Priorities and recommendations to optimize lifespan outcomes, foster child health and well-being, strengthen families, support our communities, and enhance the position of Louisiana as a leading state for children.
Building a healthy future

Priority Areas

**PROMOTE HEALTHY CHILDREN**
All children must have access to the highest-quality health care, so they can thrive throughout their lifespan and reach their maximum potential. Policymakers must ensure that all children:

- have affordable and high-quality health care coverage,
- have insurance with comprehensive, pediatric-appropriate benefits,
- have access to needed primary and subspecialty pediatric care and mental health services, and
- receive comprehensive, family-centered care in a medical home.

**SUPPORT SECURE FAMILIES**
Together we can work to advance efforts to ensure that parents can give their children the best foundation for the future. Policymakers must ensure that all families have:

- work that provides a stable and adequate income and family-friendly benefits,
- safe and secure housing,
- affordable and safe child care,
- access to adequate, healthy, nutritious foods throughout the year, and
- resources that support positive parenting skills training.

**BUILD STRONG COMMUNITIES**
Strong communities are the building blocks for secure families and healthy children. Policymakers must ensure that communities:

- are safe from violence and environmental hazards,
- provide high-quality early education programs,
- support public health systems that protect children from infectious diseases and support maternal and child health, and
- respond effectively when disasters and public health emergencies occur.

**ENSURE OUR STATE IS A LEADER FOR CHILDREN**
Child health and well-being must be elevated and maintained as a priority in our state. Policymakers must develop and implement policy that:

- funds and supports public health and health services to help children grow into healthy adults,
- addresses environmental health and climate change issues that affect children, and
- addresses factors that make some children more vulnerable than others, such as race, ethnicity, religion, immigration status, sexual orientation or gender identity, and disability.
Vaccines

Vaccines are one of the most effective ways we can keep our children healthy. Despite evidence confirming that vaccines are safe and effective, save lives, and prevent disease there are still many children and even more adults who are unvaccinated. There is an abundance of information about vaccines and it can be a challenge to sort through it all and determine what is a myth and what is a fact.

To understand the attitudes of Louisianaians towards vaccines, the Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics engaged JMC Analytics and Polling to conduct a survey of registered voters in Louisiana. With 700 completed responses from around the state, the survey showed the Louisiana residents overwhelming support vaccines in both children and adults. It also identified areas of uncertainty and where education maybe helpful.

To address this identified gap and to highlight the support our state has for vaccines, the Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics has created the Louisiana Vaccine Alliance.

The mission of the Louisiana Vaccine Alliance is to reduce vaccine-preventable disease across the lifespan through education, advocacy and strategic partnerships.

The Alliance has set the following goals:

- Raise the public’s awareness of vaccine-preventable disease
- Educate providers, the public and policy makers
- Advocate for evidence-based immunization policy, ensure equitable access to immunizations, and protect communities from vaccine-preventable diseases
- Provide evidence-based resources that families need to make informed choices
- Increase use of the Louisiana Immunization Network System (LINKS)

The Louisiana Vaccine Alliance continues to build a base of partners who want to promote the mission and goals of the alliance. It is through these partnerships and relationships that we believe we can help ensure that individuals and families have evidence-based information to help guide them in making the best decisions for the health of themselves and their children.
In recent years, the issue of whether or not to vaccinate children and/or adults has become somewhat controversial. To determine what true public opinion is about vaccinations among Louisianians, the Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (LAAAP) engaged JMC Analytics and Polling to conduct a 16 question survey.

**Key Takeaways:**

1. **Respondents demonstrated solid support for vaccinations**

   - 91% agree that vaccines are safe and useful for preventing serious illnesses.

2. **There was a minimal gender and/or racial gap in terms of strength of support**

3. **In multiple instances, support for vaccinations was stronger among younger respondents**

81% of respondents believe that the state of Louisiana should be involved.

- 82% of Republicans support state involvement
- 83% of Democrats support state involvement

To see the full Vaccine Survey Results, visit https://bit.ly/3bA21M7 or lavaccinealliance.com

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Should Vaccines Be Mandatory?

Kids' Health Depends on Vaccines
91% of survey respondents believe that children should be immunized in order to attend school.

Laws to Promote Vaccines?

- 60% agree that parents should NOT be allowed to refuse getting their children vaccinated for any reason.
- 54% agree that laws to reduce the number of vaccine exemptions are a good idea.

79% of survey respondents agree that mandatory vaccinations are okay during a disease outbreak.

Represent Louisiana Well, Help Louisiana Stay Healthy
Support Vaccines!

To see the full Vaccine Survey Results, visit https://bit.ly/3bA2lM7 or lavaccinealliance.com
Education and Utilization of LINKS

The Louisiana Immunization Network System (LINKS) is the state’s Immunization Information System (IIS) and has been recognized as a model system. Each state has its own IIS. The system gathers and consolidates scattered immunization records, forecasts what immunizations are due to support a patient and their healthcare providers, through planned and unexpected events. The Louisiana IIS is a secure system with the capability of a bi-directional interface with many electronic health records. Individuals are able to opt out of having their data in LINKS. Health care providers are able to reference and update a patient’s immunization record in the IIS. This ensures the individual is fully immunized and prevents unnecessary vaccinations, which is cost-saving. LINKS equips the whole care team with the information they need to confidently deliver the best health care for disease prevention.

Louisiana Immunization Network System

LINKS is a statewide computer-based system designed to keep track of immunization records for our citizens.

Provides Consolidated Records

This web application allows doctors, nurses and other health professionals to search for their patients’ vaccination records in a central location.

Manages Vaccine Inventory

Vaccine ordering, tracking, and administration are all managed in one tool within LINKS.

Minimizes Waste

Ensures every vaccine is accounted for and prevents the administration of unnecessary doses of vaccines.

Reminds Patients and Provider Dates

Automated reminders promote on-time vaccinations for patients. Helpful alerts assist providers with clinical decisions and management of the complex immunization schedule.

Coverage Rates and Outbreak Response

Population-level vaccine coverage data provides a clear view of communities at risk. Insights into vaccination status set the stage for effective outbreak response.
Medicaid and LaCHIP coverage

Medicaid and LaCHIP are critical to ensuring Louisiana children’s health needs are covered.

MEDICAID PUTTING LOUISIANA CHILDREN ON A PATH TO SUCCESS

Medicaid and LaCHIP (CHIP) provide health insurance for Louisiana children; bring federal dollars into the state; and help children grow into healthy, productive adults.

PROVIDING HEALTH INSURANCE FOR LOUISIANA CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Children make up 49% of Louisiana residents covered by Medicaid and LaCHIP.

This equals 713,819 Louisiana children, including:

- 100% of children in foster care
- 86% of children who live in or near poverty
- 65% of children born to moms covered by Medicaid
- 46% of children with disabilities or special health care needs such as diabetes and asthma
- 57% of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers

WHERE MEDICAID FITS IN: CHILDREN’S COVERAGE IN LOUISIANA

- 52% Medicaid and LaCHIP
- 40% Employer-sponsored insurance
- 2% Other, including Medicare, Tricare, VA
- 4% Direct purchase, including Marketplace
- 3% Uninsured

HELPING CHILDREN SUCCEED IN SCHOOL AND LIFE

- MISS LESS SCHOOL
- DO BETTER IN SCHOOL
- GRADUATE AND ATTEND COLLEGE
- BECOME HEALTHIER ADULTS
- EARN HIGHER WAGES
- PAY MORE IN TAXES

ENSURING HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT FROM THE START

Medicaid guarantees access to care for children through its Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit, known as EPSDT.

- EPSDT is one of the best ways Medicaid helps vulnerable children stay healthy and on track with their peers. It:
  - Identifies problems early
  - Checks children’s health at periodic intervals
  - Provides development, vision, and hearing screenings to detect problems
  - Performs diagnostic tests to identify risks
  - Provides treatment for any problems found

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INVESTING IN LOUISIANA’S ECONOMY AND FAMILIES

Medicaid is an economic driver, bringing state tax dollars back home:

Every $1 Louisiana invests in Medicaid brings back $1.86 in federal funds

Medicaid strengthens families:
- When parents are covered, they are healthier and better able to care for their children.
- Data show that children are more likely to get and keep health insurance when their parents are covered.
- When parents and children are covered, the whole family is more financially secure.

AFTER YEARS OF PROGRESS, WE’RE LOSING GROUND

- In 2017, the number of uninsured children increased for the first time in a decade. 276,000 more U.S. children became uninsured, and progress in covering Louisiana children stalled.
- In 2018, the number of children enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP fell by about 840,000 nationwide—including 26,033 in Louisiana.

These data show that children’s health coverage is headed in the wrong direction—an alarming trend that cannot be ignored.

WE MUST PROTECT CHILDREN’S COVERAGE

KEEP MEDICAID STRONG
Medicaid faces serious threats in states where enrollment barriers such as work reporting requirements, budget cuts, and moves to block grant or cap Medicaid funding are being proposed. Actions like these prevent Medicaid from doing its job of providing health insurance. We must prevent harmful changes that add costly administrative burden for states while also taking away people’s health coverage.

KEEP CHILDREN COVERED
States have made historic gains in covering children. But, with coverage rates stalling or headed in the wrong direction, we must double down on efforts to reach and enroll eligible children, focus on system improvements to keep them covered, and ensure that parents have health insurance, so they can keep themselves and their families healthy.

This 2019 fact sheet was created by the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

For data sources used see: ccf.georgetown.edu/2019/03/20/medicaid-and-chip-snapshot-data-sources-2019/
Visit our websites at: ccf.georgetown.edu | aap.org

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Car Seat Safety
During the 2019 legislative session Louisiana lawmakers updated the car seat and safety restraint laws to align with national safety recommendations. The Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is helping spread the word about the changes that became effective on August 1, 2019 with our “Keep Me Safe As I Grow” campaign. This educational campaign aims to bring awareness to the changes and promote safe restraints for children of all ages.

Emergency Medical Services for Children
Where children are born can affect their chances for a strong start in life. Babies need good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences to foster their healthy brain development and help them realize their full potential.

This fact sheet provides a snapshot of how infants, toddlers, and their families are faring with respect to these three developmental domains. For each domain, selected child or family indicators and policy indicators are highlighted and compared to national averages. Important demographic information is also included. A summary table of all indicators is provided on the last page, for reference.

Demographics
Infants and toddlers in Louisiana

Overview

Louisiana is home to 188,400 infants and toddlers, representing 4 percent of the state's population. As many as 52 percent live in households with incomes less than twice the federal poverty line (in 2017, about $50,000 a year for a family of four), placing them at economic disadvantage. America's youngest children are diverse and are raised in a variety of family contexts. A broad array of policies and services are required to ensure that all of them have an equitable start in life.

Race/ethnicity of infants and toddlers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th>National Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic Black</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic Other</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poverty status of infants and toddlers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poverty Status</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th>National Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Above Low-Income</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Poverty</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Income</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Infants and toddlers in poverty, by race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th>National Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic Black</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic Other</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Structure</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th>National Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-Parent Family</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Parent Family</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Parents Present</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grandparent-headed households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grandparent-Headed Households</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th>National Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rural/Non-metro area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural/Non-Metro Area</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th>National Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living Outside of a Metro Area</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Positive Early Learning Experiences in Louisiana

What Defines Positive Early Learning Experiences?

Infants and toddlers learn through play, active exploration of their environment, and, most importantly, through interactions with the significant adults in their lives. The quality of babies’ early learning experiences at home and in other care settings has a lasting impact on their preparedness for lifelong learning and success. Parents who require child care while they work or attend school need access to affordable, high-quality care options that promote positive development.

Louisiana scores in the Working Effectively (W) tier of states when considering key indicators related to early care and education early intervention for infants and toddlers. The state’s high ranking in the Positive Early Learning Experiences domain reflects indicators such as its less burdensome costs of infant care as a percentage of single parents’ and married parents’ incomes. In contrast, Louisiana is in the Getting Started (G) tier when considering the percentage of income-eligible young children who have access to Early Head Start, and the percentage of infants and toddlers who received a developmental screening in the past year.

Six Key Indicators of Positive Early Learning Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th>National average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Income-eligible infants/toddlers with Early Head Start access</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>3.0% - 21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental screening received</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>17.2% - 30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent reads to baby every day</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
<td>25.0% - 59.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of care, as % of income single parents</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>24.6% - 39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low/moderate income infants/toddlers in CCDF funded-care</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>1.8% - 9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of infants/toddlers receiving IDEA Part C services</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1.5% - 9.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Positive Early Learning Experiences Policy in Louisiana

Families above 200% of FPL eligible for child care subsidy: No

All indicators for Louisiana

Good Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th>National average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility limit (% FPL) for pregnant women in Medicaid</td>
<td>138.0</td>
<td>200.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low or very low food security</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants breastfed at 6 months</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers reporting less than optimal mental health</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventive dental care received</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninsured low-income infants/toddlers</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants ever breastfed</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late or no prenatal care received</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventive medical care received</td>
<td>97.0%</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babes with low birthweight</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received recommended vaccines</td>
<td>66.8%</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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About the Louisiana Chapter | American Academy of Pediatrics
The Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics was established in 1984 as a member-based non-profit. The Chapter represents over 800 pediatricians and pediatric subspecialist throughout the state. The mission of the Louisiana Chapter is to advocate for all children in Louisiana.