High-quality early care and education (ECE) is proven to dramatically improve a child’s opportunities for a better future while offering parents greater job stability and overall economic security.

**The Economic Impact**

Access to affordable, high-quality child care can increase parental labor force participation and family economic stability. However, widespread problems finding and paying for child care adversely affect both state and national economies. As a direct result of child care issues, the national economy loses $122 billion annually in the form of lost earnings, productivity, and revenue. In Alaska: The estimated annual economic impact of the infant-toddler child care crisis: $305M.

There are several early learning programs that provide working families with access to high-quality, affordable ECE opportunities, but currently the demand for care far outweighs the supply, and funding constraints leave many eligible children unserved. Each of these programs has its own eligibility requirements, purpose, and service delivery model. Together they form a mixed-delivery system that supports parental choice and aims to meet children’s individual needs.

**Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG)**

1,750

Children Birth Through Age Five Served

Learn more about CCDBG in Alaska [here](#).

**Early Head Start**

657

Children Enrolled

**Head Start**

1,707

Children Enrolled

Eligible Children Birth Through Age Five Served

11%

**Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)**

200

Families Served

Learn more about MIECHV in Alaska [here](#).

**State-Funded Pre-K**

590

Children Enrolled

3%

of three- and four-year-old children attend public ECE

**IDEA Part C**

730

Children Served

**IDEA Part B, Sec. 619**

1,033

Children Served

**Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC)**

Through the tax code, the CDCTC helps parents with the cost of work-related child care expenses. Learn more about CDCTC [here](#).
Early Care and Education (ECE) in Alaska Snapshot

Accessibility

Many families struggle to find the care they need.
- 61% of Alaska residents live in a “child care desert.”
- Rural families and families with low incomes are disproportionately represented among those who live in a “child care desert.”
- 3% of children under age 3 receive early intervention services.

Affordability

The cost of ECE is too expensive for many families.
- The annual price of center-based infant care is $11,760, and home-based infant care is $9,624.
- Families receiving a CCDBG subsidy pay between $20 and $516 per month for one child in care.
- A two-parent household spends 9% of their income on child care, while HHS defines spending over 7% to be a burden.

ECE Workforce

Early childhood educators have some of the lowest paying jobs in the United States, earning poverty-level wages.
- $33,140 child care worker annual salary ($15.93 per hour).

Program Quality

Program quality varies substantially across and within states.
- Met 2/10 of NIEER’s Quality Standards Benchmarks for state-funded pre-K programs. Only 5 states met all 10 benchmarks in 2022.
- 45% of children received developmental screenings at 9, 18, and 30 months in the past year.

For full sourcing information, visit here.

Federal and State ECE Funding in Alaska

Federal funding is foundational to providing ECE.

Spotlight: ECE Successes in Alaska

COVID-19 Relief:
Throughout the pandemic, there was strong bipartisan support for federal relief funding to keep the child care sector afloat.
- As a result, 430 child care programs in Alaska received support, impacting up to 16,400 children.
- These funds also allowed states to demonstrate what would be possible when equipped with additional resources. Funds have been used to support and stabilize the workforce through wage bonuses. Through a teacher award initiative, 545 eligible early childhood teachers were awarded $500 on a first come, first serve basis in 2021. In 2022, eligible educators were awarded $2,080 (or $2,580 for eligible teachers at or above a level 6 on the career ladder).

Program Quality

Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B–5):
PDG B–5 is a competitive federal grant designed to improve states’ early childhood systems. In their 2023 renewal grant application, among other uses, Alaska noted that they would use funding to:
- Implement Learn & Grow, Alaska’s Quality Recognition & Improvement System, offers ECE programs comprehensive resources and support for continuous quality improvement.
- Develop and disseminate annual inventories of ECE programs, which assist families in understanding the range of available options and facilitate informed decision-making.

Alaska received an additional $99M through COVID-19 relief.

For full sourcing information, visit here.