



Early Childhood Development

The early years, ages birth to five, are critical years for children to develop social, emotional and cognitive competencies that lead to healthy development and behaviors and academic success. But poverty and the lottery of geography—which gives children in some states more supports than in others—prevent many children from reaching their full potential. Every 32 seconds a baby is born into poverty; every 42 seconds a baby is born without health insurance; every minute a baby is born at low birthweight. Poor children’s development at nine months already is behind their higher income peers. The learning gap widens from there, pushing children without the early help they need into the cradle to prison pipeline. By kindergarten, it is even harder to catch up.

- More than 20 percent of children under age five are poor; more than 40 percent of Black and more than 33 percent of Hispanic children.
- Infants are the most likely to be victims of abuse and neglect, and nearly one-third percent of all victims are younger than four; 30 percent of children in foster care are preschool age.
- More than 63 percent of mothers of young children are in the labor force.
- The annual cost of child care for a 4-year-old is more than the annual in-state tuition at a public four-year college in 36 states and the District of Columbia.
- In 20 states, a family must have an income that is below 175 percent of the poverty level to receive a public child care subsidy.
- In 2008, fewer than 10 percent of all child care centers and fewer than one percent of all family child care homes were accredited.
- Only 14 percent of 3-years-olds and 38 percent of 4-year-olds in 2007 were being served by state-funded prekindergarten, Head Start or special education programs.
- Only eight states and the District of Columbia require 5-year-olds to be enrolled in school.
- Only 13 states and the District of Columbia require school districts to offer full-day kindergarten. Six states do not require local districts to offer any kindergarten.

For almost 20 years, 60 percent or more of women with young children have been in the labor force.

Labor Force Participation of Women with Children Under Age Six, Selected Years

	All Women		Married Women	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1950	–	–	1,399,000	11.9%
1955	–	–	2,012,000	16.2
1960	–	–	2,474,000	18.6
1965	–	–	3,117,000	23.2
1970	–	–	3,914,000	30.3
1975	–	–	4,518,000	36.7
1980	6,538,000	46.8%	5,227,000	45.1
1985	8,215,000	53.5	6,406,000	53.4
1990	9,397,000	58.2	7,247,000	58.9
1999	10,322,000	64.4	7,246,000	61.8
2000	10,316,000	65.3	7,341,000	62.8
2001	10,199,000	64.9	7,317,000	62.5
2002	9,474,000	64.3	7,057,000	61.1
2003	9,460,000	63.0	7,051,000	60.0
2004	9,375,000	62.5	6,980,000	59.6
2005	10,424,000	62.6	7,309,000	59.8
2006	10,430,000	63.0	7,366,000	60.3
2007	10,894,000	63.5	7,664,000	61.5
2008	10,452,000	63.6	7,285,000	61.6

– Data not available

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.



More than 60 percent of children under age six and 70 percent of school-age children in 44 states and the District of Columbia have all parents in the labor force.

Parental Labor Force Participation, 2008

	Mothers* in the labor force by age of youngest child (percent)		Children with mothers in the labor force (percent)		Children with all parents in the labor force (percent)	
	Under age 6	Ages 6–17	Under age 6	Ages 6–17	Under age 6	Ages 6–17
Alabama	66.6%	76.7%	60.8%	68.4%	64.6%	71.0%
Alaska	67.3	77.9	57.8	64.7	64.9	70.1
Arizona	62.7	76.6	53.3	63.7	59.7	68.8
Arkansas	67.5	79.9	60.0	70.0	63.5	71.5
California	62.7	74.1	53.7	63.0	60.2	67.7
Colorado	66.6	78.8	59.0	67.7	63.4	71.9
Connecticut	71.1	78.8	63.3	71.5	67.6	73.9
Delaware	72.5	84.0	61.8	74.2	70.9	78.4
District of Columbia	67.4	80.4	58.3	67.0	63.2	74.2
Florida	69.8	79.7	61.0	70.5	67.4	75.0
Georgia	67.7	78.5	58.4	69.3	63.1	72.7
Hawaii	69.1	84.2	59.0	73.3	66.3	77.0
Idaho	61.2	77.0	54.3	65.2	58.2	69.0
Illinois	68.0	78.8	60.0	68.5	64.7	72.1
Indiana	71.6	80.3	62.6	70.7	68.1	74.6
Iowa	77.6	86.1	68.8	76.5	74.0	80.7
Kansas	71.4	83.9	64.8	73.6	68.7	76.6
Kentucky	66.8	75.1	57.7	66.0	62.5	68.4
Louisiana	67.4	75.2	59.3	67.9	65.9	70.6
Maine	70.9	83.7	62.8	74.2	69.1	77.9
Maryland	74.7	84.4	67.2	74.4	71.8	78.1
Massachusetts	70.9	80.5	64.5	72.4	67.9	75.1
Michigan	69.9	79.3	62.9	70.3	66.4	72.8
Minnesota	76.8	85.2	68.4	75.4	73.7	79.5
Mississippi	70.7	77.9	63.6	69.2	68.6	72.2
Missouri	72.8	81.0	63.9	71.5	69.1	75.1
Montana	69.0	80.8	58.7	71.6	64.6	75.1
Nebraska	77.5	85.8	69.4	76.1	75.1	80.4
Nevada	64.1	79.4	54.3	67.1	62.4	73.1
New Hampshire	74.2	82.4	66.6	72.3	70.1	76.8
New Jersey	68.3	79.3	61.6	70.3	65.0	73.1
New Mexico	64.3	77.6	55.0	65.6	61.8	72.1
New York	66.4	77.6	58.8	66.9	63.2	69.8
North Carolina	68.9	79.7	60.5	70.1	66.5	73.8
North Dakota	79.4	87.9	72.3	79.4	74.8	80.7
Ohio	71.4	81.2	64.2	70.6	68.6	74.8
Oklahoma	64.6	77.5	56.6	66.0	61.4	71.2
Oregon	66.0	78.6	57.2	67.6	61.3	72.0
Pennsylvania	68.4	79.3	60.1	68.5	65.2	71.7
Rhode Island	74.4	81.4	67.8	73.5	71.1	75.6
South Carolina	69.3	78.9	60.2	71.2	65.9	74.0
South Dakota	82.2	87.1	72.9	76.6	78.1	80.2
Tennessee	68.2	77.9	60.7	68.2	64.9	71.2
Texas	62.2	75.0	54.7	64.6	60.0	68.3
Utah	56.0	74.1	49.4	60.2	51.5	63.5
Vermont	80.0	84.3	68.8	76.3	75.4	80.3
Virginia	69.6	79.7	62.5	70.0	66.6	73.2
Washington	63.6	77.6	55.7	66.6	60.0	70.8
West Virginia	63.4	73.8	56.3	65.9	60.8	67.4
Wisconsin	76.9	85.4	69.6	74.7	73.8	78.8
Wyoming	69.0	79.2	57.6	69.1	64.1	75.0
United States	67.6	78.5	59.4	68.3	64.5	72.0

* Mothers ages 20–64 only.

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2008 American Community Survey, Tables B23003 and B23008, accessed September 22, 2009. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Just over one million low-income children were enrolled in Head Start during 2008, yet that number fell far short of those who were eligible.

Head Start Enrollment, 2008

	Funded Enrollment*				Actual Enrollment**			
	Total	Early Head Start	Head Start Preschool	Head Start Migrant	Total	Early Head Start	Head Start Preschool	Head Start Migrant
Alabama	15,664	644	14,910	110	18,101	877	17,113	111
Alaska	3,064	334	2,730	0	3,597	481	3,116	0
Arizona	19,649	1,135	17,762	752	21,923	1,791	19,379	753
Arkansas	9,615	640	8,575	400	11,561	1,002	10,143	416
California	106,434	7,654	92,852	5,928	131,435	12,610	112,550	6,275
Colorado	10,629	814	9,115	700	13,075	1,387	10,985	703
Connecticut	7,259	439	6,820	0	8,772	666	8,106	0
Delaware	1,926	173	1,702	51	2,340	285	2,004	51
District of Columbia	3,281	327	2,954	0	3,643	416	3,227	0
Florida	39,760	2,653	31,621	5,486	46,063	3,665	37,171	5,227
Georgia	23,681	1,285	22,027	369	28,356	1,680	26,295	381
Hawaii	3,049	377	2,672	0	3,726	624	3,102	0
Idaho	4,105	406	2,902	797	4,741	605	3,338	798
Illinois	39,499	2,637	36,393	469	49,302	4,095	44,661	546
Indiana	14,210	908	13,302	0	17,709	1,600	16,109	0
Iowa	7,804	1,076	6,728	0	9,554	1,624	7,930	0
Kansas	9,118	1,794	7,324	0	11,656	2,932	8,724	0
Kentucky	16,399	1,094	15,160	145	19,532	1,669	17,718	145
Louisiana	20,463	952	19,431	80	23,193	1,367	21,732	94
Maine	3,980	561	3,419	0	4,910	900	4,010	0
Maryland	10,397	877	9,520	0	12,295	1,382	10,913	0
Massachusetts	12,883	846	11,964	73	15,637	1,344	14,220	73
Michigan	36,203	2,018	32,750	1,435	42,684	3,200	37,997	1,487
Minnesota	15,035	1,608	12,411	1,016	17,945	2,305	14,729	911
Mississippi	25,552	963	24,589	0	28,730	1,105	27,625	0
Missouri	16,832	1,363	15,469	0	21,739	2,342	19,397	0
Montana	4,606	439	4,167	0	5,470	762	4,708	0
Nebraska	5,397	882	4,450	65	6,528	1,305	5,152	71
Nevada	3,116	276	2,840	0	3,744	400	3,344	0
New Hampshire	1,632	204	1,428	0	2,117	362	1,755	0
New Jersey	12,491	728	11,572	191	14,307	1,058	13,084	165
New Mexico	8,912	903	8,009	0	10,165	1,277	8,888	0
New York	49,256	3,832	44,809	615	57,463	5,767	51,092	604
North Carolina	19,997	1,487	17,568	942	23,121	2,038	20,305	778
North Dakota	3,353	421	2,932	0	4,005	641	3,364	0
Ohio	37,971	1,466	36,505	0	47,488	2,592	44,896	0
Oklahoma	16,568	1,136	15,432	0	19,946	1,883	18,063	0
Oregon	13,193	749	9,895	2,549	15,135	1,049	11,500	2,586
Pennsylvania	35,221	2,331	32,451	439	41,424	3,481	37,513	430
Rhode Island	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
South Carolina	12,525	638	11,610	277	14,256	851	13,163	242
South Dakota	4,522	635	3,887	0	5,416	936	4,480	0
Tennessee	16,828	880	15,684	264	20,290	1,334	18,691	265
Texas	74,129	3,884	62,270	7,975	87,296	6,059	72,688	8,549
Utah	6,149	423	5,324	402	7,307	702	6,194	411
Vermont	1,563	277	1,286	0	2,026	445	1,581	0
Virginia	13,367	1,136	11,885	346	15,794	1,782	13,695	317
Washington	15,654	1,650	10,835	3,169	19,250	2,855	13,054	3,341
West Virginia	7,458	394	7,064	0	8,862	588	8,274	0
Wisconsin	16,217	1,176	14,511	530	18,707	1,810	16,356	541
Wyoming	2,001	311	1,690	0	2,387	444	1,943	0
United States	858,617	59,836	763,206	35,575	1,024,723	92,375	896,077	36,271

* The number of funded Head Start slots for the year.

** The number of children enrolled at any point during the year.

n/a — data not available.

Source: Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), CLASP DataFinder, at <http://www.clasp.org/data>. Data are from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008 Program Information Report.

Black and Hispanic children account for the majority of children in Head Start.

Head Start Enrollment, by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2008

Percent of Enrollment

	White	Black	Hispanic*	Asian, Pacific Islander	American Indian, Alaska Native	Other race, multi-racial or unspecified race
Alabama	19%	73%	7%	0%	0%	7%
Alaska	17	3	4	5	57	18
Arizona	58	3	59	0	25	14
Arkansas	45	38	14	1	3	13
California	36	9	72	6	5	44
Colorado	53	7	64	1	3	36
Connecticut	25	32	47	3	4	37
Delaware	10	47	54	1	0	43
District of Columbia	0	78	18	3	0	18
Florida	34	50	34	0	2	12
Georgia	21	69	19	1	0	8
Hawaii	14	2	6	65	0	18
Idaho	63	1	39	0	9	26
Illinois	22	46	31	2	1	30
Indiana	59	21	14	8	3	10
Iowa	65	13	17	1	3	18
Kansas	47	21	27	3	1	26
Kentucky	72	18	6	0	0	9
Louisiana	16	79	2	0	0	3
Maine	85	4	3	1	2	7
Maryland	19	65	14	1	1	13
Massachusetts	39	17	41	5	1	38
Michigan	46	33	16	1	2	17
Minnesota	49	20	24	3	8	19
Mississippi	14	82	3	0	1	3
Missouri	51	36	8	1	0	12
Montana	49	1	3	0	41	8
Nebraska	59	15	27	2	6	17
Nevada	29	17	57	2	9	43
New Hampshire	84	5	11	1	1	9
New Jersey	20	38	45	2	0	40
New Mexico	42	2	61	0	22	34
New York	33	25	36	5	2	35
North Carolina	24	52	23	1	3	19
North Dakota	50	3	3	1	38	8
Ohio	47	40	7	1	0	12
Oklahoma	40	16	17	1	24	19
Oregon	59	5	47	3	6	27
Pennsylvania	47	33	15	2	0	18
Rhode Island	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
South Carolina	11	81	7	0	0	7
South Dakota	39	2	3	0	47	10
Tennessee	51	42	10	1	0	7
Texas	59	18	69	1	0	23
Utah	50	2	44	3	12	34
Vermont	87	4	2	1	1	7
Virginia	32	50	14	2	0	15
Washington	50	8	45	5	10	28
West Virginia	86	7	1	0	0	6
Wisconsin	54	23	24	4	6	13
Wyoming	59	1	25	3	15	22
United States	39	29	36	3	4	25

* Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race.
n/a — data not available.

Source: Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), CLASP DataFinder, at <http://www.clasp.org/data>. Data are from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008 Program Information Report.

In 36 states and the District of Columbia the annual cost of center-based child care for a 4-year-old is more than annual in-state tuition at a public four-year college. In five of these, it is at least twice the cost.

Child Care vs. College Costs, 2008

	Yearly cost for 4-year-old in center-based care	Annual in-state tuition at public 4-year college	Ratio
Alabama	\$ 4,992	\$ 4,907	1.02
Alaska	7,000	4,747	1.47
Arizona	6,626	4,954	1.34
Arkansas	4,536	5,427	0.84
California	8,234	4,879	1.69
Colorado	9,067	5,250	1.73
Connecticut	9,832	7,465	1.32
Delaware	6,899	7,823	0.88
District of Columbia	10,660	3,140	3.39
Florida	6,033	2,980	2.02
Georgia	5,973	4,006	1.49
Hawaii	7,536	4,653	1.62
Idaho	5,360	4,381	1.22
Illinois	8,117	8,982	0.90
Indiana	6,990	6,604	1.06
Iowa	7,062	6,219	1.14
Kansas	6,526	5,406	1.21
Kentucky	5,720	6,342	0.90
Louisiana	4,610	3,835	1.20
Maine	7,228	7,250	1.00
Maryland	7,821	7,141	1.10
Massachusetts	11,678	7,922	1.47
Michigan	7,540	8,471	0.89
Minnesota	9,700	7,707	1.26
Mississippi	4,056	4,762	0.85
Missouri	4,532	6,643	0.68
Montana	6,467	5,418	1.19
Nebraska	6,760	5,443	1.24
Nevada	7,133	3,053	2.34
New Hampshire	8,035	9,610	0.84
New Jersey	8,489	9,702	0.87
New Mexico	5,931	4,143	1.43
New York	10,541	5,065	2.08
North Carolina	6,804	4,301	1.58
North Dakota	5,966	5,765	1.03
Ohio	7,384	8,090	0.91
Oklahoma	4,881	4,471	1.09
Oregon	7,500	5,939	1.26
Pennsylvania	8,060	9,593	0.84
Rhode Island	7,800	7,120	1.10
South Carolina	4,756	8,389	0.57
South Dakota	6,500	5,395	1.20
Tennessee	5,732	5,366	1.07
Texas	6,084	5,538	1.10
Utah	5,580	4,046	1.38
Vermont	7,485	10,401	0.72
Virginia	8,268	6,887	1.20
Washington	7,800	5,353	1.46
West Virginia	4,560	4,377	1.04
Wisconsin	8,424	6,177	1.36
Wyoming	6,500	2,990	2.17

Sources: National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, "2008 Price of Child Care" (March 2009), at <http://www.naccrra.org/randd/docs/2008_Price_of_Child_Care.pdf>; and U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics: 2008* (March 2009), Table 332. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Eligibility for public child care subsidies is limited in 20 states to children in families with incomes below 175 percent of the poverty level (\$32,043 for a family of three).

Child Care Assistance, 2009

Income Limits for a Family of Three

	As annual dollar amount	As percent of poverty	As percent of state median income
Alabama	\$ 22,320	122%	44%
Alaska	46,243	202	77
Arizona	29,052	159	53
Arkansas	28,345	155	65
California	44,664	244	71
Colorado	22,880 – 39,600	125 – 216	36 – 62
Connecticut	39,405	215	50
Delaware	35,208	192	54
District of Columbia	40,225	220	67
Florida	27,465	150	50
Georgia	26,560	145	47
Hawaii	47,124	224	66
Idaho	23,184	127	48
Illinois	35,208	192	56
Indiana	22,356	122	39
Iowa	25,524	139	45
Kansas	32,568	178	57
Kentucky	26,400	144	52
Louisiana	35,244	192	70
Maine	40,006	218	75
Maryland	29,990	164	38
Massachusetts	37,526	205	50
Michigan	23,880	130	39
Minnesota	32,167	176	47
Mississippi	34,999	191	79
Missouri	22,620	124	43
Montana	26,400	144	52
Nebraska	21,120	115	36
Nevada	41,640	227	75
New Hampshire	44,000	240	60
New Jersey	35,200	192	44
New Mexico	35,200	192	81
New York	35,200	192	55
North Carolina	36,684	200	71
North Dakota	29,556	161	52
Ohio	35,208	192	61
Oklahoma	35,100	192	76
Oregon	33,874	185	62
Pennsylvania	35,200	192	57
Rhode Island	31,680	173	48
South Carolina	26,400	144	53
South Dakota	36,675	200	69
Tennessee	30,312	166	60
Texas	26,400 – 42,703	144 – 233	53 – 85
Utah	31,111	170	58
Vermont	35,484	194	62
Virginia	26,400 – 44,000	144 – 240	40 – 67
Washington	35,208	192	56
West Virginia	26,400	144	56
Wisconsin	33,876	185	56
Wyoming	34,968	191	58

Source: Karen Schulman and Helen Blank, "State Child Care Assistance Policies 2009: Most States Hold the Line, but Some Lose Ground in Hard Times," National Women's Law Center (September 2009), Table 1A. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Almost 6.5 million families receive help with child care expenses through the federal Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit.

Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, 2007

	Number of filers	Amount claimed (in \$1,000s)
Alabama	104,625	\$ 54,657
Alaska	14,365	7,665
Arizona	111,954	58,287
Arkansas	52,247	26,148
California	716,269	410,893
Colorado	105,057	53,545
Connecticut	81,367	42,569
Delaware	24,558	13,560
District of Columbia	14,080	8,848
Florida	421,655	228,711
Georgia	231,205	123,022
Hawaii	30,168	13,831
Idaho	29,690	14,004
Illinois	271,646	152,353
Indiana	120,430	59,200
Iowa	85,499	39,649
Kansas	65,919	32,139
Kentucky	73,887	35,122
Louisiana	89,088	47,168
Maine	28,078	14,028
Maryland	176,126	104,171
Massachusetts	146,185	74,737
Michigan	176,750	84,911
Minnesota	147,160	66,469
Mississippi	60,080	32,857
Missouri	127,146	61,639
Montana	17,773	7,530
Nebraska	54,016	25,698
Nevada	54,475	31,365
New Hampshire	31,144	15,956
New Jersey	228,505	134,280
New Mexico	28,640	13,702
New York	495,953	301,405
North Carolina	221,528	110,969
North Dakota	18,319	8,748
Ohio	175,910	86,262
Oklahoma	62,992	30,448
Oregon	69,464	32,659
Pennsylvania	224,448	117,109
Rhode Island	20,263	10,757
South Carolina	103,574	55,847
South Dakota	24,805	12,159
Tennessee	124,035	63,836
Texas	494,849	278,038
Utah	37,177	18,051
Vermont	14,097	7,108
Virginia	191,737	104,216
Washington	118,831	61,306
West Virginia	18,015	7,886
Wisconsin	106,938	47,414
Wyoming	10,496	4,983
United States	6,453,218	\$ 3,447,915

Source: U.S. Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, Historical Table 2, SOI Bulletin, at <http://www.irs.gov/taxstats/article/0,,id=171535,00.html>. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

On average 1.7 million children were assisted under the Child Care and Development Fund each month in 2007.

Child Care and Development Fund, FY 2007

Monthly Average Number Receiving Assistance

	Families	Children
Alabama	16,800	31,700
Alaska	2,300	3,800
Arizona	18,000	29,900
Arkansas	3,200	4,700
California	91,800	144,500
Colorado	9,200	16,500
Connecticut	6,200	9,700
Delaware	4,200	7,000
District of Columbia	2,700	3,900
Florida	71,800	108,900
Georgia	28,300	53,600
Hawaii	6,400	10,000
Idaho	4,600	8,700
Illinois	41,300	76,200
Indiana	18,400	35,200
Iowa	10,200	17,900
Kansas	12,000	22,500
Kentucky	16,400	29,400
Louisiana	27,300	44,800
Maine	3,800	5,600
Maryland	13,900	23,900
Massachusetts	20,700	28,600
Michigan	38,700	75,500
Minnesota	14,000	25,600
Mississippi	16,600	30,600
Missouri	22,100	38,100
Montana	2,700	4,500
Nebraska	8,400	14,900
Nevada	3,600	6,100
New Hampshire	5,200	7,600
New Jersey	24,300	35,100
New Mexico	12,600	21,300
New York	69,400	115,500
North Carolina	30,700	64,200
North Dakota	2,300	3,800
Ohio	31,000	54,300
Oklahoma	14,000	24,100
Oregon	10,500	19,600
Pennsylvania	53,900	95,700
Rhode Island	4,700	7,700
South Carolina	11,700	20,500
South Dakota	3,200	5,100
Tennessee	21,100	40,400
Texas	71,300	132,000
Utah	6,700	12,600
Vermont	4,200	6,100
Virginia	15,000	24,400
Washington	33,100	54,100
West Virginia	5,500	9,300
Wisconsin	14,500	25,700
Wyoming	2,700	4,400
United States	983,200	1,695,800

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Child Care Bureau, Child Care and Development Fund: Average Monthly Adjusted Number of Families and Children Served (FFY 2007), at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/data/ccdf_data/07/acf800/table1.htm.

Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

In most states, the child-staff ratio is 4:1 for 9-month-old infants; in 15 states it is 5:1 or higher.

Child-Staff Ratios and Group Sizes for Child Care Centers¹, 2007

	Maximum children per caretaker			Maximum group size in child care centers		
	9 months	27 months	4 years	9 months	27 months	4 years
Alabama	5:1	8:1	18:1	NR	NR	NR
Alaska	5:1	6:1	10:1	10	12	20
Arizona	5:1 or 11:2	8:1	15:1	NR	NR	NR
Arkansas	6:1	9:1	15:1	12	18	30
California	4:1	6:1	12:1	NR	12	NR
Colorado	5:1	7:1	12:1	10	14	24
Connecticut	4:1	4:1	10:1	8	8	20
Delaware	4:1	8:1	12:1	NR	NR	NR
District of Columbia	4:1	4:1	10:1	8	8	20
Florida	4:1	11:1	20:1	NR	NR	NR
Georgia	6:1	10:1	18:1	12	20	36
Hawaii	4:1	8:1	16:1	8	NR	NR
Idaho	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL	NL
Illinois	4:1	8:1	10:1	12	16	20
Indiana	4:1	5:1	12:1	8	10	24
Iowa	4:1	6:1	12:1	NR	NR	NR
Kansas	3:1	7:1	12:1	9	14	24
Kentucky	5:1	10:1	14:1	10	20	28
Louisiana	6:1	12:1	16:1	NR	NR	NR
Maine	4:1	4:1 or 5:1	8:1 or 10:1	8	10 or 12	20 or 24
Maryland	3:1	6:1	10:1	6	12	20
Massachusetts	3:1 or 7:2	4:1 or 9:2	10:1	7	9	20
Michigan	4:1	4:1	12:1	12	12	NR
Minnesota	4:1	7:1	10:1	8	14	20
Mississippi	5:1	12:1	16:1	10	14	20
Missouri	4:1	8:1	10:1	8	16	NR
Montana	4:1	8:1	10:1	NR	NR	NR
Nebraska	4:1	6:1	12:1	12	NR	NR
Nevada	6:1	10:1	13:1	NR	NR	NR
New Hampshire	4:1	6:1	12:1	12	18	24
New Jersey	4:1	10:1	12:1	12	20	20
New Mexico	6:1	10:1	12:1	NR	NR	NR
New York	4:1	5:1	8:1	8	12	21
North Carolina	5:1	10:1	20:1	10	20	25
North Dakota	4:1	5:1	10:1	8	10	20
Ohio	5:1 or 12:2	7:1	14:1	10	14	28
Oklahoma	4:1	8:1	15:1	8	16	30
Oregon	4:1	5:1	10:1	8	10	20
Pennsylvania	4:1	6:1	10:1	8	12	20
Rhode Island	4:1	6:1	10:1	8	12	20
South Carolina	5:1	9:1	18:1	NR	NR	NR
South Dakota	5:1	5:1	10:1	20	20	20
Tennessee	4:1	7:1	13:1	8	14	20
Texas	4:1	11:1	18:1	10	22	35
Utah	4:1	7:1	15:1	8	14	30
Vermont	4:1	5:1	10:1	8	10	20
Virginia	4:1	10:1	12:1	NR	NR	NR
Washington	4:1	7:1	10:1	8	14	20
West Virginia	4:1	8:1	12:1	8	16	24
Wisconsin	4:1	6:1	13:1	8	12	24
Wyoming	4:1	8:1	12:1	10	18	30
Maximum Recommended Level ²	3:1 to 4:1	4:1 to 6:1	8:1 to 10:1	6 to 8	8 to 10	16 to 20

NL — not licensed at the state level
NR — not regulated at the state level

¹ There may be some exceptions to these ratio and group size requirements in some states under certain circumstances. For example, some states have different requirements for small centers, classes with mixed-age groups, or different levels of licensing. See original source for details.

² Maximum Recommended Level: As recommended in the accreditation guidelines developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and in the National Health and Safety Performance Standards developed by the American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Source: National Association for Regulatory Administration, Findings from the 2007 Child Care Licensing Study, Table 27, Center Child-Staff Ratio Requirements in 2007, at <http://www.naralicensing.org/associations/4734/files/Table_27_Ratios_Center_2007.pdf>, and Table 28, Center Group Size Requirements in 2007, at <http://www.naralicensing.org/associations/4734/files/Table_28_Groupsize_Center_2007.pdf>.

Fewer than 10 percent of all child care centers and fewer than one percent of all family child care homes are accredited.

Accredited Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes, 2008

	Child care centers		Family child care homes	
	Total	Accredited	Total	Accredited
Alabama	1,183	91	1,863	18
Alaska	220	16	1,001	10
Arizona	1,901	204	2,199	74
Arkansas	2,082	532	742	30
California	11,054	716	38,132	314
Colorado	2,620	89	3,334	34
Connecticut	2,177	453	2,638	5
Delaware	493	29	1,252	0
District of Columbia	337	101	219	26
Florida	10,427	1,469	7,305	217
Georgia	3,074	482	5,518	201
Hawaii	474	131	555	6
Idaho	517	24	1,131	12
Illinois	5,581	566	11,568	117
Indiana	642	125	4,049	100
Iowa	1,549	100	11,633	24
Kansas	576	66	6,248	44
Kentucky	2,520	107	756	12
Louisiana	1,840	35	7,422	3
Maine	677	74	2,056	52
Maryland	1,514	169	8,976	142
Massachusetts	2,415	1,135	7,532	73
Michigan	4,524	255	8,742	56
Minnesota	2,061	253	11,847	6
Mississippi	1,174	13	1,000	0
Missouri	2,562	436	2,041	69
Montana	461	18	951	20
Nebraska	904	74	2,947	14
Nevada	416	38	479	6
New Hampshire	811	55	755	4
New Jersey	3,881	281	3,031	35
New Mexico	692	120	341	9
New York	3,984	308	13,956	29
North Carolina	5,060	154	3,829	49
North Dakota	127	7	1,248	1
Ohio	5,866	323	6,371	59
Oklahoma	1,794	166	2,874	38
Oregon	1,438	32	4,756	2
Pennsylvania	5,025	352	3,387	56
Rhode Island	395	50	1,054	3
South Carolina	1,924	130	1,721	3
South Dakota	267	3	920	1
Tennessee	3,843		1,272	
Texas	9,281	638	16,765	133
Utah	325	17	1,352	9
Vermont	653	258	1,091	12
Virginia	2,523	194	5,353	47
Washington	2,044	114	5,313	21
West Virginia	387	27	1,749	12
Wisconsin	2,638	161	6,235	98
Wyoming	241	29	594	0
United States	119,174	11,220	238,103	2,306

Source: National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, *2008 Child Care Capacity* (March 2009).
Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Thirty eight states had state-funded prekindergarten programs in 2008–2009 but served only 25.4 percent of 4-year-olds and 3.7 percent of 3-year-olds.

Prekindergarten Enrollment of 3- and 4-year-olds, 2008–2009

Percent of Age Group Enrolled

	State-funded prekindergarten program		State-funded prekindergarten program, Head Start, or special education	
	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	3-year-olds	4-year-olds
Alabama	0.0%	5.5%	10.7%	23.1%
Alaska	0.0	0.0	12.5	18.9
Arizona	0.0	5.4	8.8	20.2
Arkansas	5.9	43.7	21.5	62.7
California	5.4	12.6	13.0	25.9
Colorado	6.0	20.2	14.2	32.1
Connecticut	8.2	10.9	18.3	24.4
Delaware	0.0	7.3	7.3	19.5
District of Columbia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Florida	0.0	66.7	8.3	76.8
Georgia	0.0	53.4	9.6	61.1
Hawaii	0.0	0.0	9.2	14.3
Idaho	0.0	0.0	7.0	14.5
Illinois	21.2	28.7	29.6	42.8
Indiana	0.0	0.0	9.7	14.7
Iowa	1.3	28.7	11.1	39.2
Kansas	0.0	21.2	12.5	37.1
Kentucky	10.0	28.3	20.0	44.4
Louisiana	0.0	31.7	18.0	48.2
Maine	0.0	19.0	13.0	36.0
Maryland	1.2	35.1	12.9	47.9
Massachusetts	2.9	11.3	13.8	25.7
Michigan	0.0	19.1	13.8	37.7
Minnesota	1.1	1.6	10.6	15.7
Mississippi	0.0	0.0	24.6	37.6
Missouri	1.9	3.9	13.0	19.8
Montana	0.0	0.0	15.1	22.5
Nebraska	2.9	7.3	12.1	20.6
Nevada	0.6	2.3	5.5	11.1
New Hampshire	0.0	0.0	8.1	11.6
New Jersey	17.3	26.5	26.2	37.4
New Mexico	0.0	16.5	13.6	37.7
New York	0.1	42.6	14.7	56.6
North Carolina	0.0	25.0	7.8	36.0
North Dakota	0.0	0.0	16.9	25.4
Ohio	5.3	8.1	17.1	24.2
Oklahoma	0.0	71.0	14.3	86.6
Oregon	4.8	8.3	14.1	21.4
Pennsylvania	4.8	16.4	16.2	31.1
Rhode Island	0.0	0.0	9.9	16.0
South Carolina	4.1	38.1	15.6	49.0
South Dakota	0.0	0.0	14.9	25.9
Tennessee	0.8	21.6	9.1	34.7
Texas	4.7	45.4	13.5	55.3
Utah	0.0	0.0	7.0	11.9
Vermont	17.3	53.0	29.1	67.8
Virginia	0.0	14.1	8.0	24.3
Washington	2.4	7.2	11.0	19.8
West Virginia	8.5	50.6	19.5	73.3
Wisconsin	1.0	48.4	12.8	59.4
Wyoming	0.0	0.0	16.4	26.5
United States	3.7	25.4	13.8	38.9

Source: National Institute for Early Education Research, *The State of Preschool 2009* (May 2010), Tables 2 and 4.

School Attendance Requirements for Young Children

Only eight states and the District of Columbia require 5-year-olds to enroll in school:

Arkansas	New Mexico
Connecticut	Oklahoma
Delaware	South Carolina
District of Columbia	Virginia
Maryland	

Pennsylvania and Washington do not require school attendance until age 8.

Only 11 states and the District of Columbia require that children attend kindergarten:

Arkansas	Oklahoma
Delaware	Rhode Island
District of Columbia	South Carolina
Maryland	Tennessee
New Mexico	Virginia
Ohio	West Virginia

Only 13 states and the District of Columbia require school districts to offer full-day kindergarten:

Alabama	Louisiana
Arkansas	Maryland
Delaware	Mississippi
District of Columbia	North Carolina
Florida	South Carolina
Georgia	Tennessee
Hawaii	West Virginia

Six states do not require local school districts to offer either full- or half-day kindergarten.

School Attendance Requirements, 2008

	Ages at which attendance is compulsory	Age at which children enter kindergarten	Kindergarten program must be offered by local district		Mandatory kindergarten attendance
			Full-day	Half-day	
Alabama	7-16	5	Yes		
Alaska	7-16	5			
Arizona	6-16 or completion of grade 10	5		Yes	
Arkansas	5-17	5	Yes		Yes
California	6-18	5	either full- or half-day		
Colorado	6-17	5	either full- or half-day		
Connecticut	5-18	5		Yes	
Delaware	5-16	5	Yes		Yes
District of Columbia	5-18	5	Yes		Yes
Florida	6-16	5	Yes		
Georgia	6-16	5	Yes		
Hawaii	6-18	5	Yes		
Idaho	7-16	5			
Illinois	7-17	5		Yes	
Indiana	7-18	5		Yes	
Iowa	6-16	5	No	No	
Kansas	7-18	5	either full- or half-day		
Kentucky	6-16	5		Yes	
Louisiana	7-18	5	Yes		
Maine	7-17	5		Yes	
Maryland	5-16	5	Yes	N/A	Yes
Massachusetts	6-16	Local decision		Yes	
Michigan	6-16	5	either full- or half-day		
Minnesota	7-16	5	either full- or half-day		
Mississippi	6-17	5	Yes		
Missouri	7-16	5		Yes	
Montana	7-16	5		Yes	
Nebraska	6-18	5	either full- or half-day		
Nevada	7-18	5		Yes	
New Hampshire	6-18 (effective July 1, 2009)	Local decision			
New Jersey	6-16	Local decision	either full- or half-day		
New Mexico	5-18	5		Yes	Yes
New York	6-16	5			
North Carolina	7-16	5	Yes		
North Dakota	7-16	5			
Ohio	6-18	5	either full- or half-day		Yes
Oklahoma	5-18	5	either full- or half-day		Yes
Oregon	7-18	5		Yes	
Pennsylvania	8-17	Local decision			
Rhode Island	6-16	5		Yes	Yes
South Carolina	5-17	5	Yes		Yes
South Dakota	6-18 (effective July 1, 2009)	5	either full- or half-day		
Tennessee	6-17	5	Yes		Yes
Texas	6-18	5	either full- or half-day		
Utah	6-18	5		Yes	
Vermont	6-16 or completion of grade 10	5	either full- or half-day		
Virginia	5-18	5	either full- or half-day		Yes
Washington	8-18	5		Yes	
West Virginia	6-16	5	Yes		Yes
Wisconsin	6-18	5		Yes	
Wyoming	7-16 or completion of grade 10	5	either full- or half-day		

Sources: Education Commission of the States, Compulsory School Age Requirements (April 2009); and Council of Chief State School Officers, Key State Education Policies on PK-12 Education: 2008 (2009), Tables 5 and 6.

Early Child Care and Development Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

The quality of early childhood development programs is a focus of work in the field of early care and education. To assess quality, a growing number of states are using Child Care and Development Fund monies to create quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS).

The QRIS systems are composed of five common elements: (1) standards, (2) accountability measures, (3) program and practitioner outreach and support, (4) financial incentives, and (5) parenting consumer education efforts.

As of September 2009, only the following states and the District of Columbia had implemented statewide QRIS with the five core elements in place:

Colorado	Maine	North Carolina
Delaware	Maryland	Ohio
District of Columbia	Mississippi	Oklahoma
Indiana	Montana	Pennsylvania
Iowa	New Hampshire	Tennessee
Kentucky	New Mexico	Vermont
Louisiana		

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center, "QRIS and the Impact on Quality in Early and School-Age Care Settings," at <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/poptopics/qrs-impact/qualitycc.html>.



The median salary for preschool teachers is only half that of kindergarten teachers.

Annual Salaries of Early Childhood Educators, 2008

	Head Start teachers (mean)	Child care workers (median)	Preschool teachers (median)	Kindergarten teachers (median)	Elementary teachers (median)
Alabama	\$ 19,289	\$ 15,710	\$ 23,070	\$ 42,940	\$ 44,610
Alaska	25,259	21,060	26,420	53,090	57,560
Arizona	25,531	17,950	21,250	37,670	38,600
Arkansas	22,707	15,580	19,990	41,600	41,140
California	30,935	21,490	27,920	54,470	59,850
Colorado	26,016	19,970	24,400	43,120	45,520
Connecticut	27,390	21,650	27,290	61,540	64,200
Delaware	19,064	18,740	22,320	48,100	50,280
District of Columbia	37,123	24,300	30,410	39,900	53,710
Florida	28,446	18,280	22,440	47,470	47,940
Georgia	29,519	16,200	19,260	45,290	50,480
Hawaii	31,773	17,160	27,890	36,350	46,840
Idaho	17,720	17,060	17,780	36,820	50,200
Illinois	29,229	20,080	26,000	40,530	55,390
Indiana	22,187	17,360	22,630	44,950	47,650
Iowa	25,080	16,860	20,860	38,200	37,890
Kansas	25,968	17,980	21,890	42,510	40,600
Kentucky	23,701	16,560	22,210	46,630	45,770
Louisiana	23,816	15,980	17,840	42,410	42,390
Maine	25,135	21,270	25,850	44,270	44,850
Maryland	31,696	19,720	26,250	49,990	55,320
Massachusetts	26,670	21,660	28,920	54,650	59,740
Michigan	26,135	20,320	28,270	50,960	54,680
Minnesota	23,470	19,180	27,800	49,670	48,240
Mississippi	18,108	15,430	19,120	40,060	40,640
Missouri	22,511	17,540	22,770	39,260	40,380
Montana	18,887	17,010	20,660	32,760	37,810
Nebraska	24,267	16,700	21,240	41,890	42,700
Nevada	25,827	18,160	21,400	40,900	45,550
New Hampshire	21,467	19,390	25,750	42,060	49,220
New Jersey	38,812	21,110	29,710	53,750	55,460
New Mexico	24,425	17,310	20,500	50,560	47,660
New York	31,395	23,210	29,460	63,650	62,370
North Carolina	23,177	17,990	20,090	38,850	40,710
North Dakota	25,489	16,050	25,530	38,880	42,630
Ohio	24,679	19,730	20,480	49,980	53,720
Oklahoma	25,942	16,310	21,250	37,420	38,620
Oregon	20,344	19,420	22,470	45,700	50,340
Pennsylvania	30,285	18,460	22,970	48,990	49,790
Rhode Island	n/a	20,660	26,940	64,600	67,940
South Carolina	19,361	16,150	20,330	44,230	43,970
South Dakota	23,761	17,750	25,920	34,820	35,980
Tennessee	23,434	16,070	18,870	41,970	44,230
Texas	25,062	16,270	19,610	44,710	45,860
Utah	20,364	17,740	19,850	41,010	45,520
Vermont	25,707	19,520	25,830	45,450	48,020
Virginia	27,473	18,120	23,770	50,030	52,130
Washington	23,512	20,150	25,130	49,800	54,220
West Virginia	27,164	15,430	21,800	43,770	43,430
Wisconsin	27,580	21,180	20,720	45,220	49,100
Wyoming	24,652	18,360	26,060	48,450	52,290
United States	26,145	18,970	23,870	47,100	49,330

Sources: Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), CLASP DataFinder, at <http://www.clasp.org/data>; data are from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008 Program Information Report; and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2008 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates and May 2008 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, at http://stats.bls.gov/oes/2008/may/oes_dl.htm#2008.

— Some of the differences in compensation are related to requirements regarding the credential and education levels of teachers.

State Overview of Early Childhood Development Data

States	General cost of center-based child care for 4-year olds is at least 1 1/2 times the cost of an in-state tuition at a public 4-year university (F-6)	Eligibility for public child care subsidies limited to children in families with incomes below 175% of poverty (F-7)	States where fewer than 3.7% of 3-year-olds are in state funded Pre-K programs (F-12)	States where fewer than 25.7% of 4-year-olds are in state funded Pre-K programs (F-12)	States where fewer than 13.8% of 3-year-olds are in state-funded Pre-K, Head Start or Special Education (F-12)	States where fewer than 38.9% of 4-year-olds are in state-funded Pre-K, Head Start or Special Education (F-12)	No state requirement that full- or half-day kindergarten be offered by local school districts (F-14)	No requirement for mandatory kindergarten attendance (F-14)
Alabama		X	X	X	X	X		X
Alaska			X	X	X	X	X	X
Arizona		X	X	X	X	X		X
Arkansas		X						
California	X			X	X	X		X
Colorado	X			X		X		X
Connecticut				X		X		X
Delaware			X	X	X	X		
District of Columbia	X		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		
Florida	X	X	X		X			X
Georgia		X	X		X			X
Hawaii	X		X	X	X	X		X
Idaho		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Illinois								X
Indiana		X	X	X	X	X		X
Iowa		X	X		X		X	X
Kansas			X	X	X	X		X
Kentucky		X						X
Louisiana			X					X
Maine			X	X	X	X		X
Maryland		X	X		X			
Massachusetts			X	X		X		X
Michigan		X	X	X		X		X
Minnesota			X	X	X	X		X
Mississippi			X	X		X		X
Missouri		X	X	X	X	X		X
Montana		X	X	X		X		X
Nebraska		X	X	X	X	X		X
Nevada	X		X	X	X	X		X
New Hampshire			X	X	X	X	X	X
New Jersey						X		X
New Mexico			X	X	X	X		
New York	X		X				X	X
North Carolina	X		X	X	X	X		X
North Dakota		X	X	X		X	X	X
Ohio				X		X		
Oklahoma			X					
Oregon				X		X		X
Pennsylvania				X		X	X	X
Rhode Island		X	X	X	X	X		
South Carolina		X						
South Dakota			X	X		X		X
Tennessee		X	X	X	X	X		
Texas					X			X
Utah		X	X	X	X	X		X
Vermont								X
Virginia			X	X	X	X		
Washington			X	X	X	X		X
West Virginia		X						
Wisconsin			X		X			X
Wyoming	X		X	X		X		X

n/a – not available