

In Alabama, federal and state early learning opportunities serve more than 70,743 children and families,¹ or 20% of children ages 5 and under.²

High quality child care and early learning programs support child development and offer parents peace of mind while they work or attend school.

Unfortunately, the demand for quality care far outweighs the supply, so many families struggle to access and afford the care options they want or need. While there are several federally funded programs that provide working families with access to quality child care opportunities, limited funding leaves many eligible children unserved. The impacts of these challenges extend beyond families and carry over to the workplace. As a direct result, the national economy loses **\$122 billion annually** in the form of lost earnings, productivity, and revenue.³

Below is a list of existing child care and early learning programs which together form a mix delivery system that supports parental choice and aims to meet children's individual needs. These programs have unique eligibility requirements and service delivery models. However, at current funding levels, each only reaches a fraction of eligible families.

STATE OF CHILD CARE IN ALABAMA
350,945

 Children 5 & Under⁴
62%

 Children 5 & Under with All Available Parents in the Workforce⁵
1,338

 Licensed Child Care Centers in 2023 (-21 compared to 2022)⁶
557

 Licensed Family Child Care Homes in 2023 (-39 compared to 2022)⁷
40%

 Gap in the Supply of Child Care vs. the Potential Need⁸
\$1.3B

 Estimated Economic Impact of Infant-Toddler Child Care Challenges Each Year⁹
\$8,771

 Annual Price of Center-Based Infant Care (\$731 per month)¹⁰
\$8,186

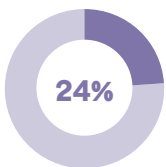
 Annual Price of Home-Based Infant Care (\$682 per month)¹¹
\$104,991

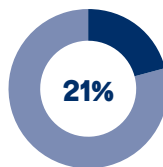
 Median Income of Married-Couple Family¹²
8.4%

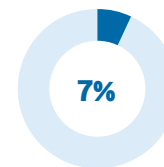
 Portion of Income Spent by a Married-Couple Family on Center-Based Infant Care¹³
\$27,632

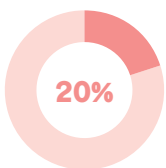
 Median Income of Single-Parent Family¹⁴
31.7%

 Portion of Income Spent by a Single-Parent Family on Center-Based Infant Care¹⁵
CHILD CARE & DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CCDBG)

 102,820 CHILDREN 5 & UNDER ELIGIBLE¹⁶
 24,282 CHILDREN 5 & UNDER SERVED¹⁷

 24% ELIGIBLE CHILDREN 5 & UNDER SERVED¹⁸
HEAD START

 42,941 CHILDREN ELIGIBLE¹⁹
 9,218 CHILDREN ENROLLED²⁰

 21% ELIGIBLE CHILDREN SERVED²¹
EARLY HEAD START

 42,941 CHILDREN ELIGIBLE²²
 3,061 CHILDREN ENROLLED²³

 7% ELIGIBLE CHILDREN SERVED²⁴
STATE-FUNDED PRE-K

 23,388 CHILDREN ENROLLED²⁵

 20% 3-AND 4-YEAR-OLDS SERVED²⁶
MIGRANT AND SEASONAL HEAD START

 293 CHILDREN ENROLLED²⁷
MATERNAL, INFANT, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING (MIECHV)

 1,758 FAMILIES SERVED²⁸
IDEA PART C

 (EARLY INTERVENTION)
 4,367 CHILDREN SERVED²⁹
IDEA PART B, SEC. 619

 (PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION)
 4,669 CHILDREN SERVED³⁰

ALABAMA: FEDERAL AND STATE CHILD CARE AND EARLY LEARNING FUNDING



\$205.9M	CCDBG and Mandatory Funds ³¹
\$160.9M	Head Start and Early Head Start ³² (includes AIAN HS/EHS when applicable)
\$4M	PDG B-5 ³³
\$8.3M	MIECHV ³⁴
\$7.8M	IDEA Part C ³⁵
\$6.2M	IDEA Part B, Sec. 619 ³⁶
\$44.3M	TANF Early Care and Education ³⁷
\$18.6M	TANF Transferred to CCDBG ³⁸

STATE INVESTMENT

\$173.7M	State-Funded Pre-K ³⁹
\$11.9M	CCDBG State Match ⁴⁰
\$1.2M	PDG B-5 State Match ⁴¹

ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM QUALITY

Program quality varies substantially within and across states.

Quality child care and early learning programs rely on a strong workforce, but low pay makes it difficult to recruit and retain educators. **In Alabama, child care workers earn \$10.36 per hour (\$21,550 annually).**⁴²

Teacher-child ratios are crucial for ensuring safety, quality, and individual attention. Licensed center-based care providers participating in CCDBG are required to have the following ratios:⁴³

- **Infant** 1:5
- **Toddler** 1:7 for 18-30 months
1:8 for 24-36 months
- **Preschool** 1:11 for 30 months-4 years
1:18 for 4 years-school-age

The state's pre-K program met **10/10 of NIEER's Quality Standards Benchmarks**, which represent minimum standards to support quality preschool programs.⁴⁴

Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) is a competitive federal grant designed to improve states' early childhood systems. **Alabama's PDG B-5 accomplishments include:**⁴⁵

- Expanded "Born Ready University" parenting courses to 25 counties, equipping expectant parents and caregivers of young children with essential knowledge and skills.
- Developed a website hub for families called "Alabama Family Central" with all services available to support children's development.

CHILD AND DEPENDENT CARE TAX CREDIT (CDCTC)

The Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC) directly helps working parents offset the cost of child care.

In its current form, the credit only reaches a small percentage of families and has been swiftly outpaced by the escalating cost of child care as it lacks any adjustment for inflation.

Last permanently updated in 2001, the current credit averages \$500-\$600 a year.⁴⁶

CDCTC IN ALABAMA BY TAX YEAR

2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82,350: Number of taxpayers claiming the CDCTC⁴⁷ • \$542: Average credit
2021	<p><i>The CDCTC was temporarily expanded and made refundable for one year in response to the pandemic.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 127,860: Number of taxpayers claiming the CDCTC⁴⁸ (an additional 45,510 from 2020) • \$2,215: Average Credit (an additional \$1,673 from 2020, on average)
TODAY	<p><i>The temporary expansion expired; the CDCTC reverted back to 2001 levels.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$500-600: Average credit

NOTE: Major provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA) expire at the end of 2025⁴⁹, giving Congress the opportunity to modernize the CDCTC and other tax provisions to better help working families offset the cost of quality child care.⁵⁰



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