

Medicaid in Early Childhood: A Smart Investment for New York

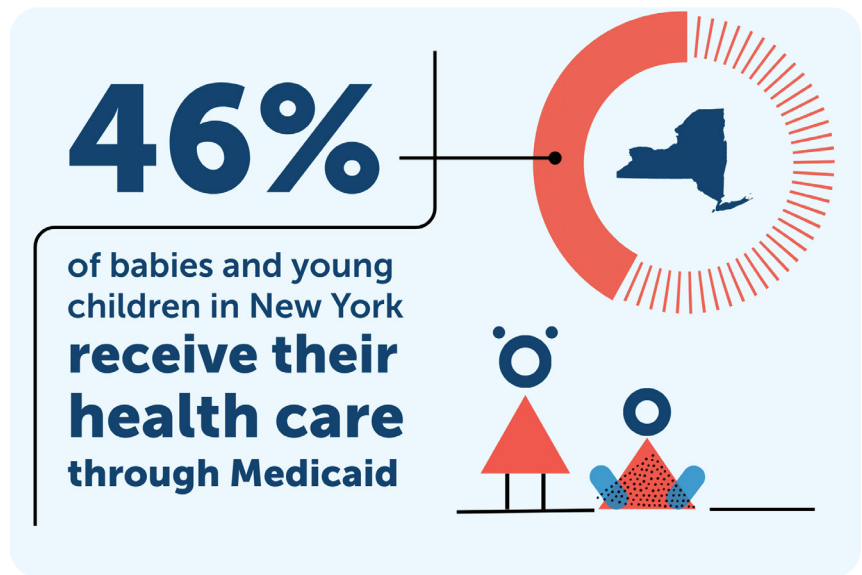


Why it Matters

Babies' brains make 1 million neural connections per second; more connections than at any other time in life. The early years are pivotal – the capacities and skills developed during this critical period become the basis of thriving communities. States that prioritize early childhood health see long-term gains in **education outcomes, economic productivity, and lifelong health and well-being.**

New York (NY) State Medicaid helps ensure children in families with low-income have the health coverage and care they need to flourish. In NY, children account for 27% of Medicaid enrollment but only 9% of expenditures. Medicaid coverage for low-income children from birth to age six is associated with better health outcomes in adulthood (ages 25-54), and continuous Medicaid coverage for children and pregnant people is associated with improved health outcomes, higher educational attainment, and greater financial security.¹

Medicaid also finances **Early Intervention**, a set of services for infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities and their families, also referred to as Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Early Intervention serves approximately 70,000 children in New York annually and is ranked 48th in the nation for timely delivery of services.² Approximately half the children in NY Early Intervention rely on Medicaid for health care.³



Medicaid coverage helps moms and babies thrive.

A Story of Strength: Victoria and Micah's Journey

The Role of Medicaid

Medicaid paid for the critical care that saved Micah's life. His earliest days were spent in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), where Medicaid made lifesaving treatment possible when his family needed it most.

"People don't always realize how vital Medicaid is," said Micah's mother, Victoria. "It covers mental health care, maternal health services, speech therapy, feeding support—care that would have been out of reach for our family without it."



Cuts to Medicaid aren't just budget decisions or numbers on a spreadsheet. They have real, lasting consequences for real families. Micah is alive and thriving today because Medicaid was protected and funded. Future families are counting on that commitment to continue.

Support NY Families

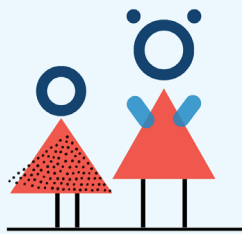
- **Protect and Expand Medicaid/Child Health Plus** to reach more children and pregnant people. Support the great progress NY has made, especially as federal policy will threaten coverage. Keeping parents covered is essential to keeping children covered
- **Protect coverage and care for immigrant children and families**
- **Support maternal mental health**, especially preventive prenatal services, postpartum care and screening (e.g., [A5709](#))
- **Increase access to developmental screenings and Early Intervention services** by supporting evidence-based pediatric primary care models like HealthySteps through [S7833](#) / [A8048](#)

HealthySteps

HealthySteps is an evidence-based population health model that improves outcomes and addresses health disparities with children served by Medicaid as our priority population.⁴ HealthySteps partners with pediatric primary care to help families with young children have the strongest foundation possible. Demonstrated outcomes, such as improved attendance at well-child visits and higher rates of immunization, help **drive short-term Medicaid cost savings.**

AVERAGE
ROI

163%



For every \$1 New York invests in HealthySteps, New York realizes an estimated \$0.63 in Medicaid agency savings** over 1 year.

Leveraging the HealthySteps cost savings model developed by Manatt Health in partnership with sites across the country.

**Savings above and beyond the initial \$1 invested by the State

NY Gains



Healthier families: Promotion, prevention, and early intervention prevent chronic disease and long-term disability



Stronger schools: Healthy children are better prepared to learn



Smarter spending: Preventive care costs less than future treatment

Call To Action



Stand up for Medicaid. Your voice matters as federal cuts are proposed. Learn more at [thinkbabies.org](https://www.thinkbabies.org).

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Early Childhood Data by County

Counties	# of Births (2022) ⁵	% of Children with Medicaid/CHP ⁶	Percent of children receiving Early Intervention ⁷ services 30 days or less from the date of the authorizing Individualized Family Service Plan (2023)	# of Children ages 0-17 with SNAP ⁸	# of Children Experiencing Poverty Under 5 Years ⁹	% of Children Experiencing Poverty Under 5 Years ⁹
New York State	206,812	41.9%	n/a	936,663	199,826	18.6%
New York City	n/a	n/a	56.6%	521,366	n/a	n/a
Albany	2,819	40.2%	77.1%	12,053	2,559	17.2%
Allegany	472	43.4%	44.4%	1,845	512	22.3%
Bronx	16,728	64.4%	n/a	n/a	31,838	34.6%
Broome	1,685	45.4%	90.3%	9,767	2,434	25.5%
Cattaraugus	796	44.9%	94.1%	3,644	1,134	27.1%
Cayuga	706	42.8%	92.3%	3,300	754	20.9%
Chautauqua	1,157	45.3%	96.0%	8,279	1,823	28.3%
Chemung	802	44.2%	76.9%	4,512	1,099	26.3%
Chenango	465	43.7%	100%	2,012	361	15.5%
Clinton	615	42.7%	73.3%	2,921	530	15.5%
Columbia	473	41.6%	33.3%	1,699	377	16.4%
Cortland	455	41.0%	66.7%	1,971	371	17.1%
Delaware	350	44.2%	75.0%	1,426	563	31.5%
Dutchess	2,615	37.3%	90.1%	6,166	1,149	8.6%
Erie	9,087	41.4%	86.8%	52,378	10,021	20.3%
Essex	287	42.0%	26.7%	1,055	330	25.4%
Franklin	441	45.1%	71.4%	2,108	514	23.7%
Fulton	507	44.5%	66.7%	2,256	528	22.5%
Genesee	553	40.5%	45.0%	1,676	409	13.8%
Greene	379	42.3%	62.5%	1,400	192	10%
Hamilton	287	40.7%	100%	71	3	2%
Herkimer	591	41.0%	31.8%	2,801	456	15.8%
Jefferson	1,759	42.8%	100%	4,919	1,464	17.8%
Montgomery	611	46.6%	55.6%	3,221	490	16.3%
Nassau	13,747	22.7%	63.6%	13,052	4,105	5.7%
New York	13,198	34.2%	56.6%	n/a	11,184	16.2%
Niagara	1,961	41.2%	100%	9,728	2,171	20.8%
Oneida	2,185	44.2%	24.7%	15,072	2,801	22.4%
Onondaga	4,627	42.0%	42.9%	25,193	5,558	21.7%
Ontario	1,016	39.0%	88.2%	2,841	645	12.5%
Orange	5,443	42.8%	74.2%	19,162	5,283	20.1%
Orleans	376	43.7%	70.8%	1,918	250	13.8%
Oswego	1,110	43.7%	25.0%	6,578	1,637	27.4%
Otsego	458	41.7%	36.4%	1,735	560	24.2%
Putnam	909	36.2%	76.1%	605	163	3.7%
Queens	2,3877	46.8%	n/a	n/a	19,164	15.1%
Rensselaer	1,483	40.8%	84.6%	6,317	1,760	22.9%
Richmond	4,908	39.9%	n/a	n/a	3,515	13.2%
Rockland	6,389	46.0%	98.7%	24,214	8,480	29.9%
Saint Lawrence	905	43.5%	59.1%	4,682	1,272	25.9%
Saratoga	2,082	34.9%	78.0%	3,911	779	7.1%
Schenectady	1,662	41.4%	54.2%	8,280	1,523	16.5%

Early Childhood Data by County

Schoharie	253	40.6%	85.7%	1,027	132	11%
Schuyler	139	42.5%	0.0%	644	130	15.4%
Seneca	291	42.8%	46.2%	992	199	11.1%
Steuben	988	43.0%	42.9%	3,382	962	19.2%
Suffolk	16,104	20.6%	57.1%	33,674	6,289	8.1%
Sullivan	974	46.3%	75.0%	4,957	904	20.1%
Tioga	491	40.8%	66.7%	1,777	620	25.1%
Tompkins	638	41.2%	25.0%	2,589	528	14.4%
Ulster	1,540	42.8%	40.4%	5,347	1,144	15.1%
Warren	537	40.0%	92.9%	2,011	208	7.6%
Washington	533	41.6%	75.9%	2,182	472	17.2%
Wayne	842	40.6%	97.2%	2,825	930	19%
Westchester	9,913	33.5%	52.6%	29,732	5,356	10.2%
Wyoming	342	41.1%	90.9%	794	270	14.7%
Yates	315	42.1%	60.0%	782	290	18.7%



End Notes

- ¹ Buettgens M. Ensuring Continuous Eligibility for Medicaid and CHIP: Coverage and Cost Impacts for Children.; 2023. Accessed June 10, 2025. <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2023/sep/ensuring-continuous-eligibility-medicaid-chip-impacts-children>
- ² The Children’s Agenda. Reimagine the Future: The Need to Reform Early Intervention in New York State. 10/9/2025. <https://thechildrensagenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/2025-Report-on-Early-Intervention-Reform-FINAL-October-9-2025.pdf>
- ³ <https://www.ideainfanttoddler.org/pdf/2023-ITCA-Finance-Survey-Results.pdf>
- ⁴ HealthySteps. The Evidence Base. <https://www.healthysteps.org/our-impact/the-evidence-base/>
- ⁵ Table 9: Live Births by Race/Ethnicity and Resident County, New York State – 2022. https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/vital_statistics/2022/table09.htm
- ⁶ County-level Medicaid/CHIP coverage estimates are based on an analysis of 2022-2023 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). ACS estimates are not adjusted to address the “Medicaid undercount” often observed when comparing analysis based on Census survey data to the reported numbers of individuals enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP using federal and state administrative data. Federal and state administrative data typically shows higher levels of enrollment. <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2025/02/06/medicaid-coverage-in-new-york-counties-2023/>
- ⁷ Early Intervention Municipality Performance Data: https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/community/infants_children/early_intervention/local_program_performance/
- ⁸ Council on Children & Families. Kids’ Well-being Indicators Clearinghouse. KWIC Indicator: Children and Youth Receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits. https://www.nyskwic.org/get_data/indicator_profile.cfm?indicatorid=2
- ⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. “Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months.” American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1701?q=Poverty&g=040XX00US36,36\\$05000000&tp=false](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S1701?q=Poverty&g=040XX00US36,36$05000000&tp=false) Accessed on 3 Dec 2025.