

Federal Expenditures on Infants and Toddlers in 2007

KEY FACTS



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Extensive research shows investing in very young children can help build a strong future workforce, improve children's educational success and health, and potentially reduce some of the social ills that drain the nation's resources and will. What investments does the United States currently make in infants and toddlers?

- **The nation's 12.5 million infants and toddlers received 2.1 percent—\$44.1 billion—of federal domestic spending in 2007, while representing 4.2 percent of the population.** Federal domestic spending, which excludes defense, homeland security, and international affairs, totaled \$2.1 trillion.
- **In addition to the \$44.1 billion in spending, \$13.0 billion in tax expenditures went toward infants and toddlers.** Together, these allotments represent the majority of public investment on infants and toddlers, since states spend little on this population.
- **Early care and education programs, essential to many children's successful development and costly to provide for this age group, make up a relatively small share of the expenditures on infants and toddlers.** Just 7 percent of federal spending on infants and toddlers was for Early Head Start, Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and child care assistance.
- **Driven largely by Medicaid, health and nutrition constituted the biggest share of federal expenditures on infants and toddlers—38 percent—compared with 25 percent for all children.** Twenty-one percent of spending on the youngest children came via Medicaid, compared with 12 percent for all children.
- **Seventy-one percent of federal expenditures affecting children under age 3 came through six programs.** Only one, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), has a particular emphasis on serving infants and toddlers. The other five programs were Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly Food Stamps), the earned income tax credit, the child tax credit, and the dependent exemption.
- **Infants and toddlers receive very little cash assistance.** Programs providing regular cash payments composed only 2 percent of total spending on infants and toddlers, compared with 9 percent of expenditures on all children. Relatively few infants and toddlers receive Social Security survivors' benefits, qualify as disabled under Supplemental Security Income, or receive child support payments.

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