Guide to Using Atlas

Today New America’s Education Policy Program released “From Crawling to Walking: Ranking States on Birth-3rd Grade Policies that Support Strong Readers,” a report that ranks states on a broad set of policy indicators that can help ensure children are on track to read on grade level by the end of third grade. States were evaluated on 65 indicators in seven policy areas:

1. Educators: Teachers and Leaders;
2. Standards, Assessment, and Data;
3. Equitable Funding;
4. Pre-K: Access and Quality;
5. Full-Day Kindergarten: Access and Quality;
6. Dual Language Learner Supports; and
7. Third Grade Reading Laws

Accompanying the written report are interactive maps of state standings displayed via New America’s data visualization and policy analysis tool, Atlas. We’ll be posting a video for policy leaders, policymakers, researchers, and the public in the coming weeks to help users navigate the tool. In the meantime, this guide will explain how to access the data.

Atlas is home to a host of projects from New America’s Education Policy Program. Select the “From Crawling to Walking” square to get started.
For an in-depth project description select “More...” after the project sub-heading, “Ranking States on Birth- 3rd Grade Policies that Support Strong Readers.” This hyperlink leads to the project overview, including our methodology and evaluation. This page also includes a link to the companion report.

Users can explore the various Atlas maps to learn more about the seven policy areas and how states fared on specific indicators.

This main map displays state’s overall birth through third grade ranking. The title of the map is displayed on the left hand side followed by an explanation of the indicator. The different categories-- Walking, Toddling, and Crawling-- are listed below it.

To view one category at a time, select the colored “check marks” next to each category. The map can be moved by holding and dragging the cursor, and users can zoom in and out to view certain regions or states. (Washington, DC can only be viewed when zoomed in on the Mid-Atlantic region.) Dragging the cursor over the states will reveal their specific numerical ranking.

Users can click on states to view their individual profiles. The screenshot below displays New York’s profile.
To view maps of specific policy areas and indicators, select the ellipses next to the “Overall Birth-Third Ranking” on the main page, as displayed below.

This brings the user to a full list of indicators, organized by policy area. To learn more about why each policy area, including why we included certain indicators, select the “+” next to each title. To minimize this explanation, select the “-” symbol.
Users must select an indicator to view specific maps. The following map displays the percentage of 4-year-olds served in state pre-K programs, an indicator found under the Pre-K heading. After selecting this indicator, users must select the “X” in the right hand corner to view the results displayed on the map.

As with the previous map, the title is displayed on the left hand side followed by an explanation of the indicator. States are grouped into four categories based on the percentage of 4-year-olds served in their public pre-K programs. Scrolling the cursor over the state will show the specific percentage of 4-year-olds served.

The ellipses can be used to return back to the list of indicators and to access the other maps. If users wish to download the data, they can select the icon in the upper right hand corner.

We will be updating Atlas periodically to portray policy changes. Users can direct questions and provide updated state policy information to earlyandelementaryed@newamerica.org.