

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Alabama	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	68%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	29%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	28%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	15%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Alabama	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	76	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Alabama has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Alabama	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	13%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Alabama has:

Not addressed	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Alabama	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	60%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	44%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	67%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Alabama has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Alabama	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	65%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Alaska	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	92%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	51%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	43%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	12%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Alaska	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	77	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Alaska has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Alaska	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	11%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Alaska has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Alaska	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	71%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	59%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	52%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Alaska has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Alaska	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	68%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Arizona	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	85%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	39%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	26%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	22%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC

tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Arizona	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	76	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Arizona has:

0 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Partially met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Arizona	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	12%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Arizona has:

Not addressed

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Arizona	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	71%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	47%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	61%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Arizona has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Arizona	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	66%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Arkansas	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	81%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	31%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	24%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	15%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Arkansas	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	71	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Arkansas has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Arkansas	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	11%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Arkansas has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Arkansas	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	59%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	46%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	73%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Arkansas has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Arkansas	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	59%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs' participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

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Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	California	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	89%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	48%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	30%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	20%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



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Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	California	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	89	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

California has:

8 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Fully met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	California	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	11%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

California has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	California	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	71%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	53%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	50%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

California has:

Fully met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Fully met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	California	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	77%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Colorado	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	89%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	45%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	34%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	18%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Colorado	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	86	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Colorado has:

12 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Partially met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021

	Colorado	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	5%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Colorado has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Colorado	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	72%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	52%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	56%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Colorado has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Colorado	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	74%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Connecticut	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	87%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	36%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	23%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	36%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Connecticut	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	88	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Connecticut has:

12 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Partially met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021

	Connecticut	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	7%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Connecticut has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Connecticut	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	75%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	56%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	43%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Connecticut has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Connecticut	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	74%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Delaware	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	85%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	32%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	22%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	20%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Delaware	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	93	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Delaware has:

12 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Fully met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

*As of March 2025, Delaware has enacted legislation, but paid leave benefits for eligible employees will be available in 2026. SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Delaware	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	10%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Delaware has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Delaware	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	62%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	45%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	56%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Delaware has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Delaware	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	68%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

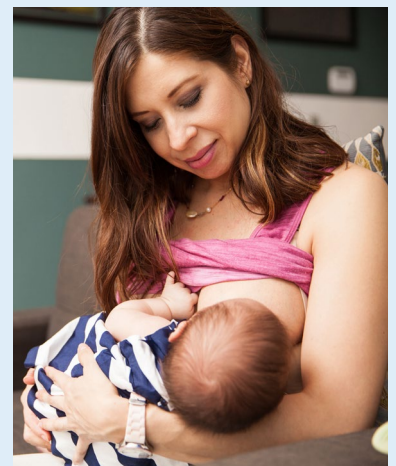
See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Florida	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	81%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	34%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	22%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	28%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Florida	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	85	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Florida has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Florida	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	8%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Florida has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Florida	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	56%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	39%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	50%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Florida has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Florida	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	61%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Georgia	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	88%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	41%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	29%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	25%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Georgia	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	78	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Georgia has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Fully met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Georgia	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	10%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Georgia has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Georgia	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	67%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	54%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	66%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Georgia has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Georgia	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	69%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Hawaii	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	93%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	54%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	27%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	25%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Hawaii	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	78	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Hawaii has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Hawaii	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	4%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Hawaii has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Hawaii	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	61%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	45%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	51%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Hawaii has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Hawaii	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	65%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Idaho	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	86%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	37%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	25%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	14%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Idaho	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	79	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Idaho has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Idaho	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	6%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Idaho has:

Not addressed	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Idaho	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	65%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	50%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	67%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Idaho has:

Not addressed	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Idaho	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	66%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Illinois	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	85%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	37%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	27%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	22%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Illinois	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	81	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Illinois has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Fully met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Illinois	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	13%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Illinois has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Illinois	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	72%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	47%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	57%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Illinois has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Fully met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Illinois	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	74%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Indiana	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	80%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	37%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	28%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	12%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Indiana	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	83	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Indiana has:

0 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Partially met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021

	Indiana	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	13%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Indiana has:

Not addressed

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Indiana	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	65%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	45%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	60%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Indiana has:

Not addressed	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Indiana	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	67%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Iowa	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	83%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	39%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	29%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	21%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Iowa	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	76	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Iowa has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Iowa	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	6%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Iowa has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Iowa	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	70%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	53%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	61%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Iowa has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Iowa	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	68%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Kansas	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	86%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	44%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	36%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	11%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Kansas	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	81	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Kansas has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Kansas	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	9%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Kansas has:

Not addressed	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Kansas	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	68%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	49%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	57%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Kansas has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Kansas	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	69%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Kentucky	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	75%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	34%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	21%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	15%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Kentucky	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	74	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Kentucky has:

0 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Partially met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Kentucky	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	11%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Kentucky has:

Not addressed

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Kentucky	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	62%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	50%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	64%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Kentucky has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Kentucky	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	60%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

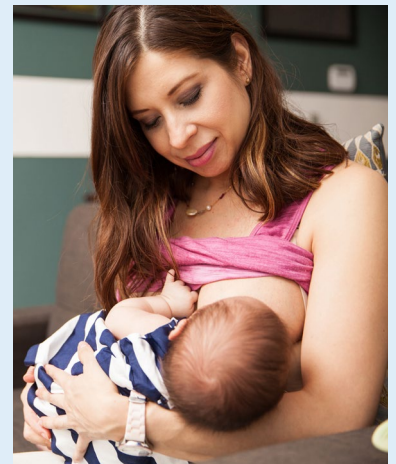
See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Louisiana	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	73%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	29%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	22%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	18%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Louisiana	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	85	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Louisiana has:

0 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Fully met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021

	Louisiana	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	10%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Louisiana has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023

	Louisiana	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	51%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	40%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	68%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Louisiana has:

Partially met

the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.

Partially met

the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.

Partially met

the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023

	Louisiana	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	61%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2022–2023 surveys.



Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs' participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Maine	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	88%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	45%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	28%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	14%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Maine	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	82	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Maine has:

12 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

*As of March 2025, Maine has enacted legislation, but paid leave benefits for eligible employees will be available in 2026. SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Maine	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	6%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Maine has:

Not addressed	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Maine	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	79%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	62%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	39%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Maine has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Maine	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	72%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Maryland	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	90%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	47%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	28%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	23%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Maryland	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	83	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Maryland has:

12 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Fully met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

*As of March 2025, Maryland has enacted legislation, but paid leave benefits for eligible employees will be available in 2026. SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Maryland	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	8%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Maryland has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Maryland	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	67%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	47%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	54%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Maryland has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Maryland	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	77%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Massachusetts	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	89%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	42%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	26%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	20%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Massachusetts	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	89	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Massachusetts has:

12 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Partially met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021

	Massachusetts	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	10%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Massachusetts has:

Not addressed

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Massachusetts	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	69%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	50%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	48%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Massachusetts has:

Not addressed	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Massachusetts	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	79%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Michigan	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	85%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	39%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	27%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	18%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Michigan	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	79	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Michigan has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Michigan	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	7%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Michigan has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Michigan	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	72%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	53%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	52%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Michigan has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Michigan	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	71%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Minnesota	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	88%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	50%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	38%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	14%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Minnesota	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	81	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Minnesota has:

12 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Partially met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

*As of March 2025, Minnesota has enacted legislation, but paid leave benefits for eligible employees will be available in 2026. SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Minnesota	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	7%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Minnesota has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Minnesota	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	75%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	57%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	49%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Minnesota has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Minnesota	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	77%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Mississippi	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	73%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	24%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	22%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	24%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Mississippi	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	87	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Mississippi has:

0 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Fully met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Mississippi	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	13%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Mississippi has:

Partially met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Mississippi	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	50%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	38%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	74%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Mississippi has:

Fully met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Fully met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Mississippi	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	59%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Missouri	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	81%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	38%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	29%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	18%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Missouri	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	77	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Missouri has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Missouri	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	12%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Missouri has:

Not addressed	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Missouri	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	70%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	57%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	58%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Missouri has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Missouri	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	63%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Montana	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	88%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	44%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	34%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	12%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Montana	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	84	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Montana has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Montana	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	10%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Montana has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Montana	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	79%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	55%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	59%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Montana has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Montana	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	70%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Nebraska	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	84%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	39%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	32%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	15%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Nebraska	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	75	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Nebraska has:

0 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Partially met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021

	Nebraska	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	9%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Nebraska has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Nebraska	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	68%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	51%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	63%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Nebraska has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Nebraska	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	64%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Nevada	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	79%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	30%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	26%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	30%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Nevada	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	76	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Nevada has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Nevada	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	13%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Nevada has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Nevada	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	64%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	49%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	63%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Nevada has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Nevada	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	64%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	New Hampshire	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	88%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	44%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	26%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	14%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	New Hampshire	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	90	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

New Hampshire has:

0 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Partially met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	New Hampshire	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	7%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

New Hampshire has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	New Hampshire	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	79%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	57%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	35%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

New Hampshire has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	New Hampshire	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	75%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	New Jersey	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	82%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	40%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	25%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	31%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	New Jersey	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	84	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

New Jersey has:

12 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Partially met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	New Jersey	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	6%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

New Jersey has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	New Jersey	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	69%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	47%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	45%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

New Jersey has:

Fully met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Fully met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	New Jersey	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	75%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	New Mexico	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	79%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	37%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	28%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	17%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	New Mexico	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	88	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

New Mexico has:

0 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Partially met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	New Mexico	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	12%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

New Mexico has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	New Mexico	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	66%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	53%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	69%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

New Mexico has:

Fully met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Fully met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	New Mexico	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	68%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	New York	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	86%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	41%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	28%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	26%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	New York	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	84	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

New York has:

12 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Partially met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	New York	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	10%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

New York has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	New York	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	63%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	45%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	52%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

New York has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	New York	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	73%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	North Carolina	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	84%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	38%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	28%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	17%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	North Carolina	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	84	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

North Carolina has:

0 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Fully met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	North Carolina	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	12%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

North Carolina has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	North Carolina	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	67%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	52%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	60%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

North Carolina has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	North Carolina	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	69%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	North Dakota	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	84%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	42%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	31%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	13%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	North Dakota	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	78	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

North Dakota has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	North Dakota	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	7%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

North Dakota has:

Partially met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	North Dakota	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	70%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	53%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	60%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

North Dakota has:

Not addressed	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	North Dakota	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	72%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Ohio	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	83%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	41%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	28%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	19%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Ohio	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	85	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Ohio has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Ohio	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	10%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Ohio has:

Partially met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Ohio	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	67%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	49%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	53%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Ohio has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Fully met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Ohio	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	71%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Oklahoma	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	78%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	27%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	20%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	21%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Oklahoma	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	79	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Oklahoma has:

0 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Partially met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Oklahoma	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	9%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Oklahoma has:

Not addressed

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Oklahoma	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	63%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	44%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	70%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Oklahoma has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Oklahoma	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	59%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

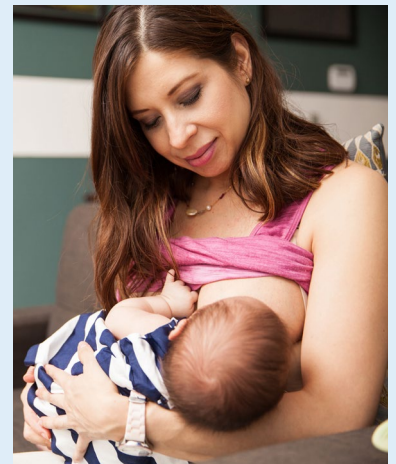
See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Oregon	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	94%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	52%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	32%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	10%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Oregon	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	87	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Oregon has:

12 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Oregon	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	11%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Oregon has:

Contradicted	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Oregon	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	77%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	54%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	52%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Oregon has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Oregon	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	73%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Pennsylvania	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	83%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	37%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	25%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	21%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Pennsylvania	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	83	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Pennsylvania has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Pennsylvania	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	10%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Pennsylvania has:

Not addressed	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Pennsylvania	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	70%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	49%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	56%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Pennsylvania has:

Fully met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Fully met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Pennsylvania	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	70%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Rhode Island	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	81%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	39%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	19%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	25%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Rhode Island	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	87	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Rhode Island has:

7 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Partially met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Rhode Island	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	14%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Rhode Island has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Rhode Island	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	71%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	50%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	42%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Rhode Island has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Rhode Island	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	77%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	South Carolina	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	81%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	34%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	26%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	23%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	South Carolina	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	80	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

South Carolina has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	South Carolina	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	10%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

South Carolina has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	South Carolina	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	66%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	47%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	60%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

South Carolina has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	South Carolina	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	70%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	South Dakota	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	89%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	48%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	34%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	19%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	South Dakota	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	75	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

South Dakota has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	South Dakota	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	7%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

South Dakota has:

Not addressed	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	South Dakota	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	69%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	50%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	59%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

South Dakota has:

Not addressed	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Not addressed	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	South Dakota	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	70%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Tennessee	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	78%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	34%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	26%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	21%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Tennessee	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	76	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Tennessee has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Tennessee	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	16%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Tennessee has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Tennessee	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	66%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	48%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	62%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Tennessee has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Fully met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Tennessee	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	68%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Texas	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	83%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	33%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	23%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	18%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Texas	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	81	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Texas has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Fully met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Texas	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	12%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Texas has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Texas	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	59%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	44%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	69%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Texas has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Fully met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Texas	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	60%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Utah	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	91%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	41%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	27%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	24%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Utah	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	78	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Utah has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Utah	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	9%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Utah has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Utah	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	70%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	48%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	66%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Utah has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Utah	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	73%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs' participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Vermont	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	93%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	57%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	38%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	15%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Vermont	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	90	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Vermont has:

0 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Fully met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021

	Vermont	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	11%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Vermont has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Vermont	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	76%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	63%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	42%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Vermont has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Vermont	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	78%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Virginia	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	84%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	42%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	28%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	23%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Virginia	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	82	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Virginia has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Virginia	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	12%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Virginia has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Virginia	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	70%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	54%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	56%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Virginia has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Virginia	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	72%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Washington	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	91%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	52%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	37%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	17%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Washington	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	86	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Washington has:

12 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Washington	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	6%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Washington has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Washington	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	81%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	60%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	49%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Washington has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Washington	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	75%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	West Virginia	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	69%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	24%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	18%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	17%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	West Virginia	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	76	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

West Virginia has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	West Virginia	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	13%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

West Virginia has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	West Virginia	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	63%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	54%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	69%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

West Virginia has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Fully met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	West Virginia	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	62%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Wisconsin	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	83%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	43%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	31%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	16%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Wisconsin	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	85	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Wisconsin has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Wisconsin	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	6%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Wisconsin has:

Fully met	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Wisconsin	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	74%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	58%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	54%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Wisconsin has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Wisconsin	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	70%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	Wyoming	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	89%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	40%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	28%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	13%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	Wyoming	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	73	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

Wyoming has:

0 weeks	of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.
Partially met	the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021	Wyoming	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	7%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

Wyoming has:

Not addressed	the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.
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SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Wyoming	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	69%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	52%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	66%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Wyoming has:

Not addressed

the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.

Not addressed

the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.

Not addressed

the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	Wyoming	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	72%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.



Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

CDC's Early Childhood Nutrition Report 2025

State data to support healthy growth and development for children 5 years and younger

Infancy and early childhood are periods of rapid growth and development, and healthy nutrition plays a vital role. Healthy nutrition supports brain development, strengthens bones, and supports optimal growth and development. Starting healthy nutrition routines early can establish habits that promote health and prevent chronic diseases. Early feeding decisions, such as breastfeeding, timing of solid food introduction, and what foods and drinks are provided, can play a critical role in early childhood. Policies and practices in places where children and caregivers spend their time can affect these decisions.

See *Opportunities for State Action* to identify steps to improve nutrition for young children.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for most infants. It helps protect babies and moms from some illnesses and diseases. It is recommended that infants are fed only breast milk for about the first 6 months. Infants can be introduced to solid foods at about 6 months and can continue to be fed breast milk for 1 to 2 years, or longer. Many families stop breastfeeding earlier than they planned. Breastfed infants who receive infant formula within 2 days of birth typically do not breastfeed for as long as those who do not.

Children born in 2021	D.C.	National	Ideal
Ever breastfed	83%	84%	Higher
Breastfed through 12 months	39%	40%	Higher
Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months	21%	27%	Higher
Breastfed infants fed formula before 2 days	26%	21%	Lower

SOURCE: National Immunization Survey - Child, 2021 births.



Opportunities for State Action

Work with breastfeeding coalitions, healthcare, community organizations, and groups that represent populations with lower breastfeeding rates to carry out breastfeeding support programs and services. Some examples include quality improvement initiatives to promote breastfeeding-friendly policies and practices and technical assistance to partners.

Supports for Infant Feeding



Practices and policies can impact how infants and children are fed in places such as hospitals and early care and education (ECE) centers. This report includes data on maternity care practices in hospitals, ECE licensing standards for breastfeeding support, and state paid family and medical leave legislation. CDC tracks maternity care practices through the Maternity

Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey. Hospitals with higher mPINC scores have better maternity care practices and policies supportive of optimal infant feeding. State ECE licensing regulations and state paid family and medical leave programs can be used to support healthy infant feeding practices after the birth hospitalization.

	D.C.	National	Ideal
2024 Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Score out of 100.	Not available	82	Higher

SOURCE: Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care Survey, 2024.

D.C. has:

12 weeks

of paid family and medical leave available for the care of a new child as of 2025.

Fully met

the licensing standard to encourage and support breastfeeding in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCES: Congressional Research Service, 2025; Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

First Solid Foods

It is recommended that children be introduced to foods other than breast milk or infant formula when they are about 6 months old. Solid foods can provide important nutrients to support growth and development. However, introducing solid foods before 4 months old is too early because children might not be developmentally ready, and it could increase their risk of overweight and obesity. This report provides data on the percentage of children introduced to solid foods too early and related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support appropriate timing of first solid foods.

Infants born during 2019–2021

	D.C.	National	Ideal
Given foods other than breast milk or infant formula too early (before 4 months old).	11%	10%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children's Health, 2019–2021 births.

D.C. has:

Fully met

the licensing standard for timely introduction of solid foods in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.



Opportunities for State Action

Convene key decision makers in workplaces, hospitals, clinics, ECE, communities, and government to address barriers to breastfeeding support.

Work with partners to implement or increase use of a statewide recognition program, such as breastfeeding-friendly programs for healthcare, worksites, and ECE facilities.



Opportunities for State Action

Partner with those working with young families to ensure that parents and caregivers are supported to introduce nutrient-dense solid foods at the appropriate time. Partners could include local Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices, ECE providers, and healthcare professionals.

Healthy Eating

Once children start eating solid foods, they need a variety of foods from different food groups to meet their nutrient needs. This includes fruits and vegetables. Children younger than 2 years should also avoid foods and beverages with added sugars. Children older than 2 years should limit calories from added sugars. This report provides data on the percentage of children who ate fruits and vegetables daily and drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly, as well as related state ECE licensing regulations, which can support healthy eating.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	D.C.	National	Ideal
Ate fruit at least once daily	70%	67%	Higher
Ate vegetables at least once daily	54%	49%	Higher
Drank a sugary drink one or more times weekly	41%	57%	Lower

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

D.C. has:

Partially met	the licensing standard to serve fruits of several varieties in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to serve vegetables in ECE centers in 2023.
Partially met	the licensing standard to avoid sugar in ECE centers in 2023.

SOURCE: Achieving a State of Healthy Weight. State Profile Pages, 2024.

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

When healthy foods are inaccessible or unaffordable, families might feed their children foods that are higher in calories and lower in important nutrients. It is important for all families to be able to afford healthy foods so they can make healthier choices. This report provides data on the percentage of children 1–5 years living in households that could always afford nutritious foods.

Children 1–5 years in 2022–2023	D.C.	National	Ideal
Living in households that could always afford to eat nutritious foods.	87%	69%	Higher

SOURCE: National Survey of Children’s Health, 2022–2023 surveys.

Opportunities for State Action

Use strategies such as ECE licensing requirements and Farm to ECE programs to ensure that nutritious foods are appealing and accessible to children.

Increase ECE programs’ participation in Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in your state through education, promotion, and outreach.



Opportunities for State Action

Support policies and programs such as produce prescription and fruit and vegetable incentive programs in communities with limited access to fruits and vegetables.

Work with food banks and food pantries to adopt nutrition standards for foods purchased or accepted through donations.

Ensure eligible families have access to nutritious foods through U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or WIC.

Resources

Breastfeeding

Strategies for Continuity of Care in Breastfeeding:

<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/php/strategies/public-health-strategies-for-continuity-of-care-in-breastfeeding.html>

Public Health Strategies for Breastfeeding:

<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/php/breastfeeding-strategies/index.html>

Supports for Infant Feeding

Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) Survey:

<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding-data/mpinc/index.html>

First Solid Foods

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic>

Healthy Eating

Strategies for Early Care and Education:

<https://www.cdc.gov/early-care-education/php/public-health-strategy/>

Affordability of Nutritious Foods

Strategies for Fruit and Vegetable Voucher Incentive and Produce Prescriptions:

<https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/php/public-health-strategy/voucher-incentives-produce-prescriptions.html>

Strategies for Food Service and Nutrition Guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/php/public-health-strategy/food-service-and-nutrition-guidelines.html>

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program>

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/fdpir/food-distribution-program-indian-reservations>