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 Maine. To learn more about the specific programs we reference here, read FFYF’s ABCs of Federal Early Learning and Care Funding Streams resource.

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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 Maine

Head Start and Early Head Start*  
CCDBG and Mandatory Funds*  
CCDBG State Match*  
State-Funded Pre-K  
TANF Funds transferred to early learning and care  
MIECHV  
Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five  
IDEA Part C  
IDEA Part B, Sec. 619  

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Early Childhood Education and the Maine Economy

There are 53,943 children under age six with all available parents in the workforce. 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.

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

The cost of care in Maine 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.

In Maine, an estimated 8,578 JOBS are sustained by the child care sector.

In Maine, the child care industry has an estimated ECONOMIC IMPACT OF $387 M including revenue generated by child care providers and spillover or related productivity in other sectors.

In Maine, 22% of residents live in a “child care desert”.

In Maine, $9,224 is the average annual cost of center-based infant care in Maine. 11.2% of the state median income.

In Maine, $8,045 is the average annual cost of home-based infant care in Maine. A 27.5% decline in availability of home-based care from 2010 to 2016.