



# **Prenatal to Age Three Policies: Summary of an Expert Roundtable Discussion**

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November 14, 2018

NGA Education Division

# Overview of NGA:

<b>Mission</b>	The National Governors Association (NGA) is the nonpartisan organization of the nation's governors. Through NGA, governors share best practices, speak with a collective voice on national policy and develop innovative solutions that improve state policy.
<b>Who we are</b>	Members are the governors of the 55 states, territories and commonwealths
<b>What we do</b>	Support governors with identification of priority issues and deal with matters of public policy and governance at the state and national levels.
<b>Organizational Structure</b>	Office of Federal Relations  Center for Best Practices

# 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN





## **Governance and Finance**

- Integrating and Aligning Pre-natal to Age Three Policies



## **Standards, Assessment and Accountability**

- Creating Comprehensive PreK-Grade 3 Systems



## **Human Capital**

- Human Capital Road Map
- Early Care & Education Workforce (2.0)



## **Whole Child**

- Integrating Equity in Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning



## **Personalized Education**

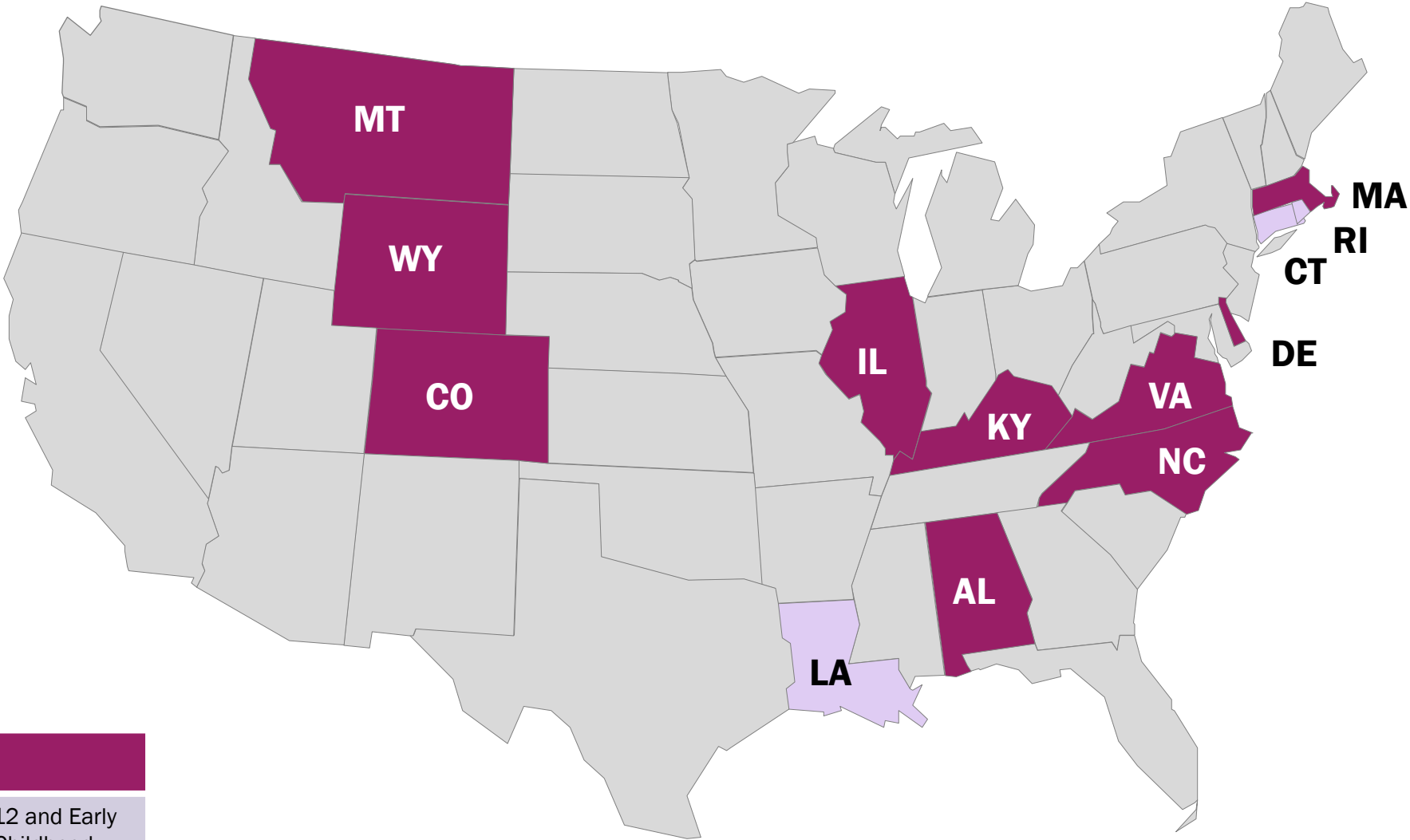
- Charter Schools



# Governors Response Team (GRT)



# GRT in Action: Early Childhood Education

AK 



	
Early Childhood Education	K-12 and Early Childhood

# Louisiana's ECE Summit



Expert Roundtable  
Integrating and Advancing State  
Prenatal to Age Three Policies



Date:  
June 4th -5th, 2018

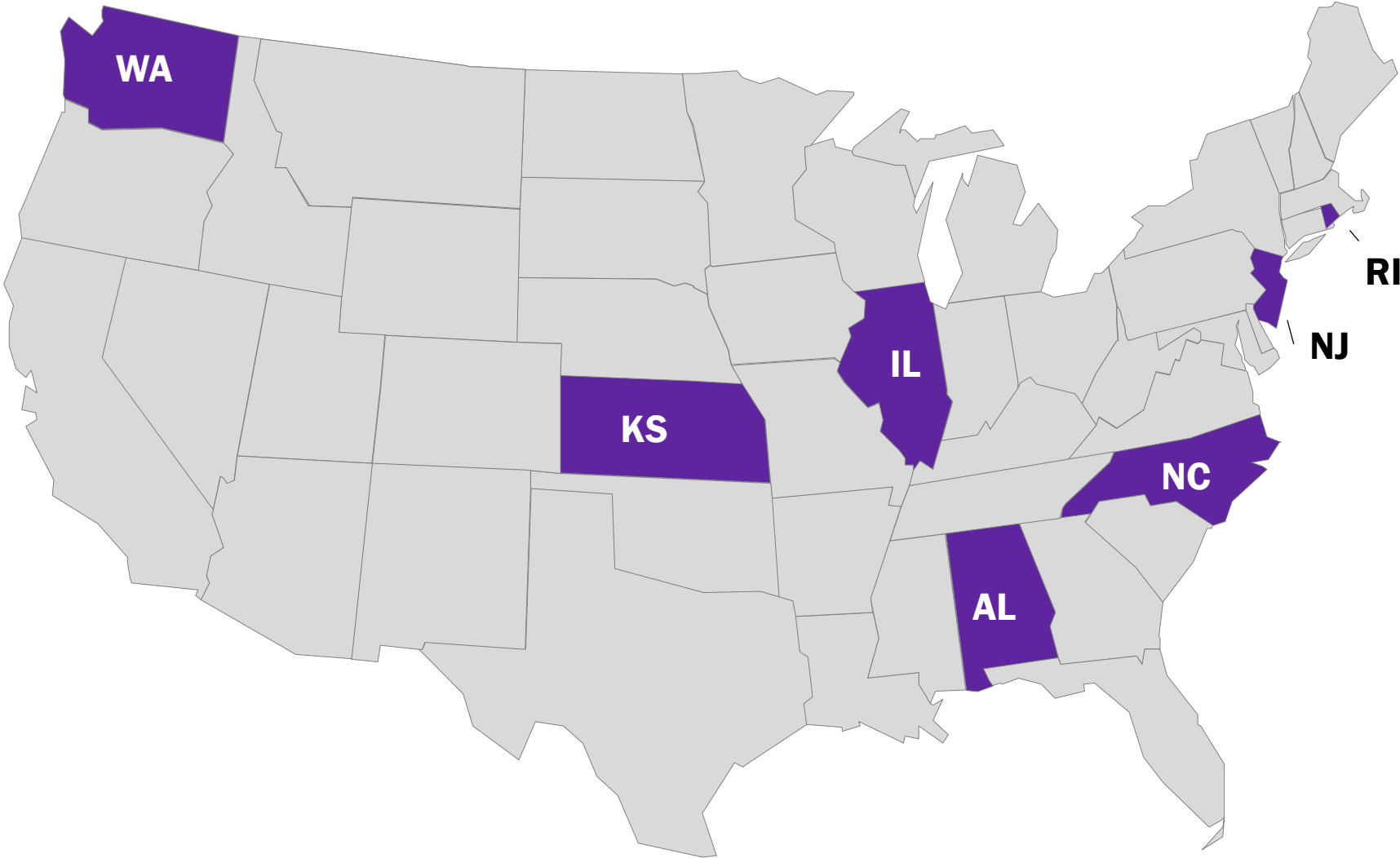
Hosted By:



Center on the Developing Child  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



# Prenatal to Age Three Expert Roundtable States





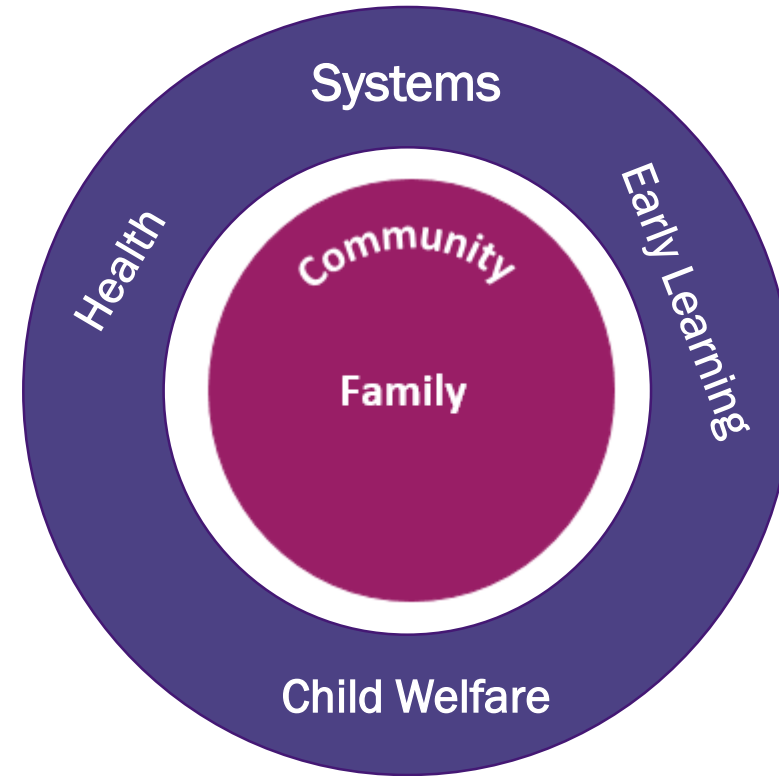


Report Available on the NGA Website > Best Practices  
> NGA Publications at  
<https://www.nga.org/center/publications/nga-releases-expert-roundtable-report-on-integrating-and-advancing-prenatal-to-age-3-policies/>



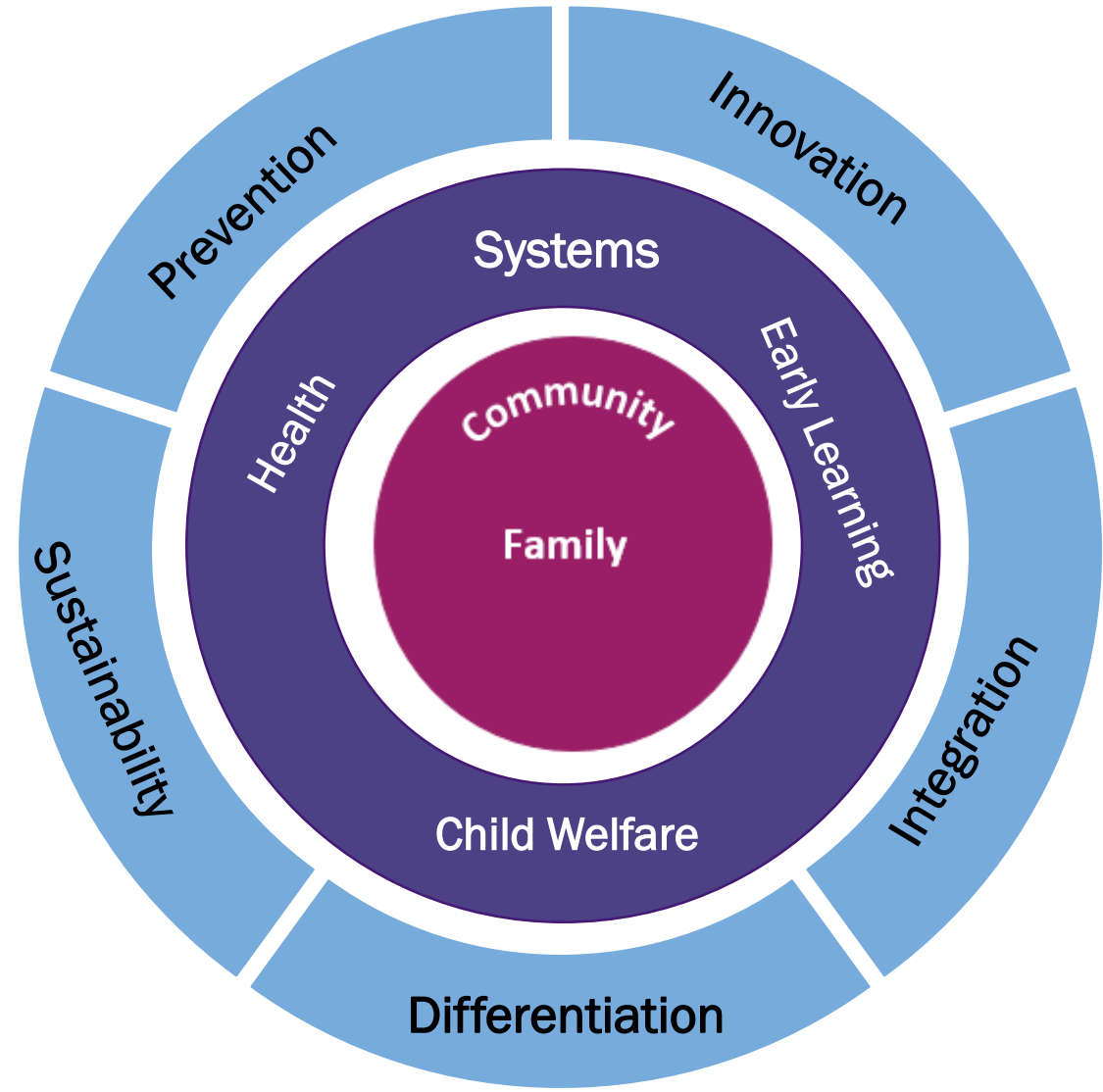
# Prenatal to Three Policy Components

- Ensure that Children and Families are at the Center
- Integrate Health, Early Learning and Child Welfare Systems



# A Vision for an Integrated PN3 Policy Agenda

- Prevention
- Integration
- Differentiation
- Sustainability
- Innovation



# Policy Levers to Consider

- **Governors' Levers**

- Staff Appointments
- Power of Convenings
- Bully Pulpit

- **Health Policies**

- Health and Mental Health Services for Pregnant Women and New Parents
- Nutrition Programs (SNAP, WIC)
- CHIP, EPSDT, TANF
- Medicaid Expansion

- **Early Learning Policies**

- CCDBG Quality Set-Aside for Infants and Toddlers
- Part C of IDEA
- Early Head Start Expansion
- Birth to Five Preschool Development Grants

- **Human Services Policies**

- MIECHV - Home Visiting
- Paid Family Leave

Save the Date  
NGA Education Division's

# Prenatal to Age Three Learning Lab

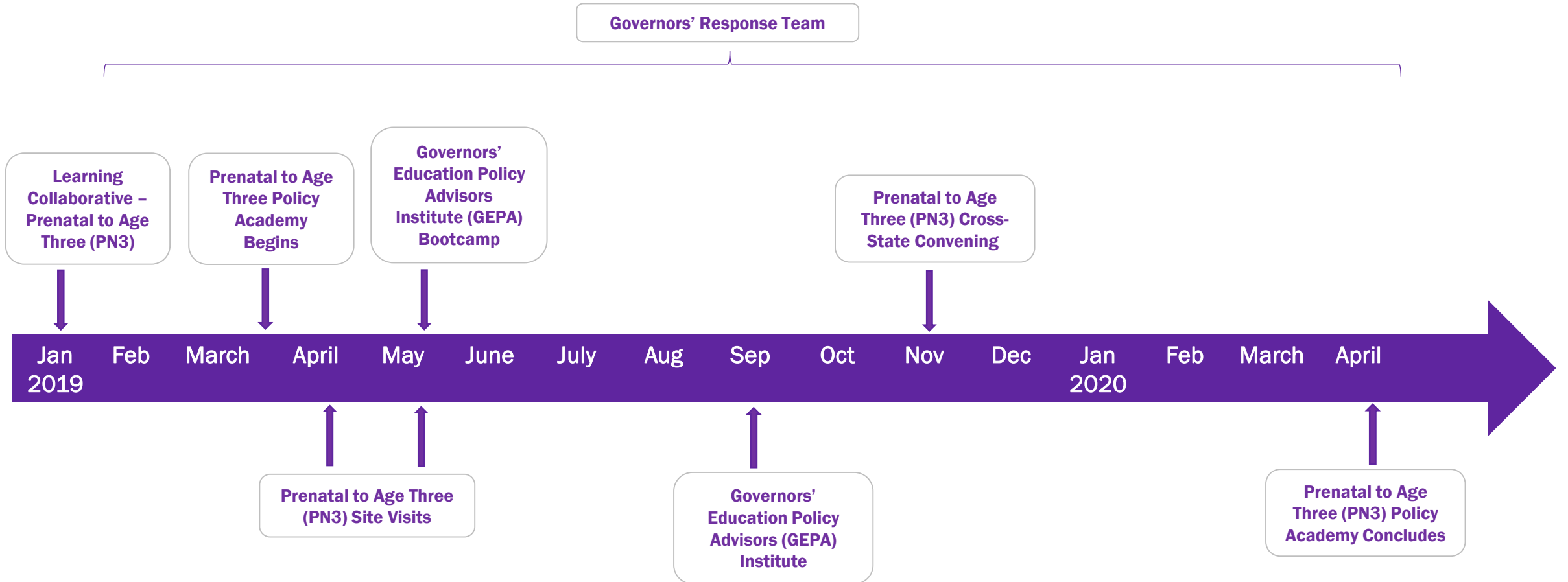
January 7th-9th, 2019

Hotel Monteleone  
New Orleans, LA 70130

For more information, email [msorge@nga.org](mailto:msorge@nga.org)



# 2019-2020 Timeline of Selected NGA ECE Projects



*Note: Additional opportunities for learning such as podcasts, conference calls, and webinars will occur throughout the year.*





# *Think Babies*<sup>TM</sup> Campaign Overview

Barbara Gebhard, ZERO TO THREE

# What is *Think Babies*™ ?



ZERO TO THREE created the *Think Babies*™ campaign to bring nationwide attention to what babies and families need to thrive.



# Building Advocacy Capacity: State Partners



Established *Think Babies*  
campaigns in 6 states in 2018

Colorado



North Carolina



Georgia



Rhode Island



New Jersey



Washington



# *Think Babies*™ State Partnerships: Policy Solutions



- Affordable, quality child care for infants and toddlers
- Paid family leave
- Infant and early childhood mental health
- Voluntary, evidence-based home visiting
- Healthy nutrition and obesity prevention
- Child and family screenings



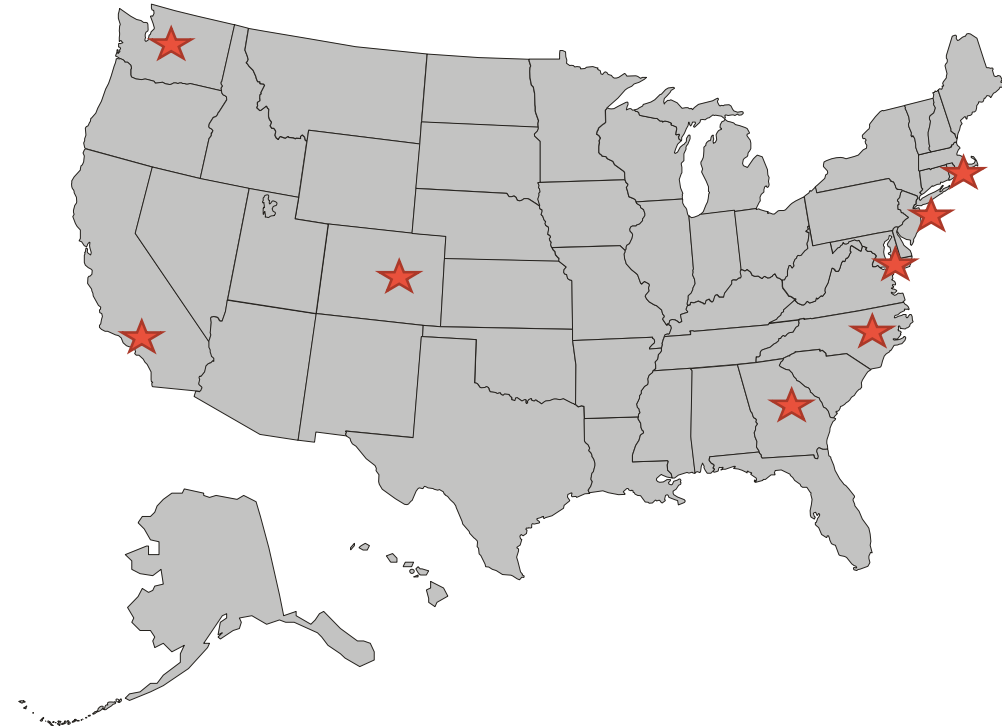
# Building Awareness and Will: *Strolling Thunder*



Expanded to 8 *Strolling Thunder* events in 2018

- Washington, DC
- Los Angeles, CA
- Providence, RI
- Seattle, WA
- Denver, CO
- Atlanta, GA
- Raleigh, NC
- Trenton, NJ

**STROLLING**  <sup>TM</sup>  
**THUNDER**



# What's Next



Building momentum towards the campaign's policy priorities for infants and toddlers

## Fall 2018:

- Preparation for 2019 state legislative sessions and 116<sup>th</sup> Congress
- Education of policymakers post-election

## January 2019-ongoing:

- State partner campaign execution on *Think Babies* policy priorities
- Coordinated digital advocacy push targeted at new Congress

## February 2019:

- Release of ZERO TO THREE's national and state infant-toddler fact sheets
- *Think Babies* Policy Forum

## April 30, 2019:

- National Strolling Thunder

[www.thinkbabies.org](http://www.thinkbabies.org)

# *Think Babies*<sup>™</sup>



*Think Babies*<sup>™</sup> was developed to make the potential of every baby a national priority. Funding partners for *Think Babies*<sup>™</sup> include the Perigee Fund and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which supports the public education aspects of *Think Babies*<sup>™</sup>

Learn more at <https://www.thinkbabies.org>



**ZERO TO THREE**  
Early connections last a lifetime

# Infant-Toddler Policy Resources

Barbara Gebhard

ZERO TO THREE





# It's Time for Governors to *Think Babies*™

## It's Time for Governors to *Think Babies*™



### Why Babies?

Governors have a proven way to build a healthy future for their states: investing in their youngest constituents. The science is clear—children's brains grow faster between birth and age 3 than at any later point in life, forming more than one million new neural connections every second. When babies have nurturing relationships with caregivers, high quality early learning experiences, and good physical health and nutrition, these neural connections are stimulated and strengthened, laying a strong foundation for school readiness and success in school and beyond.

Unfortunately, too many babies aren't getting what they need. Nearly half of America's babies live in or near poverty and many young children face a range of risk factors that can impede positive development. Without a focus on early development, public systems will pay more in the long run, in lower academic achievement, increased special education costs, higher disease rates, increased economic dependence, and higher criminal justice costs.

By championing high-quality programs and supportive policies that ensure parents and caregivers have the time and resources to nurture healthy brain development, governors can make an investment with long-term social and economic returns. In addition, policies that support families can more immediately boost the state's economy by making the state a more appealing place for families to live and work.



### The Role of Governors

Governors who *Think Babies*™ are highly visible and vocal champions for infants and toddlers with a commitment to ensuring that necessary resources are allocated to the policies and programs that support them. A governor who champions the needs of babies will:

- Be familiar with the data about how infants and toddlers in their state are faring;
- Be bold and think beyond the way things have always been done to develop systemic solutions that improve child outcomes;
- Convene legislators from across the aisle to advance a vision of building a great state for babies; and
- Ensure that state administrative structures reflect this commitment to babies, including representation focused on infant-toddler issues at the cabinet level.



### The First 100 Days and Beyond

The first 100 days lays the groundwork for a governor's focus on infant-toddler policy priorities. A governor can first assess how well the state is currently supporting infants, toddlers and their families and identify and champion specific strategies for making improvements by taking the following steps:

- Putting a process in place to consult with agency staff, community leaders, professionals delivering infant-toddler services, and parents during the transition period and early in the administration to better understand state system strengths and gaps.
- Appointing agency leaders who have expertise and understanding of infant-toddler issues, and appointing state leaders qualified in infant-toddler policy to existing state governance bodies concentrating on the broader early childhood continuum (such as Early Learning Councils) to ensure a focus on infant-toddler priorities.

- Why babies?
- The role of governors
- The first 100 days
- Policy improvements for infants, toddlers, and their families



# Assessing Needs and Setting Infant-Toddler Priorities

**A PLACE TO GET STARTED**

**Innovation in Infant and Toddler State Policies**

In the world of public policy, innovative approaches and solutions can make the difference between achieving long-held goals and maintaining the status quo. States are incubators for innovative ideas and often set the trends about which policy strategies build momentum and which do not. For the early childhood field, this is an exciting time of policy innovation. More attention is being focused on the earliest years of life than ever before in our nation's history. Across states, this new awareness about the early years is translating into creative policy strategies that promote responsible government while specifically addressing the needs of children prenatally to 3 years old.

Research shows that, to ensure a good start in life, all infants and toddlers need good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences. Programs and services that address these areas are critical, however, they are only as strong as the infrastructure that supports them. When states build comprehensive, coordinated systems of high-quality, prenatal-to-5 services, it is possible to make the most efficient use of resources to meet the needs of the youngest children and their families.

There is much to be gained by looking at how your state can build on the strengths of existing state programs and take new, innovative steps toward a coordinated, comprehensive system of services for infants, toddlers, and their families. This paper features some of the infant-toddler policy strategies currently garnering attention and provides an overview of how states are implementing them. The approaches featured here are only a sample of ideas about where to begin your work on infant and toddler policy. For a more complete array of policy options that your state could consider, see also a copy of ZERO TO THREE's *Early Experiences Matter Policy Guide*. Additional information on how states are implementing the strategies included in this paper and others that impact infants, toddlers, and their families can be found in ZERO TO THREE's *Early Experiences Dashboard: A Gateway to State Policies and Practices*.

When reading these examples, you may ask yourself, "How did the states featured here make their innovations happen? And where did they start?" Our experience teaches us that there is no wrong place to begin. In fact, each state is unique and will focus on the infant-toddler system area that makes the most sense in its particular context. To help guide you through this process, ZERO TO THREE developed *Infants and Toddlers in the Policy Picture*, a state self-assessment tool. With the assessment in hand, *A Place to Get Started* can act as a starting-off point for your state's in-fact-toddler strategic planning. ZERO TO THREE's work with states has made it clear that collecting and analyzing data is important in this process and can drive the policy choices you make. It is critical to gather basic information about the infants and toddlers in your state, such as how many children are under 3 years old, where infants and toddlers are being cared for, and the economic environment in which families with young children are living. In addition, states find it valuable to assess current policies and practices that impact our policy decisions. The key is to start somewhere and be thoughtful about how your policy choices fit within the context of a broader system of supports for infants, toddlers, and their families. No matter where you get started, the ZERO TO THREE Policy Center is here to support your efforts.

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**Infants and Toddlers in the Policy Picture: A Self-Assessment Toolkit for States**

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**Advancing State Policies for Infants and Toddlers: Lessons Learned From Three States**

**Why Focus on Infants and Toddlers?**

The first 3 years of life are a time of incredible physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development. A baby's brain makes more than one million neural connections per second in this period, building the foundation for school readiness and success in school and beyond. For infants and toddlers, positive and nurturing interactions with adults, whether parents, family members, or caregivers, are critical for getting a good start in life. Unfortunately, the first 3 years of life can be risky for the most vulnerable young children: infants and toddlers living with poverty, abuse or neglect, or other adversities may experience stress that can impede positive development. Research shows that this stress can most effectively be buffered through supportive adult relationships. Investing early in infant-toddler development can also prevent more costly interventions later in life. Studies have found that evidence-based programs for infants, toddlers, and their families have a higher return on investment than for any other age group.

Over the last several decades, state policymakers have expanded access to high-quality programs for young children, including pre-kindergarten programs, but have not typically focused on the unique needs of infants, toddlers, and their families. A comprehensive birth-5 state policy approach, as outlined in Figure 1, would include a range of health, family strengthening, and early learning supports that can help all infants and toddlers to thrive, including children in low-income or at-risk families or who face developmental delays. Federal and state agencies already support several initiatives for infants and toddlers, such as home visiting programs, child care subsidies, and early intervention services, but access to these programs is uneven and too often out of reach. In addition, initiatives serving infants and toddlers are often managed through separate agencies and funding sources, with limited coordination to assess families' needs and provide comprehensive services that promote infant-toddler development.

To address this challenge, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation provided ZERO TO THREE with a 2.5-year grant (*Moving States Ahead for Infants and Toddlers*) to support three states in developing and taking action toward cross-sector

**Figure 1. Infant & Toddler Policy Framework**

Health  
 • Prenatal health  
 • Infant/toddler health  
 • Developmental screening

Family Strengthening  
 • Home visiting  
 • Parent training  
 • Child abuse  
 • Paid family leave

Early Learning  
 • Child care  
 • Early home visit  
 • Early intervention

Good Health

Strong Families

Positive Early Learning Experiences

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- [Infants and Toddlers in the Policy Picture: A Self-Assessment Toolkit for States](#)
- [A Place to Get Started: Innovation in State Infant and Toddler Policies](#)
- [Advancing State Policies for Infants and Toddlers: Lessons Learned from Three States](#)



# Building Strong Foundations

- [Policy Framework for Infants, Toddlers, and Families](#)
- [From the Ground Up: Establishing Strong Core Policies for Infants, Toddlers, and Families](#)
- [13 Core Policies for Advancing Infant-Toddler Wellbeing](#)
- Racial Inequity in Policies that Impact Infants, Toddlers, and Families (forthcoming)
- State and Federal Policy Opportunities to Improve the Lives of Infants and Toddlers and their Families (forthcoming)
- Innovation in Cross-System Collaboration to Better Support Babies (forthcoming)



# NGA SUPPORT



**Dr. Aaliyah Samuel**  
Division Director  
asamuel@nga.org



**Dr. Beth Caron**  
Program Director  
bcaron@nga.org



**Mandy Sorge**  
Policy Analyst  
msorge@nga.org



**Tiffany Ferrette**  
Program Assistant  
tferrette@nga.org

# Questions?

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