

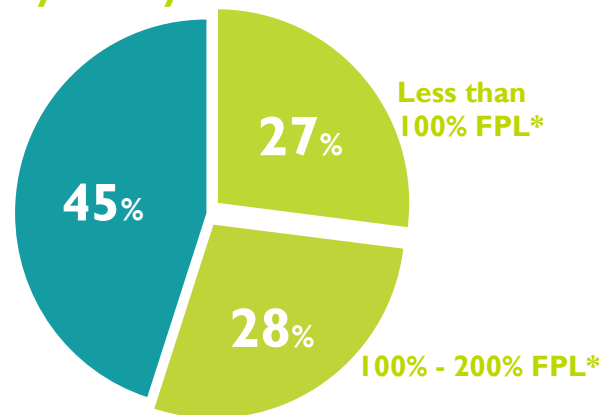
# OKLAHOMA'S 155,286 INFANTS, TODDLERS, AND THEIR FAMILIES

- 10%** live with unemployed parents
- 32%** live with a single parent
- 71%** have at least one risk factor known to increase the chance of poor health, school, and developmental outcomes

Oklahoma ranks **43<sup>rd</sup>** among all states for child well-being

**55%** of Oklahoma infants and toddlers live in low-income families {U.S. is 46%}

Oklahoma Infants & Toddlers by Family Income Level



\*Federal Poverty Level

## FEDERAL PROGRAMS HELP OKLAHOMA BUILD STRONG FAMILIES AND GROW HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE CHILDREN

All babies need **good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences** to foster healthy brain development and realize their potential.

Brains develop at lightning speed in the first three years of life. A baby's early experiences shape the brain's architecture into a strong—or fragile—foundation for learning, health, and success in the workplace. Adverse early experiences, such as poverty, can weaken babies' brain development and follow them their entire lives.

As in the country as a whole, too many of Oklahoma's babies grow up in families under great economic stress, without the resources to provide ingredients necessary for healthy development. These include adequate health care, food, housing, and early learning opportunities. More than half of Oklahoma's babies live in families with income inadequate to meet these basic needs, at less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). More than one fourth live in outright poverty, defined as an income of \$22,350 or less for a family of four.

Our nation's prosperity is jeopardized when the future of young children is compromised. Oklahoma's families benefit from important federal programs that help them secure resources needed to nurture their children's healthy development and realize their potential. Combinations of programs, such as nutrition and housing assistance, help buffer young children against the developmental effects of multiple hardships.

- Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) support physical health and provide fuel for healthy brains to develop.
- Home visiting and child welfare programs support families and protect and nurture children; housing assistance and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) help shelter them.
- Early Head Start (EHS), child care, and Part C Early Intervention provide positive early learning experiences and help parents support early development.

# OKLAHOMA'S INFANTS, TODDLERS, AND FAMILIES: GOOD HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Good health is the foundation from which young children grow and develop physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially. Quality medical care and adequate nutrition, starting before birth, are key building blocks for this healthy development.

- Lack of nutritious food during pregnancy increases the risk of infant mortality and poor long-term health
- Preterm babies may endure lifelong consequences like blindness, chronic lung disease, and other conditions
- Underweight babies are 166% more likely to be at developmental risk compared to normal weight babies

## Oklahoma Infant & Toddler Health Chart

<b>8.3%</b> have low birthweight {U.S. average 8.2%}	<b>77%</b> are born to mothers who receive early prenatal care {National Healthy People goal is 90%}
<b>13.4%</b> are born preterm, earning Oklahoma a grade F compared to national objective	<b>70%</b> of two-year-olds are immunized {U.S. average 75%}

**7%** of Oklahoma's  
youngest children don't  
have health insurance

## KEY FEDERAL PROGRAMS SUPPORT INFANTS & TODDLERS IN OKLAHOMA

Compared to the U.S. average of 8.9%, approximately 7.2% of Oklahoma's young children under age 6 do not have health insurance. Insured children are 3 times more likely to have seen a doctor compared to uninsured children, and the need for health care during a child's earliest years is more crucial than at most other times in life, as preventative care and screening can catch problems early.

Federal programs can help ensure Oklahoma's babies get a healthy start in life. These federal programs include Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

### MEDICAID IN OKLAHOMA

- **64%** of births are covered by Medicaid
- **89%** of infants on Medicaid receive at least one EPSDT screening
- **74%** of children on public insurance have a medical home

Medicaid is critical in ensuring that the youngest children have access to high quality, affordable, and consistent health care. Research demonstrates that Medicaid's impact on the health outcomes of very young children is especially pronounced.

Due in large part to Medicaid, the national rate of uninsured low-income children of all ages fell from 28% in 1998 to 10.4% in 2010.

### SNAP AND WIC IN OKLAHOMA

- **17%** of SNAP recipients are under age 5
- **103,037** mothers, infants, and children receive WIC
- **25%** of WIC recipients are infants

Nutrition programs play a key role in protecting the health of the most vulnerable infants and toddlers. Nationwide, mothers who participate in WIC are 44% less likely to have low-birthweight babies and also experience fewer preterm births.

Children who receive WIC and SNAP benefits experience lower levels of food insecurity, which has been shown to increase risk for poor health and developmental delays.

# OKLAHOMA'S INFANTS, TODDLERS, AND FAMILIES: STRONG FAMILIES

Young children develop in the context of their families, where supportive relationships nurture their growth. Especially during an economic downturn, it can be challenging for parents to provide their children the necessities of life. Factors like family stress, difficult economic situations, environmental effects, and abuse and neglect can impair the development of infants and toddlers.

## Oklahoma Family Index

An estimated **2,500** homeless children are under age 6

**20%** of children under age 3 experience residential mobility

**44%** of children living with their grandparents are under age 6

**15-20%** of children under age 6 are in families spending more than half of their income on rent



**35%** of Oklahoma's maltreated children are under age 3

## KEY FEDERAL PROGRAMS SUPPORT INFANTS & TODDLERS IN OKLAHOMA

Chronic, unrelenting stress, particularly stress that results from abuse and neglect, can be toxic to the developing brain. More than 1 in 3 of Oklahoma's maltreated children is an infant or toddler. Toxic stress can alter their brain development and leave lasting negative effects both in childhood and later in life. Other factors that can cause toxic stress and impact a family's physical and mental health include insecure and inadequate housing and heating. Family residential stability, on the other hand, is highly associated with a child's educational success. Key federal programs provide families with resources needed to support healthy development.

### TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

**39% of TANF families in Oklahoma have at least one child under age 3.** TANF helps states provide resources such as income support, transportation, and child care to families while they train or look for work.

### LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP)

**25% of Oklahoma households receiving heating assistance through LIHEAP have a child under age 6.** Young children in low-income households receiving LIHEAP are less likely than their counterparts to be undernourished, require emergency hospitalization, or incur developmental problems.

### CHILD WELFARE

**38% of Oklahoma children entering foster care are under age 3.** These children rely on the child welfare system to make good decisions on their behalf, including placement into a foster home, maintenance of visitation with parents, and movement towards permanency. Federal funding through Title IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act, along with other programs, provides 55% of Oklahoma's child welfare funds.

### VOLUNTARY HOME VISITING

**A variety of Oklahoma's home visiting programs served an estimated 25,444 families and clients from 2008-2009.** Home visiting is effective in increasing school readiness, improving child development, reducing child abuse and neglect, and enhancing parents' ability to respond to their child's physical, cognitive, and emotional needs. The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program created by the Affordable Care Act will boost Oklahoma's efforts to support the development of its babies.

# OKLAHOMA'S INFANTS, TODDLERS, AND FAMILIES: POSITIVE EARLY LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Positive early learning experiences can ensure each child is able to seize his or her potential for future success. Development is cumulative, and the earliest experiences lay the foundation for all the learning that follows. During the first 3 years of life, the brain undergoes its most dramatic development and children acquire the ability to think, speak, learn, and reason. By 16-18 months, word learning is significantly affected by economic background. Gaps between children of different income levels in the amount of talk, vocabulary growth, and style of interaction appear early and widen long before a child's scholastic career begins.

## Oklahoma Infant & Toddler Early Learning Progress Report

**47%** of parents read to their 0-5 year-old each day


**59%** of parents tell stories and sing to their 0-5 year-old

**31%** of children age 0-5 have parents who had to make emergency child care arrangements or change jobs for child care reasons

**26%** of children are determined to be at moderate or high risk for developmental or behavioral problems

**58%** of Oklahoma mothers with infants are in the labor force

## KEY FEDERAL PROGRAMS SUPPORT INFANTS & TODDLERS IN OKLAHOMA



For infants and toddlers, learning unfolds in many settings, including the home, child care centers, and Early Head Start. High-quality care that promotes positive early learning can have lasting effects into adulthood, particularly for low-income children who often start school behind their peers. In Oklahoma, 66% of mothers with children under age 6 are in the labor force, as compared to 67% nationwide. This high proportion of working mothers with young children increases the need for key federal programs that provide families with resources needed to lay the foundation for children's success.

### CHILD CARE

**8,809 Oklahoma infants and toddlers receive Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) support each month. The cost of child care for an Oklahoma infant is 37% of a single mother's median income and 11% of a two-parent family's median income.** With tough economic times and a growing number of mothers entering the labor force, child care is more important than ever for the overall health and well-being of families.

### EARLY HEAD START (EHS)

**2,012 Oklahoma infants and toddlers participate in EHS.** EHS plays an important role in children's success in school, family self-sufficiency, and parent support of their child's development. Currently, only a small portion of low-income children are served by federal EHS and state EHS initiatives, leaving the majority of eligible infants and toddlers without access to this proven program.

### EARLY INTERVENTION PART C

**1.86% of Oklahoma's infants and toddlers receive Part C services.** For infants and toddlers with a disability or developmental delay, intervening early can make all the difference in the world and can serve as a protective buffer against multiple adverse influences that may hinder their developmental progress.