

Family Supports and Services

Vision: By 2030 Maine will have an early childhood system with regional coordination and connection, with no wrong door for families to access services.



DATA

- Prior to the pandemic, the average annual cost of child care for an infant was \$9,224 in a child care center and \$8,045 in a family child care home. The average annual cost of infant center-based care was 92.6% of the cost of tuition and fees at a 4-year Maine college. [Data](#)
- The Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) reimburses CCSP Child Care Licensed Providers at the 75th percentile of the Market Rate Survey per Maine statute. [Data](#)
- From August 2019 to August 2021, there were 400 less children enrolled in the child care subsidy program, subsequently in the same period there are 136 less child care programs in the state. [Data](#)
- From 2018-2019 2,008 families with 2,070 children were served by Home Visiting services.



STATUS

- Maine once had Resource Centers that provided resources for child care programs and connected families with child care and programming. Maine is one of the only states without some sort of resource and referral network.
- Federal funds for pandemic relief allowed short term subsidy enrollment for essential workers in 2020, temporarily waived family copays, increasing reimbursement rates based on quality of program a child enrolls in, and 35% increase for children with documented special needs.
- Cost of child care is trending up as child care programs rebuild from financial losses and workforce shortages have strained the market.
- LD 1712 passed in 2021 included Help ME Grow, a systems-level initiative that connects parents with early learning providers, health care providers, and child-serving state and local agencies to assist families in locating appropriate services for their children which could be developed to include child care services.

2022 Goals



- Support implementation of Help ME Grow to include elements that support partnerships with child care programs and Home Visitors
 - Increase access for eligible families to the Child Care Subsidy Program and recommend changing language from subsidy to scholarship program to reduce stigma for families
 - Outline a path forward to blending services for families and child care programs into early childhood hubs including current programming available and identifying service gaps for families and early childhood programs
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2023–2024 Goals



- Support full integration (elements) in Help ME Grow
 - Monitor progress and data outcomes for 1 year of full implementation
 - Identify needed data to be tracked and set up system for shared data collection
 - Make permanent the temporary (ARPA) child care subsidy reimbursement to cover enrollment vs. attendance (dependent on federal legislation)
 - Increase promotion of the Child Care Subsidy program to reach more families including translated items
 - Increase Home Visiting access to 25% of eligible families who request home visiting services
 - Create Early Childhood Hub
 - Gather parent, business, and stakeholder input to determine recommendations for the design of an early childhood hub model (Child Care Choices, MRTQ PDN, Help Me Grow, First4ME, First 10, etc.)
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2025–2026 Goals



- Increase developmental screening to reach 60% of children under 5
- Increase access of families utilizing funding support for child care by 50% (90% dependent on federal legislation)
- Creation of state funded program to support immigrant families who are ineligible for the Child Care Subsidy program
- Increase compensation for Home Visiting Professionals
- Increase workforce recruitment of multi-lingual professionals for Home Visiting services
- Create Early Childhood Hub
 - Meet with members of the administration to discuss recommendations and determine whether to pursue administrative or legislative advocacy
- Ensure no family pays more than 7% of their income on child care