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 Alaska.

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

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**STRENGTHS OF ALASKA’S EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM**

- Alaska’s state Pre-K program is administered by the same agency that oversees the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which can increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALASKA’S EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM**

- Further increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness of monitoring and oversight by aligning the administration of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) with state Pre-K and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- Improve program alignment and efficiency by colocating CCDF with state Pre-K and the Head Start Collaboration Office.
- Facilitate cross-agency communication to ensure seamless coordination and transition for IDEA Part C (infants/toddlers) and Part B, Section 619 (3-5 year olds).
- 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.
Flow of Federal Early Childhood Funds: Alaska

**KEY:**
- Funding mandated for State Departments of Education
- Funding provided directly to local organizations
- State does not receive funding
- Partnership with funding provided by state department or agency

**Department of Health and Human Services**
- Office of Head Start
- Office of Child Care
  - CCDF
- Office of Family Assistance
  - TANF

**Department of Agriculture**
- Food & Nutrition Service
  - CACFP

**Department of Education**
- Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
  - Part B, Section 619
  - Part C

**Alaska Office of the Governor**
- Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership
  - Grants to local organizations

**Local Institutions**
- Department of Health
  - Division of Public Assistance
    - Child Care Program Office - Licensing, Subsidy and Quality Improvement
      - CCDF
    - Temporary Assistance Program
      - TANF
  - Division of Senior and Disabilities Services
    - Part C

- Food & Nutrition Service
  - CACFP

- Child Nutrition Programs
  - CACFP

- State Board of Education and Early Development
  - State Pre-K

- Office of Postsecondary Education
  - CCAMPIS

- Special Education
  - Part B, Section 619

- State Advisory Council (SAC)
  - SAC

- State Pre-K

**Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council**
- SAC

**Learn & Grow**
- Child Care Quality Recognition and Improvement System
- State Advisory Council (SAC)

**Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)**
Learn & Grow has five levels with higher levels indicating higher levels of quality. The QRIS is statewide and participation is voluntary.

**Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council (AECCC)**
- SAC

- The Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council (AECCC) is responsible for coordination of state systems to provide efficient, effective, and accessible services for children. It includes representatives from the public and private sectors and generally meets quarterly.

**Learn & Grow**
- Child Care Quality Recognition and Improvement System

**Local Institutions**
- Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership
  - Grants to local organizations

- Local Head Start Programs
## ECE Funding in Alaska

<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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCDF Expenditure</td>
<td>$32,396,072</td>
<td>$24,670,776</td>
<td>$112,243,223</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer from TANF</td>
<td>$8,879,493</td>
<td>$8,879,493</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Start Allocation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>$18,635,001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Head Start</td>
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<td></td>
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<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>$1,298,113</td>
<td>$1,308,113</td>
<td>$1,986,446</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCAMPIS Grants</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Additional ECE Funding Streams

<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>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TANF Child Care Expenditure (Direct)</td>
<td>$5,902,781</td>
<td>$5,088,429</td>
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<tr>
<td>TANF Pre-K / Head Start Expenditure</td>
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<tr>
<td>CACFP Allocation</td>
<td>$8,504,586</td>
<td>$6,393,122</td>
<td>$6,131,551</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BPC Reviewed

BPC reviewed the following federally-funded programs to assess the efficiency and integration of Alaska’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

### Number of Children Under Age 6

- UNDER 3: 27,320
- 3-4 YEARS OLD: 18,878
- 5 YEARS OLD: 11,013

### Percentage of Children in Poverty

16.9%