



2023 Child Care and Early Education in Iowa



In Iowa, federal and state early learning opportunities serve more than 52,251 children and families,¹ or 22% of children birth through age 5.²

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.⁷ In Iowa: The estimated annual economic impact of the infant-toddler child care crisis: \$1.1B.⁸

Families Lack Access to High-Quality ECE Options in Iowa

The high cost and limited supply of quality ECE have created serious challenges for many families.

Unmet Need



235,958 Children Birth Through Age Five³



15% of Children Birth Through Age Five Living in Poverty⁴



73% of Children Birth Through Age Five With All Available Parents in the Workforce⁵



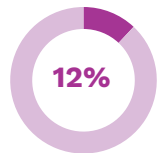
22% of Children Birth Through Age Five Served By Federal- and State-Funded Early Learning Opportunities⁶

Note: 1,2,6: These figures include 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.

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)

10,496 Children Birth Through Age Five Served⁹



Eligible Children Birth Through Age Five Served¹⁰

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

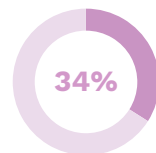
Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)

809 Families Served¹⁵

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

State-Funded Pre-K

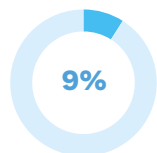
26,771 Children Enrolled¹⁶



of three- and four-year-old children attend public ECE¹⁷

Early Head Start

2,102 Children Enrolled¹¹



Eligible Children Served¹²

IDEA Part C

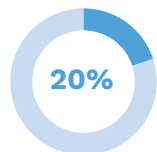
2,722 Children Served¹⁸

IDEA Part B, Sec. 619

4,214 Children Served¹⁹

Head Start

5,137 Children Enrolled¹³



Eligible Children Served¹⁴

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 Iowa Snapshot



Accessibility

Many families struggle to find the care they need.

- **23%** of Iowa residents live in a “child care desert.”²⁰
- **Rural families and families with low incomes** are disproportionately represented among those who live in a “child care desert.”²¹
- **2%** of children under age 3 receive early intervention services.²²



Affordability

The cost of ECE is too expensive for many families.

- The annual price of center-based infant care is **\$11,129**, and home-based infant care is **\$7,769**.²³
- Families receiving a CCDBG subsidy pay between **\$8** and **\$138** per month for one child in care.²⁴
- A two-parent household spends **8%** of their income on child care, while HHS defines spending over 7% to be a burden.²⁵



ECE Workforce

Early childhood educators have some of the lowest paying jobs in the United States, earning poverty-level wages.²⁶

- **\$24,140** child care worker annual salary (\$11.61 per hour).²⁷



Program Quality

Program quality varies substantially across and within states.

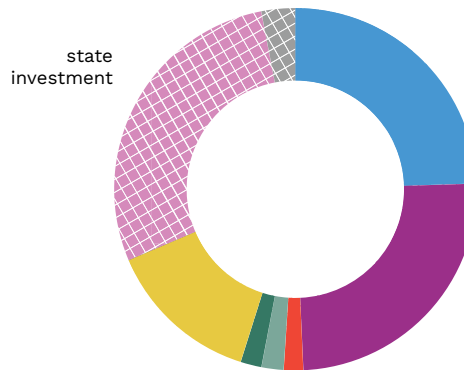
- **Met 8/10** of NIEER’s Quality Standards Benchmarks for state-funded pre-K programs. Only 5 states met all 10 benchmarks in 2022.²⁸
- **36%** of children received developmental screenings at 9, 18, and 30 months in the past year.²⁹

For full sourcing information, visit [here](#).

^{*}Iowa Department of Human Services | ^{**}IA PDG B-5 Planning Grant Application

Federal and State ECE Funding in Iowa

Federal funding is foundational to providing ECE.



\$80.6M • Head Start and Early Head Start³⁰

\$81.5M • CCDBG and Mandatory Funds³¹

\$5.7M • MIECHV³²

\$6.5M • IDEA Part C³³

\$6.2M • IDEA Part B, Sec. 619³⁴

\$45.1M • TANF Early Learning and Care Expenditures³⁵

\$93.3M • State-Funded Pre-K³⁷

\$9.9M • CCDBG State Match³⁸

Iowa received an additional \$496M through COVID-19 relief.⁴⁰

Spotlight: ECE Successes in Iowa

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, **2,155** child care programs in Iowa received support, impacting up to **73,900** children.⁴¹
- 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 the Iowa Worker Premium Pay Program, early educators received recruitment and retention bonuses of \$1,000 each.*

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 2018 planning grant application, among other uses, Iowa noted that they would use funding to:

- **Study the quality and availability of ECE programming through statewide data collection and integration with existing data**, and identify gaps in data capacities to include in future development work.
- **Engage families by conducting family focus groups**, intentionally gathering feedback from diverse groups about what is working and what gaps and barriers they experience.**