

2023 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:

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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>
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- F. Green, B. L., Ayoub, C., Bartlett, J. D., Von Ende, A., Furrer, C., Chazan-Cohen, R., Vallotton, C., & Klevens, J. (2014). The effect of Early Head Start on child welfare system involvement: A first look at longitudinal child maltreatment outcomes. *Children and Youth Services Review, 42*, 127–135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2014.03.044>
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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>
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- K. 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. (2004). *The role of Early Head Start programs in addressing the child care needs of low-income families with infants and toddlers: Influences on child care use and quality*. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/the-role-of-early-head-start-programs-in-addressing-the-child-care-needs-of>
- 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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- P. Roggman, L. A., Boyce, L. K., & Cook, G. A. (2009). Keeping kids on track: Impacts of a parenting-focused Early Head Start program on attachment security and cognitive development. *Part of Special Issue: Early Head Start: New Looks at Program Impacts*, 20(6), 920–941. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409280903118416>
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- R. Vallotton, C. D., Harewood, T., Ayoub, C. A., Pan, B., Mastergeorge, A. M., & Brophy-Herb, H. (2012). Buffering boys and boosting girls: The protective and promotive effects of Early Head Start for children’s 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>
- S. Vogel, C., Brooks-Gunn, J., Martin, A., & Klute, M. M. (2013). III. Impacts of Early Head Start participation on child and parent outcomes at ages 2, 3, and 5. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 78(1), 36–63. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5834.2012.00702.x>

- T. Vogel, C. A., Xue, Y., Moiduddin, E. M., & Lepidus Carlson, B. (2010). *Early Head Start children in grade 5: Long-term follow-up of the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project Study sample* (OPRE 2011-8; p. 193). Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation, Administration for Children & Families, US Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/early-head-start-children-in-grade-5-long-term-followup-of-the-early-head>
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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>
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- BB. Brophy-Herb, H. E., Choi, H. H., Senehi, N., Martoccio, T. L., Bocknek, E. L., Babinski, M., Krafchak, S., Accorsi, C., Azmoudeh, R., & Schiffman, R. (2022). Stress mothers receiving infant mental health-based Early Head Start increase in mind-mindedness. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*, 897881. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.897881/full>

What are the key policy levers to support Early Head Start?

In the absence of an evidence-based state policy lever to ensure eligible children have access to EHS, we identified one key policy lever to more effectively implement EHS:

- State support for EHS programs through direct funding to programs, becoming an EHS-CCP grantee, and/or creating a state-specific program similar to 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 September 1, 2023, and whether 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 four states, Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, and West Virginia (for additional details, please see below in Measure 2). The datasets, calculations, and sources referenced for each state are listed below.

To assess state progress to more effectively implement Early Head Start, we also performed an electronic search using Quorum State between September 1, 2022 and September 15, 2023 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.

How does access to Early Head Start vary across states?

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 2021 funded enrollment data from the Office of Head Start and population-level estimates from the 2019-2021 American Community Survey. Additional details on the calculation of this measure can be found below (see Measure 1). States identified as serving a share of children slightly above or below from the median are those that were roughly one percentage point away from the national median of 10.2%. States with the highest and lowest share of eligible children served through EHS were also identified.

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 at or below 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 Head Start Notice of Award data
2. **Denominator:** The number of children under the age of 3 whose family poverty value was at or below 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL) based on population level estimates from the 2019-2021 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. The data for the numerator (the number of funded EHS slots for children under age 3) came from the Notice of Grant Award data. Previously, we used the number of funded EHS slots that came from the self-reported Program Information Reports (PIRs) populated by grant recipients. Beginning in 2023, we switched to the

Notice of Grant Award data upon guidance from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF)¹ and the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)² that the Notice of Grand Award data is a more authoritative source for funded enrollment than the PIRs.

5. 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.
6. The Census Bureau warned of quality issues with the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) data due to the pandemic's impact on data collection. To ensure as up-to-date data as possible, we pooled a state's 2021 ACS data with either their 2019 ACS or 2020 ACS data, depending on which data year better represented the "true" trend in poverty from 2019 to 2020 as captured by the official Census Bureau poverty estimates using the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC) data. We compared the published 2019³ and 2020⁴ ACS tables of the poverty rate for the under age 18 population to the published 2019⁵ and 2020⁶ CPS ASEC tables of the same measure. If the ACS data showed that the poverty rate moved in the same direction as the CPS ASEC data from 2019 to 2020, we assigned the 2020 ACS data to that state because the ACS trend in poverty rate matched the trend in CPS ASEC poverty rate. If the ACS poverty rate for the state decreased from 2019 to 2020 and the CPS ASEC data showed that it increased, we assigned the 2019 ACS data to the state because the 2019 ACS poverty rate is closer to the "true" 2020 CPS ASEC poverty rate. If the ACS poverty rate for the state increased from 2019 to 2020 and the CPS data showed that it decreased, we assigned the 2019 ACS data to the state because the 2019 ACS poverty rate is close to the "true" 2020 CPS ASEC poverty rate. We assigned the 2019 ACS data to 30 states and the 2020 ACS data to 21 states.
 - a. Estimates are impacted by both the numerator and denominator. For example, a state's value of the percent of children with access to Early Head Start could decrease both because of decreases to the numerator (fewer funded EHS slots) or increases to the denominator (more children in poverty). Annual estimates should be compared conservatively, because two factors drive changes in the overall estimate of the percent of children without access to Early Head Start.
7. 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.
8. 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

¹ J. Escobar, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Children & Families, personal communication, September 14, 2023.

² A. Krauss, NIEER, personal communication, August 4, 2023.

³ U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). *Table S1701: POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS* [data table]. Retrieved on December 7, 2022, from <https://data.census.gov/table?q=Income+and+Poverty&tid=ACSST1Y2019.S1701>.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). *Table ID: XK201701: POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY AGE* [data table]. Retrieved on December 7, 2022, from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data/experimental-data/1-year.html>.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *POV46: Poverty Status by State: 2019* [data table]. Retrieved on December 7, 2022, from <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/tables/archive/decommissioned-after-2020/pov-46/2019/>.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *POV46: Poverty Status by State: 2020* [data table]. Retrieved on December 7, 2022, from <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/tables/archive/decommissioned-after-2020/pov-46/2020/>.

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*).⁷

Sources:

1. US Census Bureau. (2020-2022). *2019-2021 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.). *2021 Early Head Start (EHS) Funding and Enrollment Data* [Data Sets]. Retrieved on September 14, 2023, [through](#) personal correspondence with the Administration for Children and Families

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) provide funding directly to local EHS programs, (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:

1. Provide funding directly to local EHS programs is current as of September 1, 2023.
2. Researchers were unable to successfully receive verification from four states to confirm their state funding for EHS programs and status as an EHS-CCP grantee in 2023. These four states were Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, and West Virginia. Researchers used prior data sources and personal communication to inform the assumptions for their status on these indicators in 2023.

Sources:

State	Sources
Alabama	T. Calloway, Alabama Head Start Association, personal communication, September 2, 2022.
Alaska	L. Shoop, Alaska Department of Education and Early Development, personal communication, June 27, 2023. Alliance for Early Success. (2023). <i>Alaska early childhood policy landscape</i> . Retrieved on August 20, 2023, from https://earlysuccess.org/alaska
Arizona	B. Colvin, Arizona Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 27, 2023.
Arkansas	C. Musick, Arkansas ARVAC Head Start, personal communication, June 28, 2023.
California	L. Barnes, California Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 21, 2023.
Colorado	H. Craiglow, Colorado Department of Early Childhood, Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 28, 2023.

⁷ 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>

Connecticut	K. Pascale, Connecticut Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 28, 2023. H.B. 6941, 2023 Leg., Reg. Sess. (Conn., 2023).
Delaware	J. Fisher-Klein, Office of Early Learning, Delaware Department of Education, personal communication, July 25, 2023.
District of Columbia	K. Kigera, Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Division of Early Learning, personal communication, July 3, 2023. Office of the State Superintendent of Education. (July, 2023). <i>FY 2024 approved budget for the District of Columbia government</i> . Retrieved on August 20, 2023, from https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/gd_osse_tables_2024j.pdf
Florida	W. Minick, Florida Head Start Association, personal communication, June 29, 2023.
Georgia	A. Setterlind, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 22, 2023.
Hawaii	C. Jackson, Hawaii Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 5, 2023.
Idaho	B. Foxcroft, Idaho Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 5, 2023.
Illinois	W. Williams, Illinois Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 16, 2023. Alliance for Early Success. (2023). <i>Illinois early childhood policy landscape</i> . Retrieved on August 20, 2023, from https://earllysuccess.org/illinois
Indiana	T. Carriger, Indiana Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 5, 2023.
Iowa	M. Garner, Iowa Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 6, 2023.
Kansas	K. Kennedy, Kansas Department for Children and Families, personal communication, June 20, 2023.
Kentucky	L. Baker, Kentucky Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, September 7, 2022
Louisiana	K. Wahid, Louisiana Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, August 31, 2022.
Maine	S. McCoy, Maine Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 22, 2023. H.P. 257, 131 st Leg., First Spec. Sess. (Me. 2023). L.D. 258, 131 st Leg., First Spec. Sess. (Me. 2023).
Maryland	V. Jones, Maryland State Department of Education, personal communication, July 3, 2023. H.B. 200, 2023 Leg., Reg. Sess. (Md. 2023).
Massachusetts	J. Cohen, Massachusetts Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 6, 2023. Executive Office for Administration and Finance. (2023, August 9). <i>Department of Early Education and Care budget summary</i> . Retrieved on August 20, 2023, from https://budget.digital.mass.gov/summary/fy24/enacted/education/early-education-and-care/

Michigan	C. Derby, Michigan Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 13, 2023.
Minnesota	J. Dickhausen, Minnesota Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 6, 2023. H.F. 2292, 93 rd Leg., Reg. Sess. (Minn. 2023).
Mississippi	N. Norphlet-Thompson, Mississippi Head Start Association, personal communication, June 29, 2023.
Missouri	L. Kavanaugh, Missouri Office of Childhood, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, personal communication, June 8, 2023. H.B. 2, 102 nd Leg., Reg. Sess. (Mo. 2023).
Montana	K. Rich, Montana Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 9, 2023.
Nebraska	S. Knust, Nebraska Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 6, 2023.
Nevada	P. Gardner, Nevada Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 13, 2023.
New Hampshire	D. Nelson, New Hampshire Child Development and Head Start Collaboration, personal communication, June 6, 2023.
New Jersey	B. Eggenburg, New Jersey Head Start Association, personal communication, June 25, 2023.
New Mexico	S. Runck, New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department, personal communication, July 17, 2023.
New York	P. Persell, New York Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 6, 2023.
North Carolina	M. Jones, North Carolina Office of Early Learning, personal communication, June 12, 2023.
North Dakota	C. Kueber, North Dakota Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 9, 2023.
Ohio	A. Armstrong, Ohio Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 14, 2023.
Oklahoma	P. Brown, Oklahoma Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 12, 2023.
Oregon	R. Elliott, Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care, personal communication, June 29, 2023.
Pennsylvania	K. McFalls, Pennsylvania Head Start Association, personal communication, June 15, 2023.
Rhode Island	C. Green, Rhode Island Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 21, 2023. S. 463, 2023 Leg., Reg. Sess., (R.I. 2023). Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. (2023, July). <i>Legislative wrap-up</i> . Retrieved on August 20, 2023, from https://www.rikidscount.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Legislative/6815%20LegiWrap23_v3.pdf?ver=2023-07-27-115519-943
South Carolina	M. Diggs, South Carolina Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 27, 2023.
South Dakota	J. Berscheid, South Dakota Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 15, 2023.

Tennessee	H. Murphy, Tennessee Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 14, 2023.
Texas	A. Giles, Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 9, 2023.
Utah	A. Snow, Utah Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 29, 2023.
Vermont	R. Kelly, Vermont Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 15, 2023.
Virginia	T. Jeffries, Virginia Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 27, 2023.
Washington	C. Garland, Washington Head Start Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 16, 2023.
West Virginia	B. Doss, West Virginia Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, August 26, 2022.
Wisconsin	J. Clemens, Wisconsin Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 12, 2023. S.B. 70, 2023-2024 Leg., Reg. Sess. (Wis. 2023).
Wyoming	H. Wagner, Wyoming Head Start State Collaboration Office, personal communication, June 15, 2023.