**Leave Behind for Policymakers**

The following sample language can be used to craft your own leave behind to give to policymakers and staff and during meetings with families. This text can be modified to reflect your organization’s priorities.

Every child deserves a strong start in life. The foundation we provide for them shapes their future and the future of our communities. The science is clear that our brains grow faster between the ages of 0 and 3 than any later point in our lives, forming more than one million new neural connections every second. Babies’ early experiences – both positive and negative – build the foundation for brain architecture and physical and mental health that will support their ability to learn, grow and thrive. When babies don’t get what their growing brains need to thrive, they don’t develop as they should. This leads to life-long developmental, educational, social, and health challenges.

**It’s time to invest in the future.**

Public policy can help ensure babies get the best possible start, but policies have not kept up with the needs of today’s parents and caregivers. And opportunities for young children to grow and flourish are not shared equally by all infants, toddlers, and families, reflecting pas and present systemic racism and barriers to critical resources. We must make the potential of every baby our priority through policies that promote good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences. In [STATE] key areas of investment include:

* + [ADD BULLETS WITH STATE POLICY SOLUTIONS, SEE THINK BABIES KEY MESSAGES AND TALKING POINTS FOR POLICY AREA SPECIFIC LANGUAGE]

It’s time to bring nationwide attention to what babies—and families—need to thrive.Be part of the team that’s fighting for our future. Learn more at [WEBSITE] and sign up at [www.thinkbabies.org](http://www.thinkbabies.org).

**About Babies in [STATE/COMMUNITY]:**

The [*State of Babies Yearbook*](https://stateofbabies.org/) is a resource that seeks to bridge the gap between science and policy with national and state-by-state data on the well-being of babies in the United States. The *Yearbook* provides a snapshot of how babies are faring nationally and by state across nearly 60 indicators and policy domains in areas essential for a good start in life: Good Health, Strong Families, and Positive Early Learning Experiences. States are ranked into one of four tiers based on how they fare on selected indicators and policy domains that represent their progress towards assuring babies’ access to health care, paid leave, quality early learning and more. The *Yearbook* shows us that, even before the pandemic, the littlest among us face big challenges, and the policies and programs in their state can make a difference in their ability to reach their full potential. Most alarming, significant disparities across key indicators of well-being emphasize the big barriers babies of color face.

The data are clear: the state where a baby is born makes a big difference in their chance for a strong start in life. All states need to do better for babies. Even among states with high averages, significant disparities exist in the opportunities available to babies and families of color to thrive, often driven by historical and structural inequalities. By nearly every measure, children living in poverty face the biggest obstacles, such as low birthweight, unstable housing, and limited access to quality child care. Regardless of income, racism still impacts outcomes for children of color and we know that children living in poverty are disproportionately children of color. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed and exacerbated these disparities and structural barriers, which have harmful and life-altering effects that begin even before birth and can last a lifetime.

In [STATE/ COMMUNITY]:

[INSERT RELEVANT DATA POINTS FROM YOUR [STATE PROFILE](https://stateofbabies.org/states/)]

**For more information, please contact**:

[NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION]

[PHONE NUMBER] | [EMAIL]