

Overview of Federal Child Care and Early Learning Programs

BACKGROUND

Every year, millions of families and children from birth through age five benefit from federal child care and early learning programs. Together, these programs form a mixed-delivery system that supports parent's ability to access and afford care that fits their individual needs and children's healthy development.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)

- *What it does:* Provides funding to support child care subsidies for working families with low incomes and to improve the quality of child care. The funding is provided through a block grant and the program is administered by states, territories, and tribal entities.
- *Who it serves:* Children under 13 (most children served are five and under) from families with income below 85% of the state median income (SMI); states can choose to expand eligibility further using state funding.

Head Start and Early Head Start

- *What it does:* Funds local organizations, school districts, and tribal entities to deliver comprehensive early learning, health, development, and family support services to children birth through age five from families that meet the income eligibility requirements and pregnant women.
- *Who it serves:* Children from families with income below federal poverty guidelines; who are receiving TANF, SNAP, or Supplemental Security Income (SSI); or who are experiencing homelessness; children in foster care. Early Head Start serves pregnant women and children birth to three; Head Start serves children ages three through five.

Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5)

- *What it does:* Competitive grant program to help states strengthen early childhood systems to be more effective and efficient, improving child care access and quality. Two types of grants are made available—one-year planning grants and three-year renewal grants. States use PDG B-5 funding to conduct needs assessments and conduct strategic planning and to directly improve and strengthen their child care systems
- *Who it serves:* All states, territories, and commonwealths are eligible to apply.

Department of Education

Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools (CCAMPIS)

- *What it does:* Grants provided to institutions of higher education to support or establish campus-based child care services for students with low income, including before- and after- school services.
- *Who it serves:* Student-parents with low income who are eligible for a federal Pell Grant, unless they are enrolled in a graduate or professional degree program or are a temporary visa student.

CCDBG SERVES

Approximately 1.4 Million children from over 870,000 families monthly.

HEAD START SERVICES

are delivered nationwide through 1,600 agencies that tailor the federal program to the local needs of families.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—Part B and C

- *What it does:* IDEA B, Sec. 619 provides Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) and related services to children; Part C provides Early Intervention (EI) services to infants and toddlers and their families. Together, these provisions support children’s health and development in a variety of settings.
- *Who it serves:* Children with a delay or disability. Part B serves children ages three through five, Part C serves children ages birth through three. Who it serves: All states, territories, and commonwealths are eligible to apply.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Child Care Aware® of America recommends that Congress continues to strengthen these trusted child care and early learning programs through meaningful policy change and by continuing to increase annual funding for these programs to serve more children and families. Policymakers should prioritize strategies to grow the supply of child care; support the early education workforce; keep children healthy, safe, and learning; and reduce family costs.

Learn more about current federal legislation that CCAoA is tracking: <https://www.childcareaware.org/federal-child-care-bills/>