FIRST FIVE YEARS FUND

2026 STATE FACT SHEET

Child Care & Early Learning in **Maryland**

In Maryland, federal and state early learning opportunities serve more than **80,962** children,[1] or **19%** of children ages 5 and under.[2]

High-quality child care and early learning programs support children's healthy development while giving parents peace of mind as they work or attend school.

While several federally funded programs help working families access quality child care, limited funding leaves many eligible children unserved. These challenges not only affect families but also employers and the broader economy. Each year, child care shortages across the country impose significant economic costs on families, businesses, and state tax revenues.

Maryland's early learning landscape operates through a mixed-delivery system of diverse programs, each with distinct eligibility requirements, funding structures, and service delivery models designed to maximize parental choice.

MARYLAND AT-A-GLANCE

NEED

430,237
Children 5 & Under[3]

70%
Children 5 & Under with All Available Parents in the Workforce[4]

16%
Gap in Supply of Child Care vs. Potential Need[5]

COST

$20,124
Annual Price of Center-Based Care ($1,677 per month)[6]

$15,704
Annual Price of Home-Based Care ($1,309 per month)[7]

IMPACT

$3.3B
Estimated Annual Economic Impact of the Child Care Crisis[8]

MARYLAND INCOME ELIGIBILITY

CDCTC
Available to **families of all income levels** (higher credit for lower incomes)

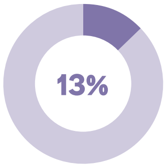
CCDBG
60% of state median income, families earning up to **$75,624** for a family of 3[10]

HEAD START
100% of the federal poverty level, **$27,320** for a family of 3[9]

MARYLAND PROGRAM REACH

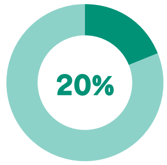
Existing federal child care and early learning programs, combined with state-funded pre-K, form a mixed delivery system that aims to meet children's individual needs. However, at current funding levels, only a fraction of eligible families are served.

CHILD CARE & DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CCDBG)
134,736 CHILDREN 5 & UNDER ELIGIBLE[11]
17,028 CHILDREN 5 & UNDER SERVED[12]



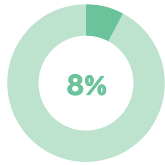
ELIGIBLE CHILDREN 5 & UNDER SERVED[13]
Based on federal eligibility (85% SMI)

HEAD START PRESCHOOL
26,176 CHILDREN ELIGIBLE[14]
5,176 CHILDREN ENROLLED[15]



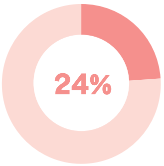
ELIGIBLE CHILDREN SERVED[16]

EARLY HEAD START
26,176 CHILDREN ELIGIBLE[17]
2,089 CHILDREN ENROLLED[18]



ELIGIBLE CHILDREN SERVED[19]

STATE-FUNDED PRE-K
33,746 CHILDREN ENROLLED[20]



3-& 4-YEAR-OLDS SERVED[21]

IDEA PART C
(EARLY INTERVENTION)
9,574 CHILDREN SERVED[22]

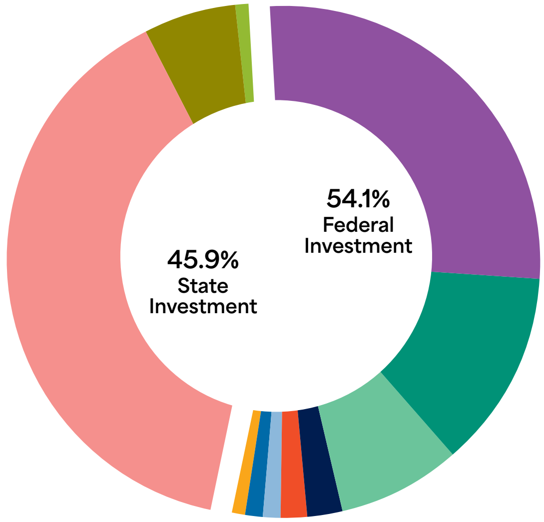
IDEA PART B, SEC. 619
(PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION)
12,224 CHILDREN SERVED[23]

MATERNAL, INFANT, & EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING (MIECHV)
1,125 CHILDREN SERVED[24]

CHILD & DEPENDENT CARE TAX CREDIT (CDCTC)
146,740 FAMILIES RECEIVED[25]

MARYLAND

FEDERAL & STATE CHILD CARE AND EARLY LEARNING FUNDING



STATE INVESTMENT

- **$269.7M** State-Funded Pre-K[26]
- **$40.6M** CCDBG State Match[27]
- **$4.4M** PDG B-5 State Match[28]

FEDERAL INVESTMENT

- **$185.8M** CCDBG and Mandatory Funds[29]
- **$85.5M** Head Start Preschool[30] (includes AIAN when applicable)
- **$52.7M** Early Head Start[31] (includes AIAN when applicable)
- **$14.8M** PDG B-5[32]
- **$10.5M** MIECHV[33]
- **$9.3M** IDEA Part C[34]
- **$7.4M** IDEA Part B, Sec. 619[35]
- **$5.0M** TANF Early Care and Education[36]
- **$0** TANF Transferred to CCDBG[37]

CCDBG

CCDBG allows states to provide child care assistance to low-income working families with children under age 13, helping parents access child care in a setting of their choice.

- Income eligibility: **60% of state median income** (**$75,624 per year** for a family of 3)[38,39]
- Monthly cost of center-based infant care
  - No subsidy: **$1,677**[40]
  - Maximum copayment with subsidy: **$26**[41]
  - Potential savings: **$1,651**
- **3,595** child care providers accept CCDBG subsidies[42]
- Child care workers' median wage: **$18.29 per hour** (**$38,030 per year**)[43]

States must establish child care licensing requirements, including staff-to-child ratios, to ensure children are cared for in safe, quality environments. Different rules may apply depending on the setting (e.g., center- or home-based), and some providers may be exempt from licensing requirements (e.g., faith-based programs).

The state has set the following ratios for licensed center-based care:[44]

INFANT	1:3
TODDLER	1:3
PRESCHOOL	1:6 for age 2 1:10 for age 3-4

Scan or click the QR code for full references and links at www.ffyf.org/factsheet26. For more information contact FFYF at mail@ffyf.org.

EARLY HEAD START/HEAD START

Early Head Start and Head Start provide high-quality early learning and comprehensive services - including health, nutrition, and family support - at no cost to eligible families. Programs are federally funded and locally administered.[45] Children are eligible based on family income, if they receive TANF, SNAP, or SSI benefits, or if they are in foster care or experiencing homelessness. Head Start programs must reserve at least 10% of enrollment slots for children with disabilities.

- Income eligibility: at or below the federal poverty level (**$27,320** for a family of 3)[46]
- In Maryland: **25 Head Start grants** fund **153 program sites**, serving **7,265 children**.[47, 48, 49]
- Maryland does not serve any children in Migrant and Seasonal Head Start or American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Head Start.[50]

PDG B-5

To date, Maryland has been awarded **$52.2 million** in funds through Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5).[51]

PDG B-5 is a competitive federal grant program designed to improve states' early childhood systems. Maryland's PDG B-5 accomplishments include:[52]

- Improving access to quality programs by scaling evidence-based models that support child development and by awarding grants to early childhood advisory councils and libraries.
- Advancing modernization of Maryland's integrated, statewide early childhood data system.

CDCTC

In 2022, **146,740** Maryland families claimed the CDCTC.[53]

The CDCTC directly helps working parents offset the cost of child care. In 2025, the CDCTC was permanently updated for the first time since 2001. Many filers could see their credit increase by as much as $450 (for one child) or $900 (for two or more children) in tax year 2026.[54]