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 Massachusetts. To learn more about the specific programs referenced, 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.

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 Massachusetts

In Massachusetts, there are 305,101 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 Massachusetts 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 Massachusetts, an estimated 51,919 jobs are sustained by the child care sector.

In Massachusetts, the child care industry has an estimated $3.4 billion impact, including revenue generated by child care providers and spillover or related productivity in other sectors.

In Massachusetts, 53% of residents live in a “child care desert.”

In Massachusetts, the average annual cost of center-based infant care in Massachusetts is $20,880, which is 16.4% of the state median income.

In Massachusetts, the average annual cost of home-based infant care is $13,184, a 25.3% decline in availability of home-based care from 2010 to 2016.

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1 U.S. Census Bureau (Census) 2 Ibid. 3 Office of Head Start Performance Indicator Report (PIR) 4 PIR 5 Ibid. 6 PIR 7 Ibid. 8 Office of Child Care (OCC) FY2018 CCDF Data Tables 9 Center for American Progress (CAP) Early Learning in the U.S. 10 U.S. Department of Education (ED) 11 Ibid. 12 Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center 13 Office of Child Care (OCC) FY2018 CCDF Allocations (Based on Appropriations) 14 Ibid. 15 NIEER - State of Preschool 2019 16 CCDBG and Mandatory Funds 17 CCDBG State Match 18 State-Funded Pre-K 19 TANF Funds transferred to early learning and care 20 MIECHV 21 IDEA Part C 22 IDEA Part B, Sec. 619 23 HRSA 24 Funds transferred to early learning and care 25 IDEA 26 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) 27 Office of Family Assistance TANF FY2018 Financial Data 28 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) 29 Office of Family Assistance TANF FY2018 Federal/State Enrollment Data 30 Cubit 31 Center for American Progress (CAP) Early Learning in the U.S. 2019 32 HRSA 33 ED 34 Ibid. 35 Census 36 Committee for Economic Development (CED) 37 Child Care Aware of America - The US and the High Price of Care 2019 38 Ibid. 39 Ibid. 40 Ibid. 41 Ibid. 42 Ibid. 43 Ibid. 44 Ibid. 45 Ibid.