

Early Childhood Information for Choice Neighborhoods

Home Visiting

The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV or The Federal Home Visiting Program) gives pregnant women and families, particularly those considered at-risk, necessary resources and skills to raise children who are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy and ready to learn.

The Federal Home Visiting Program improves outcomes for children and families through implementation of evidence-based voluntary home visiting programs. Research shows home visiting works, improving health and saving money for taxpayers, with tangible results like better birth outcomes, improved child health outcomes, better educational attainment for moms, improved school readiness, reduced child abuse and neglect, and more economically self-sufficient families.

Locally-administered home visiting programs match at-risk parents and their children with trained providers such as nurses, social workers, or paraprofessionals. These providers meet regularly with families through home visits, providing support and services, such as parenting and health care education, child abuse prevention, and early intervention and education services during pregnancy and throughout the child's earliest years.

<https://mchb.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/mchb/MaternalChildHealthInitiatives/HomeVisiting/MIECHVFormulaGrantProgram%28X10%29.pdf>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/172-the-zero-to-three-home-visiting-community-planning-tool>

Head Start

ACF's Head Start (with Early Head Start) is a comprehensive child development program that serves children from birth to age five, pregnant women, and their families. It is a child-focused, multi-generational program with the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families. Head Start directly serves children experiencing homelessness from birth to five years old and provides children and their families with services related to nutrition, developmental, medical and dental screenings, immunizations, mental health and social services referrals, family engagement, and in some cases transportation.

The objective of the Head Start program is to promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of low-income children through the provision of comprehensive health, educational, nutritional, social, and other services; to involve parents in their children's learning and to help parents make progress toward their educational, literacy, and employment goals. Head Start also emphasizes the significant involvement of parents in the administration of their local Head Start programs.

The Head Start and Early Head Start programs are administered by the Office of Head Start, within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Head Start and Early Head Start programs offer a variety of service models, depending on the needs of the local community. Many Head Start and Early Head Start programs are based in centers and schools. Other programs are located in child care centers and family child care homes. Some programs offer home-based

services that assigned dedicated staff who conduct weekly visits to children in their own home and work with the parent as the child's primary teacher.

Over fifty years ago Head Start began as a program for preschoolers. Today 3- and 4-year-olds make up over 80 percent of the children served by Head Start programs each year. Early Head Start was created to serve pregnant women, infants, and toddlers. Early Head Start programs are available to the family until the child turns 3 years old and is ready to transition into Head Start or another pre-K program. Just recently, many Early Head Start programs have been funded to partner directly with existing infant and toddler child care programs, resulting in higher quality services to all children enrolled in the child care program.

Head Start programs support children's growth and development in a positive learning environment through a variety of services, which include:

- **Early learning:** Children's readiness for school and beyond is fostered through individualized learning experiences. Through relationships with adults, play, and planned and spontaneous instruction, children grow in many aspects of development. Children progress in social skills and emotional well-being, along with language and literacy learning, and concept development.
- **Health:** Each child's perceptual, motor, and physical development is supported to permit them to fully explore and function in their environment. All children receive health and development screenings, nutritious meals, oral health and mental health support. Programs connect families with medical, dental, and mental health services to ensure that children are receiving the services they need.
- **Family well-being:** Parents and families are supported in achieving their own goals, such as housing stability, continued education, and financial security. Programs support and strengthen parent-child relationships and engage families around children's learning and development.

Delivered through 1,700 agencies in local communities, Head Start and Early Head Start programs provide services to over a million children every year, in every U.S. state and territory, in farmworker camps, and in over 155 tribal communities. Head Start programming is responsive to the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage of each child and family.

Head Start Program Locator: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices>

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/data/factsheets/docs/head-start-fact-sheet-fy-2015.pdf>

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/presenting>

Child Care and Development Fund (Subsidized Child Care)

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), administered by the Office of Child Care (OCC), is a multi-billion dollar Federal and State partnership that promotes family economic self-sufficiency and helps children succeed in school and life through affordable, high-quality early care and afterschool programs. Subsidized child care services are available to eligible families through certificates (vouchers), or grants and contracts with providers. CCDF provides financial assistance for child care to over 1.4 million children every month.

As a block grant, this program offers States, territories, and tribes significant flexibility in designing their CCDF policies, including the ability to define eligibility and prioritize resources. OCC encourages States to leverage this flexibility to offer access to the most vulnerable populations, including families experiencing homelessness.

On November 19, 2014, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 was signed, which authorizes the Child Care and Development Fund. The law, which Congress passed with strong bipartisan support, reauthorizes the child care program for the first time since 1996 and represents an historic re-envisioning of the CCDF program. The new law not only benefits the children receiving federal assistance through CCDF, but also improves the health and safety of millions of other children in child care each day and provides important support for working parents.

The new law includes several provisions that will make the program more family-friendly, making it easier for families (including homeless families) to keep their subsidy and their child care arrangement. These include:

- Establishing a 12-month eligibility re-determination period regardless of changes in income (as long as the family's income does not exceed 85% of the State median income) or temporary changes in participation in work, training, or education activities;
- Allowing States the option to terminate assistance prior to re-determination if a parent loses employment; however, assistance must be continued for at least 3 months to allow for job search;
- Requiring States to show that the eligibility re-determination process does not unduly disrupt employment; and
- Requiring States to now show that their sliding fee scale is not a barrier to CCDF families.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ>

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/fact-sheet-occ>

Preschool Development Grants

The Preschool Development Grant (PDG) program is a discretionary grant competition jointly administered by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health & Human Services. The PDG is designed to strengthen state and local efforts to build, develop and expand high-quality preschool programs so that more children from low- and moderate-income families enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school.

<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/preschooldevelopmentgrants/index.html>

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece/pdgprogressfinal15.pdf>

Statewide Pre-K Programs

The *2015 State of Preschool Yearbook* is the newest annual report profiling state-funded prekindergarten programs in the United States. This latest Yearbook presents data on state-funded pre-

kindergarten during the 2014-2015 school year as well as documenting more than a decade of change in state pre-K since the first Yearbook collected data on the 2001-2002 school year. The 2015 Yearbook profiles 57 state-funded pre-K programs in 42 states plus the District of Columbia and also provides narrative information on early education efforts in the 8 states and the U.S. territories that do not provide state-funded pre-K.

<http://nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbooks/the-state-of-preschool-2015>

Successful Early Learning-to-Kindergarten Transitions Webinar

Going from preschool or other early learning settings into kindergarten is a milestone event for more than 3.5 million children and their families each year. Research shows that children who are academically, socially, and emotionally prepared to enter kindergarten are more likely to do better in school and in life.

<http://relnw.educationnorthwest.org/events/effective-components-successful-early-learning-kindergarten-transitions>

The P–3 Continuum (CEELO, August 2016)

Two recent and influential policy reports are indicative of the emergent emphasis on P–3 system building: *The Research Base for a Birth to Age 8 State Policy Framework* (Alliance for Early Success, 2013) and *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation* (Institutes of Medicine [IOM] & the National Research Council [NRC], 2015). Both reports include extensive summaries of the research on child development and early learning and draw on this research to make the case for “continuity of practice and integrated service supports” across the P–3 continuum (Alliance for Early Success, 2013). *Transforming the Workforce* reviews the science of child development in detail and concludes that the “rapid and cumulative” nature of early development requires that families and service providers ensure a high degree of continuity in the care that children experience. Continuity is achieved by aligning care and learning vertically over time as children progress through home visits, infant and toddler care, preschool, and early elementary school. It is achieved horizontally as children and families experience multiple services and supports at each stage of development. Vertical alignment addresses standards, curricula, assessment, instructional strategies, environments, and transitions so that new learning experiences build on competencies developed earlier, and the dosage of high-quality experiences increases over time. Horizontal alignment requires communication and coordination across the providers serving the same children and families so that services are mutually reinforcing and, thus, more effective, again increasing the dosage of high-quality experiences (IOM & NRC, 2015).

http://ceelo.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ceelo_pdg_P3systems_AligningEarlyEducFINAL.pdf

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