

It's Time For Congress To Invest In Babies

STROLLING THUNDER 10 YEARS

Hi, I'm baby

Mira

This is my story.

Location:

Cambridge, Massachusetts

My Grown Up's Name:

Marisa

“ I was two weeks postpartum, still sick, spending hours a day on hold with insurance — just trying to get the leave my doctor recommended and that the law required.



Federal policies play a critical role in the health and well-being of both babies and their caregivers, including through Medicaid, early intervention, mental health, and pediatric investments. By investing in the health and well-being of children and their families now, we can set them up for lifelong success, and the future success of our country.

Our story begins...

My 37-week appointment was supposed to be routine. But my blood pressure was suddenly dangerously high. Within hours, I was admitted to the hospital, put on a magnesium drip to prevent stroke or seizure, and prepared for induction. After more than 48 hours in the hospital, our daughter Mira was born. She was healthy. It was the most magical moment of our lives. But my preeclampsia didn't resolve.

Instead of stabilizing, my blood pressure stayed dangerously high. I remained hospitalized for a week while doctors tried different medications. I went home on two prescriptions, taken three times a day, and stayed on them for six months.

Two weeks postpartum—still sick, still exhausted, triple-feeding my newborn every two hours because she was struggling to gain weight. Triple-feeding means breastfeeding, then pumping, while your partner gives a bottle, and then starting again two hours later. It is constant.

But I was forced to spend hours on the phone with my HR department and insurance company trying to get my paid leave approved. They kept denying it. They kept asking for forms that weren't legally required.

It took over a month of calls and emails and a script from a stranger in an online mom group to finally resolve it.

I live in Massachusetts, one of the states with the strongest family leave protections in the country. And I still had to fight for it while I was recovering from a serious medical condition and caring for a newborn.

No mother should have to do that.

IT'S TIME To Make Policy Change

Families like mine are doing everything we can to keep our babies healthy, but it's not always easy to find affordable care or get the support we need. When appointments are delayed or services aren't available, for me or my baby, it affects children for the rest of their lives. That's why I'm asking Congress to invest in programs that make sure caregivers and babies like mine can access reliable care from the very beginning.

We Want Congress to Support Good Health by:

- Opposing cuts to Medicaid to ensure babies and those who care for them can access the care they need for a strong, healthy start.
- Increasing funding for early intervention through Medicaid and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C to ensure young children stay on track.
- Increasing investment in early childhood health and mental health, including through SAMHSA's Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Grant Program and Project LAUNCH, HRSA's Early Childhood Development Expert program and HRSA's Transforming Pediatrics for Early Childhood.

About Think Babies™ and Strolling Thunder™

ZERO TO THREE created Think Babies™ as a call to action for policymakers to prioritize good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences, particularly during the crucial early years of brain development. Strolling Thunder™ is an annual event for families to share their stories with their elected officials in person. [Learn more at www.ThinkBabies.org/StrollingThunder](http://www.ThinkBabies.org/StrollingThunder).