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RHODE ISLAND RANKS AS A TOP STATE FOR BABIES

[February 26, 2019] – Rhode Island ranks as a top state for babies, according to a report released today by early childhood development nonprofit ZERO TO THREE and children’s research organization Child Trends.

The *State of Babies Yearbook: 2019* is a first-of-its-kind resource that looks holistically at the well-being of America’s babies, providing a national snapshot and comparisons across states. The Yearbook compiles nearly 60 indicators—specifically for children ages 0 to 3—to measure progress across three policy areas: Good Health, Strong Families, and Positive Early Learning Experiences. The *State of Babies Yearbook: 2019* reveals where you are born—and factors like race, ethnicity, and income level – can make a difference in your chances for a strong start in life. The wide variation among and within states shows how policy supports for babies and families give babies the chance to overcome adversity and reach their full potential.

Rhode Island was among 12 states across the United States and the District of Columbia to earn a top ranking. The Yearbook gives the state top scores in Good Health, Strong Families, and Positive Early Learning Experiences; and provides areas where Rhode Island still has room to grow to give the littlest Rhode Islanders the best chance to thrive.

“Each of the 33,067 children under age three in Rhode Island was born with a bundle of unlimited potential and the first three years of their life will shape every year that follows,” said Myra Jones-Taylor, chief policy officer of ZERO TO THREE. “But far too many babies face persistent hardships—such as food insecurity, unstable housing, and exposure to violence—that undermine their ability to grow and thrive.”

“Our brains are built in the first few months and years of life,” said Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Executive Director. “Early experiences have an enormous impact on brain development and can determine how a child learns throughout his or her lifetime. All babies need a strong foundation to grow into the leaders of tomorrow. We are very excited to work with ZERO TO THREE on the **Think Babies™ Rhode Island** campaign, to make babies and their families a priority through policies and investments built on the science of brain development.”

Think Babies Rhode Island

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is leading a state campaign to develop and advance policies benefiting infants and toddlers with support from ZERO TO THREE. The initiative is called **Think Babies Rhode Island**.

Think Babies Rhode Island Policy Priorities for 2019:

- Increasing access to affordable, quality child care for infants and toddlers by improving rates for the Child Care Assistance Program, strengthening child care licensing practices, and increasing wages for infant/toddler educators.
- Ensure access to paid family leave by improving the wage replacement and extending the number of weeks that are provided in Rhode Island’s paid family leave law.
- Ensure access to voluntary, evidence-based home visiting for families with infants and toddlers by providing state funding to secure a Medicaid match.
- First 1,000 Days of Rlte Care: Increase screenings, and improve connections to high-quality infant, toddler and family programs and services through the opportunity of the 13 well-child visits scheduled in the first 3 years of life.

The State of Rhode Island’s Babies

Rhode Island’s young children fare better than the national average in:

- Women receiving timely prenatal care: 98.3% for Rhode Island mothers, compared to 93.8% for nationally
- Babies with all the recommended vaccines: 75.5% in Rhode Island, compared to 70.7% nationally
- Infants/toddlers receiving Early Intervention services: 6.1% for Rhode Island children, compared to 3.1% nationally

Rhode Island’s young children fare worse than the national average in:

- Mothers of infants/toddlers who rate their mental health as worse than “excellent” or “very good”: 32.4% of Rhode Island mothers compared to 22% nationally
- Rate of maltreatment of infants/toddlers (per 10,000 population): 27.9 in Rhode Island, compared to 16.0 nationally
- Prevalence of one adverse childhood experiences among infants/toddlers: 23.9% in Rhode Island, compared to 21.9% nationally

The State of Babies Yearbook: 2019 Ranking Process

The *State of Babies Yearbook: 2019* uses a transparent ranking process to group states into one of four tiers to provide a quick snapshot of how states fare on the selected indicators and domains. These tiers represent four groupings of states that are approximately equal in size and ordered from highest to lowest performing. The *State of Babies* uses the following tiering symbols to designate a given state’s placement in one of the four tiers:

- “GROW” for Working Effectively
- “GRO” for Improving Outcomes
- “GR” for Reaching Forward
- “G” for Getting Started

State	Overall ranking	Good Health	Strong Families	Positive Early Learning Experiences
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Alabama	G	G	G	GR
Alaska	GRO	GR	G	GRO
Arizona	G	GR	G	G
Arkansas	G	G	G	G
California	GR	GROW	GRO	G
Colorado	GROW	GROW	GRO	GROW
Connecticut	GROW	GROW	GROW	GRO
Delaware	GROW	GR	GROW	GROW
District of Columbia	GRO	GRO	GROW	GRO
Florida	G	G	GR	G
Georgia	GR	GR	GR	GR
Hawaii	GRO	GROW	GRO	GR
Idaho	GR	GRO	GRO	G
Illinois	G	GR	GRO	G
Indiana	GR	GR	G	GRO
Iowa	GRO	GROW	GRO	GRO
Kansas	GR	GR	GRO	GR
Kentucky	G	G	GR	GRO
Louisiana	GR	G	G	GROW
Maine	GROW	GRO	GR	GROW
Maryland	GROW	GROW	GROW	GRO
Massachusetts	GROW	GROW	GROW	GROW
Michigan	GR	GR	G	GR
Minnesota	GROW	GROW	GROW	GR
Mississippi	G	G	GR	GR
Missouri	GRO	G	GROW	GR
Montana	GROW	GRO	GR	GROW
Nebraska	GRO	GR	GRO	GROW
Nevada	G	G	G	G
New Hampshire	GROW	GROW	GROW	GROW
New Jersey	GRO	GR	GROW	GRO
New Mexico	GRO	GR	G	GROW
New York	GR	GRO	G	GR
North Carolina	GRO	GRO	GR	GRO
North Dakota	GR	GR	GR	GRO
Ohio	GRO	GRO	GRO	GRO
Oklahoma	G	G	G	GRO
Oregon	GRO	GRO	GRO	GR
Pennsylvania	GRO	GRO	GRO	GRO
Rhode Island	GROW	GROW	GROW	GROW
South Carolina	GR	GR	GR	G
South Dakota	GRO	GRO	G	GROW
Tennessee	G	G	GR	G
Texas	G	G	GR	G
Utah	GR	GRO	GR	G
Vermont	GROW	GROW	GROW	GROW
Virginia	GR	GRO	GRO	G
Washington	GROW	GROW	GROW	GR
West Virginia	G	G	GR	GR
Wisconsin	GR	GRO	GRO	G
Wyoming	G	G	G	GR

Access the national profile and state data at stateofbabies.org.

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About ZERO TO THREE

ZERO TO THREE works to ensure all infants and toddlers benefit from the family and community connections critical to their well-being and development. Since 1977, the organization has advanced the proven power of nurturing relationships by transforming the science of early childhood into helpful resources, practical tools and responsive policies for millions of parents, professionals and policymakers. For more information, and to learn how to become a ZERO TO THREE member, please visit zerotothree.org, facebook.com/zerotothree, or follow [@ZEROTOTHREE](https://twitter.com/ZEROTOTHREE) on Twitter.

About *Think Babies*TM

ZERO TO THREE created the *Think Babies* campaign to make the potential of every baby a national priority. When we *Think Babies* and invest in infants, toddlers, and their families, we ensure a strong future for us all. Learn more at thinkbabies.org or follow [@ZEROTOTHREE](https://twitter.com/ZEROTOTHREE) on Twitter.

About Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children's policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, safety, education and development of Rhode Island's children.