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2022 Prenatal-to-3 State Policy Roadmap

Methods and Sources

Effective Strategies

EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

What are Early Intervention services and why are they important?

All references for this section are provided in the Notes and Sources section at the bottom of each webpage. Additionally, search the <u>Prenatal-to-3 Policy Clearinghouse</u> for an ongoing inventory of rigorous evidence reviews, including more information on Early Intervention services.

What impact do Early Intervention services have?

The following studies meet standards of strong causal evidence to demonstrate the impacts of Early Intervention services for the health and wellbeing of young children and their families:

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- I. Hill, J., Brooks-Gunn, J., & Waldfogel, J. (2003). Sustained effects of high participation in an Early Intervention for low birthweight premature infants. *Developmental Psychology*, *39*(4), 730–744. https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.39.4.730

How and why do Early Intervention services vary across states?

In the absence of an evidence-based state policy lever to ensure Early Intervention (EI) services effectively provide children and families the support they need, we present several choices that states can make to more effectively implement their EI programs. We identify states as leaders in the implementation of EI services if they:

- Serve a high share of their infants and toddlers relative to other states;
- Allow children with less severe delays to qualify for EI services and allow children to qualify through a wide variety of medical conditions and risk factors, which may include low birthweight and prematurity;
- Access a variety of funding streams beyond the federal Part C allocation to ensure that sufficient resources are available to provide eligible infants and toddlers with timely therapies and treatments; and/or
- Foster collaboration with other state agencies and systems.

Our determination of state leaders did not apply a specific numerical threshold or formula to the above criteria, but rather involved a holistic comparison of states' EI programs based on available data and previous consultation with national experts and researchers in Early Intervention.

To determine each state's share of infants and toddlers served by Early Intervention services, we calculated the percentage of children under age 3 served by EI services over the course of a 12-month reporting period based on annually reported state-level data from the US Department of Education and estimates of the under age 3 population from Census Population Estimates. (For further information regarding this calculation, see the information for Measure 1 below).

We collected information on state eligibility criteria for Part C programs from multiple sources: a database managed by the Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center, a report from the IDEA Infant & Toddler Coordinators Association (ITCA) containing states' self-reported eligibility categories, and information available on state agency websites and statutes. We also reached out to Part C coordinators in specific states to confirm state data and descriptions regarding eligibility criteria and categories, especially when eligibility categorizations were inconsistent across states.

A separate IDEA ITCA report provided states' self-reported funding information, and we also accessed a 2020 report by the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) and the Georgetown University Health Policy Institute's Center for Children and Families for state-specific survey information on Medicaid and other funding mechanisms

for EI. The NCCP and Georgetown report also included information on child welfare agencies' coordination with Part C programs, maternal depression screenings for mothers with children in EI services, and infant mental health trainings for EI staff, among other state policies and procedures related to EI.

In 2021 and 2022, we also performed outreach to Early Intervention researchers and experts regarding state strengths and investments in Part C programs to supplement the information we learned from written reports and to resolve any discrepancies between written sources. We convened a conference call in July 2021 with EI researchers to gain a greater understanding of various aspects of EI policy and to discuss states' strengths and areas for improvement in implementing their EI programs; this information continues to inform the Roadmap. We accessed a report from the Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education to identify which states are designated as "birth mandate states," which are the states that provide a free, appropriate public education to all children ages 0 to 21, including EI services from birth to age 3 for eligible children (no family fees may be charged for EI services in these states).

To capture state compliance with the federally mandated policy requiring states to connect victims of child abuse or neglect to EI services as needed through a screening and referral process, we incorporated available information from the most recent Child Maltreatment report, including the percentages of children in each state who were victims of substantiated abuse or neglect and who were referred to Part C agencies for further screening, evaluation, or services.

To assess state legislative progress associated with Early Intervention, we also performed an electronic search using Quorum State between August 15, 2021 and September 28, 2022. The main search strategy used combinations of keywords for Early Intervention (early intervention OR Individuals with Disabilities Education Act OR Part C). Research staff conducted searches, analyzed results for relevant state legislation, and summarized the progress states made toward supporting Early Intervention programs.

This section, as well as those that follow, also contains the sources for the information presented in the individual state Roadmaps.

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Data were collected for six different measures to assess how states vary in their implementation of Early Intervention services. The data sets, calculations, and sources referenced for each state are listed below.

Measures 1 and 3: Cumulative percentage of children under age 3 receiving Early Intervention services, overall and in each of four mutually exclusive race/ethnic groups

Definition:

The cumulative percentage of children under age 3 who received Early Intervention services during the state's most recent 12-month reporting period, as reported to the Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Notes:

- 1. **Numerator:** The number of children under age 3 who received Early Intervention services during the state's most recent 12-month reporting period, overall and in each of four mutually exclusive race/ethnic groups.
- 2. **Denominator:** The number of children under age 3, overall and in each of four mutually exclusive race/ethnic groups.
- 3. Four mutually exclusive race/ethnic groups were created from the race/ethnicity information provided for both the data for the numerator (EDFacts Metadata and Process System [EMAPS]) and denominator (2020 vintage Census Population estimates). Three of the seven categories in EMAPS were white, Hispanic/Latino, and Black or African American. The fourth group was created as the sum of the remaining four categories (Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and two or more races). In the Census population estimate data, race/ethnic groups were calculated using the Hispanic/non-Hispanic and 6-race category indicators. If a child was identified as Hispanic, then they were categorized as Hispanic regardless of race. Next, children were identified as Black, non-Hispanic, then White, non-Hispanic. The fourth group was created from the other four non-Hispanic categories (Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and more than one race or unknown/not stated).
- 4. For each state, we calculated the difference in the percentage served between the race/ethnic group with the highest percentage served and the lowest percentage served to identify each state's range, or difference between the highest-served and least-served group. We identified the 10 states with the smallest gaps between the highest-served and least-served group.
- 5. The 12-month reporting period is defined by each state and varies across states, with some reporting on the calendar year and others reporting on timelines aligned with fiscal, academic, or other defined annual periods.

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Special Note About the Percentage Served by Early Intervention Services

In the Roadmap, we chose to report on the cumulative, rather than point-in-time, number of children participating in Early Intervention services based on recommendations from national EI experts. Although the point-in-time measure (which captures the number of children served in each state on one specific day during a 3-month window in the fall) may be the more appropriate measure for children age 3 and older who may also be more likely to be receiving services in a formal school setting following an academic calendar, the cumulative data may be a better representation of the experience of children under age 3 as these data capture the full count of children receiving services over the span of a 12-month reporting period. The two measures are highly correlated (r = 0.94), with the cumulative count generally reflecting a value twice the size of the point-in-time count. With this larger sample of children served, the cumulative count of children also allows for greater utility in disaggregating the percentage served by race/ethnicity groups within states. The table on the following page provides both the cumulative and point-in-time data for each state.

Percentage of Children Under Age 3 Served in State Part C Programs, Point-in-Time and Cumulative Counts for 2020-2021

State	Point-in-Time	Cumulative
State	% Served	% Served
Alabama	2.0%	4.4%
Alaska	2.8%	6.2%
Arizona	2.2%	4.3%
Arkansas	0.9%	1.9%
California	3.3%	6.1%
Colorado	3.8%	6.7%
Connecticut	4.8%	10.3%
Delaware	3.0%	5.2%
District of Columbia	3.7%	7.6%
Florida	2.4%	5.1%
Georgia	2.3%	5.0%
Hawaii	0.8%	6.5%
Idaho	2.8%	6.1%

6	Point-in-Time	Cumulative
State	% Served	% Served
Illinois	2.8%	9.4%
Indiana	4.5%	10.6%
Iowa	2.2%	5.4%
Kansas	4.3%	9.7%
Kentucky	2.2%	6.0%
Louisiana	2.7%	5.4%
Maine	2.4%	6.2%
Maryland	3.4%	6.7%
Massachusetts	10.5%	20.7%
Michigan	2.9%	6.4%
Minnesota	2.4%	5.6%
Mississippi	1.5%	2.4%
Missouri	3.1%	4.3%
Montana	1.7%	4.0%
Nebraska	2.5%	9.7%
Nevada	2.7%	9.8%
New Hampshire	4.6%	15.2%
New Jersey	4.0%	8.8%
New Mexico	6.7%	5.5%
New York	3.8%	9.5%
North Carolina	2.5%	5.6%
North Dakota	4.8%	3.8%
Ohio	2.6%	7.1%
Oklahoma	1.5%	11.0%
Oregon	2.6%	14.2%
Pennsylvania	4.9%	7.6%
Rhode Island	6.4%	5.2%
South Carolina	3.8%	6.9%
South Dakota	2.6%	5.1%
Tennessee	3.4%	6.7%
Texas	2.4%	11.8%
Utah	3.0%	6.5%
Vermont	5.5%	7.5%
Virginia	3.3%	13.5%
Washington	3.3%	6.1%
West Virginia	6.8%	9.6%
Wisconsin	2.7%	6.9%
Wyoming	5.9%	1.9%

Measures 2 and 4: Percentage of babies born low birthweight (less than 5.5 pounds), overall and by four mutually exclusive race/ethnicity groups

Definition:

The percentage of babies born in the past year who were born weighing less than 5.5 pounds (2,500 grams).

Notes:

- 1. **Numerator**: The number of births in the past year in which the baby weighed less than 5.5 pounds (2,500 grams), overall and by four mutually exclusive race/ethnicity groups.
- 2. **Denominator**: The number of births in the past year with known birthweight, overall and by four mutually exclusive race/ethnicity groups.
- 3. The sample was limited to births in the past year with valid birthweight data. Race/ethnic groups based on mother's race and ethnicity were calculated using the Hispanic origin and 6-race category variables provided in the CDC WONDER online database. From these two variables, four mutually exclusive race/ethnic groups were created. If a birth was identified with a Hispanic mother, then the birth was categorized as Hispanic regardless of the race of the mother. Next, births were identified as those to Black, non-Hispanic mothers, then White, non-Hispanic mothers. The fourth group was created from all other non-Hispanic mothers (Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, more than one race, or unknown/not stated). Births to mothers whose Hispanic origin was reported as unknown on the birth certificate were excluded from the percentages reported by race/ethnic group. CDC reporting rules require the suppression of sub-national counts of 9 or fewer births.¹

Source:

United States Department of Health and Human Services (US DHHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Division of Vital Statistics. (n.d.). *Natality public-use data 2020, on CDC WONDER Online Database, November 2021 [Data Set]*. Accessed at http://wonder.cdc.gov/natality-expanded-current.html on August 25, 2022.

Measure 5: Criteria used to determine eligibility for Early Intervention services

Definition:

We reported the following components of EI eligibility policies for each state.

- 1. Developmental delay eligibility criteria,
- 2. States' self-declared eligibility category (broad, moderate, narrow) as reported in a 2021 survey,
- 3. Low birthweight criteria for diagnosed/established conditions or at-risk eligibility,
- 4. Preterm birth criteria for diagnosed/established conditions or at-risk eligibility, and
- 5. Whether the state is designated as serving at-risk children under federal Part C policies.

Notes:

¹ Centers for Disease Control (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). (n.d.). CDC WONDER Datasets - Data use restrictions. As of February 10, 2020. Retrieved May 15, 2020 from https://wonder.cdc.gov/DataUse.html#

States self-declared their eligibility categories in a June 2021 survey (see source below) as either broad, moderate, or narrow, meant to correspond roughly to the definitions below, although states with the same eligibility criteria did not always self-declare the same category.

- a. **Broad eligibility** was defined as: At Risk, Any Delay, Atypical Development, one standard deviation in one domain, 20% delay in two or more domains, 22% in two or more domains, 25% delay in one or more domains.
- Moderate eligibility was defined as: 25% in two or more domains, 30% delay in one or more domains,
 1.3 standard deviations in two domains,
 1.5 standard deviations in any domain,
 33% delay in one domain.
- c. **Narrow eligibility** was defined as: 33% delay in two or more domains, 40% delay in one domain, 50% delay in one domain, 1.5 standard deviations in 2 or more domains, 1.75 standard deviations in one domain, 2 standard deviations in two or more domains.

Sources:

- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (2022). State and jurisdictional eligibility requirements for infants and toddlers with disabilities under IDEA Part C. Retrieved on September 9, 2022, from https://ectacenter.org/topics/earlyid/state-info.asp
- M. Greer, IDEA Infant & Toddler Coordinators Association, personal communication, August 29, 2022. (Forthcoming 2022 Tipping points survey data, from June 2021.)https://www.ideainfanttoddler.org/pdf/2020-Tipping-Points-Survey.pdf
- 3. For the 2021 Prenatal-to-3 State Policy Roadmap, outreach to individual states and national experts was conducted to assess discrepancies between states stated eligibility standards and their self-categorization into one of the three categories above. In some cases, this information was used again this year and is based on the following sources:
 - a. C. Robles, Hawaii Department of Health, Early Intervention Section, personal communication, June 15, 2021.
 - b. C. Scott, Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Early Childhood, personal communication, July 13, 2021.
 - c. E. Shaw, Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, personal communication, August 30,2022.
 - d. J. Kaufman, Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services, personal communication, August 3 and August 10, 2021.
 - e. K. Berman, Start Early, personal communication, August 4, 2021.
 - f. L. Barrett, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, personal communication, August 3, 2021.
 - g. M. Greer, IDEA Infant & Toddler Coordinators Association, personal communication, July 12, 2021
 - h. S. Evans, New Jersey Department of Health, personal communication, July 13, 2021.
 - i. Texas Health and Human Services Early Childhood Intervention Services. *Qualifying diagnosis search*. Retrieved on June 16, 2021, from https://diagsearch.hhsc.state.tx.us/Eligibility/Detail/23773

Measure 6: State funding mechanisms for Early Intervention services

Definition: The state reports the primary source of funding for Early Intervention as either state, federal, or local funds; the state accesses private insurance for EI services; and the state charges family fees for EI services.

Notes:

- 1. Supplemental sources for individual states were consulted to clarify/confirm the information data provided in the IDEA ITCA report
- 2. Funding indicators for Kansas were not provided in the report.

Sources:

- 1. IDEA Infant & Toddler Coordinators Association. (2021). *Funding structure*. Retrieved on August 29, 2022, from https://www.ideainfanttoddler.org/pdf/Funding-Structure.pdf
- 2. M. Greer, IDEA Infant & Toddler Coordinators Association, personal communication, June 25, 2021 and August 29, 2022.