

Understanding the Early Childhood Landscape of Services and Supports for Young Children Experiencing Homelessness

Know the early care and education infrastructure in your community and access the highest quality services for young children experiencing homelessness.

The early childhood field encompasses a wide variety of service types and settings, as well as funding streams and regulatory systems. For those in the field, it can seem like a maze, or even a heavy fog. Local resources are often blurred because communities tend to rename programs at the local level¹ and may even create their own policies and procedures regarding eligibility and enrollment.² Fortunately, with a few key questions and sources of information, one can map out the local early childhood landscape. Knowing how the system is structured will help to identify programs and services by the components they represent, and may help in advocating for access, prioritized enrollment, and service expansion, especially where originating legislation and regulations include mandates for children experiencing homelessness, or allow for flexibility in local implementation.

The **Early Care and Education Infrastructure in My Community** grid provides a list of the key programs supported by public funds and legislation and provides space to record what the program is called locally with the name and contact information for accessing the program and services. The **Early Education and Care Resource List** provides an annotated list of these same programs and a link to the programs' websites with state contacts who can help identify and access local programs. Most of the programs listed are major federal funding streams supporting state and local early childhood service systems, providing critical guidance for system design and often driving how programs and services are integrated and aligned to better support families. Any of those state contacts listed will be able to provide assistance in better understanding the early childhood landscape in local communities.

Special thanks to Grace Whitney, Connecticut's Director of the Head Start State Collaboration Office, for creating these tools. For more information on early childhood homelessness please see <http://naehcy.org/educational-resources/early-childhood> or contact Barbara Duffield, NAEHCY's Director of Policy and Programs, at bduffield@naehcy.org

¹ For example, IDEA Part C services may be called "Birth to Three" in one state, and provide services via contract through local non-profits, whereas in another state, IDEA Part C services are called "Early Intervention" and may be offered through state agencies. One state may call State Pre-k programs "Smart Start," but another state calls their preschool program "School Readiness."

² States may choose to limit their IDEA Part C services only to children with evidence of severe disability or to open services to provide preventive interventions. States can choose to implement a variety of evidence-based home visiting models under the MIECHV grant programs with models varying as to their appropriateness for serving more at-risk families. States can choose to prioritize child care vouchers under CCDF for vulnerable families and those with very low incomes, or to open enrollment up to families with incomes up to 85% of the state's median income which for some states is many times the federal poverty rate.

Early Care and Education Infrastructure in My Community

Program	What is this program called in my community?	Contact Name, Address, Email, Phone	Notes:
Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)			
Subsidized Child Care (Grants & Contracts)			
Child Care Subsidies (Vouchers)			
Head Start/Early Head Start			
State Pre-K			
Federal PDG Pre-K			
IDEA Part B/619 – Preschool Special Education			
IDEA Part C – Infant/Toddler Early Intervention			
MIECHV Home Visiting Programs			
Local/Regional Early Childhood Council			
State Advisory Council for Early Care and Education			
State MIECHV Home Visiting Advisory Council/			
McKinney-Vento Liaison			
Coordinated Access Network (Housing Case Management)			
My Key Early Childhood Go-To Resource:			

Early Education and Care Resource List

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Subsidized Child Care Providers and Child Care Subsidies

Through the states, the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) supports a range of child care services. Publicly *subsidized child care* centers and family child care homes receive grants or contracts to provide early education and child care, often on a sliding fee scale, for infants, toddlers, preschoolers. Additionally, *child care subsidies* are vouchers for child care that parents can use with the provider of their choice, including public and private child care centers, family child care homes, and relatives or friends. Following federal rules, eligibility criteria are determined by individual states and there may be a waiting list for subsidized child care slots and child care vouchers. States supplement federal funds with state funds and TANF.

CCDF Grantee State and Territory Contacts | Office of Child Care | Administration for Children and Families
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/ccdf-grantee-state-and-territory-contacts>

Early Head Start and Head Start

Federally funded comprehensive child development program for pregnant women, infants and toddlers and their families (Early Head Start) and preschoolers (Head Start) that provides early learning experiences, usually in a center-based setting, along with health and family support services. Some, but not all, Head Start programs include full-day early care and education. Federal rules require that at least 90% of children served have family income at or below the federal poverty line and that at least 10% of children have an identified disability. States may supplemental federal funds with state funds to reach additional low-income families.

Head Start Locator <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices>
State Collaboration Offices <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/states/collaboration/map/index.html>

Child Care Resource and Referral

Carve out of federal child care block grants (CCDF) to states to provide for the coordination of early care and education resources, to link families with early care and education in their communities, to help build the supply of resources in communities, and to improve the overall quality of care. CCR&Rs help to connect child care and education resources, document various needs and help to build early care and education systems in states and communities. They may be statewide or more regionally or locally based and often sponsor training services to providers as well as consumer education for parents on identifying and accessing quality care.

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies Listed By State
<http://www.all-things-child-care.com/resource-and-referral.html>

State Pre-Kindergarten/Universal Pre-K

State supported early childhood education for preschoolers through local school districts or community councils. Operate education-focused half-day and full-day programs in schools or through community partnerships. Some programs provide referrals for health and developmental screening, supportive services to families, and offer opportunities for parent involvement. Under names like School Readiness, Smart Start, Bright Beginnings, etc., nearly all states now operate pre-kindergarten programs for four-year-olds or for three- and four-year-olds.

Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO)
<http://ceelo.org/state-information/>

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Preschool Development Grants

Federal preschool development and expansion grants to State Education Agencies in 18 states, ideally modeled on Head Start and serving children in families at or below 200% of federal poverty. At least 10% of children enrolled must have an identified disability and programs are expected to offer a wider array of support services including parent engagement. Serves four-year-olds only.

Preschool Development Grants

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/preschooldevelopmentgrants/awards.html>

Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)

Under the Affordable Care Act states are funded both by formula and through competitive grants to coordinate and enhance home visiting services in their state and to expand home visiting services utilizing federally designated evidence-based home visiting service models. Primarily focused on meeting the needs of pregnant women, infants and toddlers, some models serve preschoolers, as well.

State Home Visiting Websites

<http://mchb.hrsa.gov/programs/homevisiting/states.html>

IDEA – Preschool Special Education

Federally funded early care and education services, often only part-day, for children with disabilities, which will impact on their ability to learn. School districts are formula funded through State Departments of Education to provide special education services typically in a classroom setting in the schools but services can be integrated into community programs, too. Children must meet strict eligibility criteria to receive a wide range of educational and family supports that met their individual educational needs.

U.S. Department of Education – State Contacts

http://wdcrocolp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org_list.cfm?category_ID=SSE

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities – State Contacts

<http://www.nichcy.org/Pages/StateSpecificInfo.aspx?State=>

IDEA – Part C – Early Intervention Services

Federally funded, and state supplemented, educational and family supports for children birth to age three with identified developmental delays and disabilities. States set eligibility criteria, which can restrict interventions to a narrow target population or address more broad preventative service needs. Generally, services are through home visits to families and early childhood providers but may include group or center-based interventions.

NECTAC – The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center – State Contacts

<http://www.nectac.org/contact/Ptccoord.asp>

State Early Childhood Advisory Councils/Cabinets

Under the Head Start Act of 2007 states established or designated State Advisory Councils (SAC) to coordinate and further develop early childhood systems and services across varying funding streams and service sectors.

State Advisory Councils | Early Childhood Development | Administration for Children and Families

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils>

Federal Resources Promoting Development and Learning for Young Children Experiencing

Homelessness <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/interagency-projects/ece-services-for-homeless-children>

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