



2024 STATE FACT SHEET

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING IN ALASKA

In Alaska, federal and state early learning opportunities serve more than 6,310 children and families,¹ or 11% of children ages 5 and under.²

High quality child care and early learning programs support child development and offer parents peace of mind while they work or attend school.

Unfortunately, the demand for quality care far outweighs the supply, so many families struggle to access and afford the care options they want or need. While there are several federally funded programs that provide working families with access to quality child care opportunities, limited funding leaves many eligible children unserved. The impacts of these challenges extend beyond families and carry over to the workplace. As a direct result, the national economy loses **\$122 billion annually** in the form of lost earnings, productivity, and revenue.³

Below is a list of existing child care and early learning programs which together form a mix delivery system that supports parental choice and aims to meet children's individual needs. These programs have unique eligibility requirements and service delivery models. However, at current funding levels, each only reaches a fraction of eligible families.

STATE OF CHILD CARE IN ALASKA

59,251

Children 5 & Under⁴

58%

Children 5 & Under
with All Available Parents
in the Workforce⁵

229

Licensed Child Care
Centers in 2023
(-14 compared to 2022)⁶

222

Licensed Family Child
Care Homes in 2023
(-26 compared to 2022)⁷

Coming soon

Gap in the Supply of Child
Care vs. the Potential Need⁸

\$305M

Estimated Economic Impact
of Infant-Toddler Child Care
Challenges Each Year⁹

\$11,760

Annual Price of Center-
Based Infant Care
(\$980 per month)¹⁰

\$9,624

Annual Price of Home-
Based Infant Care
(\$802 per month)¹¹

\$124,129

Median Income of
Married-Couple Family¹²

9.5%

Portion of Income Spent by
a Married-Couple Family on
Center-Based Infant Care¹³

\$43,253

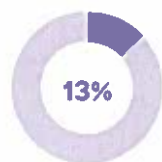
Median Income of
Single-Parent Family¹⁴

27.2%

Portion of Income Spent by
a Single-Parent Family on
Center-Based Infant Care¹⁵

CHILD CARE & DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CCDBG)

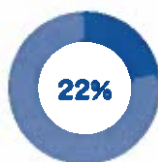
13,290 CHILDREN 5 & UNDER ELIGIBLE¹⁶
1,725 CHILDREN 5 & UNDER SERVED¹⁷



ELIGIBLE CHILDREN
5 & UNDER SERVED¹⁸

HEAD START

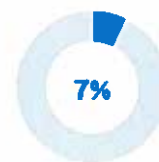
4,720 CHILDREN ELIGIBLE¹⁹
1,035 CHILDREN ENROLLED²⁰



ELIGIBLE
CHILDREN
SERVED²¹

EARLY HEAD START

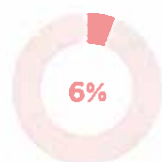
4,720 CHILDREN ELIGIBLE²²
340 CHILDREN ENROLLED²³



ELIGIBLE
CHILDREN
SERVED²⁴

STATE-FUNDED PRE-K

1,040 CHILDREN ENROLLED²⁵



3-AND 4-YEAR-
OLDS SERVED²⁶

MIGRANT AND SEASONAL HEAD START

0 CHILDREN ENROLLED²⁷

MATERNAL, INFANT, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING (MIECHV)

190 FAMILIES SERVED²⁸

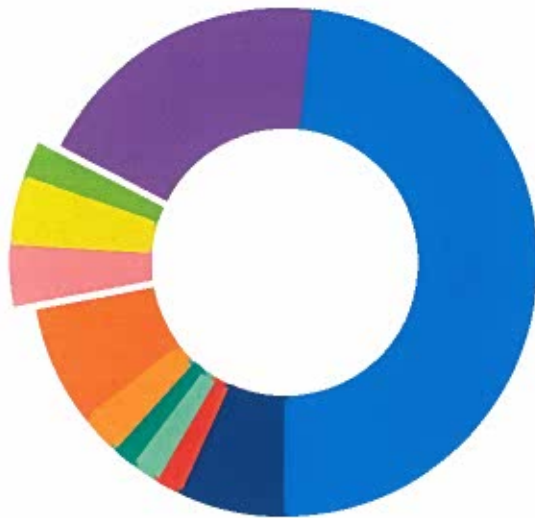
IDEA PART C

(EARLY INTERVENTION)
877 CHILDREN SERVED²⁹

IDEA PART B, SEC. 619

(PRESCHOOL SPECIAL
EDUCATION)
1,103 CHILDREN SERVED³⁰

ALASKA: FEDERAL AND STATE CHILD CARE AND EARLY LEARNING FUNDING



\$23.3M	CCDBG and Mandatory Funds ³¹
\$58.1M	Head Start and Early Head Start ³² (includes AIAN HS/EHS when applicable)
\$8M	PDG B-5 ³³
\$2M	MIECHV ³⁴
\$2.6M	IDEA Part C ³⁵
\$1.4M	IDEA Part B, Sec. 619 ³⁶
\$3.5M	TANF Early Care and Education ³⁷
\$8.9M	TANF Transferred to CCDBG ³⁸

STATE INVESTMENT

\$5M	State-Funded Pre-K ³⁹
\$5.3M	CCDBG State Match ⁴⁰
\$2.4M	PDG B-5 State Match ⁴¹

ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM QUALITY

Program quality varies substantially within and across states.

Quality child care and early learning programs rely on a strong workforce, but low pay makes it difficult to recruit and retain educators. **In Alaska, child care workers earn \$17.29 per hour (\$35,950 annually).**⁴²

Teacher-child ratios are crucial for ensuring safety, quality, and individual attention. Licensed center-based care providers participating in CCDBG are required to have the following ratios:⁴³

- **Infant** 1:5
- **Toddler** 1:6
- **Preschool** 1:10

The state's pre-K program met **2/10 of NIEER's Quality Standards Benchmarks**, which represent minimum standards to support quality preschool programs.⁴⁴

Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) is a competitive federal grant designed to improve states' early childhood systems. **Alaska's PDG B-5 plans include:**⁴⁵

- Expand linguistically and culturally equitable leadership and advocacy training opportunities for parents and families.
- Use subgrants to develop new early learning programs and expand the quality and stability of existing programs in rural and isolated areas.

CHILD AND DEPENDENT CARE TAX CREDIT (CDCTC)

The Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC) directly helps working parents offset the cost of child care.

In its current form, the credit only reaches a small percentage of families and has been swiftly outpaced by the escalating cost of child care as it lacks any adjustment for inflation.

Last permanently updated in 2001, the current credit averages \$500-\$600 a year.⁴⁶

CDCTC IN ALASKA BY TAX YEAR

2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9,860: Number of taxpayers claiming the CDCTC⁴⁷ • \$609: Average credit
2021	<p><i>The CDCTC was temporarily expanded and made refundable for one year in response to the pandemic.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10,280: Number of taxpayers claiming the CDCTC⁴⁸ (an additional 420 from 2020) • \$2,138: Average Credit (an additional \$1,529 from 2020, on average)
TODAY	<p><i>The temporary expansion expired; the CDCTC reverted back to 2001 levels.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$500-600: Average credit

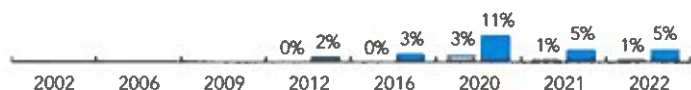
NOTE: Major provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA) expire at the end of 2025⁴⁹, giving Congress the opportunity to modernize the CDCTC and other tax provisions to better help working families offset the cost of quality child care.⁵⁰



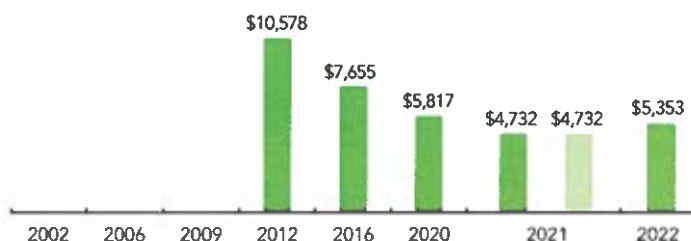
Scan or click the QR code for full references and links. For more information contact FFYF at mail@ffyf.org.

Alaska

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED
(2022 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

During the 2021-2022 school year, Alaska preschool enrolled 605 children, a decrease of 31 from the prior year. State spending totaled \$3,238,823, up \$229,181 (8%), adjusted for inflation since last year. State spending per child equaled \$5,353 in 2021-2022, up \$621 from 2020-2021, adjusted for inflation. Alaska met 2 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT'S NEW

In May 2022, the Alaska State Legislature passed the Alaska Reads Act which will provide more consistent and stable funding of early childhood programs starting on July 1, 2023. The Alaska Reads Act includes a total of \$3 million in grant money that will be available to districts to develop preschool programs or to expand and improve upon existing programs. Programs can apply for a portion of the \$3 million, to be spent over the course of three years. Districts that receive this competitive grant must work towards meeting the Alaska Early Education Program Standards, which include components that meet Head Start Standards and other high-quality federal standards. Once a district has adopted the Standards (and it is confirmed by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development), the district can claim their 4- and 5-year-old students as part of their Average Daily Membership (the state funding formula) at a rate of .5, starting the following fall.

Additionally, in December 2022, the Alaska Department of Health was awarded a federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) 3-year renewal grant for \$8 million. Funds are planned to be used to update the Statewide Early Childhood Needs Assessment and Statewide Early Childhood Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND

Since the 1980s, Alaska has supplemented federal funding for Head Start programs in an effort to enhance school readiness and professional development and expand opportunities for children and families. During the 2021-2022 program year, the state provided \$6.85 million to support Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Alaska. In 2009-2010, the state launched the Alaska Pre-Kindergarten pilot program for school districts, now known as the Alaska Pre-Elementary program.

In 2015, the state changed the way competitive grants were offered to include two types of grantees. Districts new to the program may apply for a 3-year Pre-Elementary Development Grant geared toward strategic planning to begin implementing or supporting existing Pre-Elementary goals. Previously funded grantees could apply for three-year renewal grants to support the program while the districts worked towards sustainability of the program once the state grant funding ended. Development grants were geared toward strategic planning to begin implementing or support existing Pre-Elementary goals until they could be switched to renewal grants.

Starting in the 2020-2021 school year, the department posted a request for applications for a three-year Pre-Elementary Grant. Any school district was eligible to apply for this competitive grant. Seventeen districts were awarded a Pre-Elementary Grant. The 2021-2022 school year was the second year of a three-year grant. The financial support is part of an effort to develop program quality through school readiness activities and professional improvement. The funds also offer admission to additional children and families whenever possible.

Budget reductions have continued to be a challenge, as insecure funding has affected program implementation and quality. Funding for the Alaska Pre-Elementary program goes directly to school districts. Participating programs may subcontract with public schools, Head Start programs, or private agencies.

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
41	30

RESOURCE RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
25	33

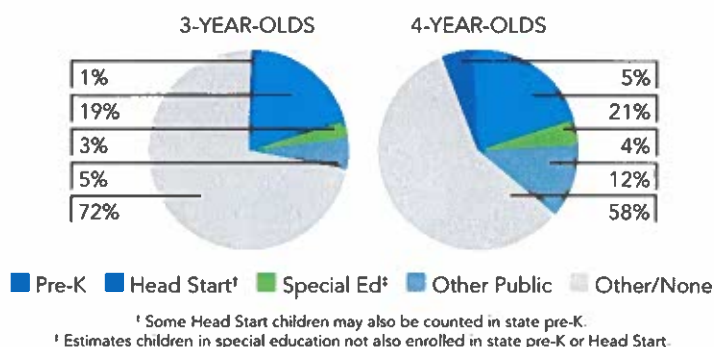
TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
2

ALASKA PRE-ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	605
School districts that offer state program	31%
Income requirement	No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation	Determined locally
Operating schedule	Determined locally
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	944
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	2,258
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	1,712

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	AK PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process	Approval process & supports	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	Alaska Teaching Certificate	Specializing in pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	HSD	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	6 credit hours/5 years (teachers only); PD plans (some teachers & assistants)	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	Determined locally	20 or lower	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	Determined locally	1:10 or better	<input type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	None	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations are required, but are determined locally	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

* Indicates that while policy meets the benchmark, it is not being implemented fully.

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$3,238,823
Local match required?	No
State Head Start spending	\$6,853,000
State spending per child enrolled	\$5,353
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$5,403

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.

† Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.

‡ K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

