

2021 Prenatal-to-3 State Policy Roadmap

Methods and Sources

Effective Strategies

EARLY HEAD START

What is Early Head Start and why is it important?

All references for this section are provided in the Notes and Sources section at the bottom of each webpage. Additionally, search the [Prenatal-to-3 Policy Clearinghouse](#) for an ongoing inventory of rigorous evidence reviews, including more information on Early Head Start.

What impact does Early Head Start have?

The following studies meet standards of strong causal evidence to demonstrate the impacts of Early Head Start for the health and wellbeing of young children and their families:

- A. Ayoub, C., Vallotton, C. D., & Mastergeorge, A. M. (2011). Developmental pathways to integrated social skills: The roles of parenting and early intervention. *Child Development*, 82(2), 583–600. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01549.x>
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- C. Chazan-Cohen, R., Ayoub, C., Pan, B. A., Roggman, L., Raikes, H., McKelvey, L., Whiteside-Mansell, L., & Hart, A. (2007). It takes time: Impacts of Early Head Start that lead to reductions in maternal depression two years later. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 28(2), 151–170. <https://doi.org/10.1002/imhj.20127>
- D. Chazan-Cohen, R., & Kisker, E. E. (2013). VI. Links between early care and education experiences birth to age 5 and prekindergarten outcomes. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 78(1), 110–129. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5834.2012.00705.x>
- E. Chazan-Cohen, R., Raikes, H. H., & Vogel, C. (2013). V. Program subgroups: Patterns of impacts for home-based, center-based, and mixed-approach programs. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 78(1), 93–109. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5834.2012.00704.x>
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- H. Jones Harden, B., Sandstrom, H., & Chazan-Cohen, R. (2012). Early Head Start and African American families: Impacts and mechanisms of child outcomes. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 27*(4), 572–581. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2012.07.006>
- I. Love, J. M., Eliason Kisker, E., Ross, C. M., Schochet, P. Z., Brooks-Gunn, J., Paulsell, D., Boller, K., Constantine, J., Vogel, C., Sidle Fuligni, A., & Brady-Smith, C. (2001). *Building their futures: How Early Head Start programs are enhancing the lives of infants and toddlers in low-income families*. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/building-their-futures-how-early-head-start-programs-are-enhancing-the-1>
- J. Love, J. M., Eliason Kisker, E., Ross, C. M., Schochet, P. Z., Brooks-Gunn, J., Paulsell, D., Boller, K., Constantine, J., Vogel, C., Sidle Fuligni, A., & Brady-Smith, C. (2002). *Making a difference in the lives of infants and toddlers and their families: The Impacts of Early Head Start*. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/impacts_vol1.pdf
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- L. McKelvey, L., Schiffman, R. F., Brophy-Herb, H. E., Bocknek, E. L., Fitzgerald, H. E., Reischl, T. M., Hawver, S., & Deluca, M. C. (2015). Examining long-term effects of an infant mental health home-based Early Head Start program on family strengths and resilience. *Infant Mental Health Journal, 36*(4), 353–365. <https://doi.org/10.1002/imhj.21518>
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- N. Raikes, H. H., Vogel, C., & Love, J. M. (2013). IV. Family subgroups and impacts at ages 2, 3, and 5: Variability by race/ethnicity and demographic risk. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 78*(1), 64–92. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5834.2012.00703.x>
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- Q. Roggman, L. A., & Cook, G. A. (2010). Attachment, aggression, and family risk in a low-income sample. *Family Science, 1*(3–4), 191–204. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19424620.2010.567829>
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- expressive language in the context of parenting stress. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 27(4), 695–707. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2011.03.001>
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- V. Yazejian, N., Bryant, D. M., Hans, S., Horm, D., Clair, L. S., File, N., & Burchinal, M. (2017). Child and parenting outcomes after 1 year of Educare. *Child Development*, 88(5), 1671–1688. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12688>
- W. Yazejian, N., Bryant, D. M., Kuhn, L. J., Burchinal, M., Horm, D., Hans, S., File, N., & Jackson, B. (2020). The Educare intervention: Outcomes at age 3. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 53, 425–440. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2020.05.008>
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- Y. Douglass, A. G., Roche, K. M., Lavin, K., Ghazarian, S. R., & Perry, D. F. (2020). Longitudinal parenting pathways linking Early Head Start and kindergarten readiness. *Early Child Development and Care*, 0(0), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2020.1725498>

How can states effectively implement Early Head Start?

In the absence of an evidence-based state policy lever to ensure eligible children have access to EHS, we present several choices that states can make to more effectively implement EHS. We identify states as leaders in the implementation of Early Head Start if they:

- Serve a high share of their state’s eligible infants and toddlers relative to others;
- Have a state-specific program that has a similar structure and performance standards as Early Head Start; and
- Provide state financial support for Early Head Start or provide a state match as an Early Head Start–Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) grantee.

To assess if a state serves a high share of eligible infants and toddlers, we calculated the percentage of income-eligible children in a state with access to EHS, using data from the 2019 Early Head Start Program

Information Reports and population-level estimates from the 2018 and 2019 American Community Survey. Additional details on the calculation of this measure can be found below (see Measure 1). States identified as serving a high share of children are those that were in roughly the top third of states on this measure and typically had a substantial number of infants and toddlers in their state who may benefit from participating in EHS.

We performed individual outreach to each state's Head Start Collaboration Office Director, or other relevant contact, regarding the state's funding of Early Head Start as of July 1, 2021, and whether or not state-specific funds are appropriated or leveraged to fund EHS programming. State's responses informed research pertaining to state-specific models similar to EHS. For state-funded and administered programs, researchers analyzed the design (e.g., center-based, home-based, or partnership programs) and performance standards (e.g., low child-to-staff ratios, evidence-based curricula, family engagement and comprehensive services) to assess if programs were similar to EHS. We were unable to confirm information with the relevant personnel in two states, Massachusetts and Mississippi. (For additional details, please see below in Measure 2.)

We also performed an electronic search using Quorum State between July 1, 2020 and August 15, 2021 to assess legislative progress pertaining to state funding of Early Head Start programs, or EHS-like models. The main search strategy used keywords for Early Head Start (Early Head Start). Research staff conducted searches, analyzed results for relevant state legislation, and summarized the progress states made towards supplementing federal EHS funding at the state level.

Sources:

State	Sources
All States	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. US Census Bureau. (2019-2020). <i>2018-2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)</i> [Data Sets]. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata.html 2. US Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Head Start. (n.d.). <i>2019 Early Head Start (EHS) Program Information Report</i>. Retrieved on August 5, 2020, from https://hses.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/pir/
Alabama	1. J. Connell, Alabama Child Care Services Division, personal communication, June 24, 2021.
Alaska	1. S. Ackerman, Alaska Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 1, 2021.
Arizona	1. L. Masseur, Arizona Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 23, 2021.
Arkansas	1. C. Musick, Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 8, 2021.
California	1. C. Maricle, Head Start California, personal communication, July 12, 2021.
Colorado	1. H. Craiglow, Colorado Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 28, 2021.
Connecticut	1. E. Trueworthy, Connecticut Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 17, 2021.
Delaware	1. D. Taylor, Delaware Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 8, 2021.
District of Columbia	1. K. Kigera, DC Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 2, 2021.

State	Sources
Florida	1. K. Cook, Florida Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 1, 2021.
Georgia	1. A. Setterlind, Georgia Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 23, 2021.
Hawaii	1. C. Jackson, Hawaii Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 8, 2021.
Idaho	1. O. Shamim, Idaho Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 17, 2021.
Illinois	1. C. Wall, Illinois Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 17, 2021.
Indiana	1. T. Carriger, Indiana Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 1, 2021.
Iowa	1. M. Garner, Iowa Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 23, 2021.
Kansas	1. E. Smith, Kansas Department for Children and Families, personal communication, June 29, 2021.
Kentucky	1. A. Flanary, Kentucky Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 17, 2021.
Louisiana	1. K. Wahid, Louisiana Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 17, 2021.
Maine	1. N. Cunningham, Maine Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 17, 2021. 2. S.P. 533, 130th Leg., Reg. Sess., (Me. 2021). 3. The Center for Law and Social Policy and ZERO TO THREE. (2012). <i>Maine: Early Head Start initiatives. [fact sheet]</i> . Retrieved on August 6, 2020, from https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publications/files/ME-EHS.pdf
Maryland	1. H. Tresa, Maryland Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 2, 2021.
Massachusetts	1. C. Nolan, Massachusetts Head Start State Collaboration Offices, Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, personal communication, June 16, 2020.
Michigan	1. C. Derby, Michigan Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 2, 2021.
Minnesota	1. J. Dickhausen, Minnesota Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 4, 2021.
Mississippi	1. National Head Start Association. (2020). <i>State investments in Head Start to support at-risk children and families [fact sheet]</i> . Retrieved on May 30, 2020, from https://www.nhsa.org/files/state_investments_in_head_start.pdf
Missouri	1. W. Wilson and S. Wright, Missouri Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 17, 2021.
Montana	1. K. Rich, Montana Early Childhood Services Bureau, personal communication, June 22, 2021.
Nebraska	1. J. Luebbers, Nebraska Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, July 12, 2021.
Nevada	1. P. Gardner, Nevada Office of Early Learning and Development, personal communication, June 17, 2021
New Hampshire	1. D. Nelson, New Hampshire Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 17, 2021.
New Jersey	1. S. Burnette, New Jersey Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 17, 2021.
New Mexico	1. O. Valenzuela-Zavala, New Mexico Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 23, 2021.

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New York	1. P. Persell, New York State Council on Children and Families, personal communication, June 17, 2021.
North Carolina	1. K. McKnight, The Hunt Institute, personal communication, June 17, 2021.
North Dakota	1. C. Kueber, North Dakota Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 28, 2021.
Ohio	1. A. Armstrong, Ohio Department of Education, personal communication, June 23, 2021.
Oklahoma	1. P. Brown, Oklahoma Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 17, 2021. 2. The Center for Law and Social Policy and ZERO TO THREE. (2012). <i>Oklahoma: Early Head Start initiatives. [fact sheet]</i> . Retrieved on August 6, 2020, from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED544227.pdf
Oregon	1. A. Bales Molnar, Oregon Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 4, 2021.
Pennsylvania	1. T. Duarte, Pennsylvania Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 17, 2021.
Rhode Island	1. C. Green, Rhode Island Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 9, 2021.
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Virginia	1. T. Jeffries, Virginia Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 10, 2021.
Washington	1. C. Garland, Washington Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 25, 2021. 2. S.B. 5237, 67th Leg., Reg. Sess., (Wash. 2021).
West Virginia	1. B. Doss, WV Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 17, 2021.
Wisconsin	1. J. Clemens, Wisconsin Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 7, 2021.
Wyoming	1. H. Wagner, Wyoming Head Start, personal communication, June 1, 2021.

How does Early Head Start vary across states?

Data were collected for 2 different measures to assess how states vary in their implementation of Early Head Start. The datasets, calculations, and sources referenced for each state are listed below.

Measure 1: Estimated percentage of income-eligible children under age 3 with access to Early Head Start

Definition:

The estimated percentage of income-eligible children (those in families whose poverty status was less than 100% of the federal poverty level) under age 3 with access to Early Head Start (as measured through the total number of funded EHS slots).

Notes:

1. **Numerator:** The total number of EHS slots (regardless of funding source) available in all EHS programs (traditional EHS, American Indian, Alaska Native (AIAN) and migrant EHS) as provided in state-level 2019 Program Information Reports (PIRs).
2. **Denominator:** The number of children under the age of 3 whose family poverty value was below 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL) based on population level estimates from the 2018 and 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) Public-Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).
3. The percentage reported represents the percent of income-eligible children under age 3 with access to Early Head Start but does not account for other eligibility factors.
4. Sample size estimates were calculated in Stata 17 using person-level weights. Given the age and income limits imposed on the sample (children under age 3 living in families below 100% of the FPL) and the estimates by state, two years of ACS data were combined to improve data quality and accuracy and all weights were appropriately adjusted to account for the two combined years of data.
5. Children living in group quarters or whose family poverty status was not available (e.g., foster children or children who were unrelated to the head of household) were excluded from the calculation.
6. The US Census calculation of poverty is based on the total income of all individuals aged 15 or older who are related to the head of household through marriage, birth or adoption. Income from cohabiting partners who are not married and unrelated children (including foster children) are not included in the calculation of family income. This family income is compared to federal poverty thresholds based on related family size and composition (*povpip*).¹

Sources:

1. US Census Bureau. (2019-2020). *2018-2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)* [Data Sets]. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata.html>
2. US Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Head Start. (n.d.). *2019 Early Head Start (EHS) Program Information Report*. Retrieved on August 5, 2020, from <https://hses.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/pir/>

¹ US Census Bureau (n.d.). *How the Census Bureau measures poverty*. As of August 27, 2019. Retrieved on April 28, 2020 from <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>

Measure 2: State support for Early Head Start

Definition:

States can provide support for Early Head Start in any of the following three ways: (1) supplement federal funding for EHS programs as of July 1, 2021, (2) act as an EHS-Child Care Partnership grantee and contribute state matching funds, and/or (3) have a state-specific program with a similar structure and quality standards as EHS.

Notes:

Researchers were unable to successfully receive verification from two states to confirm their state funding for EHS programs and status as an EHS-CCP grantee in 2021. These two states were Massachusetts and Mississippi, and researchers used prior data sources and personal communication to inform the assumptions for their status on these indicators in 2021.

Sources:

State	Sources
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Alaska	1. S. Ackerman, Alaska Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 1, 2021.
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