



May 2025

Child Care and Early Learning: Appropriations in 2025

What's at stake, what happens next, and how to get involved.

Today's Speakers



Sarah Rubinfeld
First Five Years Fund




Bob Bissen
National Head Start
Association



Daniel Hains
NAEYC



Anne Hedgepeth
Child Care Aware
of America



State Of Play



— What Are “Appropriations”?

Congress holds the “**power of the purse.**”

“**Appropriations**” is the process by which Congress allocates funding for federal programs.

Congress produces **12 separate appropriations bills**, each determined by a specific subcommittee which oversees budgeting for individual agencies.

Child care and early learning bills are primarily funded through the **Labor-Health and Human Services-Education and Related Agencies** bill (often called “Labor-H”).

—The Programs



Child Care Development Block Grants: Provides funding for states to subsidize child care for lower income families.



Head Start: Provides early learning, nutrition, medical care and family services for children in poverty.



Preschool Development Grants B-5: Funding for data, infrastructure, and more efficient programs.

How Appropriations Works: 2025

NOW: White House budget “wish list”.

MAY 16: Members of Congress submit “Dear Colleague” letters with priorities

SUMMER: Appropriators decide program-by-program funding levels.

SEPT 30: House and Senate Appropriators resolve differences and pass a budget.

The Letters – FY 2026

Republican Letters

CCDBG

Led by Rep. Burgess Owens
(R-UT)

Head Start

Led by Rep. Pete Stauber (R-
MN)

Bipartisan Letter

Bipartisan PDG B-5

Led by Reps. Joaquin
Castro (D-TX)
and
Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)

Democratic Letters

CCDBG, IDEA

Led by Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)

Head Start

Led by Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-CT)

CCAMPIS

Led by Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL), Sen. Tammy
Duckworth (D-IL)

CCDBG, Head Start, PDG, IDEA

Led by Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN)

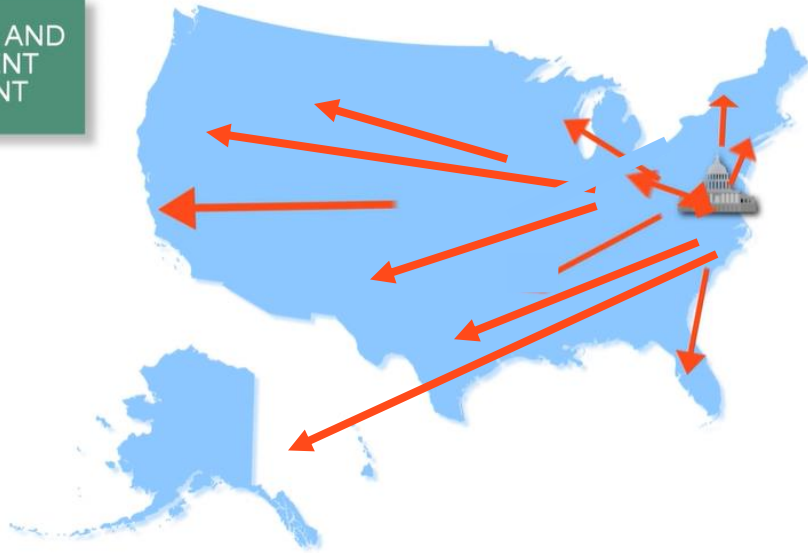
CCDBG

What it is
What's at stake

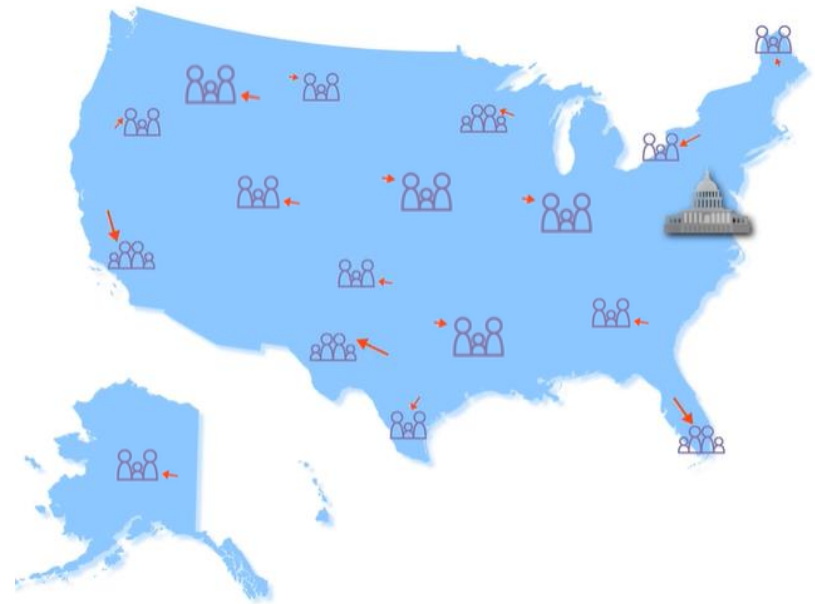


CCDBG: Nutshell

CHILD CARE AND
DEVELOPMENT
BLOCK GRANT



Funding from the Department of Health and Human Services is provided to states as a block grant.



States use funds to provide families with low incomes with child care, through vouchers, subsidies, or paid slots. (They also invest in quality and safety.)

The Impact

With CCDBG

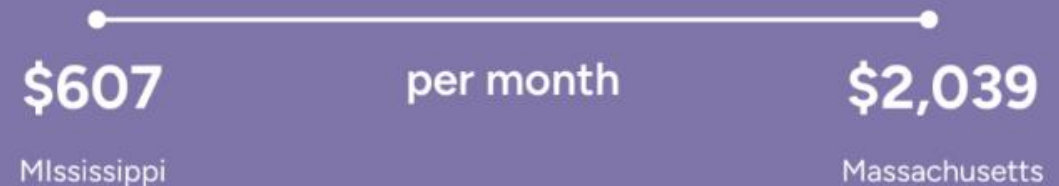
Copayments for a three-person family earning \$30,000 per year range from:



The median monthly copayment is \$10.

Without CCDBG

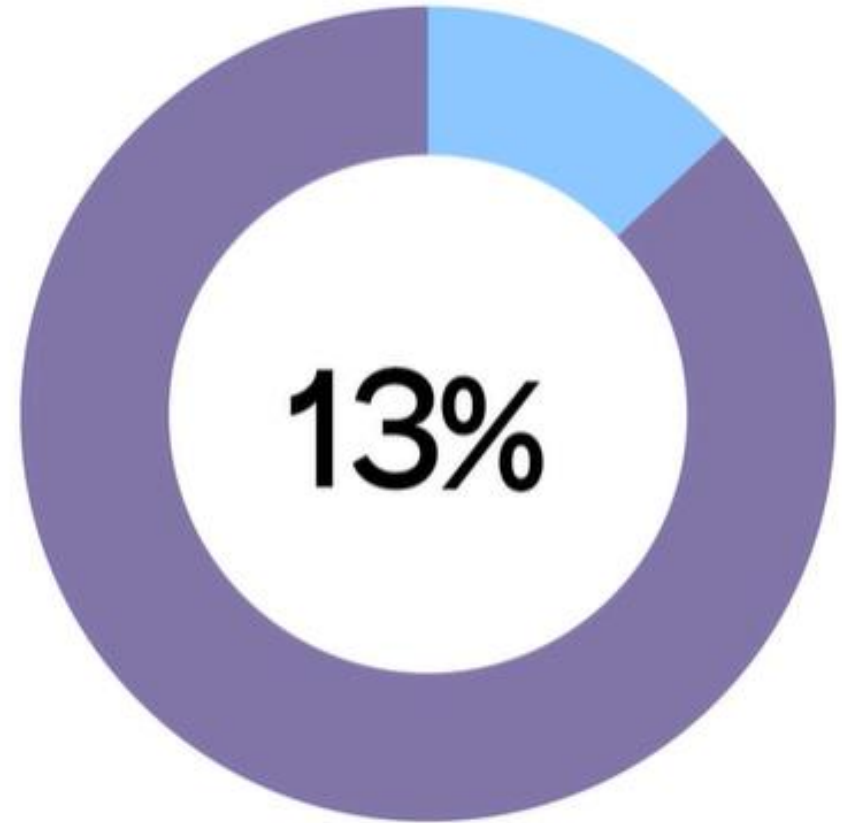
Families that do not receive subsidies pay significantly higher costs. For instances, the price of center-based care ranges from:



The Need

CHILD CARE AND
DEVELOPMENT
BLOCK GRANT

AT CURRENT FUNDING LEVELS,
CCDBG IS ABLE TO SERVE
13% OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN
BIRTH THROUGH 5



The Ask

Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) – At least an additional \$3.65 billion for CCDBG (a total of at least \$12.4 billion).


IDEA – At least \$974.8 million for grants for infants and families and \$683.5 million for preschool grants.



Head Start



What it is
What's at stake



Head Start: Nutshell

WHO: Services to pregnant women & young children (birth to five) who come from families living below the poverty line or are experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.

HOW: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services funds community-based, faith-based, and for-profit organizations in a community.

WHAT: Programs collaborate with parents to shape curriculum and allocate resources in ways that best meet the unique local needs of the children, families, and communities they serve.

WHERE: Head Start is located in every Congressional district.

— The Impact

Head Start provides children from eligible families with high-quality early learning as well as medical, dental, vision, behavioral, health, and nutrition services.

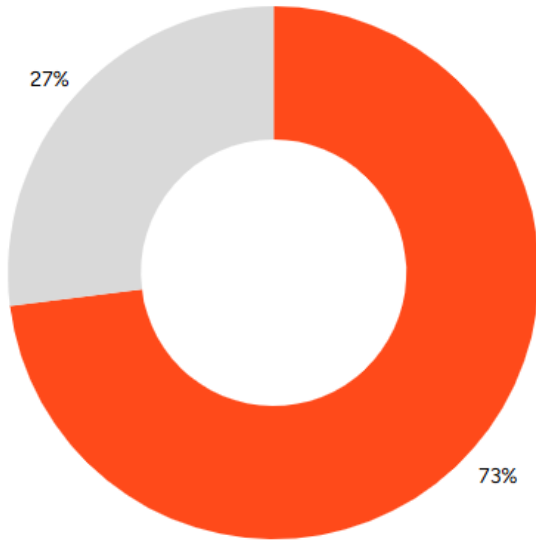
40 MILLION: Children and their families who have benefitted from Head Start since it was founded 60 years ago.

750,000+: The number of funded Head Start slots across the country.

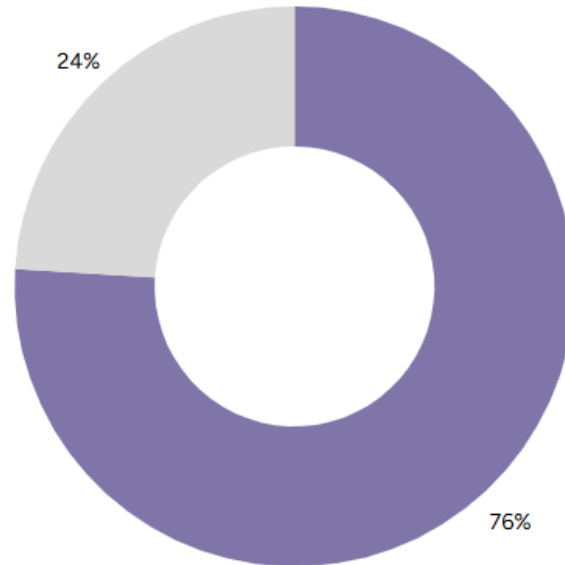
435: Number of Congressional districts with a Head Start program. (Spoiler: That's all of them!)

The Support

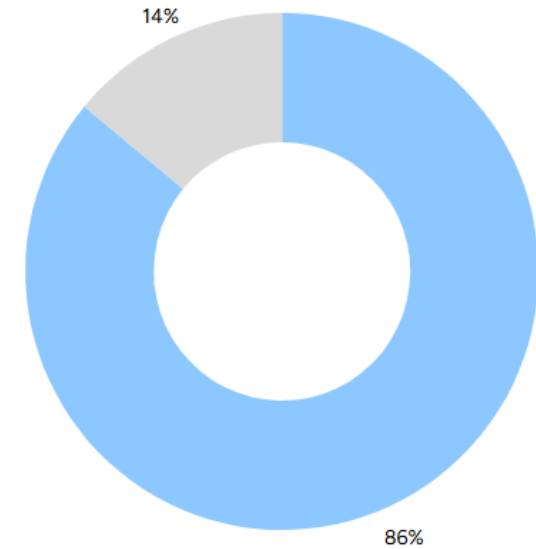
Support for Head Start is strong across the political spectrum. Four out of five (79%) voters say they support Head Start, including:



73% of Republicans



76% of Independents



86% of Democrats

— The Ask

Stand For Head Start – Reject any attempts to weaken or eliminate this important program.

Funding – An additional \$1.94 billion for Head Start (a total of at least \$14.91 billion).

PDG B-5



Preschool Development Grants B-5

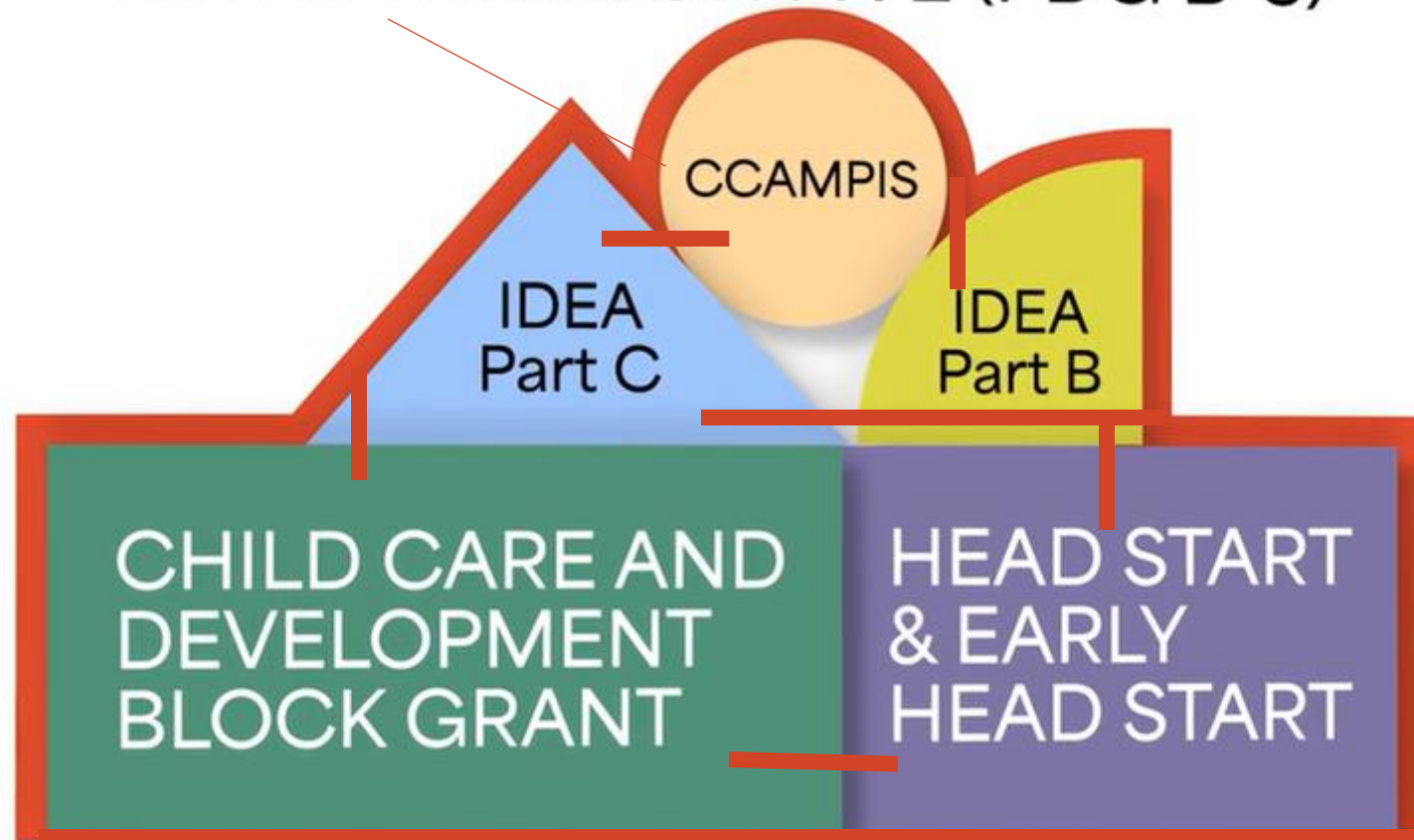
The Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) supports states' ability to build an effective early learning infrastructure.

These competitive federal grants:

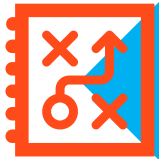
- Help states improve quality and safety across child care programs.
- Improve state collaboration across multiple child care and early learning programs, systems, and agencies.
- Assist states in collecting data, so they can make programs work more effectively and efficiently.

How PDG B-5 Works

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT
BIRTH THROUGH FIVE (PDG B-5)



Examples of PDG B-5 At Work



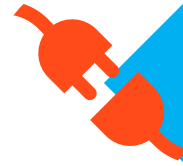
Create or Update
Strategic Plans



Support
Quality



Improve Parent
Engagement



Connect
Programs



Strengthen the
Workforce



Collect Data

— The Ask

Stand up for PDG B-5. Reject any attempts to weaken or eliminate this important program.

PDG B-5 — Robust funding to keep this program strong.



Time For Action



The Letters – FY 2026

Republican Letters

CCDBG Letter

Led by Rep. Burgess Owens (R-UT)

Deadline to Sign: May 16

Head Start/Early Head Start Letter

Led by Rep. Pete Stauber (R-MN)

Deadline To Sign: May 19

Bipartisan PDG B-5 Letter

Led by Reps. Joaquin Castro (D-TX) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)

Deadline To Sign: ASAP

The Letters – FY 2026

Democratic Letters

CCDBG + IDEA

Led by Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)

Deadline To Sign: **May 16**

Head Start/Early Head Start

Led by Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-CT)

Deadline To Sign: **May 19**

CCDBG, Head Start, IDEA, PDG

Led by Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN)

Deadline To Sign: **TBD**

Bipartisan PDG B-5

Led by Reps. Joaquin Castro (D-TX)
and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)

Deadline To Sign: **ASAP**

CCAMPIS

Led by Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL), Sen.
Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)

Deadline To Sign: **TBD**

Today: Tell Congress to Sign

Members are circulating "Dear Colleague" letters to rally support among their peers for key funding priorities including Head Start. Help them circulate at <https://www.ffyf.org/take-action/>

Ask Republican Members to
sign these Appropriations
letters

[SEND A MESSAGE](#)



Ask Democratic Members to
sign these Appropriations
letters

[SEND A MESSAGE](#)



Tomorrow: Rally Your People!

After you ask your Member to sign, invite your networks, partners, allies, social media followers, coworkers, college roommates, family members, and more to ask their Members as well!



Hey! A bunch of us are taking action today to help families with young children. Do you have a sec to join us?

Simply click here to take action! <https://www.ffyf.org/take-action/>

We're asking Members to sign on to Dear Colleague letters to make sure child care and early learning programs have support and momentum going into budget negotiations. These letters are one of the BEST ways to rally support on the Hill.

Thank you!

Ahead: Recess!

Invite your Member of Congress to see child care and early learning in action the next time they're in the District (and before the September 30 deadline!)

- May 26-30
- June 16-20 (House only)
- June 30-July 4
- July 28-August 1 (House only)
- August 4-29
- September 22-26





Questions?

