

# BOOST DATA AND INVESTMENTS IN INFANT AND TODDLER CARE

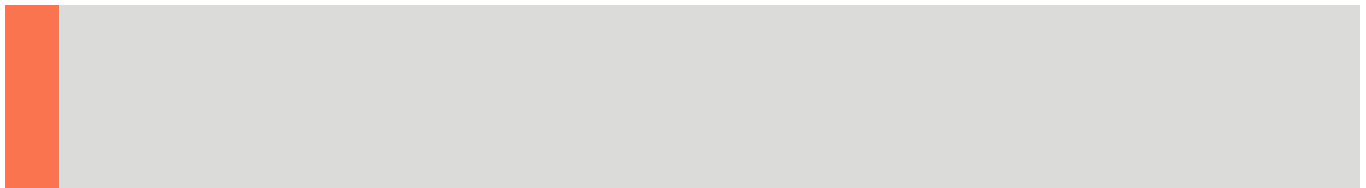
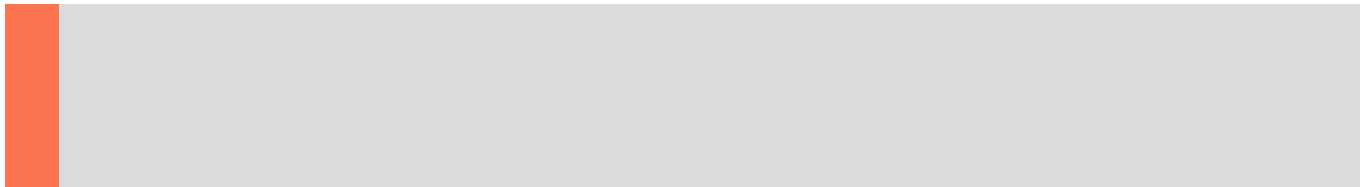
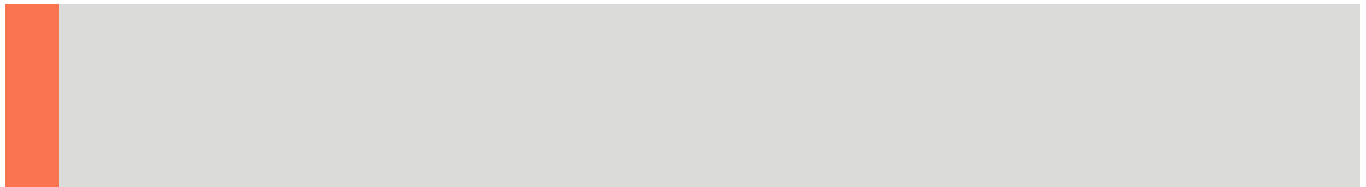
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Massachusetts is home to 204,232 babies, representing 2.9% of the state's population.[1] It's a well-established fact that the infant and toddler years are critical for brain development[2] and that an “environment of relationships” is crucial for the holistic development of the child.[3]

Nevertheless, infants and toddlers in Massachusetts are clearly at a disadvantage in receiving the financial support needed to optimize their development. Even though Massachusetts is a well-known leader in early education, the state continues to invest fewer dollars in its infants and toddlers in contrast to older children. Because of this relatively low investment, we ask: How might Massachusetts boost its investments in infants and toddlers?

## The Challenge

Data about infants and toddlers in Massachusetts is difficult to access. Based on the available information, here are some ways that Massachusetts falls short:



**Only 5.4% of families in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts can afford infant care.**

# SOLUTIONS

Given both the challenges of accessing current and relevant data, along with the complexities of infant and toddler care, we offer these three next steps:



## 01 — Develop and Expand Data Systems

There is a need to develop and expand usable data systems about infants and toddlers.



## 02 — Strengthen Collaboration

Stronger collaboration among state agencies and child care providers will be required to better plan and implement services for infants and toddlers.



## 03 — Create a Commission on Infants and Toddlers

The creation of a commission on infants and toddlers could highlight gaps and leverage existing services for infants and toddlers. This commission could strengthen both collaboration and data systems.



***These three solutions would boost investments in infant and toddler care in Massachusetts. The result would be a greater focus on our youngest citizens, increased accessibility for families, and improved administration.***

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# ENDNOTES

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[4] Department of Early Education and Care. (2023). EEC Data, Research & Reports.

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