

# Report Finds New Jersey Spends More on Children than U.S. Average but Lags in Federal Funding

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NEWARK, N.J., UNITED STATES, April 28, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Public spending per child is higher in New Jersey than in many other states, driven by state investments in public education, according to a new analysis by [The Urban Institute](#). At the same time, the analysis reveals New Jersey receives significantly less federal support per child than the national average.

The brief, [Public Spending on Children in New Jersey](#), was funded by [The Nicholson Foundation](#) and examines public spending on children from birth through age 18 in New Jersey between 1998 and 2016. The analysis reveals that New Jersey expenditures for pre-K-12 education, children's health, child-related tax credits, and economic supports for families totaled \$16,329 per child, or some \$4,000 more than the average of all states combined.

Although lower than New York's, New Jersey's spending is comparable to spending in the neighboring states of Pennsylvania, Delaware and Connecticut.

"Public investment in children through education, health, and economic supports has a clear impact on families, communities, and future generations," said Julia Isaacs, senior fellow in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute. "This analysis provides state policymakers and advocates in New Jersey with a comprehensive picture of public spending on children, one that includes federal spending and tax credits, as well as spending from state and local sources."

This brief focused on federal, state, and local programs and tax credits that provide direct benefits to children from birth through age 18, grouped into four categories:

- Pre-K-12 education, including public funding for public K-12 education, public prekindergarten, Head Start, school meals; special education, and education services that operate outside of school systems (e.g., early intervention, vocational education)
- Children's health, including spending on children through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Child-related tax credits, including the federal and state earned income tax credits and the federal child tax credit
- Economic supports for children and families, including Social Security survivor benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits to disabled children, Temporary Assistance for

Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to children

“This report provides important data that can help us develop a roadmap to a better future for New Jersey’s children,” said Dr. Kimberly Boller, Chief Strategy and Evaluation Officer at The Nicholson Foundation. “New Jersey has a lot to be proud of, including being first in pre-K-12 education outcomes, but we need to improve support for health-related services and do a better job of tapping into federal sources of funding that can fill gaps and improve outcomes in both health and education. Now is the time to be intentional about linking public investments to what children and families need to thrive, especially for children facing racial and economic inequities in access to high quality health, education, and social services. As post-COVID recovery comes to New Jersey, making all children a priority is critical.”

The analysis also suggests steps that New Jersey policymakers and advocates can take to increase uptake of federal programs and tax credits:

- Reducing barriers to SNAP participation and increasing outreach for the federal earned income tax credit could bring more federal support to New Jersey children and families.
- Examining the Medicaid and CHIP programs, including issues such as low physician reimbursement rates, may yield additional insights on why New Jersey differs from the US average and how funding gaps may be closed.
- Reviewing funding for federal education programs, such as Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), can reveal whether funding has been drawn down effectively and how federal, state and local funds can better address ongoing disparities.

A summary of key findings:

- New Jersey invests more per child than many other states and although lower than New York, is comparable to spending in neighboring states
- New Jersey spends more per child on education but less on children’s health, child-related tax credits, and economic supports for children and families
- New Jersey receives less federal support than other states across all spending categories; federal spending per child in New Jersey is low in the areas of pre-K-12 education, children’s health, child-related tax credits, and economic supports for families with children
- Federal dollars play a growing role in supporting public investments in children and a critical one in times of recession

#### ABOUT THE NICHOLSON FOUNDATION

The Nicholson Foundation is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of vulnerable populations in New Jersey. The Foundation’s approach emphasizes partnerships and performance-based grant making; its goal is sustainable systems reform. For more information about the Foundation, visit <http://thenicholsonfoundation.org>.

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