



Early Childhood Education in Arkansas



In Arkansas, state and federally funded early childhood opportunities serve more than 52,383 children and families¹

High-quality early childhood education (ECE) is proven to dramatically improve a child’s opportunities for a better future—particularly children from low-income families—while offering parents improved job stability and overall economic security. Research shows that every \$1 invested in the education and care of children from birth through age five generates \$7.30 in return for our country. To ensure all children can access high-quality early learning and care, the federal government partners with states to support local efforts and innovations.

Over time, ECE programs have been created to meet the diverse needs of children and families. A 2017 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found that these programs work in conjunction to benefit those they serve.

Much of the progress at the state and local level has been made possible by strong partnerships with the federal government aimed at expanding access and increasing quality for more children. Many state and community programs are funded exclusively with federal dollars, while others leverage federal funding to create and expand high-quality early learning and care opportunities beyond what is possible with state funding alone. The purpose of this resource is to provide a snapshot of what ECE looks like in Arkansas. To learn more about the specific programs we reference here, read FFYF’s [ABCs of Federal Early Learning and Care Funding Streams](#) resource.

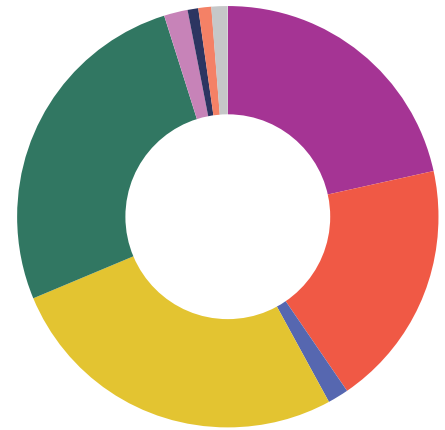
ARKANSAS QUICK FACTS

Population Under Six ²	222,690
Under Six Living in Poverty ³	24.34%
Children Enrolled in Head Start ⁴	7,694
Eligible Children Served by Head Start ⁵	24.02%
Children Enrolled in Early Head Start ⁶	2,654
Eligible Children Served by Early Head Start ⁷	6.91%
Children Under Six Served by CCDBG and Mandatory Funds ⁸	4,264
Eligible Children Under Six Served by CCDBG and Mandatory Funds ⁹	3.60%
Families Served by the Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood, Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) ¹⁰	2,492
Children Enrolled in State Funded Pre-K ¹¹	20,618
Children Served by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C ¹²	945
Children Served by IDEA Part B, Sec. 619 ¹³	13,716

¹ This figure includes beneficiaries of Head Start, Early Head Start, CCDF, MIECHV, state-funded Pre-K, and IDEA Parts B Sec. 619 and C. In some cases, children and families are served by more than one program.

Federal and State Early Childhood Education Funding in Arkansas

Head Start and Early Head Start ¹⁴	●	\$92.1 M
CCDBG and Mandatory Funds ¹⁵	●	\$81.1 M
CCDBG State Match ¹⁶	●	\$6.8 M
State-Funded Pre-K ¹⁷	●	\$114 M
TANF ¹⁸ Funds transferred to early learning and care ¹⁹	●	\$113.2 M
MIECHV ²⁰	●	\$7.8 M
Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five ²¹	●	\$3.5 M
IDEA Part C ²²	●	\$4.2 M
IDEA Part B, Sec. 619 ²³	●	\$5.4 M



Early Childhood Education and the Arkansas Economy

There are 137,953 children under age six with all available parents in the workforce.²⁴ In addition to the significant impact of early childhood education on children and families in the short and long term, early learning and care can have an immediate impact on state economies. Access to affordable child care can increase labor force participation and support parents seeking additional education and training, which contributes to higher earnings over an individual's lifetime.

In Arkansas, an estimated

17,820 JOBS

are sustained by the child care sector.

25

Lack of Supply and High Cost of Care Challenging for Working Families

The cost of care in Arkansas remains a hurdle for many parents who wish to enter or remain in the workforce. Limited access to high-quality, affordable child care presents an additional challenge for working families. Simultaneously, the supply of home-based care, which is often the more affordable and flexible option, has decreased since 2010.

\$6,726 is the average annual cost of center-based infant care in Arkansas.

9.7% of the state median income

26, 27

In Arkansas, the child care industry has an estimated

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF \$702 M

including revenue generated by child care providers and spillover or related productivity in other sectors.

31

In Arkansas,

35%

of residents live in a "child care desert".

30

\$5,364 is the average annual cost of home-based infant care in Arkansas.

4.5% decline in availability of home-based care from 2010 to 2016.

28, 29

² U.S. Census Bureau - 2017 Community Survey Age by Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months (Population for whom poverty is determined) ³ Ibid.
⁴ Office of Head Start Performance Indicator Report (PIR) ⁵ PIR and U.S. Census Bureau ⁶ PIR ⁷ PIR and U.S. Census Bureau ⁸ Office of Child Care FY2017 CCDF Data Tables ⁹ <https://StateofChildCare.org/> ¹⁰ Health Resources and Services Administration ¹¹ The National Institute for Early Education - State of Preschool 2018 ¹² U.S. Department of Education ¹³ Ibid. ¹⁴ Office of Child Care ¹⁵ Office of Child Care FY2018 CCDF Allocations (Including Redistributed Funds)
¹⁶ Ibid. ¹⁷ The National Institute for Early Education - State of Preschool 2018 ¹⁸ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) ¹⁹ Office of Family Assistance TANF FY2017 Financial Data ²⁰ Health Resources and Services Administration ²¹ Office of Child Care ²² U.S. Department of Education ²³ Ibid. ²⁴ U.S. Census Bureau ²⁵ Committee for Economic Development ²⁶ Child Care Aware of America Cost of Care ²⁷ Ibid. ²⁸ Ibid. ²⁹ Committee for Economic Development ³⁰ Center for American Progress defines "child care desert" as any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no child care providers OR more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots. ³¹ Committee for Economic Development