Low-income young children with a parent employed full-time, 2008<sup>2</sup>



Young children with mothers who have a high school education or less, 2008<sup>2</sup>



Maximum annual TANF benefit for a family of 3, 2008<sup>20</sup>



This profile is a product of NCCP's *Improving the Odds for Young Children* initiative. It is funded through NCCP's participation in The Birth to Five Policy Alliance, sponsored by the Buffett Early Childhood Fund. The information represents the most recent 50-state data sources and will be updated with the release of new data. See [www.nccp.org/improvingtheodds](http://www.nccp.org/improvingtheodds) for other state profiles.

## DATA NOTES AND SOURCES

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