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 Maine.

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

STRENGTHS OF MAINE’S EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM

- Maine administers five programs serving children—Head Start Collaboration Office, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP); IDEA Part C and Part B, Section 619; and state Pre-K—under one agency, which improves efficiency and allows for better alignment of eligibility, monitoring requirements, and quality improvement activities.

- IDEA Part C (infants/toddlers) and Part B, Section 619 (3-5 year olds) are administered within the same agency, which can support a smooth transition for parents.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAINE’S EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM

- Increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness of monitoring and oversight by aligning administration of the Child Care and Development Fund with state Pre-K and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

- 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.
The Children’s Cabinet Early Childhood Advisory Council (CCECAC) was created by statute in 2008 as “the voice” of early childhood. The Council will adopt and update a long-term plan that will achieve sustainable social and financial investments in the healthy development of Maine’s young children and their families.

Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)
- Quality for ME has four levels with higher levels indicating higher levels of quality. The QRIS is statewide and participation is required for all licensed providers.

Office of Education
- Office of Pre-K
- Child Nutrition Team
- CACFP
- State Independent Evaluation Unit
  - Child Development Services
    - Part B, Section 619
    - Part C
  - CCAMPIS

Office of Education
- Head Start Collaboration Office
  - State Pre-K
  - CACFP

Office of Health and Human Services
- Office of Child Care - Child Care Subsidy and Quality Rating Improvement System
  - CCDF
  - CACFP

Office of Health and Human Services
- Office of Family Independence
  - TANF

Office of Agriculture
- Food & Nutrition Service
  - CACFP

Office of Agriculture
- Office of Family Assistance
  - TANF

Office of Education
- Office of Early Childhood
  - CCDF
  - Special Education

Office of Education
- Office of Quality
  - Part B, Section 619
  - CCDF

Office of Education
- Office of Family Independence
  - TANF
BPC reviewed the following federally-funded programs to assess the efficiency and integration of Maine’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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>FY 2019 Funding</th>
<th>FY 2020 Funding</th>
<th>FY 2021 Funding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNDER 3</td>
<td>35,187</td>
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<tr>
<td>3–4 YEARS OLD</td>
<td>25,765</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 YEARS OLD</td>
<td>13,418</td>
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### Percentage of Children in Poverty

15.1%