

EARLY CHILDHOOD

5%

THE PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE
INFANTS AND TODDLERS IN
EARLY HEAD START



The first five years of a child's life are a time of great opportunity and risk as children's brains develop more rapidly than at any other point. The foundation for their future success depends on the actions of parents and other caregivers. Children who grow up in supportive environments are more likely to develop self-confidence, an increased desire to learn, and better impulse control as well as improve achievement in school and throughout their life.¹ Unfortunately the odds are stacked against the 4.7 million children under 6 living in poverty who often face unsafe and stressful environments where their physical and emotional needs are not met.²

Young children need a full continuum of quality early childhood opportunities. High-quality early childhood development and learning opportunities from birth to age 5 have been proven to buffer the negative impacts of poverty and other stressors and yield positive returns.

- Studies show children who experience high-quality early childhood programs are more likely to graduate from high school, hold a job, and make more money and are less likely to commit a crime than peers who do not.³
- The Abbott Preschool program serving children in low-income communities in New Jersey was found to decrease grade retention and special education placement rates and increase achievement in literacy, math and science through fifth grade.⁴ Other studies of large preschool programs in Boston and Tulsa have shown similarly positive results.⁵
- Nobel Prize Winner in Economics James Heckman estimates the lifelong return on investment from quality early childhood programs to be more than 13 percent a year for every dollar invested.⁶

While many existing early childhood programs are effective, they often fall short of serving and supporting all children in need.

- Voluntary, evidence-based home visiting programs provide impressive short- and long-term gains for children and families who participate. However, in FY2015, the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) served only a small portion of at-risk parents and children across the country.⁷

- Early Head Start and Head Start are federally-funded high-quality early childhood programs that provide comprehensive services including child care, mental health, nutritional and other developmental services and connect poor children and families with other community resources when needed. In 2016 Early Head Start served only 5 percent of eligible infants and toddlers and Head Start served only 54 percent of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds.⁸
- Other quality preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-olds are also a key part of the continuum. Yet, according to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), during the 2015-2016 school year, only 32 percent of 4-year-olds and 5 percent of 3-year-olds were enrolled in a state-funded preschool program. Of the 43 states and the District of Columbia that invested in state-funded preschool, only two operated a program that met all 10 of NIEER's evidence-based quality standards (see **Table 17**). While total state funding for preschool increased by 8 percent during the 2015-2016 school year, more work is needed to ensure that all children, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, have access to high quality preschool.⁹
 - As states continue to increase funding for quality preschool, it will be important for them to create positive school climates for all children while avoiding exclusionary discipline practices. During 2013-2014, Black children in public preschool programs were nearly four times as likely as their White peers to receive at least one out-of-school suspension.¹⁰
- Full-day kindergarten fosters continued learning and ensures children do not miss a half step as they start school. Although 80 percent of 5-year-olds in kindergarten are enrolled in a full-day program, access to full-day kindergarten is only guaranteed by statute in 13 states and the District of Columbia.¹¹ Those who have only a half day miss out on higher-quality learning as full-day kindergarten gives teachers more opportunities to meet children's needs comprehensively. Data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study show students in full-day kindergarten programs have better academic outcomes than their peers in half-day programs.¹²

High-quality, affordable child care that meets children's developmental needs is also essential for working families. However, the cost of high-quality child care is a barrier for many.

- Center-based child care for an infant cost more than public college tuition in 31 states and the District of Columbia in 2015 (see **Table 18**). In one study, child care costs exceeded rent for 81 percent of two-parent, two-child families surveyed.¹³
- The Child Care and Development Block Grant, which provides subsidies to help families with child care costs, currently serves just 16 percent of all federally-eligible children.¹⁴
- The number of children receiving publicly-funded child care subsidies has decreased by more than 370,000 since 2006 (see **Table 19**). Access to high-quality child care is not guaranteed even for families who do receive subsidies as care costs increase.¹⁵
- A well-trained, competitively-compensated workforce is necessary to ensure that child care provided is of high quality; however, in 2015 child care workers were paid less than parking lot attendants in 30 states (see **Table 20**).

Less than 32 percent of 4-year-olds and 5 percent of 3-year-olds were enrolled in a state-funded preschool program during 2015-2016 and quality varied widely from state to state.

Table 17: Enrollment of 4- and 3-Year-Olds in State-Funded Preschool Programs, 2015-2016

	Number		Percent		NIEER Quality Benchmarks Met (Out of 10) ^a
	4-Year-Olds	3-Year-Olds	4-Year-Olds	3-Year-Olds	
Alabama	11,296	0	18.9%	0.0%	10
Alaska	319	0	2.8	0.0	5
Arizona	3,763	1,602	4.4	1.9	1
Arkansas	12,314	7,127	32.0	18.4	7
California	178,821	42,354	35.0	8.5	4.4 ^b
Colorado	15,704	5,429	23.1	8.1	5
Connecticut	9,222	3,623	23.7	9.5	4.8 ^b
Delaware	843	0	7.3	0.0	6
District of Columbia	6,944	5,736	81.2	70.0	3
Florida	169,025	0	76.0	0.0	3
Georgia	80,825	0	59.7	0.0	6
Hawaii	375	0	2.0	0.0	7
Idaho	–	–	–	–	–
Illinois	41,397	31,458	26.1	19.9	7
Indiana	1,585	0	1.9	0.0	1
Iowa	24,750	1,166	63.7	3.0	6.9 ^b
Kansas	7,903	0	19.8	0.0	7.1 ^b
Kentucky	14,232	4,950	25.8	9.0	8
Louisiana	19,860	0	32.2	0.0	8 ^b
Maine	5,177	0	40.2	0.0	9
Maryland	27,003	3,733	35.7	5.0	7
Massachusetts	5,681	5,329	7.6	7.3	6.6 ^b
Michigan	38,771	0	33.6	0.0	9
Minnesota	858	759	1.2	1.1	7
Mississippi	1,517	263	3.9	0.7	8
Missouri	1,563	926	2.1	1.2	8
Montana	–	–	–	–	–
Nebraska	8,227	3,670	31.6	14.1	7
Nevada	1,357	179	3.8	0.5	6
New Hampshire	–	–	–	–	–
New Jersey	31,800	20,970	29.1	19.6	8.8 ^b
New Mexico	9,254	503	33.3	1.9	8
New York	118,560	1,509	49.9	0.6	7
North Carolina	26,851	0	21.9	0.0	9
North Dakota	–	–	–	–	–
Ohio	10,846	3,919	7.8	2.8	5
Oklahoma	39,593	1,648	73.8	3.1	6
Oregon	4,626	3,214	9.9	7.0	7
Pennsylvania	16,820	8,995	11.6	6.3	6.1 ^b
Rhode Island	594	0	5.4	0.0	10
South Carolina	23,536	0	40.0	0.0	4.5 ^b
South Dakota	–	–	–	–	–
Tennessee	17,419	585	21.8	0.7	5
Texas	194,861	25,779	48.7	6.6	4
Utah	–	–	–	–	–
Vermont	4,096	2,708	66.7	43.8	5
Virginia	18,356	0	17.8	0.0	4
Washington	7,702	3,989	8.6	4.4	7
West Virginia	13,615	2,277	66.4	11.0	9
Wisconsin	48,859	579	71.0	0.8	3 ^b
Wyoming	–	–	–	–	–
United States	1,276,719	194,979	31.8%	4.9%	

^aThe National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) defines a state preschool program as one serving 3- and 4-year-olds that is funded, controlled, and directed by the state. Its primary focus must be early childhood education and it must offer a group learning experience to children at least two days each week. It may serve children with disabilities but cannot be primarily designed to serve those children. State-funded preschool may be coordinated and integrated with the child care subsidy system in the state. State supplements for Head Start constitute state preschool if they substantially increase the number of children served and involve some state administrative responsibility. NIEER uses 10 benchmarks to measure the quality of state preschool programs: 1) comprehensive early learning and development standards that are horizontally and vertically aligned, supported, and culturally sensitive; 2) supports for curriculum implementation; 3) teachers with bachelor's degrees and 4) specialization in early childhood; 5) assistant teachers with child development associate's or equivalent degrees; 6) at least 15 hours/year of professional development, individualized plans and professional development plans, and coaching for lead and assistant teachers; 7) a maximum class size of 20; 8) child-staff ratios of no more than 10:1; 9) comprehensive vision, hearing, and health screenings; and 10) continuous quality improvement system.

^bThese states have more than one preschool program, and the score is an average of the programs operating in each state.

Note: "–" means no program.

Source: National Institute for Early Education Research. 2017. "State of Preschool 2016 Yearbook," Tables 1 and 2. http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/YB2016_StateofPreschool2.pdf.

In 2015, center-based care for infants was more expensive than public college in 31 states and the District of Columbia.

Table 18: Child Care Costs for Infants, 2015

	Average Annual Cost for an Infant in Center-Based Care	Percent Difference between Cost of Infant Center-Based Care and Public College ^a	Cost of Center-Based Care for Infants as a Percent of:		
			Income for a Poor Family	State Median Income for a Single-Parent Family	Median Annual Rent
Alabama	\$5,644	-42.1%	28.1%	30.5%	67.1%
Alaska	11,700	74.5	46.4	36.9	87.6
Arizona	9,993	-6.0	49.7	40.1	93.7
Arkansas	6,074	-22.9	30.2	29.8	76.9
California	13,343	44.0	66.4	50.4	91.4
Colorado	14,950	53.4	74.4	49.2	131.1
Connecticut	14,079	26.0	70.1	47.0	112.6
Delaware	10,396	-11.0	51.7	33.8	87.6
District of Columbia	22,658	205.3	112.8	89.9	149.4
Florida	8,719	37.1	43.4	35.6	74.7
Georgia	7,597	-10.1	37.8	33.0	74.1
Hawaii	13,584	33.5	58.8	45.3	81.6
Idaho	7,385	8.3	36.8	33.1	85.7
Illinois	13,176	1.1	65.6	53.7	124.2
Indiana	8,929	-2.1	44.4	40.1	102.3
Iowa	10,015	27.1	49.9	41.2	124.0
Kansas	11,482	36.0	57.2	48.5	130.4
Kentucky	7,800	-18.5	38.8	40.6	99.5
Louisiana	5,754	-29.2	28.6	27.9	62.8
Maine	9,677	1.1	48.2	44.2	106.1
Maryland	14,726	60.7	73.3	40.3	102.8
Massachusetts	17,082	47.1	85.0	61.3	133.9
Michigan	10,178	-15.1	50.7	47.7	111.0
Minnesota	14,826	36.9	73.8	54.7	150.5
Mississippi	5,045	-29.4	25.1	24.9	60.3
Missouri	9,100	7.6	45.3	40.2	104.2
Montana	9,383	12.0	46.7	46.9	114.5
Nebraska	9,043	11.5	45.0	35.9	107.0
Nevada	10,317	13.9	51.4	36.1	89.7
New Hampshire	12,399	3.3	61.7	41.1	105.4
New Jersey	11,548	-13.2	57.5	37.3	82.6
New Mexico	7,802	21.8	38.8	38.2	85.3
New York	14,144	85.0	70.4	54.5	107.5
North Carolina	9,254	32.8	46.1	40.5	99.9
North Dakota	8,431	9.7	42.0	38.7	105.8
Ohio	8,985	-12.0	44.7	42.0	105.3
Oklahoma	6,572	-11.8	32.7	30.3	78.0
Oregon	11,964	27.7	59.6	52.8	113.7
Pennsylvania	11,978	-10.6	59.6	48.6	122.5
Rhode Island	12,882	13.0	64.1	49.9	118.8
South Carolina	6,483	-45.1	32.3	31.5	70.5
South Dakota	6,143	-23.7	30.6	24.4	79.5
Tennessee	8,378	-9.6	41.7	41.2	94.0
Texas	9,207	-0.2	45.8	38.5	90.6
Utah	9,183	44.3	45.7	33.7	88.7
Vermont	11,513	-23.2	57.3	47.3	110.2
Virginia	12,220	3.4	60.8	45.7	93.6
Washington	13,110	27.4	65.3	50.3	112.2
West Virginia	8,580	20.1	42.7	50.2	115.7
Wisconsin	11,750	33.4	58.5	49.7	129.2
Wyoming	9,110	86.3	45.3	38.8	98.7

^aA positive percent (higher than 0) means infant center-based care cost more than public college tuition. A negative percent (lower than 0) means infant center-based care cost less than public college tuition.

Source: Child Care Aware of America. 2017. "Parents and the High Cost of Child Care 2016." <http://www.usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/reportsand-research/costofcare/>.

Although nearly 840,000 families and 1.4 million children were served each month by the Child Care and Development Fund in FY2015, more than 370,000 subsidies have been lost since 2006—the year before the recession began.

Table 19: Average Monthly Number of Children and Families Served by the Child Care and Development Fund by Race/Ethnicity, FY2015

	Number of Families, FY2015	Number of Children, FY2015	Change in Children Served 2006-2015	Percent of Children Who Are:							
				White	Hispanic	Black	Asian	Native American/Alaska Native	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	Multi-Racial	In Unregulated Care
Alabama	13,500	24,800	-3,200	1%	19%	79%	0%	0%	0%	1%	42%
Alaska	2,400	3,600	-1,300	10	43	10	5	10	5	21	18
Arizona	16,700	24,400	-5,800	39	67	17	0	5	0	10	6
Arkansas	5,200	7,400	1,800	8	43	47	0	0	0	2	0
California	74,600	108,600	-66,900	58	71	20	5	1	1	2	21
Colorado	10,200	16,900	600	22	29	8	0	1	0	4	1
Connecticut	5,900	8,500	-1,600	42	33	33	1	1	0	8	35
Delaware	4,500	7,200	-300	13	34	64	1	0	0	1	7
District of Columbia	1,200	1,500	-2,200	15	13	85	0	1	1	0	0
Florida	58,000	82,200	-26,400	26	47	48	0	0	0	4	8
Georgia	33,300	58,900	-5,700	4	15	81	0	0	0	3	1
Hawaii	4,000	6,800	-1,800	8	11	1	19	0	35	34	72
Idaho	3,800	6,700	-3,200	20	94	3	0	1	0	1	13
Illinois	26,900	46,200	-36,000	22	19	49	1	0	0	3	35
Indiana	18,700	34,800	2,000	10	39	51	0	0	0	9	24
Iowa	9,300	16,500	-2,900	14	74	18	1	0	0	7	9
Kansas	7,600	14,000	-8,400	16	62	27	1	1	0	6	12
Kentucky	5,300	10,100	-18,800	5	43	30	0	0	0	0	2
Louisiana	12,300	18,400	-20,700	3	22	73	0	0	0	4	8
Maine	1,800	2,800	-2,600	3	78	8	0	0	0	2	14
Maryland	10,300	17,400	-5,500	4	14	81	1	0	0	3	8
Massachusetts	21,800	29,500	-2,600	33	22	17	2	0	0	2	1
Michigan	18,100	32,100	-55,700	5	44	51	0	1	0	2	26
Minnesota	12,000	23,400	-3,900	6	37	47	2	2	0	7	11
Mississippi ^a	11,400	20,500	-18,600	1	11	88	0	0	0	1	6
Missouri	23,600	36,000	2,400	4	38	51	0	0	0	1	28
Montana	2,100	3,200	-1,600	5	78	2	0	13	0	4	6
Nebraska	6,300	11,600	-1,500	15	48	27	0	2	0	7	10
Nevada	3,200	5,600	-400	30	49	39	1	1	1	2	38
New Hampshire	4,100	5,500	-2,000	8	85	4	1	0	0	2	7
New Jersey	32,600	48,000	10,100	40	32	46	1	0	15	2	2
New Mexico	10,000	16,400	-5,200	77	82	5	0	7	0	3	13
New York	64,400	109,000	-14,700	32	38	46	2	1	3	5	30
North Carolina	30,700	64,100	-15,800	5	34	62	0	2	1	1	0
North Dakota	1,500	2,200	-1,800	5	70	10	0	14	0	6	17
Ohio	26,000	47,200	7,300	6	35	54	0	0	0	6	0
Oklahoma	14,800	24,300	-700	13	57	28	1	6	0	8	0
Oregon	8,400	15,300	-4,900	25	62	10	1	2	1	2	40
Pennsylvania	55,100	93,500	10,700	15	33	49	1	0	0	3	11
Rhode Island	3,800	6,000	-1,100	15	8	5	0	0	0	1	1
South Carolina	6,800	10,800	-8,900	3	21	52	0	0	0	4	9
South Dakota	2,500	4,100	-800	4	62	6	0	21	0	11	14
Tennessee	14,400	25,500	-17,000	2	31	69	0	0	0	0	7
Texas	65,700	111,700	-14,500	44	47	26	0	0	0	2	1
Utah	6,000	10,800	-2,200	15	38	5	0	2	0	0	1
Vermont	3,100	4,300	-2,500	2	91	4	1	0	0	4	7
Virginia	14,400	24,800	-3,100	4	34	64	1	0	0	0	3
Washington	27,200	44,900	-8,300	29	43	16	2	2	1	0	17
West Virginia	5,000	8,200	-1,100	2	72	11	0	0	0	14	0
Wisconsin	17,100	27,700	-1,800	12	30	33	1	1	0	6	0
Wyoming	2,000	3,200	-1,500	14	78	5	0	3	0	0	11
United States^b	839,600	1,387,100	-370,600	23%	41%	41%	1%	1%	1%	4%	13%

^aBased on only 10 months of data.

^bCounts for the U.S. exclude U.S. territories and protectorates. Percents include data from territories and protectorates.

Notes: Data are preliminary and subject to change. Racial categories (White, Black, Asian, Native American/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Multi-Racial) include children of Hispanic ethnicity. Percents for racial groups do not add up to 100 percent because of missing data.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2016. "Preliminary FY 2015 CCDF Data Tables," Tables 1, 4, 11, and 12. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/preliminary-fy2015>.

In 2015, the annual median wage for child care workers was less than that for parking lot attendants in 30 states.

Table 20: Child Care Worker Salaries, 2015

	Average Salary for:					Difference between Average Annual Median Wage for Child Care Workers and Parking Lot Attendants	Median Wage for Child Care Workers as a Percent of:	
	Child Care Workers	Head Start Teachers	Preschool Teachers	Kindergarten Teachers	Parking Lot Attendants		Preschool Teachers	Kindergarten Teachers
Alabama	\$18,210	\$23,090	\$26,570	\$47,820	\$18,900	-\$690	68.5%	38.1%
Alaska	24,550	29,881	36,410	66,820	22,820	1,730	67.4	36.7
Arizona	20,070	32,027	23,560	40,230	21,800	-1,730	85.2	49.9
Arkansas	18,290	27,066	28,170	45,390	19,500	-1,210	64.9	40.3
California	24,150	34,156	31,720	63,940	22,020	2,130	76.1	37.8
Colorado	23,870	31,255	27,260	46,190	21,710	2,160	87.6	51.7
Connecticut	22,410	34,176	31,620	71,050	22,340	70	70.9	31.5
Delaware	20,690	29,276	25,450	58,540	20,320	370	81.3	35.3
District of Columbia	23,010	68,100	39,940	52,010	19,660	3,350	57.6	44.2
Florida	19,820	28,073	24,240	45,660	18,890	930	81.8	43.4
Georgia	19,050	27,000	28,190	53,840	19,400	-350	67.6	35.4
Hawaii	18,860	34,316	33,690	44,350	20,270	-1,410	56.0	42.5
Idaho	18,280	22,000	21,930	44,070	19,010	-730	83.4	41.5
Illinois	21,830	32,691	28,670	48,710	22,090	-260	76.1	44.8
Indiana	19,480	23,231	24,530	44,970	18,490	990	79.4	43.3
Iowa	18,480	29,861	24,040	50,030	20,510	-2,030	76.9	36.9
Kansas	18,900	31,680	24,570	44,880	19,380	-480	76.9	42.1
Kentucky	18,910	26,316	37,640	52,370	19,010	-100	50.2	36.1
Louisiana	18,340	26,739	39,970	47,340	18,870	-530	45.9	38.7
Maine	21,580	24,818	29,620	49,960	25,500	-3,920	72.9	43.2
Maryland	22,120	34,074	27,980	55,900	19,060	3,060	79.1	39.6
Massachusetts	24,980	28,078	31,580	67,170	22,980 ^a	2,000	79.1	37.2
Michigan	19,620	27,613	27,740	52,460	19,530	90	70.7	37.4
Minnesota	22,470	28,192	32,130	53,110	21,620	850	69.9	42.3
Mississippi	18,140	21,842	24,970	39,800	18,670	-530	72.6	45.6
Missouri	18,840	23,870	25,070	45,070	18,500	340	75.1	41.8
Montana	19,100	19,537	25,900	44,230	20,150	-1,050	73.7	43.2
Nebraska	19,620	35,545	31,840	47,910	18,810	810	61.6	41.0
Nevada	21,120	28,434	24,640	48,700	22,380	-1,260	85.7	43.4
New Hampshire	21,780	21,720	27,510	51,280	25,060	-3,280	79.2	42.5
New Jersey	22,070	35,468	35,160	61,350	21,150	920	62.8	36.0
New Mexico	18,920	28,588	26,670	52,870	21,750	-2,830	70.9	35.8
New York	25,450	39,050	31,100	60,120	20,900	4,550	81.8	42.3
North Carolina	19,650	26,139	25,970	39,930	21,440	-1,790	75.7	49.2
North Dakota	19,200	28,673	35,410	44,360	20,310	-1,110	54.2	43.3
Ohio	19,860	24,255	23,690	52,470	19,190	670	83.8	37.9
Oklahoma	18,520	28,371	32,030	38,750	20,040	-1,520	57.8	47.8
Oregon	22,240	27,065	27,680	56,900	20,760	1,480	80.3	39.1
Pennsylvania	19,590	26,908	25,970	51,050	20,890	-1,300	75.4	38.4
Rhode Island	19,720	27,739	32,900	69,870	21,470	-1,750	59.9	28.2
South Carolina	18,370	23,080	24,620	51,150	22,130	-3,760	74.6	35.9
South Dakota	19,340	24,814	28,710	38,560	21,940	-2,600	67.4	50.2
Tennessee	18,560	28,363	23,840	47,950	19,510	-950	77.9	38.7
Texas	18,970	30,160	30,990	50,910	20,630	-1,660	61.2	37.3
Utah	19,700	20,959	23,030	43,320	21,400	-1,700	85.5	45.5
Vermont	23,400	26,153	29,390	53,080	21,920	1,480	79.6	44.1
Virginia	19,510	30,481	32,490	57,100	20,360	-850	60.0	34.2
Washington	23,520	30,241	27,810	55,020	23,180	340	84.6	42.7
West Virginia	18,890	31,987	30,640	47,880	20,120	-1,230	61.7	39.5
Wisconsin	20,410	29,714	23,890	48,700	20,120	290	85.4	41.9
Wyoming	20,850	27,181	26,130	56,190	23,960	-3,110	79.8	37.1

^aData for parking lot attendants in Massachusetts were not available for 2015 from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2014 data are reflected instead.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education. 2016. "High-Quality Early Learning Settings Depend on a High-Quality Workforce." <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/files/ece-low-compensation-undermines-quality-report-2016.pdf>.