

2021 Wisconsin Babies Count Data: Top 10*

[Babies Count](#) is a national registry of children ages birth to 36 months with visual impairments that works with public and private agencies, such as [Vision Forward Association](#) in Milwaukee, to gather information regarding children, their visual conditions, and the programs created to support them and their families. The Babies Count survey data is collected annually and has been used to make policy and budget decisions, to expand programs, to drive medical and educational research, and to track the changing face of blindness of children in our country today. This data is needed in Wisconsin to help inform our early intervention programs for children with visual impairments, their families, and their providers.

1. The three Most Prevalent Eye Conditions:
 - 1) Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI)/Delayed Visual Maturation (DVM) 29%
 - 2) Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) 13%, and
 - 3) Optic Nerve Hypoplasia (ONH) 10%.
2. On average, it takes about 5-6 months after diagnosis for a referral to be made for specialized vision services. Most children are almost 12 months old at the time of referral, which indicates a crucial time in vision development is not maximized.
3. Approximately 80% of the children under three with visual impairments have other medical conditions, such as Cerebral Palsy (CP), Seizures, or other congenital or acquired brain disorders.
4. 42% have delays in all six developmental domains (cognitive, language, fine motor, gross motor, social, and adaptive).
5. In Wisconsin, the primary learning channel for 39% of children with visual impairments is tactual (touch), which supports the need for Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) because they are the only providers that teach pre-braille early literacy skills in infants and toddlers who are visually impaired.
6. Nearly all families of children with visual impairments who are served in Wisconsin are English speaking (97%). Families who speak Spanish or other languages may not be receiving adequate access to early vision services.
7. An almost equal number of referrals for specialized vision services come from medical (45%) and early intervention (42%) providers. This increases collaboration between entities who serve children under three years old with visual impairments.
8. In Wisconsin, fewer children (10%) with visual impairments get education services in early intervention than the national average (40%).
9. More children in Wisconsin (13%) receive social work within early intervention than national average.
10. 13% of the children included in the Babies Count data in Wisconsin had no referral for specialized vision services.

*This statewide data was gathered between January and June 2021 with the help of 31 families of children with visual impairments under 3 years of age and their early intervention providers. Please contact Colleen Kickbush, Wisconsin Babies Count Coordinator, via email at ckickbush@vision-forward.org for additional information.