2023 Child Care and Early Education in Connecticut

FIRST FIVE YEARS FUND

In Connecticut, federal and state early learning opportunities serve more than 37,100 children and families,[1] or 17% 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 Connecticut: The estimated annual economic impact of the infant-toddler child care crisis: $1.5B.[8]

Families Lack Access to High-Quality ECE Options in Connecticut

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

Unmet Need

219,170 Children Birth Through Age Five[3]

14% of Children Birth Through Age Five Living in Poverty[4]

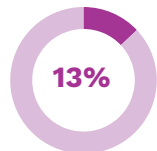**71%** of Children Birth Through Age Five With All Available Parents in the Workforce[5]

17% of Children Birth Through Age Five Served By Federal- and State-Funded Early Learning Opportunities[6]

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)

7,980 Children Birth Through Age Five Served[9]

13% Eligible Children Birth Through Age Five Served[10]

Learn more about CCDBG in Connecticut here.

Early Head Start

1,659 Children Enrolled[11]

16% Eligible Children Served[12]

Head Start

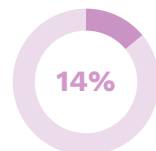**3,946** Children Enrolled[13]

46% Eligible Children Served[14]

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

1,173 Families Served[15]

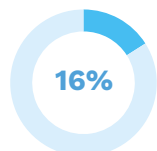Learn more about MIECHV in Connecticut here.

State-Funded Pre-K

10,387 Children Enrolled[16]

14% of three- and four-year-old children attend public ECE[17]

IDEA Part C

6,034 Children Served[18]

IDEA Part B, Sec. 619
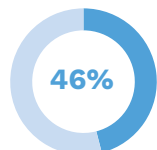
5,921 Children Served[19]

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 Connecticut Snapshot

🏫 Accessibility

Many families struggle to find the care they need.

- **44%** of Connecticut residents live in a "child care desert."[20]
- **Hispanics/Latinos and families with low incomes** 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 **$16,588**, and home-based infant care is **$12,792**.[23]
- Families receiving a CCDBG subsidy pay between **$0** and **$394** per month for one child in care.[24]
- A two-parent household spends **10%** 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]

- **$32,700** child care worker annual salary ($15.72 per hour).[27]

🏫 Program Quality

Program quality varies substantially across and within states.

- **Met 5.1/10** of NIEER's Quality Standards Benchmarks for state-funded pre-K programs. Only 5 states met all 10 benchmarks in 2022.[28]
- **49%** of children received developmental screenings at 9, 18, and 30 months in the past year.[29]

For full sourcing information, visit here.

*CSCCE | **BUILD

Federal and State ECE Funding in Connecticut

Federal funding is foundational to providing ECE.

state investment
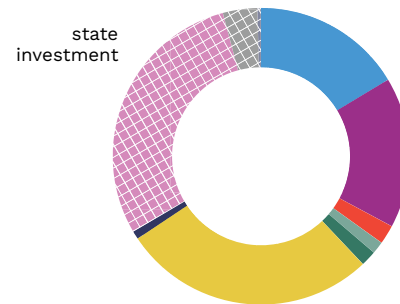
- $73M ● Head Start and Early Head Start[30]
- $73.3M ● CCDBG and Mandatory Funds[31]
- $9.3M ● MIECHV[32]
- $6M ● IDEA Part C[33]
- $7.6M ● IDEA Part B, Sec. 619[34]
- $123.4M ● TANF Early Learning and Care Expenditures[35]
- $3.9M ● PDG B-5[36]
- $130.7M ● State-Funded Pre-K[37]
- $16.8M ● CCDBG State Match[38]
- $1.7M ● PDG B-5 State Match[39]

Connecticut received an additional $370M through COVID-19 relief.[40]

Spotlight: ECE Successes in Connecticut

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, **2,575** child care programs in Connecticut received support, impacting up to **104,900** 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 the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Ready Set Rebuild Program, providers could opt into "funding for compensation," and by doing so agreed to allocate at least 25% to increasing staff compensation. Otherwise, they only received 75% of the total funding for which they were eligible.*

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

- **Support family child care providers by expanding the Staffed Family Child Care Network,** through on-call nurse phone support, quality improvements, and other child care business resources.
- **Plan and conduct family engagement initiatives,** such as parent cafes within every region, which support the professional development of Parent Cabinet members.**