

In California, federal and state early learning opportunities serve more than 464,577 children and families,¹ or 17% 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 CALIFORNIA
2,716,856

 Children 5 & Under⁴
62%

 Children 5 & Under with All Available Parents in the Workforce⁵
Data not available

 Licensed Child Care Centers in 2023⁶
Data not available

 Licensed Family Child Care Homes in 2023⁷
40%

 Gap in the Supply of Child Care vs. the Potential Need⁸
\$17B

 Estimated Economic Impact of Infant-Toddler Child Care Challenges Each Year⁹
\$19,547

 Annual Price of Center-Based Infant Care (\$1,629 per month)¹⁰
\$16,432

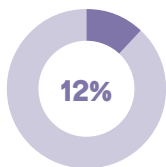
 Annual Price of Home-Based Infant Care (\$1,369 per month)¹¹
\$130,474

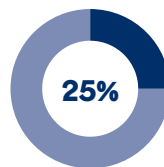
 Median Income of Married-Couple Family¹²
15.0%

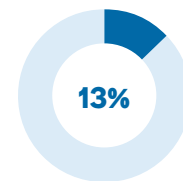
 Portion of Income Spent by a Married-Couple Family on Center-Based Infant Care¹³
\$41,887

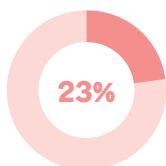
 Median Income of Single-Parent Family¹⁴
46.7%

 Portion of Income Spent by a Single-Parent Family on Center-Based Infant Care¹⁵
CHILD CARE & DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CCDBG)

 639,963 CHILDREN 5 & UNDER ELIGIBLE¹⁶
75,950 CHILDREN 5 & UNDER SERVED¹⁷

 12% ELIGIBLE CHILDREN 5 & UNDER SERVED¹⁸
HEAD START

 208,475 CHILDREN ELIGIBLE¹⁹
51,350 CHILDREN ENROLLED²⁰

 25% ELIGIBLE CHILDREN SERVED²¹
EARLY HEAD START

 208,475 CHILDREN ELIGIBLE²²
27,327 CHILDREN ENROLLED²³

 13% ELIGIBLE CHILDREN SERVED²⁴
STATE-FUNDED PRE-K

 204,733 CHILDREN ENROLLED²⁵

 23% 3-AND 4-YEAR-OLDS SERVED²⁶
MIGRANT AND SEASONAL HEAD START

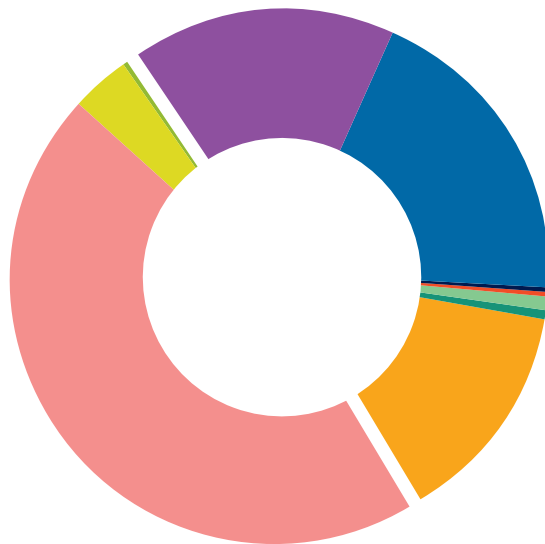
 5,892 CHILDREN ENROLLED²⁷
MATERNAL, INFANT, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING (MIECHV)

 2,470 FAMILIES SERVED²⁸
IDEA PART C

 (EARLY INTERVENTION)
55,730 CHILDREN SERVED²⁹
IDEA PART B, SEC. 619

 (PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION)
47,017 CHILDREN SERVED³⁰

CALIFORNIA: FEDERAL AND STATE CHILD CARE AND EARLY LEARNING FUNDING



- \$1.15B** CCDBG and Mandatory Funds³¹
- \$1.36B** Head Start and Early Head Start³² (includes AIAN HS/EHS when applicable)
- \$4M** PDG B-5³³
- \$26.7M** MIECHV³⁴
- \$58.8M** IDEA Part C³⁵
- \$42.2M** IDEA Part B, Sec. 619³⁶
- \$961.2M** TANF Early Care and Education³⁷
- \$0** TANF Transferred to CCDBG³⁸

STATE INVESTMENT

- \$3.2B** State-Funded Pre-K³⁹
- \$247.9M** CCDBG State Match⁴⁰
- \$1.2M** PDG B-5 State Match⁴¹

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 California, child care workers earn \$17.92 per hour (\$37,270 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 1:4**
- **Toddler 1:6**
- **Preschool 1:12**

The state's pre-K program met **4.4/10 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. **California's PDG B-5 accomplishments include:**⁴⁵

- Developed the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care: Making California for All Kids, a roadmap that was created with extensive input from stakeholders across the state.
- Expanded equitable access to quality higher education opportunities for early childhood educators with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

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 CALIFORNIA BY TAX YEAR

| | |
|--------------|---|
| 2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 530,170: Number of taxpayers claiming the CDCTC⁴⁷ • \$575: 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"> • 594,680: Number of taxpayers claiming the CDCTC⁴⁸ (an additional 64,510 from 2020) • \$2,105: Average Credit (an additional \$1,530 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



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