

Minnesota Early Childhood/Prenatal to Three Policy Development

In Minnesota, there are more than [350,000 children](#) under the age of 5, accounting for around 25% of the entire child population. At these young ages, promotion of optimal brain and child development is essential.

Our goal is to help policy makers understand what infants and toddlers need to thrive based on expert recommendations that address access to care, early education, equity, family environment, and systems development.



• Access to Care

Every child should receive care in a medical home by a primary care pediatrician, pediatric nurse practitioner or family physician, and access to pediatric medical subspecialists, pediatric surgical specialists, pediatric mental health and dental professionals, and hospitals with appropriate pediatric expertise.

- Access to prenatal, infant and early childhood health, developmental, and mental health services
 - [AAP Bright Futures Recommendations for Preventive Pediatric Health Care](#)
 - [AAP Policy Statement | Principles of Child Health Care Financing](#)
 - [AAP Policy Statement | Scope of Health Care Benefits for Children From Birth Through Age 26](#)
 - [AAP Policy Statement | Addressing Early Childhood Emotional and Behavioral Problems](#)
 - [AAP Early Brain and Child Development](#)
 - [Minnesota Department of Health | Prenatal Care: What are the Barriers?](#)
- Access to affordable and quality child care
 - [AAP Policy Statement | Quality Early Education and Child Care](#)
 - [Child Care Aware of America | The US and High Cost of Child Care: A Review of Prices and Proposed Solutions for a Broken System](#)
- Access to nutrition and obesity prevention initiatives
 - [AAP Policy Statement | Advocacy for Improving Nutrition in the First 1000 Days to Support Childhood Development and Adult Health](#)
- Access to child and family screenings, supports, and linkages to culturally responsive, trauma informed, and resilience-based services
 - [AAP Policy Statement | Early Childhood Adversity, Toxic Stress, and the Role of the Pediatrician: Translating Developmental Science into Lifelong Health](#)
 - [AAP Policy Statement | Providing Care for Immigrant, Migrant, and Border Children](#)

• Early Education

Children's early experiences are all educational, whether they are at home, with extended family and friends, or in early education and child care settings. Reading regularly with young children stimulates optimal patterns of brain

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development and strengthens parent-child relationships at a critical time in child development, which, in turn, builds language, literacy, and social-emotional skills that last a lifetime.

- Support Reach Out and Read Minnesota and other early literacy initiatives
 - [AAP Policy Statement | Quality Early Education and Child Care](#)
 - [AAP Technical Report | School Readiness](#)
 - [Reach Out and Read Minnesota](#)
 - [Reach Out and Read | The Evidence](#)
 - [Ascend at the Aspen Institute | The Elephant in the Clinic: Early Literacy and Family Well-Being](#)

• Equity

Children are increasingly diverse, with differences that may include race, ethnicity, language spoken at home, religion, disability and special health care needs, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other attributes. Minnesota's children experience very significant disparities reflecting race and ethnicity.

- Recognize and eliminate systemic racism
 - [AAP Policy Statement | AAP Diversity and Inclusion Statement](#)
 - [AAP Policy Statement | The Impact of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health](#)
 - [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation | Early Childhood is Critical to Health Equity](#)
 - [The Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine | Racism and Its Harmful Effects on Nondominant Racial and Ethnic Youth and Youth-Serving Providers: A Call to Action for Organizational Change](#)

• Family Environment

Public health efforts can nurture and support wellness in families and children to create opportunities for them to flourish and thrive. Children need safe places to play and learn. Families need places that support them in raising healthy children. Children need environments where they can be nurtured. Safe, toxin free, and supportive physical environments provide a potential link to climate and environmental health systems.

- Develop evidence-based parent education programs
 - [AAP Policy Statement | The Pediatrician's Role in Family Support and Family Support Programs](#)
 - [Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development](#)
- Provide paid family and medical leave programs and paid sick leave
 - [Organizations Endorsing the Family and Medical Leave Insurance \(FAMILY\) Act](#)
- Provide voluntary, evidence-based home visiting
 - [AAP Policy Statement | Early Childhood Home Visiting](#)
 - [Minnesota Coalition for Targeted Home Visiting | Priority Evidence-Based Home Visiting Models](#)

• Systems Development

Early childhood systems can provide families with resources on children's education, health, and well-being, as well as provide linkages to local, state, and federal programs and services.

- Implement expanded Help Me Grow referral and service coordination system
 - [Help Me Grow](#)
- Promotion of state and federal public work support programs and tax credits
 - [Children's Defense Fund Minnesota | Bridge to Benefits](#)

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