

Prenatal-to-3 State Policy Roadmap 2026

EARLY HEAD START

What progress have states made in the last year in Early Head Start?

State	State Context and Policy Progress
Alabama	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Alabama is one of five state-level Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grantees. As a grantee, the state dedicates matching funds and the program is administered by the Alabama Department of Human Resources in collaboration with the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 7.8% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Alabama have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.
Alaska	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Alaska legislators appropriated \$13 million for Fiscal Year 2027 to support Head Start and EHS programs, maintaining the prior year's funding level. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 20.2% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Alaska have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is above the national median of 12.4%.
Arizona	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No Although Arizona does not provide state funding for EHS programs or models, the state allocates federal Preschool Development Grant funds to support high-quality early learning programming in high-need communities for infants and toddlers. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 9.1% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Arizona have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.
Arkansas	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Arkansas has a state-specific program known as the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Program that serves children from birth to age 5 through home- and center-based care, as well as home visiting. ABC has similar requirements to the Head Start Program Performance Standards and is funded, in part, through state general revenue funds. For Fiscal Year 2027, the legislature appropriated \$114 million to support the ABC program, maintaining the prior year's funding level. Additionally, Arkansas is one of five state-level Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grantees. As a grantee, the state dedicates matching funds and the program is administered by the Office of Early Childhood within the Arkansas Department of Education. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 15% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Arkansas have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is above the national median of 12.4%. In addition to the number of children with access to EHS, the state served 23,059 children up to age 5 in 2024 through the ABC Program.

California	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes California is one of five state-level Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grantees. As a grantee, the state dedicates matching funds and the program is administered by the California Department of Education. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 14% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in California have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is above the national median of 12.4%.
Colorado	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 10.7% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Colorado have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.
Connecticut	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Connecticut legislators appropriated \$5.8 million for Fiscal Year 2027 from the state general fund for Head Start and EHS services, maintaining the prior year's funding level. Although Connecticut is not a state level Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) grantee, the state appropriated \$1.5 million for FY2027 to support local EHS-CCP grant recipients, the same amount appropriated in FY2026. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 14.8% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Connecticut have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is above the national median of 12.4%.
Delaware	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Delaware is one of five state-level Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grantees. As a grantee, the state dedicates matching funds and the program is administered by the Delaware Department of Education. Additionally, Delaware has a state-specific program known as the State Funded Early Care and Education Program that serves children from birth to age 5 through home- and center-based care. In prior years, the program only served children ages 3 to 5. The program follows the Head Start Program Performance Standards and is funded through state general revenue funds. For Fiscal Year 2027, the legislature appropriated \$15.8 million from the general fund to support the State Funded Early Care and Education Program, maintaining the prior year's funding level. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 9% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Delaware have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is below the national median of 12.4% and does not include the number of children served through the State Funded Early Care and Education Program.

District of Columbia	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes The District of Columbia appropriated \$1.7 million for Fiscal Year 2026 for EHS, a decrease of \$600,000 from the prior year's funding level. Additionally, the District of Columbia is one of five state-level Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grantees and appropriated, on top of EHS funding, \$2.2 million for the EHS-CCP for FY2026, a decrease of \$400,000 from the prior year's funding level. The partnership is administered by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education. Funding amounts for FY2027 are not yet available. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 40.9% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in the District of Columbia have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is the highest in the country at approximately three times the national median of 12.4%.
Florida	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 9.2% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Florida have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.
Georgia	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 6.7% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Georgia have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%, placing Georgia among the bottom five states for access.
Hawaii	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 16.3% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Hawaii have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is above the national median of 12.4%.
Idaho	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 8.3% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Idaho have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.
Illinois	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Illinois has a state-specific program known as the Illinois Prevention Initiative that serves children from birth to age 3 through grants for home- and center-based services, as well as home visiting. The program has similar requirements to the Head Start Program Performance Standards and is funded with state general revenue funds through a set-aside of the Early Childhood Block Grant. For Fiscal Year 2027, the state maintained the prior year's funding level for the Early Childhood Block Grant. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 20.6% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Illinois have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is above the national median of 12.4%. In addition to the number of children with access to EHS, the state served 16,669 children age 3 and under in 2025 through the Prevention Initiative.

Indiana	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 5.6% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Indiana have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%, placing Indiana among the bottom five states for access.
Iowa	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Iowa legislators appropriated \$575,500 for Fiscal Year 2027 for the implementation and expansion of EHS pilot projects, maintaining the prior year's funding level. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 13.2% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Iowa have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is slightly above the national median of 12.4%.
Kansas	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 12.8% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Kansas have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is slightly above the national median of 12.4%.
Kentucky	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 8.9% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Kentucky have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.
Louisiana	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 8.5% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Louisiana have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.
Maine	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Maine legislators appropriated \$4.8 million for Fiscal Year 2027 from the state general fund, as well as \$1.4 million from the Fund for a Healthy Maine, to support Head Start and EHS programs. These allocations maintain the prior year's funding level. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 14.8% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Maine have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is above the national median of 12.4%.
Maryland	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Maryland legislators appropriated \$3 million for Fiscal Year 2027 from the state general fund for Head Start and EHS programs, maintaining the prior year's funding level. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 8% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Maryland have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.

Massachusetts	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Massachusetts legislators appropriated \$20 million for Fiscal Year 2027 from the state general fund for Head Start and EHS programs, maintaining the prior year's funding level. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 9.3% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Massachusetts have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is below the national median of 12.4%.
Michigan	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 12.3% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Michigan have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is just below the national median of 12.4%.
Minnesota	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Minnesota legislators appropriated \$34.4 million for Fiscal Year 2027 from the state general fund for Head Start and EHS programs, maintaining the prior year's funding level. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 12.4% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Minnesota have access to EHS through local grantees, which is equal to the national median.
Mississippi	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 15.9% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Mississippi have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is above the national median of 12.4%.
Missouri	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Missouri legislators appropriated nearly \$6 million for Fiscal Year 2026 from the state general fund for EHS programs, maintaining the prior year's funding level. Funding amounts for FY2027 are not yet available. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 14.4% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Missouri have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is above the national median of 12.4%.
Montana	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 28.4% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Montana have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is more than double the national median of 12.4%, placing Montana among the top five states for access.

Nebraska	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Nebraska has a state-specific program known as the Sixpence Early Learning Fund that serves parents and children from the prenatal period to age 3 through grants for home-based services, center-based services, and school-child care partnerships. The program has similar requirements as the Head Start Program Performance Standards and is funded through an endowment managed by a public-private partnership. For Fiscal Year 2027, the state appropriated \$7.5 million for the program, maintaining the prior year's public funding level. Additionally, the state expanded the allowable withdrawal from the public-private cash fund by \$2 million starting in FY2026. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 22.2% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Nebraska have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is almost double the national median of 12.4%, placing Nebraska among the top five states for access. In addition to the number of children with access to EHS, the Sixpence Early Learning Fund served 1,230 children and 99 expectant parents in 2024-2025.
Nevada	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 4.1% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Nevada have access to EHS through local grantees. Nevada serves the fewest number of eligible children, at less than a third of the national median of 12.4%.
New Hampshire	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 12.6% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in New Hampshire have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is slightly above the national median of 12.4%.
New Jersey	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 11.2% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in New Jersey have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.
New Mexico	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 13.8% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in New Mexico have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is above the national median of 12.4%.
New York	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 12.5% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in New York have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is slightly above the national median of 12.4%.
North Carolina	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 7.3% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in North Carolina have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.

North Dakota	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 18.2% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in North Dakota have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is above the national median of 12.4%.
Ohio	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 9.2% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Ohio have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.
Oklahoma	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Oklahoma has a state-specific program known as the Oklahoma Early Childhood Program (OECF) that serves children from birth through age 3. The program follows select Head Start Program Performance Standards and provides services through child care centers, school districts, tribal and community agencies, local Head Start and EHS programs, and home visiting. OECF provides the fiscal structure to combine state and private funds to increase access to early learning programming. For Fiscal Year 2027, the state appropriated \$15 million for OECF, an increase of \$1 million from the prior year's funding level. In addition to OECF, the state appropriated \$2.2 million for Fiscal Year 2026 for Head Start and EHS programs, an increase of over \$195,000 from the prior year's funding level. Funding amounts for FY2027 are not yet available. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 12.4% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Oklahoma have access to EHS through local grantees, which is equal to the national median. In addition to the number of children with access to EHS, the state served 3,666 children during the 2023-2024 program year through OECF.
Oregon	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Oregon has a state-specific program known as the Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten (OPK) program that serves parents and children from the prenatal period to age 5. The program follows the Head Start Program Performance Standards and includes all models of EHS (i.e., center-based, home-based, locally designed options, and family child care partnerships). For program year 2026, Oregon allocated \$51.4 million for both the OPK program and EHS. Funding amounts for FY2027 are not yet available. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 12.6% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Oregon have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is slightly above the national median of 12.4% and does not include the number of children served through the Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten program. Annually, Head Start, EHS, and the Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten program serves an estimate of 14,581 children.
Pennsylvania	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 9.4% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Pennsylvania have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.

Rhode Island	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Rhode Island appropriated \$3 million for Fiscal Year 2026 from federal funds for Head Start and EHS programs, maintaining the prior year's funding level. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 11.5% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Rhode Island have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is just below the national median of 12.4%.
South Carolina	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 8.4% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in South Carolina have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.
South Dakota	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 21.3% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in South Dakota have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is above the national median of 12.4%, placing South Dakota among the top five states for access.
Tennessee	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 5.7% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Tennessee have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is less than half of the national median of 12.4%, placing Tennessee among the bottom five states for access.
Texas	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 6.6% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Texas have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%, placing Texas among the bottom five states for access.
Utah	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 10.2% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Utah have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.
Vermont	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 28.8% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Vermont have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is more than double the national median of 12.4%, placing Vermont among the top five states for access.

Virginia	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update In the last year, legislators enacted H.B. 211, which declares a state goal to maximize the availability of evidence-based Head Start and EHS programs for eligible families. The bill requires the development of a report by December 2026, including a summary of the current state of these programs, parent demand, enrollment, barriers to maximization of funding, and fiscal sustainability. According to data from 2024, approximately 8.7% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Virginia have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.
Washington	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No Washington had a state-specific program known as the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) that served children from birth to age 3 in 10 centers across the state. Although the program remains in statute, it stopped serving children in 2025 due to lack of state funds. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 13.3% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Washington have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is slightly above the national median of 12.4%.
West Virginia	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 9.5% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in West Virginia have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure falls below the national median of 12.4%.
Wisconsin	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? Yes Wisconsin appropriated \$6.3 million for Fiscal Year 2027 from the state general fund for Head Start and EHS programs to support expanded enrollment and quality improvement efforts, maintaining the prior year's funding level. State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 12.4% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Wisconsin have access to EHS through local grantees, which is equal to the national median.
Wyoming	Does the state provide funding for Early Head Start (EHS) programs or models? No State Context and Policy Update According to data from 2024, approximately 16.9% of income-eligible infants and toddlers in Wyoming have access to EHS through local grantees. This figure is above the national median of 12.4%.

Find additional information on the [methods and sources](#) used throughout the Roadmap and for each state.