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**AREA FOR LOCAL CONTACT(S) TO CUSTOMIZE XXXXXXXXXXXXX**

**Below are Policies in Detail to be used to customize fact sheet. Simply copy and paste applicable sections into customizable areas on page 1. Local advocates can also write their own blurb to be included that highlights a current policy ask.**

**Healthy Beginnings**

Access to health care is essential to a healthy pregnancy and healthy babies. Policies that support healthy pregnancies and healthy births include: Extending Postpartum Medicaid Coverage, Protecting and Expanding Medicaid, Increasing Enrollment in Health Care Coverage (Easy Enrollment), Funding to Support Access to Care and paid family and medical leave.

A healthy beginning for a child starts before birth with a healthy mother. To improve chances for a strong start in life, all expectant mothers need access to comprehensive prenatal and postnatal care, screenings and services to ensure infants are born safely and continue to thrive.

**Supportive Families**

Policy approaches help improve the health and wellness of your district and provide stability and support for families. Poverty is associated with poor health outcomes for both infants and families. Strategies to increase economic security can improve perinatal health include: State Minimum Wage, State Earned Income Tax Credit, State Support for SNAP, Child Care Subsidies and Paid Family and Medical Leave.

For healthy development, infants and toddlers need quality health care, stimulating learning opportunities, and nurturing, responsive relationships. A system of supports for families should be in place to reach every parent and child at or before birth with needed information, assessments and referrals

that offer each child a strong start.

**High Quality Care & Learning**

High-quality child care must be accessible and affordable for every family that needs it. Whether it’s in a child care center or with home-based providers, stimulating learning opportunities and nurturing, responsive relationships are crucial to support healthy brain development. Policies to support include: Early Care and Education Standards, Appropriations and Child Care Subsidies, Increasing Access to Head Start and Early Head Start, Supporting Child Care Providers, Evidence-based Home Visiting Programs and Early Intervention Funding.

**Specific Policy Examples**

**SNAP**

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a national program that reached more than 41 million people in 2021, nearly half of which are under 18. Research suggests that caregivers and children who participate in SNAP have improved birth outcomes, reduced childhood food insecurity, increased healthcare use among children, and improved long-term child health. SNAP policies that you can support within your state include: Reducing Administrative Burden for SNAP, Increasing SNAP Access as well as SNAP Incentive and Produce Prescription Program Funding.

**Paid Family Leave**

Working families need Paid Family and Medical Leave to bond and respond to medical needs. Paid Family and Medical Leave is associated with fewer infant deaths and low-birthweight babies, fewer hospitalizations, higher rates of breastfeeding for the infant and better mental health and physical health for parents.