

GROWTH AND IMPACT IN EARLY CARE AND LEARNING: SCORING GUIDE

State Demographics	Description	Source
Number of children (#)	Children aged 0-5 years in the state (2023)	■ First Five Year Fund: www.ffyf.org/state-impact/
Median income (\$)	Median family income state by state (2023)	■ World Population Review: https://tinyurl.com/mty9tre9
Children under 5 with all parents working (%)	Children aged 0-5 years with all parents working, which provides the basis for calculating the need for child care (2023)	■ First Five Year Fund: www.ffyf.org/state-impact/
Rural population (%)	Percentage of a state's population estimated to live in a rural area (2021)	■ American Health Rankings: www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/pct_rural_b
Children living in poverty (%)	Children under 5 years in families whose incomes are lower than the poverty level (2023)	■ First Five Year Fund: www.ffyf.org/state-impact/



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Access	Description	Scale	Source
<p>Estimated Child Care Gap (%)</p>	<p>The difference between the demand for care, determined by the number of children with parents working, and the supply of care or the number of spaces in child care centers and Family Child Care (FCC) homes. The difference divided by the demand, as a percentage, is the estimated child care gap. Data from 2023 were available for 43 states from Child Care Aware of America’s Child Care at a Standstill report. For New Jersey, data were drawn from the state’s Division of Family Development site (2023). For the remaining 8 states, data were drawn from Child Care Aware (2022/2020) and Bipartisan Policy Center (2020).</p>	<p>Emerging: > 19% Evolving: 11-18% Expanding: 1-10% Excelling: ≤ 0</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child Care Aware of America (2023): https://tinyurl.com/45aa2dww ■ State of New Jersey (2023): https://www.childcarenj.gov/Resources/Reports ■ Child Care Aware of America (2022): California https://tinyurl.com/2s4fyvn ■ Child Care Aware of America (2020): Louisiana https://tinyurl.com/3mh3czpc ■ Bipartisan Policy Center (2020): Alabama, Arizona, Idaho, New Mexico, Wisconsin https://bipartisanpolicy.org/report/child-care-gap/
<p>Public early learning programs (%)</p>	<p>Access to public programs as the percentage of eligible children served by four prominent publicly funded programs including the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Early Head Start, Head Start, and public preschool (2023)</p>	<p>Emerging: 0-25% Evolving: 26-50% Expanding: 51-75% Excelling: 76-100%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ First Five Year Fund: www.ffyf.org/state-impact/
<p>Average hourly wages of early childhood educator (\$)</p>	<p>The difference between the average living wage for an individual in the state (2023) and the average hourly wages of an early educator in the state as an indicator of the availability of educators to staff child care centers (February, 2024)</p>	<p>Emerging: >\$5 Evolving: \$3-\$5 Expanding: \$1-\$2.99 Excelling: <\$1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ First Five Year Fund: www.ffyf.org/state-impact/ ■ MIT Living Wage Calculator: https://livingwage.mit.edu/

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Affordability	Description	Scale	Source
Price of infant care (center-based - \$)	*Average monthly price of care for families placing an infant in full time care in a child care center, the most expensive of all care types (2023)	Not scaled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Care Aware of America: https://tinyurl.com/45aa2dww DHHS guideline: https://tinyurl.com/yc56h9aa
Price of infant care (FCC - \$)	*Average monthly price of care for families placing an infant in full time care at a FCC home, a relatively less expensive care type (2023)		
Price of toddler care (center-based - \$)	*Average monthly price of care for families placing a toddler in full time care in a child care center (2023)		
Price of toddler care (FCC - \$)	*Average monthly price of care for families placing a toddler in full time care in an FCC home (2023)		
Center-based infant care as a percentage of two income household (%)	The average monthly price of center-based infant care (the type of care with the greatest number of spaces) to families, as a percentage of median income of two income families, and the difference between this percentage and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) recommended ratio of care to income of 7% (2023)	Emerging: >13% Evolving: 10%-12.9% Expanding: 8%-9.9% Excelling: ≤ 7.9%	
Center-based infant care as a percentage of single income household (%)	The price of center-based infant care to families as a percentage of median income of single income families, and the difference between this percentage and the DHHS recommended ratio of care to income of 7% (2023)	Emerging: >13% Evolving: 10%-12.9% Expanding: 8%-9.9% Excelling: ≤ 7%	
Loss to the state economy (in billions - \$)	The loss to the state economy due to child care deficits resulting in “lost earnings, productivity, and revenue,” as a percentage of the state GDP (2023)	Emerging: >.5% Evolving: .31-.5% Expanding: \$.1-.3% Excelling: ≤ 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Five Year Fund: https://tinyurl.com/2pc6mzuk Bureau of Economic Analysis: https://tinyurl.com/mth5x8nx

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Quality	Description	Scale	Source
Early Intervention policy levers (#)	<p>The are three research-based Early Intervention (EI) policy levers that states can adopt to address early delays (2023):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Include very low birthweight in the state’s diagnosable or at-risk eligibility criteria, *Allow at-risk for delay as a qualifier for EI services, *Eliminate family fees for children receiving EI services. 	<p>Emerging: No policy levers adopted Evolving: 1/3 levers adopted Expanding: 2/3 levers adopted Excelling: All levers adopted</p>	<p>■ Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center: https://tinyurl.com/bddwhc5s</p>
Children receiving Early Intervention (%)	<p>The cumulative percentage of children served in EI annually, compared with the percentage of children born with low birth weight, is a state-level indicator for addressing delays early. Research shows that low birth weight is a risk factor for disabilities and delays that may improve with early intervention (2023)</p>	<p>Emerging: >2% Evolving: 1-2% Expanding: .1-.9% Excelling: ≥0</p>	<p>■ Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center: https://tinyurl.com/bddwhc5s</p>
Staff : Child ratio (Infant)	<p>State staff to child ratios for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (along with class sizes) are a determinant of the quality of interactions between early educators and children in their care. State staff to child ratios are compared with standards-based ratios recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC ratios are 1:4 ratio for infants, 1:6 ratio for toddlers, and 1:10 ratio for preschoolers (2023)</p>	<p>Emerging: 2 or more than standard for infants/toddlers, 3 or more for preschoolers. Evolving: 1 more than standard for infant/toddlers, 2 for preschoolers Expanding: Meets NAEYC standard Excelling: Exceeds NAEYC standard</p>	<p>■ Primary data collected by the Hunt Institute in May 2024 from 51 official state/territory early care and education websites on minimum staff to child ratios requirements of states.</p> <p>■ NAEYC: https://tinyurl.com/3t9vyda4</p>
Staff : Child ratio (toddler)			
Staff : Child ratio (preschooler)			

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<p>Minimum credentials (Director)</p>	<p>Experts recommend three credential levels for early educators, Early Childhood Educator (ECE) I, ECE II, and ECE III with an “associated scope of practice, expected level of professional preparation, and expected level of mastery of the Professional Standards and Competencies.” At each of the three credential levels, early educators will get licensed through certificate and credential programs, associate degree programs, or bachelor’s and master’s degree programs (2023)</p>	<p>Emerging: Orientation Evolving: CDA or Director’s Credential Expanding: CDA+ Excelling: BA</p>	<p>Primary data collected by the Hunt Institute in May 2024 from 51 official state/territory early care and education websites on minimum credentials requirements for early educators at three levels (Director, Teacher, and Assistant Teacher) and annual training hours for Directors and Staff.</p>
<p>Minimum credentials (Teacher)</p>		<p>Emerging: Orientation Evolving: CDA or Credential Expanding: CDA+ Excelling: BA</p>	
<p>Minimum credentials (Assistant teacher)</p>		<p>Emerging: Orientation Evolving: Orientation plus <20 hours Expanding: Orientation plus >20 hours Excelling: ECE certification or CDA</p>	
<p>Annual training hours: Director (hours)</p>	<p>Annual training hours ensure that early educators refresh and expand their knowledge and skills annually. Typically, they meet their annual training hours requirements by participating in professional development provided by state-endorsed providers (2023)</p>	<p>Emerging: <12 hours Evolving: 12-15 hours</p>	
<p>Annual training hours: Staff (hours)</p>		<p>Expanding: 16-24 hours Excelling: 25+ hours</p>	

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Funding	Description	Scale	Source
Child Care and Development Block Grant (%)	Percentage of eligible children served by the block grant, a federal allocation to states to fund child care assistance for eligible families (2023)	All eligible children (100%)	■ First Five Year Fund: www.ffyf.org/state-impact
Early Head Start (%)	Percentage of eligible children served by Early Head Start, a high quality public early learning program for children aged 0-3 years (2023)		
Head Start (%)	Percentage of eligible children served by Head Start, a high quality public early learning program for children aged 3-5 years (2023)		
Public preschool (%)	Percentage of eligible children served by statewide public preschool (2023)		

