



## **Early Childhood Initiative**

# **Creating an Integrated Efficient Early Care and Education System to Support Children and Families: *A State-by-State Analysis***

*December 2018*



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

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## STAFF

### **Linda Smith**

*Director, Early Childhood Initiative*

### **Sarah Tracey**

*Senior Policy Analyst*

### **Megan Campbell**

*Associate Director, Early Childhood Initiative*

### **Arabella Pluta-Ehlers**

*Project Assistant*

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## CONSULTANTS

### **Mousumi Sarkar**

*Well World Solutions, LLC*

### **Grace Reef**

*Early Learning Policy Group, LLC*

### **Shantel Meek, PhD**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Bipartisan Policy Center would like to thank the Heising-Simons Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for their generous support of this work and the staff who contributed to the design and writing of this report. The Early Childhood Initiative would also like to thank the individuals who verified the information contained in this report as well as Katie Hancock and Katie O'Connor, BPC interns, whose work was essential to completing this report.

## DISCLAIMER

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# Acronym Guide

**ACF:** Administration for Children and Families

**CACFP:** Child and Adult Care Food Program

**CCAMPIS:** Child Care Access Means Parents in School

**CCDBG:** Child Care and Development Block Grant

**CCDF:** Child Care and Development Fund

**DFS:** Department of Family Services

**ECE:** Early Care and Education

**ECIDS:** Early Childhood Integrated Data System

**ED:** Department of Education

**EHS-CCP:** Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership

**FACE:** Family and Child Education

**FY:** Fiscal Year

**GAO:** Government Accountability Office

**HHS:** Department of Health and Human Services

**IDEA:** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

**IDEA Part B, Section 619:** Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities

**IDEA Part C:** Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities

**PDG:** Preschool Development Grants

**Pre-K:** Pre-Kindergarten

**QRIS:** Quality Rating and Improvement System

**RTT-ELC:** Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge

**SAC:** Early Childhood State Advisory Council

**TANF:** Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

**USDA:** Department of Agriculture



# Executive Summary

Recognizing the critical importance of children's earliest years in terms of brain development and later life outcomes, the federal government invests billions of dollars each year in programs designed to provide early care and education (ECE) to children under the age of five. Most federal funds flow through programs managed by federal agencies—principally the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—to the states, which have wide discretion regarding how the funds are administered and coordinated to provide ECE services. Additionally, many states fund Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) and preschool programs using their own state resources.

Amid widespread concern that too many American children are still not getting the healthy start in life that will allow them to reach their full potential as adults, the adequacy and effectiveness of these ECE investments continues to be a subject of active debate. On the one hand, advocates argue that state and federal resources remain inadequate to meet acute and growing ECE needs, especially in light of social changes and economic trends that have left millions of families with young children struggling—financially and otherwise—to provide high-quality care and early learning opportunities. Others point to recent growth in public spending on early childhood programs, including a historic increase in funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program (CCDBG) in fiscal year (FY) 2018 and 2019, and argue that current levels of support ought to be sufficient if only government programs were serving children more efficiently.

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*At a time when demand for ECE services continues to far outpace available resources, the case for continued and even expanded investment must be accompanied by a commitment to efficiency, good governance, and a consistent focus on quality assurance and results.*

These debates are not new: As early as 1994, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), responding to a request from Congress, studied problems of duplication, fragmentation, and lack of coordination in ECE programs. Responding to recommendations in that report, and in a more recent report issued by the GAO in 2017, the key federal agencies have taken a number of steps to improve coordination and integration, in some cases by consolidating existing funding streams and programs. Less clear, however, is whether these steps have translated to improved alignment and coordination at the level of state agencies, which are at the front lines of actually organizing and delivering ECE services. The 2017 GAO report, for example, focused on federal agencies and did not address the state role.

Given the importance of the state-federal partnership in ECE, the Bipartisan Policy Center undertook this study to explore whether states, like the federal government, are making progress toward improved integration and governance in ECE programs. This issue is important for two reasons. First, support for early childhood programs can only be sustained if the programs are viewed as effective and efficient in their use of public funds. At a time when demand for ECE services continues to far outpace available resources—in many states, thousands of families who are eligible for Head Start or child care assistance can't access these programs—the case for continued and even expanded investment must be accompanied by a commitment to efficiency, good governance, and a consistent focus on quality assurance and results.

Second, and equally important, fragmentation, bureaucratic inefficiency, and lack of coordination in the administration of ECE programs creates real obstacles to access and results in many children—often including those who are already the most vulnerable—missing out on the support they need. When families have to apply to multiple programs, housed across multiple agencies, often with duplicative paperwork requirements and inconsistent eligibility criteria, many simply give up. Thus, the focus on integration and alignment should not be viewed as a mere academic exercise designed to satisfy abstract notions of organizational efficiency. Rather, these issues matter on the ground, in the everyday lives of families with young children who too often have trouble determining what services they might be eligible for, let alone how to go about accessing them.

As part of this review, BPC compiled information about each state's specific approaches to organizing, administering, and coordinating ECE programs. Specifically, BPC looked at:

- The total amount of federal and state funds spent on early childhood development programs.
- How states are responding to federal requirements, including the coordination requirements set forth in various authorizing statutes.
- The number of state agencies and divisions within state agencies involved in administering these programs.
- The institutional housing of related programs and the level of coordination and collaboration that takes place across programs.
- Whether the state has a functioning early learning state advisory council (SAC) and where that council is housed, if it exists, and, similarly, where the Head Start Collaboration Office is housed.
- The integration of early childhood data across programs and implementation of quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) at the state level.

To enable comparisons across states, BPC also developed a scoring system that incorporates several measures of programmatic governance (administration) and integration. Parameters considered in the scoring system include the number of state agencies involved in administering core ECE programs; whether some funding streams were split across these agencies; and the institutional placement of key offices such as the Head Start Collaboration office. BPC's scoring system also considered factors such as the presence of a SAC to provide guidance on ECE issues and efforts to integrate quality metrics (such as QRIS) with state child care subsidy programs. Finally, BPC's system awarded bonus points if states supplemented federal ECE resources with their own funding, for example to expand Head Start; conversely, states lost points in the scoring system if they failed to fully draw down federal ECE funds.

The 10 states that ranked highest using BPC's scoring system, and the 10 states that scored lowest, are summarized in Table ES-1. Obviously, organization and integration are only one aspect of programmatic effectiveness. Ultimately, the most important metric of success is improved ECE outcomes for young children. Nonetheless, BPC's analysis is grounded in a strong assumption that better program alignment and coordination matters to outcomes because it (a) affects how readily families can access services; (b) maximizes ECE benefits by leveraging scarce public resources more efficiently; and (c) promotes better monitoring and oversight to identify service gaps and target continued improvements in program design and delivery.

**Table ES-1. Results of BPC Scoring System for State Integration of ECE Programs**

Top 10	Bottom 10
1. Maryland	40. Hawaii
1. Washington, D.C.	40. New York
3. Arkansas	42. Arizona
3. Georgia	42. Nevada
3. New Mexico	44. Mississippi
6. Pennsylvania	45. Missouri
7. North Carolina	46. Idaho
8. Louisiana	47. South Dakota
8. Montana	48. Kansas
8. Washington	49. Wyoming
	50. Texas

Though there is considerable variation in states' individual approaches to delivering and organizing ECE services, broadly speaking the states that scored higher in the ranking system had consolidated program administration in a smaller number of agencies (typically two to three agencies, rather than three to four agencies); had functioning SACs; and had implemented QRIS. In most or all of the top 10 scoring states, a single agency administered funds from the largest federal programs, including the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), as well as the state's own Pre-K programs. Nearly all of these states (nine out of 10) also housed their Head Start Collaboration Office in the same agency. Table ES-2 summarizes some of these differences.

**Table ES-2: Summary of Differences in Top and Bottom Scoring States ECE Programs**

Scoring Metric	Number of States		Overall
	Top 10	Bottom 10 (based on 11 states)	
CCDF Subsidy and Quality Split Across Agencies	0	2	5
CCDF, CACFP and State Pre-K Housed Together	8	0	12
Head Start Collaboration Office Housed with CCDF and State Pre-K	9	0	18
Functioning ECE State Advisory Council (SAC)	10	7	46
State did not use all available FY2016 CCDF funds	0	2	4
Has state-wide QRIS system	10	5	43
Has Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grant	3	0	6
Transferred TANF funds to CCDF	5	3	26
Has Pre-K program	10	8	46
State provides additional funds to Head Start	2	0	12
Average number of agencies administering the six federal ECE program and state Pre-K	2-3	3-4	3

Overall, BPC's detailed state-by-state review suggests that while many states have taken important steps, both to improve coordination and consolidate the administration of ECE programs and to introduce quality measures and enhance data collection, there is room for further improvement. Overcoming the common tendency of bureaucratic entities to protect their funding streams and their policy prerogatives by resisting integration and sometimes even coordination with other entities remains a perennial challenge. Moreover, in this domain (as in others), the need to manage multiple federal requirements and different funding streams can reinforce bureaucratic inertia and create additional barriers to changing the status quo. On the other hand, states and especially governors, sometimes fail to recognize how much latitude they have to innovate and improve on the organization and implementation of their ECE programs. In fact, in only one instance are federal funds required by statute to be administered by particular state agencies.

Drawing from insights and information gathered in the course of this study, BPC has developed specific recommendations aimed at further advancing state and federal efforts to better align and coordinate ECE programs. Implementing these recommendations would help policymakers and program administrators at all levels of government work together more effectively to advance their common, core objective: ensuring that all of America's young children get the start they need to develop their full potential as future students, workers, citizens, and leaders.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

BPC's review identified distinct coordination challenges at different levels (and branches) of government. For that reason, BPC developed recommendations to improve early childhood integration at the state and federal levels and to reduce government challenges. These recommendations are grouped by actions that can be undertaken by states, by the federal agencies, and by Congress. Implementing these recommendations will help create a more integrated ECE system, which promotes efficient use of funds and removes obstacles for families and children seeking services and care.

### For Governors

- Appoint an independent review board charged with completing a business analysis and developing concrete recommendations for improving ECE program administration and governance at the state level. Unlike a SAC or Children's Cabinet, an independent review board would be an entity separate from the state bureaucracy, allowing for an objective evaluation of ECE integration and unbiased recommendations.
- Ensure that the SAC for early education and care, which is mandated under the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, is fulfilling its statutorily defined responsibilities, which include conducting a statewide needs assessment on the quality and availability of ECE programs.
- Review the placement of and requirements for the State Head Start Collaboration Office to ensure maximum alignment of Head Start services with other state ECE efforts.
- Conduct hearings and focus groups with families to identify barriers to services.
- Ensure that licensing is the foundation for the state QRIS. QRIS are an important tool for measuring and incentivizing quality in ECE programs. Having licensing serve as the entry level for state QRIS helps integrate the QRIS into the ECE system and ensures program quality for all children.
- Ensure that monitoring efforts are coordinated between the child care licensing agencies, CACFP, and QRIS systems. Administering CACFP through the same agency as state Pre-K and CCDF can improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness of monitoring and oversight.
- Consider implementing a system that assigns each child a unique identifier number at birth or when the child enters the state's ECE system. The number would remain with the child over time and across programs or services and key databases, allowing the state to track each child's progress over time and reduce redundant paperwork requirements for children who participate in multiple programs.
- Support or create an early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS).

### For Federal Agencies

- Reinstate the Federal Early Learning Interagency Policy Board, co-chaired by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education, and include the Departments of Agriculture and Defense, as these departments also administer programs that support early care and education.
- Identify lessons learned from the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grants that were awarded to states, and issue a report identifying barriers to better alignment of federal and state efforts.
- Develop technical-assistance capacity to support state efforts aimed at improving ECE program administration and governance.
- Evaluate grants provided under the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge and Preschool Development Grants to assess both their impact on state administration and the extent to which states sustained the work as indicated in their grant applications.

## For Congress

- Align early childhood eligibility requirements by defining consistent income ranges and by requiring states to serve those with the highest need first, while still giving states latitude to serve children in low-wage families (similar to the CCDBG program). This will ease the “cliff effect,” in which families become abruptly ineligible for support if their income exceeds a certain threshold, and it will encourage families to seek promotions and higher wages.
- Amend the Head Start Act to allow Head Start grantees serving 3- and 4-year-olds to redirect funds to Early Head Start when the state is offering free prekindergarten to 3- and 4-year-olds. This will allow current grantees to better meet the need for infant and toddler services without sacrificing existing grants that were designed to serve 3- and 4-year-olds.
- Conduct committee hearings on current programs that serve infants and toddlers and preschool children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Parts B and C to identify barriers to families who are transitioning from one early childhood program to another as children age out.
- Consider a birth-to-age-5 alignment of IDEA Part C and Part B, whereby families with young children can maintain eligibility until school entry instead of requiring families to reapply for Part B when children age out of Part C.
- Allow governors the flexibility to move the administration of IDEA Part B, Section 619 to align with other early education programs to create a more seamless and integrated system.
- Require all funds spent on child care under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, whether the funds are direct or transferred, to meet CCDBG requirements, including those for data reporting.<sup>a</sup> Currently, there is no requirement to report data on how many children receive care through TANF direct spending or what type or quality of care they are receiving. Having all TANF funds follow CCDBG requirements would provide a more accurate understanding of the need and how many children are being served.
- Conduct hearings on the effectiveness of the Head Start Collaboration Offices and on how these offices can help promote maximum alignment of Head Start services with other state ECE efforts.
- Request a GAO study of activities undertaken by SACs, including a review of whether these councils are meeting their statutorily defined objectives, and offer recommendations about ways to improve SAC effectiveness. These recommendations should then be included in legislation.
- Require the Department of Health and Human Services to report to Congress on the status of SACs and of activities undertaken jointly by SACs and Head Start Collaboration Offices.
- Request that the GAO study state administration and alignment of ECE programs as well as state administrative expenditures. (Previous GAO studies have only reviewed federal agencies.)

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<sup>a</sup> Note that TANF funds *transferred* to CCDBG are already required to follow CCDBG rules, but this does not apply to funds spent directly under TANF.





## Introduction



*“Few policy challenges are more important to our nation’s future than helping all American children get the strong start they need.”<sup>1</sup>*

This was the conclusion reached by former Rep. George Miller of California and former Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, as co-chairs of the Bipartisan Policy Center’s Early Childhood Initiative. Their 2017 report, [\*A Bipartisan Case for Early Childhood Development\*](#), highlighted recent advances in the science of brain development to argue for a policy agenda aimed at ensuring that all children have access to quality care and learning experiences in the crucial years before they enter school.<sup>2</sup>

Despite federal funding to support quality care and learning for all children, the data show that just a fraction of eligible children receive subsidies for child care. A 2015 report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that just 11 percent of federally eligible children received subsidies (see Figure 1).

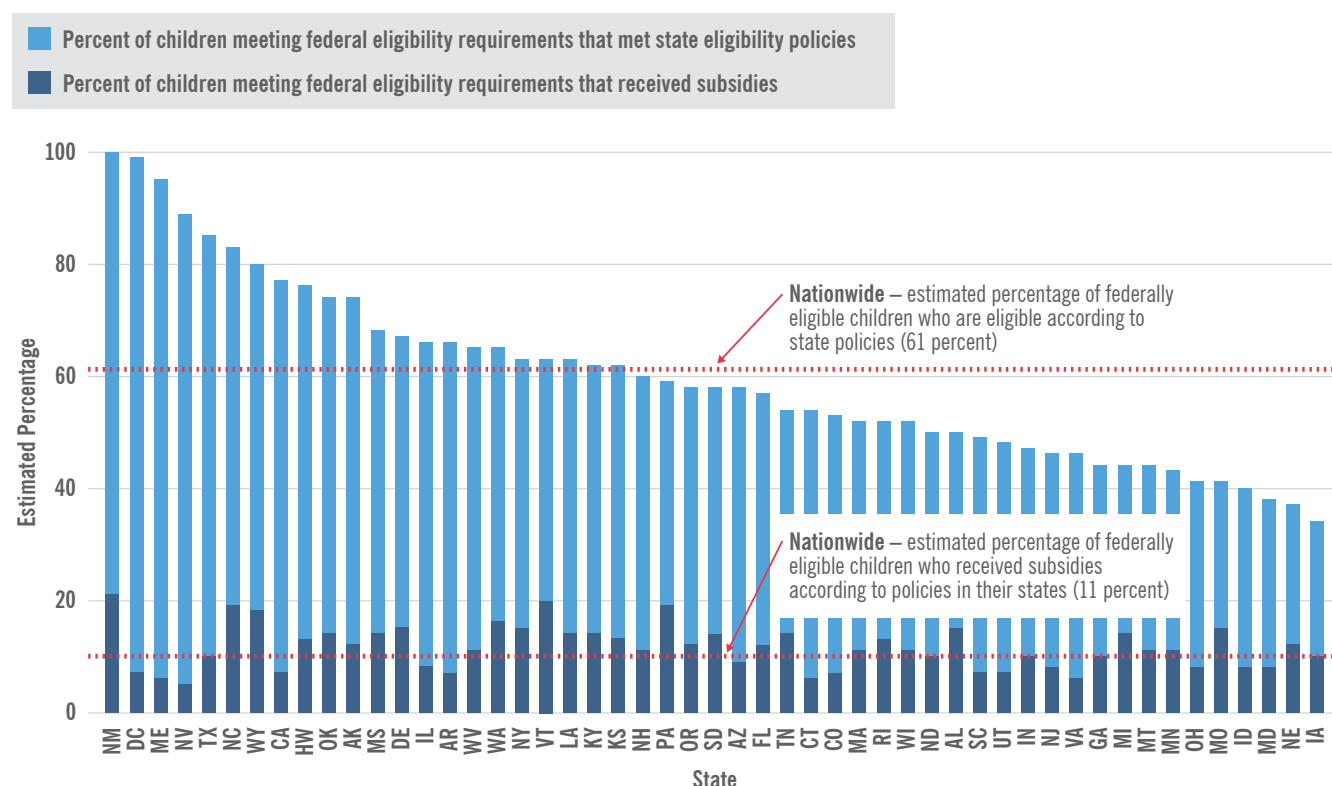
Fortunately, calls for action on early care and education (ECE) have been finding a receptive audience among policymakers and the public, as interest in early child development and recognition of its lifelong impacts continues to grow. One result, in recent years, has been a substantial increase in federal funding for programs that explicitly address ECE for young children. The federal Child Care and

Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program, for example, provides grants to states to help offset the cost of child care for low-income families and undertake other activities aimed at improving the quality of child care. Congress appropriated nearly double the amount of CCDBG funding in fiscal year (FY) 2018 compared with FY 2017, increasing overall funding for CCDF from \$5.8 billion to \$8.1 billion. Congress also increased funding for other major ECE programs, including Head Start and Early Head Start, in FY 2018. While these increases are historic, the need for ECE programs still outpaces the funding.

At the same time, Congress and the federal agencies have taken steps to address concerns about duplication, fragmentation, and “stovepiping” in the patchwork of government programs that serve young children and their families. As early as 1994, Congress requested that the GAO examine issues of governance and coordination in existing ECE programs. Since its first report on this topic, in 1994, the GAO has published six follow-up studies.<sup>3</sup> Its most recent report—issued in 2017—found that the federal government has had some success in reducing fragmentation and overlap in ECE programs.



**Figure 1: Percentage of Children Eligible for Federal Child Care Subsidies Who Also Qualify Under State Policies and Receive Assistance**



**Source:** GAO Analysis of Urban Institute Transfer Income Model, version 3 data in Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) *Estimates of Child Care Eligibility and Receipt for Fiscal Year 2012*, page 13 and of HHS data.

Whether states, which receive and disburse the vast majority of federal ECE funds, are having similar success in addressing issues of coordination and integration, however, has been less clear—especially since the GAO reports to date have focused only on the federal agencies. In an effort to fill this gap, BPC reviewed publicly available data (such as expenditure data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), as well as state and program websites, and worked with all 50 states<sup>b</sup> and the District of Columbia to verify information about states' specific approaches to organizing and administering ECE programs, including programs funded by federal appropriations as well as state-funded Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) and preschool programs. BPC's interest in ECE governance at the state level follows from the observation that states generally have wide latitude in the way they choose to organize, manage, and fund ECE programs on the ground. Better program integration and coordination at the state level is thus important, not only because it promotes the efficient use of public funds but also because it bears directly on families' ability to access the resources they need.

## THE CASE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Neuroscience shows that during a child's earliest years, more than 1 million new neural connections form every second, laying the foundation for social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Genetics as well as a child's earliest experiences affect the formation of the brain.<sup>4</sup>

In 2016, throughout the United States, there were more than 23.7 million children under the age of 6.<sup>5</sup> About 4.1 million (21.3 percent) of the children under age 5 lived in poverty.<sup>6</sup> Research shows that children in poverty experience stressors that can be damaging to their socio-emotional and cognitive development,<sup>7</sup> which can be effectively mitigated with high-quality ECE programs.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>b</sup> Note: Vermont declined to participate in this report, meaning the data presented for Vermont comes from publicly available sources only and is not verified by the state. Thus, BPC calculated an integration score for Vermont but did not include the state in the ranking.

## THE CASE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

More than 14.9 million children under age six lived in households where all parents were working (either both parents in married families worked or single mothers or fathers raising young children worked).<sup>9</sup> Many of these children are in some type of child care setting so their parents can work. For these children, their child care setting is their early learning program.

Information collected by BPC was used to generate individual state fact sheets. In addition, BPC created a simple scoring system to enable cross-state comparisons of program integration. The scoring system was used to rank states in terms of their relative success across a number of measures: consolidating program administration, establishing advisory councils, implementing quality measures, and deploying available funds.

This report is organized as follows:

- Section 2 provides an overview of the main federal ECE programs and funding streams.
- Section 3 turns to recent efforts to promote integration at the federal level and examines the state role, both in organizing and overseeing the programs that deliver actual ECE support and services and in responding to statutory requirements and executive agency guidance.
- Section 4 reviews BPC's findings concerning the current administration of ECE programs at the state level.
- Section 5 describes the scoring system BPC used to rank state efforts at ECE program integration and summarizes the results.
- Section 6 concludes with recommendations for states, federal agencies, and Congress that are aimed at promoting further improvements in the administration, coordination, quality control, and ultimate effectiveness of ECE programs at all levels of government.





## Overview of Federal Early Childhood Programs

The federal government supports young children and their early learning and development in several ways: (1) by directly funding programs that have an explicit early learning or child care purpose; (2) by providing funds to states that can be used at the states' discretion to provide or support early learning or child care; and (3) through tax expenditures that subsidize child care, such as the child and dependent care tax credit. In 2012<sup>10</sup> and again in 2017,<sup>11</sup> the GAO reviewed these three broad categories of funding related to early learning and child care.

Table 1 shows the nine programs identified in the 2017 GAO report as having an explicit early learning or child care purpose. Funding for these programs totaled \$19.61 billion for FY 2018, a significant increase from FY 2016 or FY 2017 funding.<sup>12,13,14</sup> At the federal level, most ECE funding flows through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which administers two of the largest programs: Head Start and the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), which includes funds from the CCDBG and other programs.<sup>15,16</sup> Head Start and CCDF together account for more than 90 percent of overall federal funding for programs with an explicit focus on child care and early learning; federal appropriations for these two programs totaled \$9.86

billion and \$8.14 billion, respectively, in FY 2018. The combined FY 2018 funding for the other programs listed in Table 1 totaled roughly \$1.23 billion. Based on FY 2019 appropriations, these increased levels of spending for CCDBG and Head Start will be continued and have even been further increased.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the nine programs identified in the GAO report, two other federal programs—Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)—provide funds that states use to support young children, to cover child care expenses in the case of TANF and to provide food assistance in the case of CACFP. Both of these programs were considered in BPC's state-by-state analysis and are included in the short federal program descriptions that follow.

The remainder of this section provides a short description of the major federal programs that channel funding to states to support young children. Programs are grouped by the federal agency responsible for administering them. Further details about these programs and their eligibility requirements are provided in Appendix A.

<sup>c</sup> The term "Child Care and Development Fund" is not established by statute, rather it was coined in regulation by the HHS. CCDF includes discretionary funding authorized by the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act and subject to annual appropriations and an entitlement portion of Mandatory and Matching funds made available under Section 418 of the Social Security Act. States must spend state "maintenance of effort" and matching funds to access the entitlement funds.

**Table 1: Appropriations for Programs Identified by GAO as Explicitly Addressing Early Childhood Care and Education, FY2017–2019**

Program	Appropriation			
	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19
<b>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services</b>				
Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) (includes funds from CCDBG)	\$5.68 billion	\$5.77 billion	\$8.14 billion	\$8.19 billion*
Head Start (includes Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships)	\$9.17 billion	\$9.25 billion	\$9.86 billion	\$10.06 billion
<b>U.S. Department of Education</b>				
Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities (IDEA, Part B, Section 619)	\$368 million	\$368 million	\$381 million	\$391 million
Early Intervention for Infants & Toddlers with Disabilities (IDEA, Part C)	\$459 million	\$458 million	\$470 million	\$470 million
Child Care Access Means Parents in School	\$15.1 million	\$15.1 million	\$50 million	\$50 million
Preschool Development Grants	\$250 million	\$250 million	\$250 million	\$250 million
Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy	\$190 million	\$190 million	\$190 million	\$190 million
Promise Neighborhoods	\$73 million	\$73 million	\$78 million	\$78 million
<b>U.S. Department of Interior</b>				
Family and Child Education (FACE)	<i>Not included in analysis</i>			

\*Estimated annual appropriation. At the time of publication, full year appropriation for CCDF Mandatory funding was not available.

## U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- The **CCDF** is administered by the Office of Child Care within the HHS's Administration for Children and Families (ACF). It provides grants to states to help cover child care expenses for low-income families so that parents can work, attend school, or enroll in job-training programs. CCDF funds are also used to improve the quality of child care.
- **Head Start** (includes Early Head Start and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships) is administered through the ACF's Office of Head Start. It provides grants to local community organizations to implement Head Start (for 3- and 4-year-old children) and Early Head Start (for infants and toddlers). Grants to form Early Head Start-Child Care partnerships (also for infants and toddlers) are awarded to both local community organizations and states.
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families** is administered through ACF's Office of Family Assistance. It provides grants to states to help meet the needs of low-income families.

States can transfer up to 30 percent of TANF funding to CCDF and can spend an unlimited amount of TANF funding directly to help low-income families cover child care expenses.

## U.S. Department of Education

- **Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities** is a program established under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It is administered by the Office of Special Education Programs in the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and provides funds to states to support early intervention services for infants and toddlers. States set eligibility criteria for participation in this program, which is intended to support children with developmental delays or disabilities.
- **Preschool Grants for Children with Disabilities** is a program established under IDEA Part B, Section 619. It is likewise administered by the Office of Special Education Programs and provides grants to states to meet the needs of preschool-age children (that is, ages 3-5) with disabilities.



## U.S. Department of Agriculture

- The **CACFP** is administered by the Food and Nutrition Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It provides funds to states to support nutritious meals and snacks for low-income children in ECE programs. As part of this program, child care providers that offer CACFP benefits are subject to regular inspections.<sup>18</sup>

In FY 2017, the CACFP provided meals and snacks to 4.4 million children daily, across child care centers, family care homes, and afterschool programs.

64,000 child care centers and more than 102,000 family child care providers use CACFP to provide children with high-quality nutrition.<sup>19</sup>

## U.S. Department of the Interior

- **Family and Child Education (FACE)** is administered by the Interior Department's Bureau of Indian Education and currently has programs in 49 bureau schools. It was designed as a family literacy program to promote early childhood development and parental involvement in Indian communities. Because many of the Native American tribal entities that receive FACE funding cross state lines, BPC did not include FACE in its state-by-state analysis.

## COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAMS WITH AN ECE FOCUS

During the past decade, Congress funded a number of competitive grant programs to improve the quality of early learning programs, increase child access to such programs, and support data integration related to the need for and delivery of high-quality early learning programs. These grants are awarded to states, organizations, universities, and communities to improve ECE systems or provide services to children and families, subject to certain criteria. The main competitive grant programs with an ECE focus include:

1. Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership<sup>20</sup> grants, which are administered by the HHS.
2. Striving Readers,<sup>21</sup> administered by ED.
3. Child Care Access Means Parents in School,<sup>22</sup> which are administered by ED.
4. Promise Neighborhoods,<sup>23</sup> administered by ED.
5. Preschool Development Grants,<sup>24</sup> which were administered jointly by the HHS and ED beginning in FY 2014 for four years.
6. Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grants,<sup>25</sup> which were administered jointly by the HHS and ED beginning in FY 2012 and terminated in FY 2017.

Note that BPC did not include these competitive grants in its analysis of states' core ECE systems, since the grants are often available for a limited time period, may be awarded to nongovernmental entities, and are not received by every state.



## Early Childhood Program Integration Efforts and the State Role

Concern about excessive fragmentation, overlap, and lack of coordination in the federal government's overall approach to early child development has been a feature of ECE policy discussions going back to the 1990s, even as Congress continued to authorize and fund new programs in this area. To address this concern, measures intended to promote greater coordination of ECE programs and policies were included as part of the reauthorization of several key laws related to early childhood development over the last decade, including Head Start in 2007,<sup>26</sup> the CCDBG program in 2014,<sup>27</sup> and the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015.<sup>28</sup>

In an effort to increase cross-agency collaboration, for example, the HHS and ED<sup>29</sup> from 2011 to 2017 co-chaired an Early Learning Interagency Policy Board, which was tasked with defining joint goals, tracking progress toward those goals, and working to bridge organizational cultures (through common definitions and terminology, among other things). A second example was the integration of technical assistance for early learning programs in the Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System. In recent years, federal agencies have also issued a number of joint policy statements on a wide range of topics, including career pathways for the early

learning workforce,<sup>30</sup> data integration for children served in early learning programs,<sup>31</sup> dual-language learners,<sup>32</sup> family engagement,<sup>33</sup> homeless children,<sup>34</sup> home visiting,<sup>35</sup> inclusion for children with disabilities,<sup>36</sup> monitoring across early learning programs,<sup>37</sup> and preventing the suspension and expulsion of young students from school.<sup>38</sup> Surveying these efforts, the most recent (2017) GAO report on early learning and child care concluded that the federal agencies had made progress: "The resulting improvement in coordination has helped mitigate the effects of fragmentation and overlap."<sup>39</sup>

Though states retain wide latitude in deciding how to use federal ECE funds, the federal government has also taken some steps to help state agencies enhance program alignment and effectiveness—primarily by supporting the formation of state advisory councils and improved data collection and integration. In addition, the HHS and the USDA issued a joint policy statement in 2016 recommending specific steps to be taken by states to improve ECE monitoring and oversight.

The remainder of this chapter examines specific aspects of state systems for administering ECE programs, including federally funded programs and state Pre-K.

## State Advisory Councils

Authority to create or designate a state advisory council (SAC) to support high-quality comprehensive ECE systems for children younger than school age was included in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (Pub L. 110-134).<sup>40</sup> The federal government can allocate funding to help states establish SACs, but it is the state's responsibility to fund SAC operations. The SAC's responsibilities under the Head Start statute include the following:<sup>41</sup>

- Conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services (including the availability of high-quality Pre-K services).
- Identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among federally funded and state-funded child development, child care, and early childhood education programs and services.
- Develop recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing federal, state, and local child care and early childhood education programs.

- Develop recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data-collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the state.
- Develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators in the state.
- Assess the capacity and effectiveness of two- and four-year public and private institutions of higher education in the state toward supporting the development of early childhood educators.
- Make recommendations for improvements in state early learning standards and undertake efforts to develop high-quality comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate.

## Data Systems

Congress has also made federal funds available to help states develop data systems and integrate those data systems with their ECE programs. For example, 26 states have received federal funding

## COORDINATED MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT OF ECE PROGRAMS: KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

A 2016 joint policy statement by the HHS and the USDA concerning ECE monitoring and oversight requirements recommends that states should:

- Examine the governance structure of ECE programs to foster greater coordination and policy alignment.
- Develop consistent approaches, including differential monitoring systems, to target resources to providers at the greatest risk of providing unsafe settings and to promote greater monitoring efficiencies.
- Align monitoring policies and procedures across funding streams to promote more effective practice, reduce confusion, realize cost efficiencies, and promote cross-training of personnel.
- Adopt a universal set of health, safety, and performance standards to be used across all programs.
- Establish caseload requirements that take into account the type of ECE program being monitored and the varying levels of quality.
- Develop cross-agency protocols that ensure agencies are responsive when monitoring visits reveal situations where children may be at risk.
- Ensure all requirements are publicly available and written in plain language with clear rationale and indicators about how the requirements will be assessed.
- Use technology to increase efficiency, to better target training and technical-assistance resources, and to support data sharing.

**Source:** U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Coordinated Efficiencies in Monitoring and Oversight of Early Care and Education Programs." Available at: [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/final\\_hhs\\_usda\\_joint\\_monitoring\\_policy\\_statement.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/final_hhs_usda_joint_monitoring_policy_statement.pdf).

to incorporate ECE data into their State Longitudinal Data Systems database<sup>42</sup> or to develop or enhance their early childhood development data systems. Under the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant funding, 16 states committed to developing an early childhood integrated database;<sup>43</sup> federal grants have also been provided through Early Childhood Comprehensive Services to create or support early childhood integrated data systems (ECIDS).<sup>44</sup> What is less clear is whether data initiatives have been sustained when federal grant funding ends, as occurred with the RTT-ELC grants, which are no longer operating.

States that have received federal funds to improve their ECE data systems have often used these resources to aggregate and integrate data on children and families who receive services in an effort to better understand the population being served, to assess the extent of the need that is being met, and to gain a fuller understanding of the types of services that families with young children are using and then to identify gaps. For example, a child could be in a Head Start program, also participate in a state Pre-K program, and also receive wrap-around child care subsidies so that program hours match the needs of the child's working parents. In many states, however, data are reported by funding stream, without a unique count of the children who receive assistance.

Integrating ECE data with the delivery of services is a particular challenge for states, according to a recent report by Child Trends' Early Childhood Data Collaborative,<sup>45</sup> which found that only 22 states had the capacity to link data to at least one early childhood program. Only two states, Georgia and Mississippi, were able to link data across six major ECE programs.<sup>46</sup> And only 11 states reported linking ECE data with social-services data.<sup>47</sup>

## Head Start Collaboration Offices

Under the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, state Head Start Collaboration Offices are charged to:<sup>48</sup>

- Conduct a needs assessment to address the needs of Head Start agencies in the state with respect to collaboration, coordination and alignment of services, and alignment of curricula and assessments used in Head Start programs and state early learning standards.
- Develop a strategic plan to enhance collaboration and coordination of Head Start services with other entities providing early childhood education and development.

- Assist Head Start agencies to develop a plan for full working-day, full calendar-year services for children in Head Start who need such services.
- Assist Head Start agencies to align curricula and assessments with state early learning standards.
- Enable Head Start agencies to better access professional-development opportunities for Head Start staff.
- Promote partnerships among Head Start agencies, state and local governments, and the private sector to help ensure that Head Start children are receiving comprehensive services that prepare children for elementary school.

## Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) are systems for rating the quality of child care and child education providers. In some states, providers must participate in a rating system to be eligible for subsidies or other forms of support available through federal programs such as CCDF or TANF. In other states, provider participation is voluntary. States also vary in which types of child care providers can participate in the QRIS. Based on 2016 data from the Quality Compendium, 38 states include licensed center-based programs in their QRIS and 36 states include licensed family child care homes.<sup>49</sup> QRIS are an important tool for measuring the quality of ECE providers, as a source of information for parents, and as a strategy to create incentives for continued quality improvement. As part of the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010,<sup>50</sup> (an update to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993), government agencies are required to regularly review department goals within a performance framework. One of the goals within the ACF is to increase the number of states with QRIS that meet high-quality benchmarks.<sup>51</sup>

## State Funding for ECE

There are a variety of ways that states supplement federal funds received for ECE programs beyond required state matching funds or state maintenance of effort funds when maintenance of effort is required for ECE programs. For example, federal TANF dollars are allocated to states; however, states have discretion as to how those funds are spent. There is not a federal requirement to transfer TANF funding to CCDF (although it is allowed). Nor is there a requirement to spend TANF dollars directly on child care (although it is allowed).



**Table 2: State and Federal TANF Spending on ECE, FY 2016**

Category	Number of States Spending TANF on ECE	Total Amount of TANF Spent on ECE
Direct – Child Care	49	\$3,733,381,957
Direct – Pre-K/Head Start	27	\$2,300,244,894
Transfer to CCDF	26	\$1,403,448,661

### State Pre-Kindergarten Programs<sup>52</sup>

Most states (44) spent state funds on Pre-K programs in 2017. Only six states did not report any such spending (Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming). While Montana did not report any state spending in 2017, the state has begun piloting a Pre-K program and is spending state monies to do so.

### Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships<sup>53</sup>

The HHS competitively awards Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grants to states and local organizations within states. Beginning in FY 2015, these funds were awarded primarily to community-based organizations; however, six states (Alabama, California, Delaware, Georgia, Pennsylvania) and the District of Columbia received funding to administer the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) grants at the state level. (Note: The Commonwealth of the National Mariana Islands, a U.S. territory, also received this grant but is not included in this report.<sup>54</sup>)

### Programs for Young Children with Special Needs

The early childhood components of IDEA are Part C and Part B, Section 619. Part C provides early intervention services to children with disabilities, from birth to age 3. Part B, Section 619 provides special education services to preschool-age children with disabilities.

Both programs are significantly underfunded, which has contributed to a flawed system that does not reach all the children with disabilities or developmental delays who need services. And even where services are provided, they are often minimal (for example, one hour of speech therapy per week or month) and thus not sufficient to meet the child's and the family's needs.

The flexible nature of these programs has also resulted in a patchwork of state policies that are often driven more by budgetary considerations than by assessments of need. Thus families often have difficulty navigating this program, particularly during the difficult time following a child's diagnosis when they are still trying to understand the service delivery system. To make matters worse, these programs are often inefficiently managed and in some cases, not aligned with the rest of the early childhood system—or even aligned among IDEA systems. For example, infants and toddlers may receive services under Part C but are required to qualify again under a different system, with different criteria, when they turn 3 as part of the Part B, Section 619 program.

This lack of alignment and fragmentation, with services administered by different agencies in many states, can result in parents being unable to secure the early intervention services their young children need. Part of the problem may be that funds available under Part B, Section 619 are required by statute to be administered by state education agencies and distributed across local educational agencies. Governor discretion to move the administration of Section 619 funding could be helpful in some cases to reduce the complexity and coordination challenges associated with this program.

**Table 3: Children Birth through Five Served by IDEA in 2016-2017<sup>55</sup>**

Program	Population Served	Children Served
Part C	Birth through two years	369,672
Part B, Section 619	Three to five years	744,174

**Note:** No Part B numbers reported for Nebraska or Wisconsin



# State Approaches to the Administration of Early Childhood Programs

Throughout the United States, a variety of state agencies<sup>d</sup> are responsible for administering various ECE funding streams and programs. Decisions about agency administration and groupings of related programs within the same agency have very real practical implications. For example, each funding stream (federal and state) has its own eligibility, monitoring, and quality requirements. When programs are grouped together, it is easier for agencies to align requirements to promote efficiency. Some states have aligned program standards to promote more seamless entry and access. Other states have promoted more efficient monitoring by cross-training personnel. This not only reduces costs but can improve the operation of centers and classrooms on the ground (given fewer program disruptions).

In sum, having more agencies involved can make coordination and collaboration more challenging. Oversight (program monitoring) may also be less efficient, especially if duplicative monitoring occurs across programs by funding stream, which is often the practice.

To learn more about the administration and coordination of ECE programs at the state level, BPC reviewed publicly available data as well as program and state websites, and worked with individual states to collect information in the following areas:

- The total amount of federal and state funds spent on early childhood development programs.
- How states are responding to federal requirements, including the coordination requirements set forth in various authorizing statutes.
- The number of state agencies and divisions within state agencies involved in administering early childhood development programs.
- The institutional housing of related programs and the level of coordination and collaboration that takes place across programs.

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<sup>d</sup> Different states refer to agencies differently. They may be called departments, divisions, cabinets, offices, agencies, or something else. BPC refers to them collectively as “agencies” in this report for ease of reading. By “agencies,” we mean the top-level entity (under the political leadership) that administers these programs. Various offices within these agencies administer specific aspects of these programs.

- Whether there is a SAC and where that council is housed, if it exists, and, similarly, where the Head Start Collaboration Office is housed.
- The integration of early childhood data across programs and implementation of QRIS at the state level.

In collecting these data, BPC found wide variation in the level of ECE program integration at the state level. Some states have implemented highly integrated and functional systems to administer these programs while administration in other states remains quite fragmented. Governors, despite having substantial discretion in terms of assigning programs to state agencies may not be aware of how much leeway they have to make institutional changes that would help better align and coordinate ECE services. Thus, one of the chief recommendations to emerge from this report is that governors should appoint an independent review board to conduct a complete business analysis of state administration and governance of ECE programs.

## Number of Agencies Involved in ECE and Clustering of ECE Programs in Agencies

BPC began by reviewing the number of agencies involved in administering ECE funding within each state as a simple—albeit imperfect—measure of organizational integration. Agencies were defined as departments or agencies that directly report to the governor, are politically appointed secretaries and other such entities, or are directly elected bodies, such as a board of education.

BPC found that in most states (31 out of 50 states, plus the District of Columbia), at least three state agencies are involved in administering ECE funding. As noted, governors generally have wide latitude when assigning ECE funding and program responsibility to different state agencies. The one notable exception is IDEA Part B, Section 619 funding, which is required by statute to be administered by state departments of education.

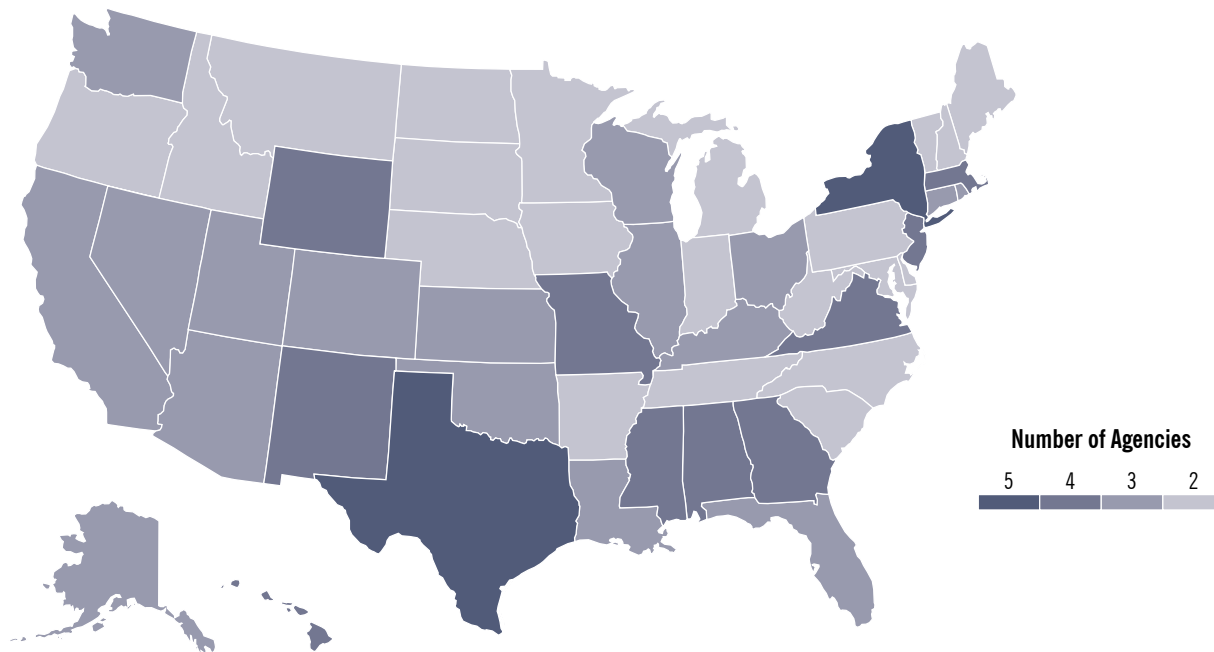
In 11 states, four state agencies administer ECE funding, and in two states (New York and Texas), five state agencies administer ECE funding (Figure 2).

BPC also considered the extent to which ECE programs were clustered within individual state agencies, since one might reasonably expect more collaboration and coordination across programs that are housed

within the same agency. The findings are summarized in Figure 3. They suggest, for example, that it is common to have four programs administered by a single agency (this is the case in 19 states). In

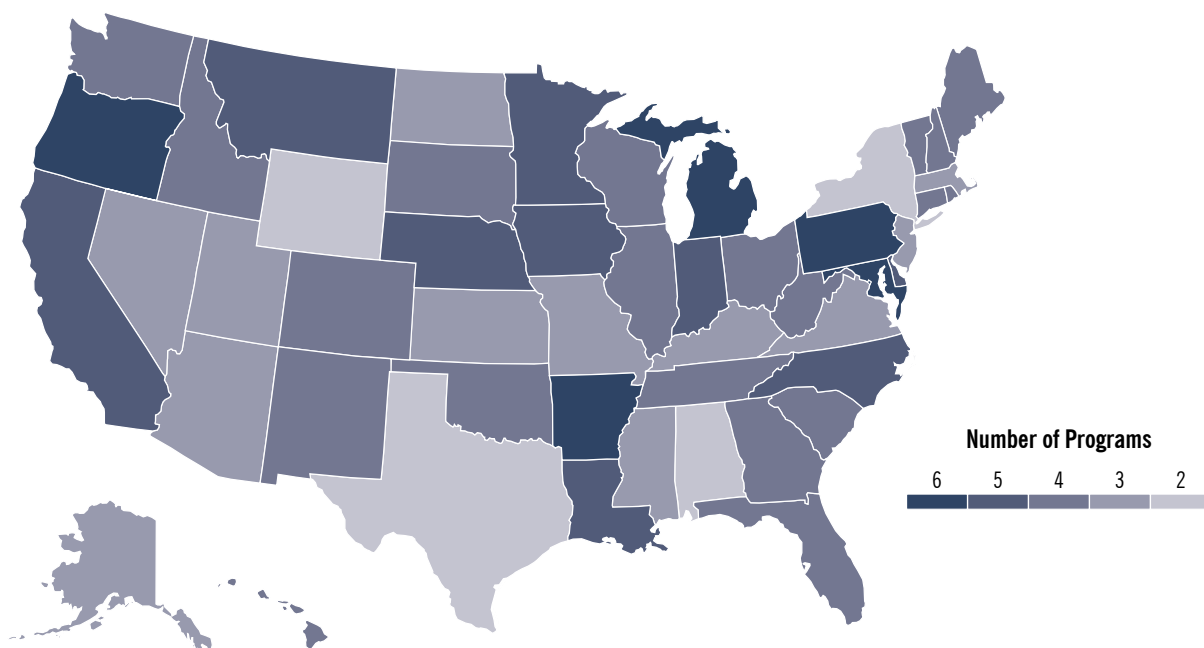
some states, five or six programs were administered by a single agency.

**Figure 2: Number of Agencies Administering ECE Programs**



**Note:** In this figure and in others throughout this section, the District of Columbia is counted as a state.

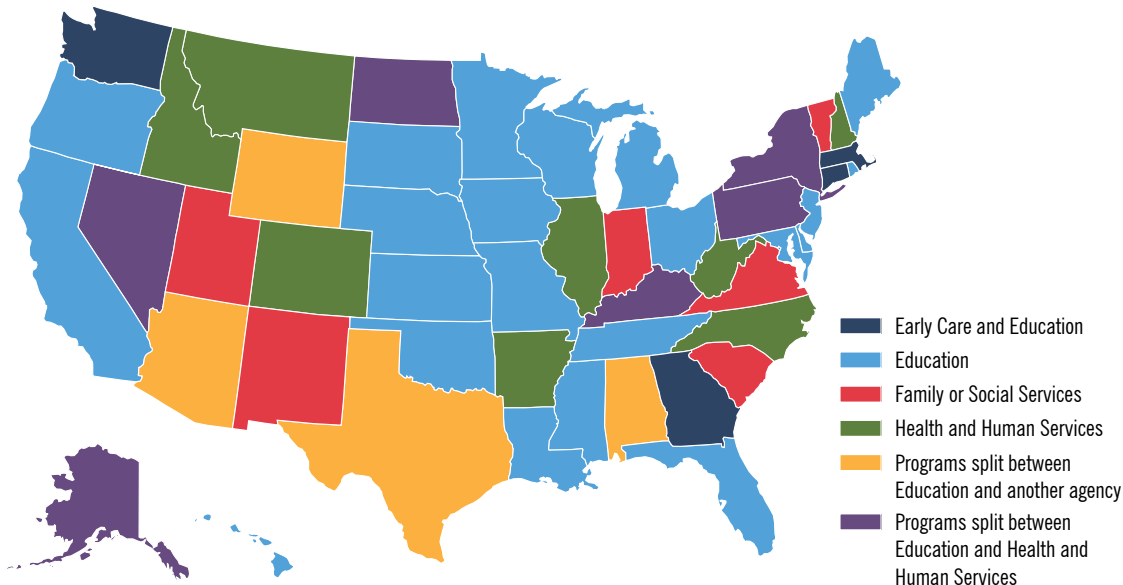
**Figure 3: Highest Number of ECE Programs Administered Together**



In terms of *which* state agencies are typically involved with ECE, education departments—either alone or in combination with one or more other agencies—are responsible for administering the largest

number of ECE programs in most states. Other state entities that are frequently involved in ECE programs are health and human services agencies, including family and workforce services (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: State Agencies Administering the Greatest Number of ECE Programs in Each State**



## Groupings of ECE Programs Within Agencies

Besides looking at where programs were housed at the state level, BPC also looked specifically at which programs were grouped together and which programs were split across agencies. Note that the state-by-state analysis did not include the FACE program (administered by the Department of Interior) as it provides funding to Native American tribal entities, which often cross state lines.

In **12 states**, CCDF, CACFP, and state Pre-K programs are housed within the same agency (Arkansas, California, Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, North Carolina, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington, DC).

In **six states**, CCDF and CACFP are housed together (Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Massachusetts, Utah, and Washington).

In **20 states**, either CCDF (or some part of it) and state Pre-K programs, or CACFP and state Pre-K programs are housed together (Alaska, Arizona, Hawaii, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Wisconsin, and West Virginia).

While federal CCDF funds are used to directly subsidize the cost of child care for low-income families and to promote quality improvements through the CCDF quality set-aside, BPC found that the administration of these two aspects of the program—subsidies and quality set-asides—were split across agencies in six states (Arizona, Delaware, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, and Texas).

## Placement of State Advisory Councils and Head Start Collaboration Offices

BPC also looked at the placement of SACs and Head Start Collaboration Offices to better understand how these entities were integrated within state ECE efforts.

We found that while Head Start Collaboration Offices are charged with coordinating and collaborating on Head Start, child care, and state Pre-K, these offices were not always housed with both CCDF and state Pre-K programs.

Besides identifying where Head Start Collaboration Offices are housed, BPC was not able to determine (from publicly available sources) how the functions or activities of these offices compared with their responsibilities as defined in legislation. BPC was also unable to get information on state expenditures on Head Start Collaboration Offices.

On the issue of SACs to provide guidance on ECE programs, BPC found that nearly all states (45) and the District of Columbia have established an ECE council based on FY 2016-2018 CCDF state plans submitted to the HHS.<sup>56</sup> Florida does not have a SAC, and Virginia's SAC is in transition (that is, the SAC designated in the FY 2016-2018 CCDF state plan is no longer in existence; however, the proposed FY 2019-2021 CCDF state plan specifies that another state committee may assume those responsibilities).<sup>57</sup> The five states without SACs are Florida, Idaho, Kansas, South Dakota, and Texas.

While BPC reviewed the location of SACs, it was not clear (from publicly available resources) how the function of, or activities undertaken by, SACs compared with the legislative charge for those entities.

The Head Start Collaboration Office was housed with both CCDF and state Pre-K programs in **17 states** (Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Washington) and the District of Columbia.

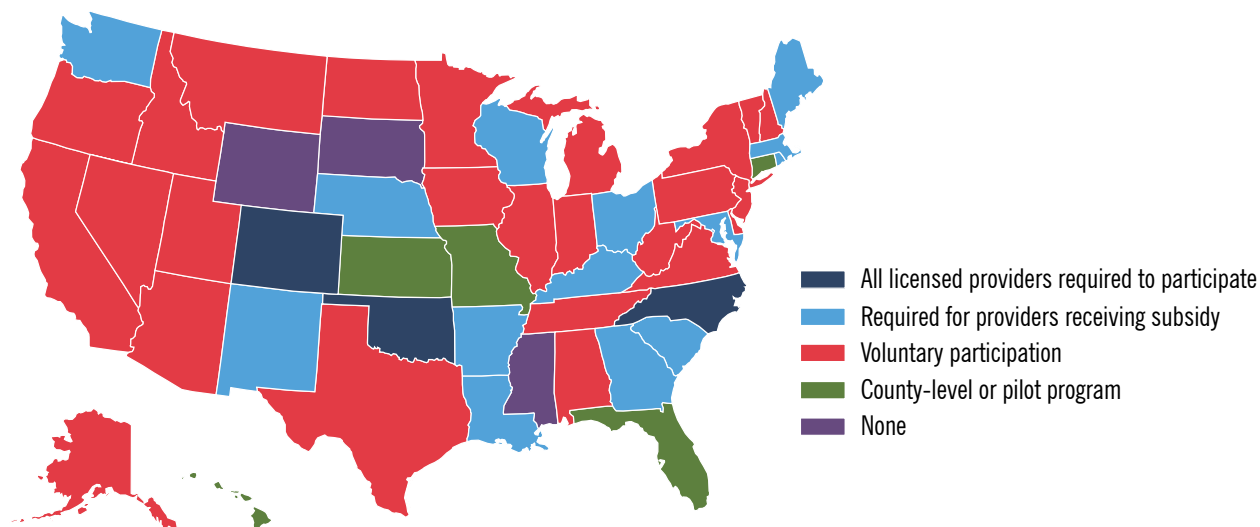
In **10 other states**, the Head Start Collaboration Office was housed with CCDF but not state Pre-K (Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia, Vermont, and West Virginia), and in **11 other states**, it was housed with state Pre-K but not CCDF (Alabama, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, Nevada, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin).

## Use of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

BPC looked at whether quality ratings for ECE providers were an integrated part of state ECE systems or a separate initiative that operated parallel to other ECE programs. BPC found that only three states (Colorado, North Carolina, and Oklahoma) fully integrate QRIS in the statewide ECE system.

- Three states embed their QRIS within their licensing system, with licensing serving as the bottom tier of the system.
- 15 states require all providers eligible to receive child care subsidy payments to be quality rated.
- 25 states offer QRIS as a voluntary program that providers can choose to participate in.
- Five states are piloting a statewide QRIS or have varying QRIS systems at the county level.
- Three states have no QRIS.

**Figure 5: State Quality Rating and Improvement Systems**



## Funding

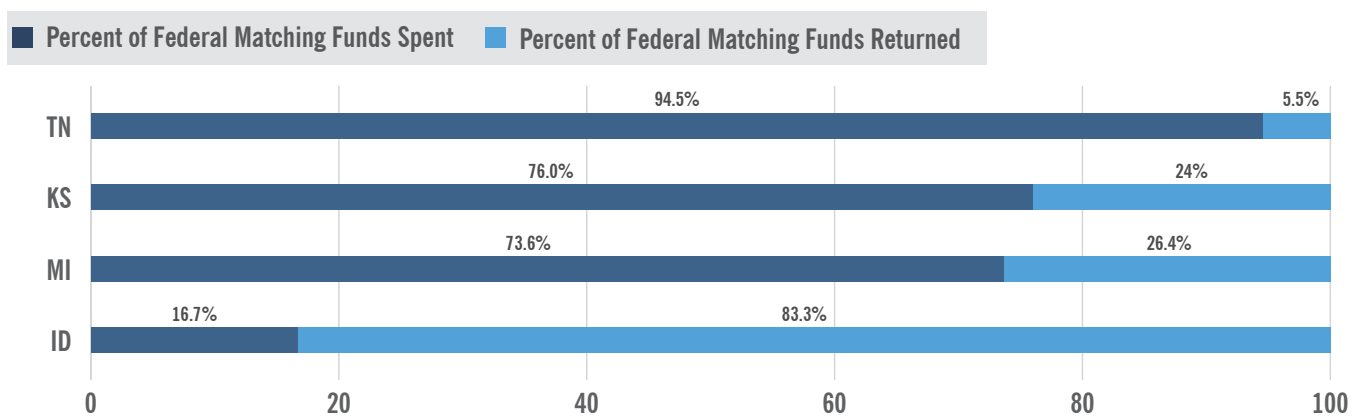
Finally, BPC looked at state actions with regard to funding ECE programs—specifically, whether states (1) transferred funds from the TANF program to the CCDF; (2) used TANF funds to directly cover child care expenses; (3) used TANF to fund state Pre-K or Head Start programs; (4) supplemented federal Head Start and Early Head Start with state funds; and (5) drew down all federal funds for child care.

- **TANF Spent on Child Care.**<sup>58</sup> States have the option to transfer up to 30 percent of their TANF funds annually to CCDF. In FY 2016, six states transferred 25 percent or more of their TANF money to CCDF. Another 20 states transferred less than 25 percent of their TANF funds to child care, while 25 states did not transfer any TANF funding to child care. It should be noted that several states, such as California, Oregon, and Washington, D.C., do not transfer TANF funds as a matter of policy.
- **TANF Spent Directly on Child Care.**<sup>59</sup> In FY 2016, 49 states spent TANF funds directly on child care—that is, without transferring these funds to CCDF. Only New Mexico and Texas did not spend directly on child care.
- **TANF Spent on State Pre-K and Head Start.**<sup>60</sup> In FY 2016,

27 states spent TANF funds on state Pre-K or Head Start (Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming).

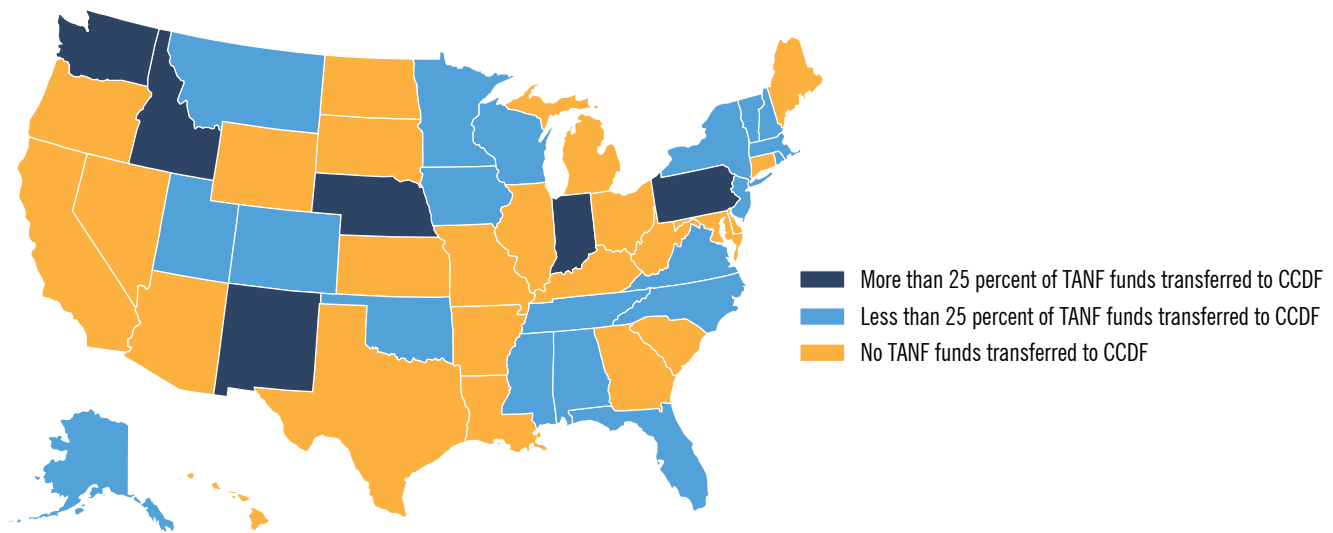
- **Supplemented Federal Funds With State Funds.** In 2017, 12 states (Alaska, Alabama, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin) supplemented federal Early Head Start and Head Start spending with state funds.
- **Drew Down All Federal Matching Funds.** In order to receive all federal matching child care funds awarded through CCDF, states must spend a certain amount of state money on child care. States that do not meet this spending requirement must return funds to the federal government at the end of the fiscal year. In FY 2016, 46 states and the District of Columbia contributed enough state funds to receive all their federal dollars. In contrast, Idaho, Kansas, Michigan, and Tennessee returned matching funds to the federal government at the end of FY 2016 because they did not spend enough state dollars on child care.

**Figure 6: States Returning Federal Matching Child Care Funds in FY 2016**





**Figure 7: TANF Funds Transferred to CCDF**



## LACK OF DATA REQUIREMENTS IN THE TANF PROGRAM UNDERMINES ECE FUNDING ACCOUNTABILITY

An important information shortfall identified by BPC in the course of this analysis was that states are required to report on the number of children served for most, but not all, ECE program spending. For example, in FY 2016, \$3.7 billion in TANF funding was spent directly on child care. However, since there is no federal requirement to report data related to those expenditures (other than aggregate dollars spent), it is not known how many children received child care assistance through TANF, the type of child care assistance they received (for example, in a center or a home, or in licensed versus unlicensed care), the average amount and duration of child care assistance provided, or even whether child care subsidized through the program met minimum health and safety requirements.

The lack of a reporting requirement has several implications. First, from an accountability standpoint, these are large expenditures about which little information is available. Second, since TANF funding spent directly on child care is not subject to minimum

requirements for provider eligibility (such as health and safety rules), it's possible that federal dollars under this program could end up being used to subsidize low-quality and even unsafe care.

Similarly, nothing is known about the expenditure of TANF funds on public Pre-K other than the aggregate amount spent.

By contrast, TANF funds that are transferred to CCDF are subject, under federal law, to CCDF requirements, which include both health and safety requirements for care providers as well as data reporting requirements.

While the CCDBG appropriation includes language to prohibit *supplantation* (in other words, CCDBG funds are expected to *supplement* state child care funding, not supplant it), the same is not true for TANF funding. This means TANF funding can be used to supplant state funds or other federal spending dedicated for specific purposes.

# The Problem

## A HYPOTHETICAL CASE STUDY: ONE FAMILY'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM

Stronger integration and coordination across early care and education (ECE) programs is essential to support the families who need these services. When programs are administered by multiple agencies without intentional cross-agency communication, families are more likely to be burdened by unclear or conflicting requirements and process steps, duplicative paperwork, and multiple appointments at various agencies. For many parents, navigating the complex early childhood system takes time away from family and work responsibilities.

This short, representative case study description is based in part on the circumstances of an actual family. It helps to illustrate the challenges of navigating ECE services in many states.

Martin and Angela and their two children—Marcus, age 4, and Emily, age 1—live in the suburbs of a medium-sized city. Martin is a full-time hourly wage earner and takes the bus into the city every day for work. Angela recently returned to work part-time, with an unpredictable schedule that changes weekly and ranges from day to evening shifts.

When Angela returned to work, her main concern was who would care for Marcus and Emily. The family could not afford high-quality child care, and relatives were unable to help. Fortunately, a neighbor offered to watch the children a few hours a week in exchange for a small payment. It seemed this was their only option until Martin and Angela learned about child care subsidies. They took time off work to go to the local Department of Family Services (DFS) office with all the necessary paperwork as listed on the website. After waiting nearly 90 minutes, they were told their application could not be submitted because of a missing document. By the time the family returned to the DFS with the missing form, the office was closed.

Eventually, the DFS approved the application, and the family was put on a wait list. When they were cleared to receive a child care subsidy two months later, one parent had to return to the DFS field office to complete additional paperwork.

Now the family faced the challenge of finding quality child care. Many of the better preschools in their community did not accept children who received child care subsidies. Others had long wait lists.

After weeks, the family secured a spot in a new but well-regarded local child care program. At this point, they learned that the state required all children to undergo developmental screening before age 2, and again before age 5. After further calls to the DFS and the Department of Health, the children were scheduled for free screenings at a regional center, 40 minutes away by bus, on the other side of town.

The screenings identified possible delays in Emily's communication skills and cognitive development. Over the course of several visits and tests, Emily was deemed eligible for early intervention services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. To receive these services both parents were required to participate in a meeting to develop an Individualized Family Services Plan, necessitating further unpaid time off work.

During the Individualized Family Services Plan meeting, the family learned that Emily also qualified for Early Head Start, which would better support her developmental needs but would also place the children in different child care programs across town. Despite the additional logistical headaches this would create, the family decided to pursue Early Head Start for Emily. To do so, they had to submit another application subject to a different set of requirements from the child care subsidy program. After several more months on a wait list, Emily was eventually enrolled in Early Head Start.

Meanwhile, Angela learned about the state's free Pre-K program for low-income families from another parent. Signing up required another application, but Marcus was ultimately approved to begin a morning Pre-K program at the start of the school year in September.

Despite the challenges, the family got into a routine. Martin found a new job with better pay and the family was hopeful that this could help pay the bills. But, when submitting the recertification application, the DFS informed them that the added income would make them ineligible for their child care subsidy and state Pre-K benefits. So Martin decided to forgo the new job.

In the end, the family managed, and the children benefited from the services they received. Of course, it might have been easier to access these services in another state, where programs and applications were more streamlined. On the other hand, it might also have been much harder to stick through the process, especially if Martin or Angela were a single parent who could not take time off from work. In that case, the children might have ended up in the neighbor's care until they were old enough to start school.

# Scoring States on ECE Integration

To compare states, BPC developed a scoring system that combines several of the measures of program organization and integration discussed in previous sections. Specific factors considered in the scoring system include the following:

- The number of state agencies involved in administering core ECE programs, specifically CCDF; TANF; IDEA Part B, Section 619; IDEA Part C; CACFP; state Pre-K; and the Head Start Collaboration Office.
- Whether some funding streams were split across agencies (such as child care subsidy and child care quality programs).
- The institutional home for child care, state Pre-K, and CACFP administration.
- The institutional home of the Head Start Collaboration Office

BPC's scoring system also took into account whether a state had a SAC and the degree to which a state's QRIS was integrated with its child care subsidy systems. (For example, did the state have a quality rating and improvement system and, if so, was the quality rating and improvement system linked to licensing—whether required or voluntary—for child care providers who participated in the state's child care subsidy system?)

Bonus points were awarded for states that supplemented their federal ECE funding beyond specified matching or maintenance-of-effort requirements. States lost points if they did not draw down all of their federal matching child care funds.

The general concept was that states scored higher for more integrated administration of ECE programs and for supplementing federal funds with additional state resources beyond the minimum level required, whereas states scored lower if ECE program administration was spread over a larger number of agencies and/or the state did not use all the federal funds available to it. In BPC's scoring system, states could earn a maximum of 50 base points, based on ECE integration, and a maximum of 20 bonus points, based on supplementing federal funds with additional state resources.

More information on scoring criteria is provided in Appendix C. State scores and ranks are summarized in Appendix D. BPC has also released information on each state, including an organizational diagram of its ECE administrative structure, funds available under each ECE program, and information about the state's Pre-K program, QRIS, and SAC. State sheets can be viewed at [bipartisanpolicy.org/ece-administration-state-by-state](http://bipartisanpolicy.org/ece-administration-state-by-state).

## Characteristics of the Highest-Scoring States

The 10 states that scored highest for program integration in BPC's scoring system are Maryland; Washington, D.C.; Arkansas; Georgia; New Mexico; Pennsylvania; North Carolina; Louisiana; Montana; and Washington. Table 3 shows the component and total scores for each of these states.

**Table 3: 10 Top-Scoring States**

State	Rank	Total Score	Base Score	Bonus Score
Maryland	1	57	47	10
Washington, D.C.	1	57	47	10
Arkansas	3	52	47	5
Georgia	3	52	42	10
New Mexico	3	52	42	10
Pennsylvania	6	51.5	31.5	20
North Carolina	7	48	40	8
Louisiana	8	47	42	5
Montana	8	47	39	8
Washington	8	47	37	10

Not surprisingly, the states in Table 3 generally have fewer agencies administering ECE programs. In six of the 10 states (Arkansas, Maryland, Montana, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C.) just two agencies administered the six major federal ECE programs and state Pre-K. In two states (Louisiana and Washington), three agencies administered these programs; and in two other states (Georgia and New Mexico) four agencies administered these programs.

## The states that scored highest in BPC's methodology also shared several other features:

- The administration of CCDF subsidies and quality initiatives was not split across agencies in any of these states.
- In **eight of 10 states**, the same agency administers CCDF, CACFP, and the state's Pre-K program. In Pennsylvania, the same agency administered CACFP and Pre-K, while in Washington state the same agency administered CCDF and Pre-K.
- In **nine of 10 states**, the Head Start Collaboration Office, CCDF, and state Pre-K were housed in the same agency. The only exception is North Carolina.
- All **10 states** have functioning SACs.
- **One state** uses licensing as the basis for its QRIS (North Carolina); **seven states** require all providers that accept CCDF subsidies to participate in the state's QRIS (Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, New Mexico, Washington, and Washington, D.C.). In **two states**, participation in the QRIS is voluntary (Montana and Pennsylvania).
- **Three states** (Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C.) are operating an Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant.
- **Five states** transferred some TANF funds in FY 2016 to CCDF (New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Washington transferred 25 percent or more, while Montana and North Carolina transferred less).
- All **10 states** have a state Pre-K program, and **two states** (Maryland and Pennsylvania) added state funding to their Head Start programs.
- All **10 states** drew down the full amount of federal child care funding available to them.

## Overview of the Lowest-Scoring States

The lowest-scoring states using BPC's methodology are Texas, Wyoming, Kansas, South Dakota, Idaho, Missouri, Mississippi, Nevada, Arizona, New York, and Hawaii. Table 4 shows the component and total scores for each of these states.

The states in Table 4 typically had a larger number of agencies involved in administering ECE programs. In two of the states (New York and Texas), five agencies are involved in administering the six federal programs and state Pre-K; in three states (Mississippi, Missouri, and Wyoming), four agencies are involved; in another three states (Arizona, Kansas, and Nevada), three agencies are involved; and in two states (South Dakota and Idaho), two agencies are involved.

**Table 4: 10 Lowest-Scoring States**

State	Rank	Total Score	Base Score	Bonus Score
Hawaii	40	22	17	5
New York	40	22	14	8
Arizona	42	21.5	16.5	5
Nevada	42	21.5	16.5	5
Mississippi	44	20.5	12.5	8
Missouri	45	17	12	5
Idaho	46	16.5	21.5	-5
South Dakota	47	15	15	0
Kansas	48	12	17	-5
Wyoming	49	10	10	0
Texas	50	9	4	5

Table 5 compares the top-scoring and bottom-scoring 10 states in terms of specific elements of the scoring.

**Table 5: Differences Between Top 10 and Bottom 10 States on Other Scoring Elements**

Scoring Metric	Number of States		Overall
	Top 10	Bottom 10 (based on 11 states)	
CCDF Subsidy and Quality Split Across Agencies	0	2	5
CCDF, CACFP and State Pre-K Housed Together	8	0	12
Head Start Collaboration Office Housed with CCDF and State Pre-K	9	0	18
Functioning ECE State Advisory Council	10	7	46
State did not use all available FY2016 CCDF funds	0	2	4
Has state-wide QRIS system	10	5	43
Has Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grant	3	0	6
Transferred TANF funds to CCDF	5	3	26
Has Pre-K program	10	8	46
State provides additional funds to Head Start	2	0	12
Average number of agencies administering the six federal ECE program and state Pre-K	2-3	3-4	3

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Reflecting a widely shared consensus about the importance of ECE to develop the full potential of America's youngest children, states and the federal government now direct substantial resources to early childhood programs. At the same time, millions of American families continue to struggle to ensure that their young children have the healthy start and early learning opportunities that will enable them to succeed as students and eventually as adults.

In this context, policymakers at all levels of government want to know:

- How much funding is needed for ECE programs to serve target populations?
- Is there coordination of ECE programs at the federal level?
- Are there models of state administration that could improve on the delivery and effectiveness of ECE programs on the ground?
- What barriers or challenges affect coordination at both the federal and state levels of administration?
- What ECE data are available, and what data are needed?
- What recommendations should be made at the federal level?
- What recommendations should be made for states?

<sup>d</sup> In Arizona, the CCDF Quality Initiative is housed with the state Pre-K program.

These questions guided BPC's review. Overall, BPC found that since the reauthorization of several major early childhood programs in the last decade, coordination of ECE funding at the federal level has improved. This improvement is evidenced by coordination activities undertaken by the Early Learning Interagency Policy Board, joint agency policy statements, and agency memoranda of understanding. The 2017 GAO report came to a similar conclusion.

★ ★ ★

*While the federal government has made strides in better coordinating ECE funding, state administration of these programs, with a few exceptions, remains highly fragmented.*

Meanwhile, funds issued under the RTT-ELC and Preschool Development Grants have come to represent a significant new form of federal investment in ECE for states that received these grants, but little is known about whether the initiatives they funded have been sustained.

While the federal government has made strides in better coordinating ECE funding, state administration of these programs, with a few exceptions (notably Arkansas, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Oregon, and Pennsylvania), remains highly fragmented. Governors have considerable discretion to determine how federal (and state) funds will be administered within their jurisdictions, but few have exercised their authority to ensure a more seamless integration of services for families with young children.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

BPC's review identified distinct coordination challenges at different levels (and branches) of government. For that reason, BPC developed recommendations to improve early childhood integration at the state and federal level and reduce government challenges. These recommendations are grouped by actions that can be undertaken by states, by federal agencies, and by Congress. Implementing these recommendations will help create a more integrated ECE system, which promotes efficient use of funds and removes obstacles for families and children seeking services and care.

## For Governors

- Appoint an independent review board charged with completing a business analysis and developing concrete recommendations for improving ECE program administration and governance at the state level. Unlike a SAC or Children's Cabinet, an independent review board would be an entity separate from the state bureaucracy, allowing for an objective evaluation of ECE integration and unbiased recommendations.
- Ensure that the SAC for early education and care, which is mandated under the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, is fulfilling its statutorily defined responsibilities, which include conducting a statewide needs assessment on the quality and availability of early care and learning programs.
- Review the placement of and requirements for the State Head Start Collaboration Office to ensure maximum alignment of Head Start services with other state ECE efforts.
- Conduct hearings and focus groups with families to identify barriers to services.
- Ensure that licensing is the foundation for the state QRIS. QRIS are an important tool for measuring and incentivizing quality in ECE programs. Having licensing serve as the entry level for state QRIS helps integrate the QRIS into the ECE system and ensure program quality for all children.
- Ensure that monitoring efforts are coordinated between the child care licensing agencies, CACFP, and QRIS systems. Administering CACFP through the same agency as state Pre-K and CCDF can improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness of monitoring and oversight.
- Consider implementing a system that assigns each child a unique identifier number at birth or when the child enters the state's ECE system. The number would remain with the child over time and across programs or services and key databases, allowing the state to track each child's progress over time and reduce redundant paperwork requirements for children who participate in multiple programs.
- Support or create an early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS).



## For Federal Agencies

- Reinstatement of the Federal Early Learning Interagency Policy Board, co-chaired by the HHS and ED, and include the Departments of Agriculture and Defense, as these departments also administer programs that support early care and education.
- Identify lessons learned from the EHS-CCP grants that were awarded to states, and issue a report identifying barriers to better alignment of federal and state efforts.
- Develop technical-assistance capacity to support state efforts aimed at improving ECE program administration and governance.
- Evaluate grants provided under the RTT-ELC and Preschool Development Grants to assess both their impact on state administration and the extent to which states sustained the work as indicated in their grant applications.

## For Congress

- Align early childhood eligibility requirements by defining consistent income ranges and by requiring states to serve those with the highest need first, while still giving states latitude to serve children in low-wage families (similar to the CCDBG program). This will ease the “cliff effect,” in which families become abruptly ineligible for support if their income exceeds a certain threshold, and it will encourage families to seek promotions and higher wages.
- Amend the Head Start Act to allow Head Start grantees serving 3- and 4-year-olds to redirect funds from Head Start to Early Head Start when the state is offering free Pre-K to 3- and 4-year-olds. This will allow current grantees to better meet the need for infant and toddler services without sacrificing existing grants that were designed to serve 3- and 4-year-olds.
- Conduct committee hearings on current programs that serve infants and toddlers and preschool children with disabilities under IDEA Parts B and C to identify barriers to families who are transitioning from one early childhood program to another as children age out.
- Consider a birth-to-age-5 alignment of IDEA Part C and Part B, whereby families with young children can maintain eligibility until school entry instead of requiring families to reapply for Part B when children age out of Part C.

- Allow governors the flexibility to move the administration of IDEA Part B, Section 619 to align with other early education programs to create a more seamless and integrated system.
- Require all funds spent on child care under the TANF program, whether the funds are direct or transferred, to meet CCDBG requirements, including those for data reporting.<sup>e</sup> Currently, there is no requirement to report data on how many children receive care through TANF direct spending or what type or quality of care they are receiving. Having all TANF funds follow CCDBG requirements would provide a more accurate understanding of the need and how many children are being served.
- Conduct hearings on the effectiveness of the Head Start Collaboration Offices and on how these offices can help promote maximum alignment of Head Start services with other state ECE efforts.
- Request a GAO study of activities undertaken by SACs, including a review of whether these councils are meeting their statutorily defined objectives, and offer recommendations about ways to improve SAC effectiveness. These recommendations should then be included in legislation.
- Require the HHS to report to Congress on the status of SACs and of activities undertaken jointly by SACs and Head Start Collaboration Offices.
- Request that the GAO study state administration and alignment of ECE programs as well as state administrative expenditures. (Previous GAO studies have only reviewed federal agencies.)

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<sup>e</sup> Note that TANF funds transferred to CCDBG are already required to follow CCDBG rules, but this does not apply to funds spent directly under TANF.

# Appendix A: Early Care and Education Funding in the United States, FY16

Funding from Nine GAO-Identified Programs	FY 2016 Funding	Numbers Served	
		Children	Programs
CCDF Expenditure	\$8,614,491,885	1,361,200	303,049
Transfer from TANF	\$1,403,448,661 (8.3%)	—	—
Head Start Allocation	\$8,035,064,872	1,040,521	3,147
Head Start		847,794	1,773
Early Head Start		192,727	1,374
IDEA Part C, Allocation (infant/toddler)	\$445,533,298	716,291	—
IDEA Part B, Section 619 Allocation (3–5 years)	\$365,267,604	744,174	—
Preschool Development Grant	\$236,277,853	34,305	—
CCAMPIS FY17 Grants	\$14,982,678	—	—
Promise Neighborhoods FY16	\$32,704,962	—	—
Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy	\$364,440,982	—	—
Additional ECE Funding Streams	FY 2016 Funding	Numbers Served	
		Children	Programs
TANF Child Care Expenditure (Direct)	\$3,733,381,957	Not Reported	
TANF Pre-K / Head Start Expenditure	\$2,300,244,894		
CACFP Allocation	\$3,187,416,829	4,379,156	—
Race to the Top, Early Learning Challenge	\$1,000,201,182	—	—
Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership	\$482,200,000	Not Reported	

# Appendix B: About the Federal Programs

## Child Care and Development Fund

**Purpose:** CCDF helps fund child care assistance for low-income children each month in the United States. CCDF funds are also used to:

- Train and professionally develop the workforce.
- Improve/develop early learning guidelines.
- Develop/enhance state QRIS.
- Improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers.
- Establish or expand a statewide system of Child Care Resource and Referral.
- Promote compliance with state licensing.
- Evaluate and assess the quality of child care programs.
- Support providers to voluntarily pursue accreditation.
- Develop high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development.
- Any other activity states determine will improve quality.

**Eligibility:** Low-income parents working or going to school can apply for monthly child care assistance for their children under age 13. **Income eligibility varies by state.** The federal government sets a maximum eligibility level of 85 percent of state median income.

## Head Start

**Purpose:** Head Start allocates funds to local community-based organizations to provide comprehensive services from birth to age 5.

**Eligibility:** Children from birth to age 5 living in poverty are generally eligible. Some children may be categorically eligible, such as children with disabilities, children whose families receive TANF or Supplemental Security Income, children whose families are homeless, or children who are in foster care. **States have no role.**

## Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

**Purpose:** The program is primarily designed to provide assistance to needy families with children, along with preventing dependency by promoting job readiness and work, and to some extent by reducing the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies. Up to 30 percent of TANF funds can be transferred to CCDF to fund child care subsidies for low-income families. TANF funding can also be spent directly on child care without limitation.

**Eligibility:** TANF funds transferred to CCDBG follow CCDBG rules (which includes state eligibility policies). TANF money spent directly on child care has no rules that apply (unless states specifically set rules applicable to TANF funds spent on child care). The federal government also does not require the collection or reporting of data so all that is known about TANF funds spent on child care is the aggregate amount. **States can set specific rules on the use of TANF funds.**

## IDEA Part C

**Purpose:** Part C provides needed intervention/services to children from birth to age 3 with developmental delays or with a physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay or disability.

**Eligibility:** There is no income eligibility criteria related to IDEA Part C. Children from birth to age 3 qualify based on screenings and state-set disability or developmental-delay policies. The five development areas for infants and toddlers that are used by the states for eligibility assessment are: cognitive, physical, social/emotional, communication, and adaptive. **States set detailed eligibility criteria of what qualifies as a developmental delay or the probability of such delay.**

## IDEA Part B, Section 619

**Purpose:** Part B, Section 619 provides needed intervention/services to children ages 3 to 5 (preschool-age) with developmental delays or disabilities. Coordination between agencies in the transition of children from Part C to Part B is required, but there is no guarantee or entitlement to services under Part B, Section 619 for children who received services under Part C.

**Eligibility:** Children ages 3 to 5, who have any of the qualifying IDEA Part B overall conditions (developmental delay, deaf-blindness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disabilities, speech and language impairment, visual impairment, autism, and traumatic brain injury) are eligible. **States set detailed eligibility criteria of what qualifies under each condition and what qualifies as a developmental delay.**

## Child and Adult Care Food Program

**Purpose:** The purpose of CACFP is to improve access to nutritious meals and snacks in child care programs for participating children by: setting requirements for the kind and amount of food to be served; providing reimbursement to programs and providers for meals and snacks that meet requirements; and requiring periodic staff training and monitoring in participating programs. While CACFP can also fund low-income adults in programs, this report looks only at meals and snacks for children.

**Eligibility:**

*Child Care Centers:* Eligible public or private non-profit child care centers, outside-school-hours care centers, Head Start programs, and other institutions that are licensed or approved to provide day care services may participate in CACFP, independently or as sponsored centers. For-profit centers must receive title XX funds for at least 25 percent of enrolled children or licensed capacity (whichever is less), or at least 25 percent of the children in care must be eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Meals served to children are reimbursed at rates based on a child's eligibility for free, reduced-price, or paid meals.

*Day Care Homes:* A family or group day care home must sign an agreement with a sponsoring organization to participate in CACFP. Day care homes must be licensed or approved to provide day care services. Reimbursement for meals served in day care homes is based on eligibility for tier I rates (which target higher levels of reimbursement to low-income areas, providers, or children) or lower tier II rates.

*Afterschool Care Programs:* Community-based programs that offer enrichment activities for at-risk children and youth, 18 and under, after the regular school day ends, can provide free meals and snacks through CACFP. Programs must be offered in areas where at least 50 percent of the children are eligible for free and reduced-price meals based upon school data.

**States do not set eligibility.**

## Preschool Development Grants

**Purpose:** Funds are competitively awarded to states to strengthen state and local efforts to build, develop, and expand high-quality preschool programs so that more children from low- and moderate-income families enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school.

**Eligibility:** Governors in states can apply for these grants. **States determine eligibility for preschool development grants.**

Note: Preschool Development Grants were repurposed by Congress as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015, so that with the FY 2018 funding competition, Preschool Development Grants are for mixed delivery from birth to age 5 systems coordination, collaboration, and strategic planning.

## Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy

**Purpose:** Funds are competitively awarded to states for the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program to create comprehensive literacy initiatives to advance literacy skills—including pre-literacy skills, reading, and writing—for students from birth through grade 12, including limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities.

**Eligibility:** Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program grants (84.371C) will be awarded competitively to State Educational Agencies, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

## Child Care Access Means Parents in School

**Purpose:** Funds are competitively awarded for the Child Care Access Means Parents in School program to support the participation of low-income parents who are eligible to receive a federal Pell Grant for postsecondary education through the provision of campus-based child care services.

**Eligibility:** Institutions of higher education may apply for these grants.

## Promise Neighborhoods

**Purpose:** Funds are competitively awarded for Promise Neighborhoods to support a vision that all children and youth growing up in Promise Neighborhoods have access to great schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career. The purpose of Promise Neighborhoods is to significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth in distressed communities.

**Eligibility:** non-profit organizations that meet the definition of a non-profit under 34 CFR 77.1(c), which may include a faith-based non-profit organization; institutions of higher education as defined by section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended; and Indian tribes.

## Family and Child Education

**Purpose:** Funds are competitively awarded to promote family literacy—an integrated model for an early childhood/parental involvement for Native American families in Bureau of Indian Education-funded schools.

**Eligibility:** Native American tribes can apply.

**States have no role.** *This program was not included in the analysis.*

## Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge

**Purpose:** The RTT-ELC grant competition focuses on improving early learning and development programs for young children by supporting states' efforts to: (1) increase the number and percentage of low-income and disadvantaged infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are enrolled in high-quality early learning programs; (2) design and implement an integrated system of high-quality early learning programs and services; and (3) ensure that any use of assessments conforms with the recommendations of the National Research Council's reports on early childhood.

**Eligibility:** Governors may apply, and awards are made to states.

## Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership

**Purpose:** The EHS-CCP is a new competitive grant opportunity to support the partnering of Early Head Start programs with child care providers. Under EHS-CCP, new or existing Early Head Start grantees will partner with regulated center-based or family child care providers who agree to meet the Head Start Program Performance Standards. The resulting partnerships will allow programs to leverage their funds to provide more high-quality early learning slots in their community.

**Eligibility:** Entities eligible to apply for Early Head Start funds are also eligible for EHS-CCP funds. Competitive priority for funds is given to applicants who create local partnerships with child care providers and align with other early childhood development programs.

## State preschool programs

**Purpose:** State-funded preschool programs serve 3- and 4-year-olds. Specific policies vary by state.

**Eligibility:** Varies by state.

# Appendix C: Scoring Criteria

The following summarizes the scoring rubric used by BPC to compare ECE integration across states.

Scoring Item	Implications for ECE Integration
<b>Base Score – ECE Integration</b>	
Number of agencies involved in administering core programs	Managing multiple programs within one agency can improve efficiency and allow for better alignment of eligibility and monitoring requirements and quality improvement activities.
CCDF subsidy and quality split	Administering CCDF quality and subsidy in different agencies can create barriers that make it difficult for children receiving CCDF subsidies to receive quality care.
Location of CCDF, Pre-K, and CACFP	Administering CACFP through the same agency as state Pre-K and CCDF can improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness of monitoring and oversight. Having all three programs together maximizes efficiency.
Head Start Collaboration Office with CCDF and/or Pre-K	Head Start Collaboration Offices are charged with coordinating and collaborating on Head Start, child care, and state Pre-K. Co-locating the Offices with these programs can support coordination.
QRIS	QRIS are an important tool for measuring the quality of ECE providers, as a source of information for parents, and as a way to create incentives for continued quality improvement. Having licensing serve as the entry level for state QRIS helps ensure program quality for all children.
Functioning SAC	SACs are responsible for identifying opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among federally funded and state-funded child development, child care, and early childhood education programs and services.
<b>Bonus Score – Supplemental Funding</b>	
State money spent on state Pre-K	Though not required, many states choose to use state funds on a state Pre-K program.
State adds money to Head Start or Early Head Start	Though not required, some states contribute state dollars to Head Start and Early Head Start on top of federal dollars.
State has Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant	States with EHS-CCP grants that applied for and received additional funds to support quality care for infants and toddlers.
State transfers TANF to ECE	Though not required, some states choose to spend TANF funds directly on child care and/or transfer up to 30% of their TANF funds to CCDF. States could receive bonus points for transferring TANF funds to CCDF because, unlike TANF direct spending, funds transferred to CCDF must follow data reporting and health and safety regulations.
State draws down all federal money	States must spend a certain amount of state dollars on child care to receive the full amount of federal matching CCDF funds for which they are eligible. States that do not meet this requirement return millions of dollars that could be spent on child care services in the state to the federal government.



# Appendix D: State-By-State Scores

## Scores by Rank:

State	Rank	Total Score	Base Score	Bonus Score
Maryland	1	57	47	10
Washington, DC	1	57	47	10
Arkansas	3	52	47	5
Georgia	3	52	42	10
New Mexico	3	52	42	10
Pennsylvania	6	51.5	31.5	20
North Carolina	7	48	40	8
Montana	8	47	39	8
Louisiana	8	47	42	5
Washington	8	47	37	10
Massachusetts	11	45	32	13
California	12	44	34	10
Delaware	12	44	34	10
Indiana	12	44	34	10
Oregon	12	44	34	10
Connecticut	16	42	32	10
Maine	16	42	32	10
Minnesota	16	42	29	13
Oklahoma	19	40.5	27.5	13
Rhode Island	20	40	27	13
Wisconsin	20	40	27	13
Michigan	22	39	44	-5
Iowa	23	37	29	8
Nebraska	23	37	27	10
South Carolina	23	37	32	5
Utah	23	37	29	8

State	Rank	Total Score	Base Score	Bonus Score
Colorado	27	35.5	27.5	8
Alabama	28	34.5	16.5	18
Alaska	28	34.5	21.5	13
West Virginia	30	34	29	5
Ohio	31	32	27	5
Florida	32	30	22	8
Kentucky	33	29.5	24.5	5
New Hampshire	33	29.5	26.5	3
Illinois	35	29	24	5
Tennessee	36	27	29	-2
New Jersey	37	24.5	16.5	8
Virginia	37	24.5	16.5	8
North Dakota	39	24	24	0
Hawaii	40	22	17	5
New York	40	22	14	8
Arizona	42	21.5	16.5	5
Nevada	42	21.5	16.5	5
Mississippi	44	20.5	12.5	8
Missouri	45	17	12	5
Idaho	46	16.5	21.5	-5
South Dakota	47	15	15	0
Kansas	48	12	17	-5
Wyoming	49	10	10	0
Texas	50	9	4	5
Vermont <sup>1</sup>	--	37	29	8

<sup>1</sup> State declined to participate. A score was calculated based on publicly available information but no ranking was given.

# Appendix D: State-By-State Scores

## Scores by State:

State	Rank	Total Score	Base Score	Bonus Score
Alabama	28	34.5	16.5	18
Alaska	28	34.5	21.5	13
Arizona	42	21.5	16.5	5
Arkansas	3	52	47	5
California	12	44	34	10
Colorado	27	35.5	27.5	8
Connecticut	16	42	32	10
Delaware	12	44	34	10
Florida	32	30	22	8
Georgia	3	52	42	10
Hawaii	40	22	17	5
Idaho	46	16.5	21.5	-5
Illinois	35	29	24	5
Indiana	12	44	34	10
Iowa	23	37	29	8
Kansas	48	12	17	-5
Kentucky	33	29.5	24.5	5
Louisiana	8	47	42	5
Maine	16	42	32	10
Maryland	1	57	47	10
Massachusetts	11	45	32	13
Michigan	22	39	44	-5
Minnesota	16	42	29	13
Mississippi	44	20.5	12.5	8
Missouri	45	17	12	5
Montana	8	47	39	8

State	Rank	Total Score	Base Score	Bonus Score
Nebraska	23	37	27	10
Nevada	42	21.5	16.5	5
New Hampshire	33	29.5	26.5	3
New Jersey	37	24.5	16.5	8
New Mexico	3	52	42	10
New York	40	22	14	8
North Carolina	7	48	40	8
North Dakota	39	24	24	0
Ohio	31	32	27	5
Oklahoma	19	40.5	27.5	13
Oregon	12	44	34	10
Pennsylvania	6	51.5	31.5	20
Rhode Island	20	40	27	13
South Carolina	23	37	32	5
South Dakota	47	15	15	0
Tennessee	36	27	29	-2
Texas	50	9	4	5
Utah	23	37	29	8
Vermont <sup>2</sup>	--	37	29	8
Virginia	37	24.5	16.5	8
Washington	8	47	37	10
Washington, DC	1	57	47	10
West Virginia	30	34	29	5
Wisconsin	20	40	27	13
Wyoming	49	10	10	0

<sup>2</sup> State declined to participate. A score was calculated based on publicly available information but no ranking was given.



# Endnotes

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