Creating a Coordinated, Integrated Early Care and Education System:
State Early Childhood Administration

In 2018, the Bipartisan Policy Center examined how states oversee federal and state funding dedicated to early childhood education, or ECE, programs. Now in 2021, we revisit each state system to understand enacted improvements and emerging challenges in state governance.

As the country adjusts to a new reality of work and home life amid the pandemic, American families are faced with the challenge of finding and affording quality child care, now more than ever. Early learning operates within a fragile business model, in which services cost more than most families can afford to pay. For this reason, states must administer funding with efficiency and effectiveness to ensure families are able to access programs and to maximize the reach of federal and state investments.

States are now responsible to distributing recent COVID-19 relief funding for child care—allocated through three successive relief packages by Congress in 2020—in addition to established funding streams that support multiple early childhood programs. The relief packages are intended to stabilize the fragile system that challenged access to affordable, reliable care. State governments are tasked with coordinating and combining the many different ECE funding streams allocated to them.

For all but one federal program, governors have wide discretion with regard to the administration and coordination of early childhood funding. The Bipartisan Policy Center set out to re-examine the issues of state governance, coordination, and integration by reviewing how states are meeting requirements set by federal statutes and agencies, as well as how states are capitalizing on the opportunity to create efficiency through their governance structures.

With this in mind, BPC is making recommendations at the federal and state level with an eye towards further reducing duplication and improving results for families. These recommendations are summarized in the full report. The following summarizes the findings for Delaware.

More state data, including funding levels and demographic information, can be found at https://bipartisanpolicy.org/report/national-child-care/.

STRENGTHS OF DELAWARE’S EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM

- Delaware administers five programs serving children—Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF); Head Start Collaboration Office; state Pre-K; Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP); IDEA Part B, Section 619—under one agency, which improves efficiency and allows for better alignment of eligibility and monitoring requirements and quality improvement activities.
- Delaware combined the administration of CCDF Licensing and Quality, reducing duplication and increasing monitoring efficiency.
- CACFP is administered through the same agency as state Pre-K and CCDF, which improves efficiency and cost-effectiveness of monitoring and oversight.
- Delaware was awarded an Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership grant, which integrates Early Head Start services and resources into child care settings, aligns child care standards with Early Head Start Performance Standards, and creates opportunities for improving outcomes for children and families.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DELAWARE’S EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM

- Ensure the State Advisory Council for Early Education and Care, mandated by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, is fulfilling its required activities, including conducting a statewide needs assessment on the quality and availability of early care and learning programs.
- Include licensing as the entry level for state Quality Rating and Improvement System to ensure program quality.
Flow of Federal Early Childhood Funds: Delaware

**KEY:**
- → Funding mandated for State Departments of Education
- → Funding provided directly to local organizations
- ○ State does not receive funding

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**Department of Health and Human Services**
- Office of Head Start
- Office of Child Care Services - Subsidy • CCDF
- Temporary Assistance • TANF
- Management Services, Birth to 3 Early Intervention System • Part C
- Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)
  - Delaware Stars for Early Success has five levels with higher levels indicating higher levels of quality. The QRIS is statewide and participation is voluntary.

**Department of Agriculture**
- Food & Nutrition Service • CACFP
- Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
  - Part B, Section 619
  - Part C

**Department of Education**
- Office of Early Learning
  - CCDF
  - SAC
  - Early Childhood Special Education • Part B, Section 619
  - Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership
  - Delaware Stars - Child Care Quality Rating and Improvement System • Not CCDF-funded
  - Head Start Collaboration Office
  - Student Support Team • Nutrition Programs Office • CACFP
  - Early Childhood Assistance Program
  - State Pre-K

**Office of the Governor**
- Delaware Stars for Early Success has /five levels with higher levels indicating higher levels of quality. The QRIS is statewide and participation is voluntary.

**Office of the Governor**
- State Advisory Council (SAC)
  - The Early Childhood Council is governor appointed and makes recommendations to the governor, the General Assembly, and the Interagency Resource Management Committee.
  - Its mission is to promote the development of a comprehensive and coordinated early childhood system, birth to age eight, which provides the highest quality services and environment for the state’s children and families.

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**Local Institutions**
- Local Head Start Programs
BPC Reviewed

BPC reviewed the following federally-funded programs to assess the efficiency and integration of Delaware’s early care and education system.

- Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)
- Head Start
- Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS)
- Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities (IDEA Part C)
- Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5)
- Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities (IDEA Part B, Section 619)
- Promise Neighborhoods
- Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP)
- Race to the Top, Early Learning Challenge

### ECE Funding in Delaware

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding from Nine GAO-Identified Programs</th>
<th>FY 2019 Funding</th>
<th>FY 2020 Funding</th>
<th>FY 2021 Funding</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCDF Expenditure</td>
<td>$27,883,628</td>
<td>$35,323,548.31</td>
<td>$163,169,409</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer from TANF</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Start Allocation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>$20,198,087</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Head Start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDEA Part C, Allocation (infant/toddler)</td>
<td>$2,301,492</td>
<td>$2,333,044</td>
<td>$3,587,364</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDEA Part B, Section 619 Allocation (3–5 years)</td>
<td>$1,291,639</td>
<td>$1,301,639</td>
<td>$1,979,972</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCAMPIS Grants</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional ECE Funding Streams</th>
<th>FY 2019 Funding</th>
<th>FY 2020 Funding</th>
<th>FY 2021 Funding</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TANF Child Care Expenditure (Direct)</td>
<td>$79,081,463</td>
<td>$82,878,406</td>
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<tr>
<td>TANF Pre-K / Head Start Expenditure</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<tr>
<td>CACFP Allocation</td>
<td>$17,911,010</td>
<td>$13,029,206</td>
<td>$11,257,817</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Number of Children Under Age 6

- **UNDER 3**: 30,810
- **3–4 YEARS OLD**: 22,217
- **5 YEARS OLD**: 12,898

### Percentage of Children in Poverty

- **16.8%**
Eligibility Requirements Set by State

Child Care And Development Fund

Age: Children up to age 13 are eligible, children with mental and physical disabilities and those in protective services are eligible through age 18. Parents are required to work a minimum of 20 hours per week. Education (high school, GED classes), job searching, and working are approved activities for eligibility. Training, ESL classes, and postsecondary education are approved if approved through TANF or SNAP. For initial and continuing eligibility a family of two must earn $2,708 or less per month and a family of four must earn $4,100 or less per month. In 2018, states will begin to see an increase in CCDF funding due to the $2.37 billion increase to the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) passed in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018.

State Pre-K (FY17)

4-year-olds at or below 100 percent of federal poverty level are eligible for Early Childhood Assistance Program, the state’s Pre-K program.

Total State Spending on Pre-K: $6,149,300
Local Match: No
Total State Head Start Spending: Not Available
Total FY 2017 Enrollment: 831

IDEA Part C (infant/toddler)

Children age birth to 36 months with 25 percent or 1.75 standard deviation developmental delay in at least one of five developmental areas or with a developmental delay condition are eligible.

Eligibility Requirements Set Federally

CACFP

Public or private nonprofit child care institutions which are licensed or approved may participate. For profit centers must receive title XX funds for at least 25 percent of enrolled children or licensed capacity or at least 25 percent of the children in care must be eligible for free and reduced price meals. A family or group day care home must sign an agreement with a sponsoring organization to participate and must be licensed or approved.

Head Start

Children birth to age five living in poverty are generally eligible. Children with disabilities, children whose families receive TANF or SSI, children whose families are homeless, or children who are in foster care are categorically eligible.

IDEA Part B, Section 619 (3-5 years)

Children three through five years, who have any of the qualifying IDEA Part B overall conditions (Developmental Delay, Deaf-Blindness, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech or Language Impairment, Visual Impairment, Autism and Traumatic Brain Injury) are eligible.