

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL



PRITZKER
Children's Initiative

A Roadmap to Making New Jersey the Safest, Healthiest and Most Supportive Place to Give Birth and Raise a Family

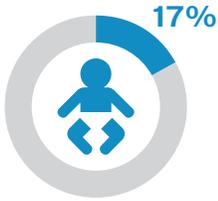
More than 100,000 babies are born every year in New Jersey. All babies possess unlimited potential, yet many of New Jersey's youngest children face daunting odds that hurt their ability to reach it fully. Too often, opportunities are affected by race, income or geography. For some, disparities begin before they are even born, due to uneven maternal health and prenatal care. At the very time of life when a healthy start, a strong family and access to high quality care and education are most critical to a baby's foundation, these gaps can have a life-long impact on a child's growth and development.

The J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation challenged states to do more to build a healthy foundation for our youngest, most vulnerable children from birth to age 3. New Jersey rose to the challenge. *Unlocking Potential* articulates a vision and action plan to unlock the potential of every child in New Jersey to grow up healthy, safe and educated.

“The Pritzker Children's Initiative (PCI) is dedicated to expanding equitable access to and participation in high-quality services for infants, toddlers, and their families across the United States.”

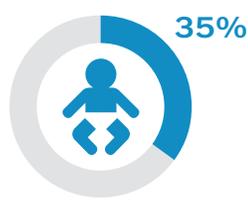
New Jersey Statistics At-A-Glance

Infants (0-3) Living Below the Poverty Line



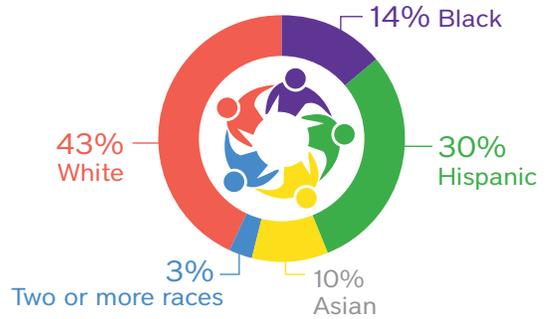
Live in households with a family income **at or below** the federal poverty threshold.

Source: *New Jersey Babies Count 2018*



Live in households where the family income is **at or below 200%** of the federal poverty threshold

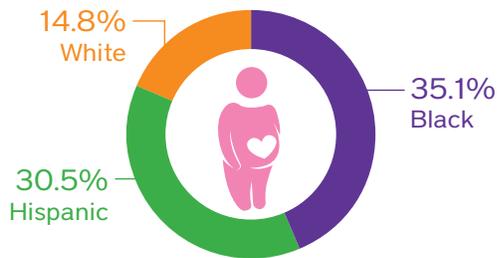
Infant and Toddler Diversity in New Jersey



Source: *New Jersey Babies Count 2018*

Women Receiving Late or No Prenatal Care (2018)

(defined as beginning in the second or third trimester of pregnancy)



Source: *NJ Department of Health*

Maternal Death Rate



New Jersey ranks 47th in maternal deaths (2019). On average, 46.4 New Jersey women die for every 100,000 live births, compared to 29.6 nationally.

MORTALITY RATES PER 100,000 BIRTHS:

Black Women: **132 deaths**

Hispanic Women: **32 deaths**

White Women: **35 deaths**

Source: *United Health Foundation*

Infant Mortality Rate (2017)



INFANT MORTALITY RATES PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS:

Black Babies: **9.4 deaths**

Hispanic Babies: **4.8 deaths**

White Babies: **2.7 deaths**

Source: *NJ Department of Health*

New Jersey Home Visiting Availability



310,000 NJ children under age 3



< 2%

5,459 funded home visitation slots

Source: *NJ Department of Health and US DHHS*

New Jersey Child Care Needs



More than **200,000** young children ages 0-3 have parents in the workforce and are likely to have a child care need because **all parents in the home are employed.**

Source: *NJ Babies Count 2018*

New Jersey Child Care Costs



According to Child Care Aware of America, in 2019, New Jersey parents with an infant pay on average **\$15,600 for full-time care** in a licensed child care center.

Source: *Child Care Aware of America*

Availability of Licensed Infant-Toddler Child Care

207,366 families, where all parents are employed, are likely to **need care.**



55,565 slots available for infants and toddlers in licensed child care centers.

73% of families likely to need care **do not have access** to licensed child care.

Source: *No Room for Babies*

Ages of Children Receiving Services Through Care Management Organizations



(September 2019: these figures represent a monthly point-in-time statistic).

Source: *NJ Department of Children and Families*

OUR VISION

We believe that every baby born in New Jersey deserves high-quality supports and services to get the best possible start in life. Not every family has access to these services, limiting opportunities for our children. Far too often, race and income determine access. *Unlocking Potential* is based on the belief that we all have a role to play in achieving equity and that supporting equity in opportunities at the start of a child's life is the first step in eliminating disparities that impact outcomes for children, families and communities.

The New Jersey Pritzker
Leadership Team



In a series of meetings held between July and December 2019, a team of public and private sector leaders, supported by early childhood experts from across the state, met to develop an action plan to ensure that an additional 25 percent of low income infants and toddlers in New Jersey – 27,000 young children – have access to high-quality services by 2023, including child care, home visiting, health and mental health services. *Unlocking Potential* is the culmination of this collaborative effort.

Unlocking Potential articulates a vision and action plan to unlock the potential of every child in New Jersey to grow up healthy, safe and educated. The plan also aims to unlock the potential for every parent, guardian, educator and service provider to be the best they can be in their critical role in the lives of infants and toddlers. Tackling racial, economic and geographic disparities will be essential to realizing success.

Unlocking Potential lays out the rationale for taking action. It provides goals and strategies for improvements in vital services for babies and their families, providing specific targets for impact, the financing needed, and the leaders poised to move the plan from vision to reality. It also proposes a system integration approach that calls for improved coordination among early childhood organizations and alignment with maternal and infant health initiatives to ensure a seamless array of services beginning prenatally.

There is much work ahead. Policies and programs will need to change and resources will need to be secured. Families will need to be engaged to ensure the services and systems are designed to meet their needs. And, additional stakeholders on the state and local level will also need to embrace the plan and use it to support their decision-making and actions.

The foundation for change is in place; the opportunity is now.

Brain science teaches us that early healthy development—the first 1,000 days—is consequential, right from the start. However, depending on their zip code, race, and family income, a baby’s early experiences could be vastly different. Racial and income disparities seen in early life persist as children grow and enter school and progress toward adulthood. Ensuring access to essential supports at the beginning of a child’s life is a foundational and effective approach to avoid disparities of outcomes that can lead to a lifetime of impact for individuals, families, and communities.



Goal Area 1:

More low-income infants and toddlers will have access to high-quality subsidized child care.

2023 Target:

8,750 more infants and toddlers in high quality child care.

Estimated Cost:

\$29.7 million in increased annual investments

Infant-Toddler Child Care Strategies

- **Require all child care centers and family child care homes to be rated at level 3 or above** by GNJK in order to continue participation in the subsidy program.
- Develop more **high-quality licensed slots for low-income** infants and toddlers in child care centers.
- **Increase the supply of high-quality family child care in low-income and under-served communities** with limited or no access to regulated child care.
- Fully utilize opportunities to **expand Early Head Start** to reach more infants and toddlers.
- **Improve the credentials and compensation** for infant-toddler educators in child care settings.



Goal Area 2:

More low-income parents of infants and toddlers will have access to evidence-based home visiting.

2023 Target:

9,867 more families served annually.

Estimated Cost:

\$25.3 million in increased annual investments

Home Visiting Strategies

- **Increase service capacity and program completion rates** within the current system of evidence-based home visiting.
- **Expand the capacity of the current evidence-based programs** to provide intensive home visiting supports to additional families.
- Reframe and develop home visiting as **inclusive of all families who want to participate**.



Goal Area 3:

More low-income infants, toddlers and their parents will have access to services to support their mental health.

2023 Target:

7,247 more low-income infants and toddlers will receive mental health services annually.

Estimated Cost:

\$10 million in increased annual investments.

Infant Mental Health Strategies

- **Expand the availability** of infant mental health consultation services in child care settings.
- **Provide intensive mental health services for infants and toddlers and their families** identified by the infant mental health consultant serving child care settings.
- **Build the capacity** to offer infant mental health consultation services in pediatric settings.
- **Increase availability and access** of infant mental health treatment services.
- Increase the supply of **well-trained infant mental health professionals**.
- **Improve documentation to demonstrate the need** for mental health supports and services for infants and toddlers.



Goal Area 4:

More low-income women will have equitable access to maternal and infant care supports and services to ensure a healthy birth.

2023 Target:

3,000 more low-income women will receive perinatal supports and services annually.

Estimated Cost:

\$4.1 million in increased annual investments.

Maternal and Infant Health Strategies

- **Coordinate and align activities with the Healthy Women Healthy Families Initiative** to ensure equitable maternal and infant care among women and children of all races and ethnicities.
- **Support the Nurture NJ campaign.**
- **Establish metrics** to assess birth outcomes, monitor progress and promote positive practices among health care community.



Goal Area 5:

A system is in place to enable more low-income families with infants and toddlers to be connected to critical services to ensure healthy growth and development.

Estimated Cost:

\$3.3 million in increased annual investments.

System Integration Strategies

- **Strengthen the county-based Central Intake Hubs** in their role as the system connection between families and critical maternal and child health and early childhood services.
- **Maximize parent voice and leadership.** Ensure the voice of under-served and minority parents are intentionally included in leadership.
- **Support the NJ Council for Young Children (NJ CYC)** as the coordinating entity to align services, assist families and inform the system of needs, gaps and opportunities.
- **Continue to convene the New Jersey PCI Leadership Team and the NJ Think Babies Coalition.**



Next Steps

The plan outlined in this report articulates a long-term vision to unlock the potential of every child in New Jersey to grow up healthy, safe and educated. It is a bold and ambitious vision, but one that we firmly believe is achievable. The leaders and supporters of this plan are poised and ready to take the next steps to responsibly stage and sequence the reforms outlined within this plan; secure financing to implement the plan; and continue to engage stakeholders and the public in the urgency of this plan and its profound potential to improve New Jersey communities. We urge you to read *Unlocking Potential* and use this plan as a roadmap to making New Jersey the safest, healthiest and most supportive place to give birth and raise a family.



Acknowledgements

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Advocates for Children of New Jersey is the trusted, independent voice putting children's needs first for more than 40 years. Our work results in better laws and policies, more effective funding and stronger services for children and families. And it means that more children are given the chance to grow up safe, healthy and educated.

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