**Sample PN-3 Op-Ed**

Check your media outlet’s submission guidelines
to see how long to make your piece and how to submit it.

**Parents need support to nurture babies’ growing brains and bodies**

CUSTOMIZE YOUR INTRODUCTION: *Write a specific, declarative summary of the case and the ask you are making. This sets up the rest of the piece—and if a reader doesn’t get farther than the first paragraph, they get the point. If you’re advocating for PN-3 support more generally, you can use the paragraph below as your opener:*

We live up to our country’s promise when we commit to all of our youngest generation. Working together, we ensure that parents and caregivers have access to what they need to raise healthy babies and toddlers: health, nutrition, social, economic, and learning supports that serve each family’s unique strengths and needs. We all have a role in building—and we all benefit from—this nurturing network of care.

Babies are born with amazing capabilities, and their brains develop rapidly during their first three years of life. Children’s early experiences shape their brain architecture in ways that directly affect their ability to learn, their behavior, and their overall health throughout life. A strong start in life is what builds the solid foundation all children need for the future they will create and inhabit. Social and education policies often focus on the school years—especially the connection between reading at grade level by third grade and greater opportunities and positive outcomes for life. Equal attention is needed in the prenatal-to-three (PN-3) period, where brain development and school readiness take shape. Investment in PN-3 ensures that children start school ready to learn and aren’t left to catch up later.

Investments and access to services are uneven for families during this crucial period. Policies and social practices, both past and present, have influenced the physical, economic, cultural, and social environments of our communities. These policies and practices often have different and unjust outcomes for some babies and toddlers, especially those in communities of color and Indigenous communities. From education and health care to economy and justice, policies and systems must be built for all families—so that all children have what they need.

*[CUSTOMIZE BY sharing a local/relevant situation, as broadly relatable as possible, that illustrates how policies and environments work against babies and toddlers in uneven and unjust ways.]*

Fortunately, **we know what works to create stability and opportunity for all babies and toddlers—and within that, strong and resilient communities for all of us.** Policies and systems that prioritize access to supportive nutrition and health care, early learning, caregiving infrastructure, and economic stability help create the conditions parents and caregivers need to build the foundation for a child’s lifelong wellbeing.

*[CUSTOMIZE BY inserting your specific policy/funding or proof point/focus]*

Availability and access are vital: We can build up effective systems of care by identifying—together with families and communities—what’s missing and where and incorporating that into policies and programs. This means recognizing that families have different ways of knowing, doing, and believing; there is no “one way” to raise a child. To serve all infants and toddlers, these systems have to support the many ways of understanding and raising children, including welcoming, supporting, and celebrating the strengths of many cultures and languages.

*[CUSTOMIZE BY inserting your specific policy/funding or proof point/focus]*

Too many parents are going it alone because our systems of support are falling short of what all babies and toddlers need during those critical first years. We must change that. We must prioritize policies and practicesthat support healthy pregnancies, babies, and toddlers so that our youngest ones grow into socially, emotionally, and physically healthy children—and into the adults that continue building our communities and economies.

*Name*

*Title, Organization (if you are writing this from your professional position)*

*City, State*

*(not for publication) Email and phone*