



Early Childhood Education in Arkansas

In Arkansas, state and federally funded early childhood opportunities served more than 50,593 children and families.¹

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 has shown an annual 13% return on investment per child through better education, economic, health, and social outcomes. 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. This resource provides a snapshot of what ECE looks like in Arkansas. To learn more about the specific programs referenced, read [FFYF's ABCs of Federal Early Learning and Care Funding Streams](#) resource.

ARKANSAS QUICK FACTS

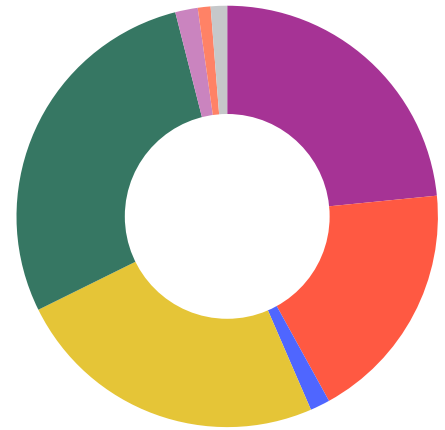
Population Under Six²	212,931
Under Six Living in Poverty³	20.37%
Children Enrolled in Head Start⁴	6,774
Eligible Children Served by Head Start⁵	25.11%
Children Enrolled in Early Head Start⁶	2,730
Eligible Children Served by Early Head Start⁷	8.11%
Children Under Six Served by CCDBG and Mandatory Funds⁸	4,067
Eligible Children Under Six Served by CCDBG and Mandatory Funds⁹	3.60%
Families Served by the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)¹⁰	2,375
Children Enrolled in State Funded Pre-K¹¹	20,186
Children Served by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C¹²	964
Children Served by IDEA Part B, Sec. 619¹³	13,497

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.

Note: The data and information in this resource relies on reporting from prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Federal and State Early Childhood Education Funding in Arkansas

Head Start and Early Head Start ¹⁴	\$102.42 M
CCDBG and Mandatory Funds ¹⁵	\$81.07 M
CCDBG State Match ¹⁶	\$6.64 M
State-Funded Pre-K ¹⁷	\$105.78 M
TANF ¹⁸ Funds transferred to early learning and care ¹⁹	\$123.87 M
MIECHV ²⁰	\$7.55 M
IDEA Part C ²¹	\$4.29 M
IDEA Part B, Sec. 619 ²²	\$5.50 M



Early Childhood Education and the Arkansas Economy

In Arkansas, there are 141,140 children under age six with all available parents in the workforce.²³ 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.

24

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.

\$6,443 is the average annual cost of center-based infant care in Arkansas.

8.9% of the state median income

25, 26

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.

30

In Arkansas,

35%

of residents live in a "child care desert."

29

\$5,281 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.

27, 28

² U.S. Census Bureau (Census) ³ Ibid. ⁴ Office of Head Start Performance Indicator Report (PIR) ⁵ PIR and Census ⁶ PIR ⁷ PIR and Census ⁸ Office of Child Care FY2018 CCDF Data Tables ⁹ Center for American Progress (CAP) Early Learning in the U.S. 2019 ¹⁰ Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) ¹¹ The National Institute for Early Education (NIEER) - State of Preschool 2019 ¹² U.S. Department of Education ¹³ Ibid. ¹⁴ Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center ¹⁵ Office of Child Care (OCC) FY2019 CCDF Allocations (Based on Appropriations) ¹⁶ Ibid. ¹⁷ NIEER - State of Preschool 2019 ¹⁸ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) ¹⁹ Office of Family Assistance TANF FY2018 Financial Data ²⁰ HRSA ²¹ ED ²² Ibid. ²³ Census ²⁴ Committee for Economic Development (CED) ²⁵ Child Care Aware of America - The US and the High Price of Care 2019 ²⁶ Ibid. ²⁷ Ibid. ²⁸ CED ²⁹ CAP 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. ³⁰ CED