

Early Care and Education

Vision: By 2030, Maine families with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers will have access to high quality early care and education in child care programs and elementary schools in partnership with home visitors, early childhood service providers, and employers.

DATA & STATUS

Publicly Funded Preschool

- In 2019, 49% of all 4-year-olds were enrolled in public PreK. Public PreK, in some form, was offered at 75% of Maine's school districts (some pilot classrooms, most are not full day, many are not universal). [Data](#)
- In the 2020/21 school year, due to the pandemic, publicly funded PreK enrollment dropped to 38%.
- Today, 35% of public PreK are in partnerships, predominantly between elementary schools and Head Start programs. [Data](#)
- \$10 million in federal ARPA relief funding for PreK infrastructure to support expansion was approved in 2021
- There may be sizable new federal funds to expand publicly funded preschool for both 4- and 3-year-olds, through a mixed delivery system including elementary schools, family child care, Head Start, center-based, and faith-based programs.

Head Start

- In 2021, 4,700 children are being served by Head Start in Maine. That is serving 39% of children who are eligible, still low, but higher than most states.
- Maine's Early Head Start enrollment is 16% of eligible children

Maine Early Childhood Consultation Partnership

- In 2019, legislation was enacted to create a statewide program to support the social emotional needs of young children.
- In 2020, implementation began with five initial counties and expanded to eight counties in 2021 with the goal of future expansion statewide.
- Maine's program is based on ECCP® an evidence-based model developed in Connecticut with rigorous research support.

First 4 ME

- Legislation creating this model in 5 pilot sites was enacted in 2021 and became law 10/18/21
- Legislation stated this will be implemented in "up to 5 pilot sites"





DATA & STATUS CONT.

Child Care Incentives

Using federal relief funds in 2020/21, OCFS put in place some child care incentives:

- A \$100 weekly stipend per infant in care
- A 10% quality bump payment for infants and toddlers
- Several quality awards: new Registry awards, newly licensed mini-grants, increased payments for moving up a quality level award (3%, 10% and 15% respectively), reimbursement for the costs of accreditation, and awards for maintaining accreditation mini-grants
- 35% increase to providers who serve children with special needs



2022 Goals

Publicly Funded Preschool

- Return public pre-k enrollment to pre-pandemic levels of 50% for all Maine 4-year-olds
- Support new publicly funded preschool partnerships and opportunities
- Determine what data and funding are needed to serve 3- and 4-year-olds in this mixed delivery system

Head Start

- Monitor federal Head Start actions and funding and work with Maine DHHS and DOE on implementation
- Explore the creation of contracts or use some other mechanism for child care providers to guarantee funding for 1-2 slots/opportunities for Head Start eligible children.

Maine Early Childhood Consultation Partnership

- Support additional funding to implement statewide access to the program

First 4 ME

- Monitor creation of the RFP process for First 4 ME implementation and promote the RFP once it is public
- Work with communities to create partnerships and apply for the First 4 ME program
- Explore an income eligibility expansion for First 4 ME in which contracts are paid while child care provider waits for eligible child(ren) to fill opportunity

Child Care Incentives

- Collect and evaluate data on the usage of each infant subsidy incentive
- Prepare recommendations for continuation of infant subsidy incentives, or possible changes or enhancements

2023–2024 Goals

Public Pre-K

- Grow public PreK to 65% for all Maine 4-year-olds, with 40% being in childcare/public school partnerships
- If federal legislation passes, begin publicly funding 3-year-old spots in child care programs, look at whether to fund in partnership with districts through school funding formula, or through separate funding stream
- HHS, DOE, MaineAEYC, Maine Superintendents Association create and offer professional learning services on early education for Superintendents to build a birth-third grade continuum

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program

- Grow ECCP model into 3 additional counties (13 counties total) and continue to monitor efficacy

First 4 ME

- Monitor progress and data outcomes for 1 year of full implementation of First 4 ME
- Grow First 4 ME by 5 new pilots in 5 new counties (total 10 statewide)

Child Care Incentives

- Collect and evaluate data on the usage of each infant subsidy incentive
- Prepare recommendations for continuation of infant subsidy incentive, or possible changes or enhancements

2025–2026 Goals

Public Pre-K

- Achieve universal public PreK for all Maine 4-year-olds, with 50% being in childcare/public school partnerships
- If federal legislation passes, publicly fund all 3 year-old spots in eligible child care programs

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program

- Grow ECCP model into 3 additional counties (serving all 16 counties) and continue to monitor efficacy

First 4 ME

- Continue to monitor progress, data and efficacy for First 4 ME
- Grow First 4 ME by 6 new pilots – so there is one in each Maine county

Child Care Incentives

- Collect and evaluate data on the usage of each infant subsidy incentive
- Prepare recommendations for continuation of infant subsidy incentive, or possible changes or enhancements