In Idaho, federal and state early learning opportunities serve more than 12,516 children and families, or 9% of children birth through age 5.¹

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.² In Idaho: The estimated annual economic impact of the infant-toddler child care crisis: $525M.³

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)

4,761 Children Birth Through Age Five Served⁴

Learn more about CCDBG in Idaho here.

Early Head Start

841 Children Enrolled⁵

Eligible Children Served⁶

Head Start

2,094 Children Enrolled⁷

Eligible Children Served⁸

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

508 Families Served⁹

Learn more about MIECHV in Idaho here.

IDEA Part C

2,009 Children Served¹⁰

IDEA Part B, Sec. 619

2,303 Children Served¹¹

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 Idaho Snapshot

Accessibility
Many families struggle to find the care they need.

- 49% of Idaho residents live in a “child care desert.”
- Hispanics/Latinos and rural families 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 $9,708, and home-based infant care is $7,308.
- Families receiving a CCDBG subsidy pay between $40 and $150 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.

- $24,640 child care worker annual salary ($11.85 per hour).

Program Quality
Program quality varies substantially across and within states.

- 25% of children received developmental screenings at 9, 18, and 30 months in the past year.

Federal and State ECE Funding in Idaho
Federal funding is foundational to providing ECE.

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, 830 child care programs in Idaho received support, impacting up to 47,700 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. The Idaho Child Care Wage Enhancement Grant provides a temporary $300 monthly wage supplement for child care workers based on the number of eligible staff beginning May 2021 or October 2021. All eligible providers will receive at least ten monthly awards.

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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, Idaho noted that they would use funding to:

- Increase and enhance the supply of quality ECE options in rural and disadvantaged communities.
- Partner with Wonderschool to develop a platform to simplify application, eligibility, and enrollment processes for families seeking home-based care.

For full sourcing information, visit here.