In North Dakota, federal and state early learning opportunities serve more than 8,077 children and families; or 13% of children birth through age 5.

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 North Dakota:

The estimated annual economic impact of the infant-toddler child care crisis: $354M.

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)
1,776
Children Birth Through Age Five

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)
161
Families Served

State-Funded Pre-K
371
Children Enrolled

IDEA Part C
1,616
Children Served

IDEA Part B, Sec. 619
1,644
Children Served

Head Start
1,930
Children Enrolled

Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC)

Learn more about CCDBG in North Dakota here.

Learn more about MIECHV in North Dakota here.

Learn more about CDCTC here.
Early Care and Education (ECE) in North Dakota Snapshot

Accessibility

Many families struggle to find the care they need.
- 24% of North Dakota residents live in a "child care desert."20
- Hispanics/Latinos and rural families are disproportionately represented among those who live in a "child care desert."21
- 5% 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 $9,984, and home-based infant care is $8,240.23
- Families receiving a CCDBG subsidy pay between $13 and $272 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
- $28,590 child care worker annual salary ($13.74 per hour).27

Program Quality

Program quality varies substantially across and within states.
- Met 5/10 of NIEER’s Quality Standards Benchmarks for state-funded pre-K programs. Only 5 states met all 10 benchmarks in 2022.28
- 32% of children received developmental screenings at 9, 18, and 30 months in the past year.29

Federal and State ECE Funding in North Dakota

Federal funding is foundational to providing ECE.

$35.5M • Head Start and Early Head Start30
$16.8M • CCDBG and Mandatory Funds31
$0.9M • MIECHV32
$3.6M • IDEA Part C33
$1.3M • IDEA Part B, Sec. 61934
$6.8M • PDG B-536
$2.3M • State-Funded Pre-K37
$4.3M • CCDBG State Match38
$2M • PDG B-5 State Match39

North Dakota received an additional $101M through COVID-19 relief.40

Spotlight: ECE Successes in North Dakota

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, 1,015 child care programs in North Dakota received support, impacting up to 35,800 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, including: increasing compensation; strengthening employee benefits; assisting with rent and utilities; and providing scholarships, professional development, and training;

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, North Dakota noted that they would use funding to:
- Introduce an online Child Care Licensing Data System to ease the licensing application and renewal process.
- Develop tools and resources to support new providers, and offer standardized state-supported training and technical assistance.”

For full sourcing information, visit here.

*North Dakota Health and Human Services | **BUILD