

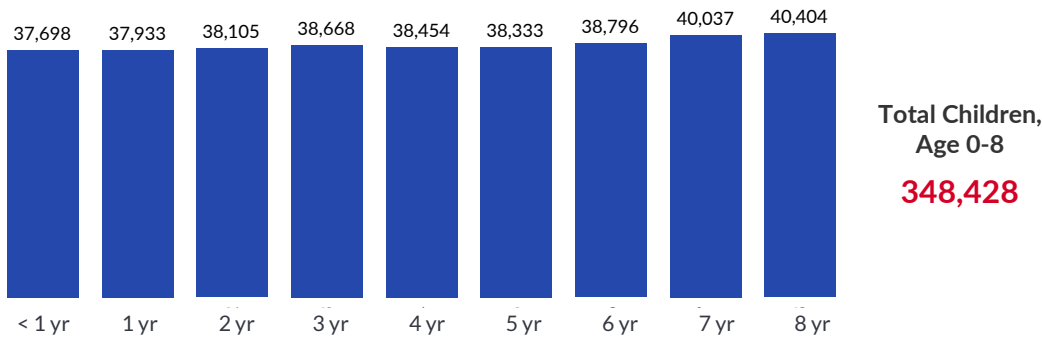
The Early Childhood Landscape in ARKANSAS



OVERVIEW

Learning is a continuum that begins from our first day in the world, not just the first day of school. As we begin to understand how the opportunities and environments early in life impact long-term learning and life outcomes, our systems of education have begun to gradually encompass children of younger ages. Because early childhood learning is largely undefined and decentralized, this packet is meant to serve as a compilation of the various statistics, data, and research available. While by no means comprehensive, we hope it provides a foundational understanding of the current landscape of early learning in your state.

Number of Children Age 8 and Younger, 2015



STATE DEMOGRAPHICS

Early childhood initiatives are often crafted to support specific populations within a state—such as infants, children from low-income families, and English language learners—which is why it is important to first understand your state’s demographics.

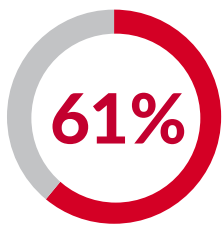
Questions To Consider

How many young children are in my state?

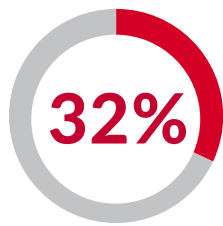
How does this impact the scale of policies?

What is the economic status of families with young children?

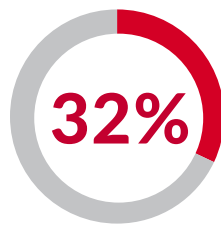
Are there unique cultural needs for young children in my state?



Children with All Available Parents in the Labor Force, Age 0–6 (2015)



Children in Poverty, Age 0–5 (2015)



Children in Low-Income Working Families, Age 0–6 (2015)

Children Age 0–4 by Race, 2015

	White	Black	Hispanic	Two or More Races	Asian	American Indian
# Children	118,470	34,773	23,236	8,511	3,250	1,371
% of All Children	62.3%	18.3%	12.2%	4.5%	1.7%	0.7%

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Current Status of Infant and Toddler Well-Being

INDICATOR	ARKANSAS	NATION
Unintended Pregnancy (% of all pregnancies)	55%	45%
Prenatal Care Before 3rd Trimester (% of live births)	N/A	87%
Teen Mothers (% of live births)	4%	7%
Home Health Visit (% of children ages 0-3)	10%	14%
Well-Baby Check (% of babies)	89%	91%
Developmental Screening (% of children ages 10 months to 5 years)	26%	31%

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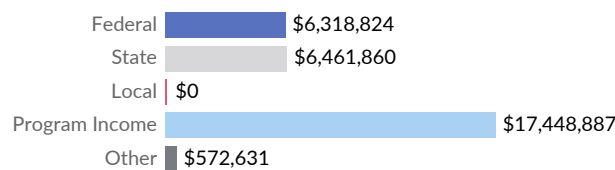
Maternal and Child Health Grant

The federal government allocates the Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Block Grant to states. **Arkansas** provides additional funding to the MCH program (as shown below).

The state has identified eight national performance measures to focus on:

- **Well-Woman Visits**
- **Risk-Appropriate Perinatal Care**
- **Breastfeeding**
- **Safe Sleep**
- **Injury Hospitalization**
- **Physical Activity**
- **Transition (Children with Special Needs)**
- **Adequate Insurance**

Arkansas MCH Funds by Source



Arkansas | MCH 2015 Expenditures

POPULATION SERVED	INDIVIDUALS SERVED	2015 EXPENDITURE
Pregnant Women	37,416	\$3,154,355
Infants	43,211	\$6,338,843
Children (Age 1-22)	371,909	\$7,155,242
Children with Special Needs	14,389	\$5,243,970
Others	125,042	\$8,454,929
Total	591,967	\$30,347,339

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INFANT AND TODDLER SUPPORT

Infants and toddlers develop and learn at exponential rates as they explore and engage with the environments and adults around them. In order to support their **health and development**, pregnant women, infants and toddlers, and parents need access to information and services.

Questions To Consider

Are women and children receiving health care services before and after birth?

Are families prepared for and educated about the needs of young children?

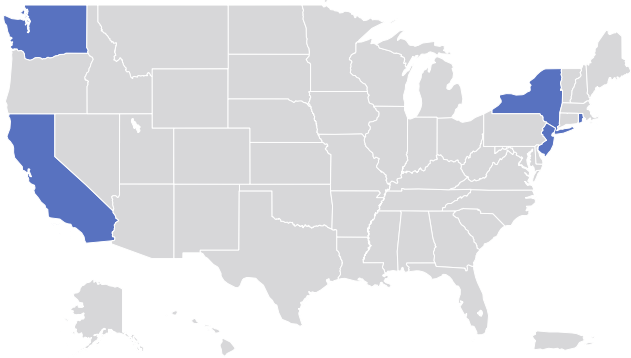
What areas of maternal and child health is my state focusing on?



Paid Family Leave

Arkansas does not have a statewide paid family leave policy.

States with Paid Family Leave Policies



State	First Year	# Weeks	Benefit (% Income)
CA	2004	6	Up to 70%
DC	2020	8	Up to 90%
NJ	2009	6	Up to 66%
NY	2018	8	Up to 50%
RI	2014	4	Up to 60%
WA	2020	12	Up to 90%

Home Visiting

Home visiting is a type of service targeted to expectant parents and parents with children ages 0-5 to support healthy child development. Though models and programs vary, home visits typically allow trained experts to provide services, share best practices, and connect families to other resources all within the home setting.

6,426

Number of Families Served Through Home Visits in 2016 ²

91,831

Number of Home Visits Provided in 2016 ^{1,2}

Arkansas uses the following evidence-based models for home visiting programs:^{1,2}

- Healthy Families America
- Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters
- Nurse-Family Partnership
- Parents as Teachers

[VIEW DATA RESOURCE 1](#)

[VIEW DATA RESOURCE 2](#)

INFANT AND TODDLER SUPPORT

Questions To Consider

*What does paid family leave look like across the country?
Is that conversation happening in my state?*

*Is my state funding a significant percentage of home visits?
Were home visits an MCH priority for my state?*

What models for home visiting is my state utilizing? How are different models used to support families' unique needs?

Cost and Affordability of Infant Care

\$5,995

Average Annual Cost of Infant Care in **Arkansas**

13%

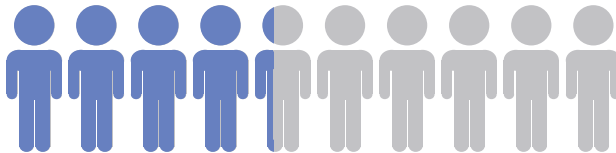
Infant Care Cost as a Share of Median Family Income in **Arkansas**

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, child care is affordable if it costs no more than 10% of a family's income.

By this standard, only

43%

of families in **Arkansas** can afford infant care.



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Public Support for Infant Care

PROGRAM	FUNDING SOURCE	DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF CHILDREN AGES 0-3 SERVED
Early Head Start	Federal (with optional state supplement)	Funds child care slots for children ages 0-3 from low-income families in addition to some health and family services.	Federal 2,149
			State 0
Child Care and Development Fund	Federal and State	Provides financial assistance to low-income families to access child care so they can work or attend a job training or educational program.	2,675 monthly average

INFANT AND TODDLER SUPPORT

Questions To Consider

Is the cost of infant care in my state affordable?

What percentage of families have all available parents in the labor force? What does that mean for the demand for infant care?

What type of public support is available in my state for infant care?



Pre-Kindergarten Trends

47.3%

3- and 4-Year Olds Enrolled in **Pre-K** Public and Private (Estimated **36,446** children)

[VIEW DATA RESOURCE HERE](#)

9.8%

3- and 4-Year Olds Enrolled in **Head Start** Program (Estimated **7,584** children)

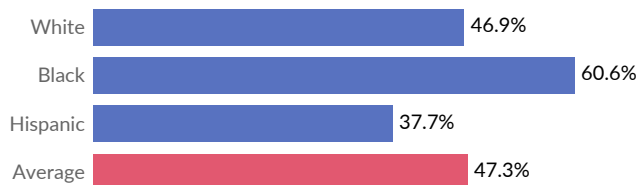
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25.2%

3- and 4-Year Olds Enrolled in **State pre-K** Program (Estimated **19,441** children)

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Percentage of 3- and 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in Pre-K, Public & Private by Race



The following group(s) have enrollment rates in pre-school programs that are below the state average: **Hispanic**

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THREE- AND FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

At ages three- and four, children may be eligible to enroll in pre-Kindergarten, or “pre-K,” programs, both private and public. Pre-K programs are not compulsory, and families may elect to continue any arrangement of their choice.

Questions To Consider

How many children are attending pre-K, public or private?

Are certain populations more likely to attend pre-K?

What percentage of children are enrolled in pre-K due to public support?

How expensive is child care for 4-year-olds?

\$8.80

Median Hourly Wage Child Care Worker

62%

Median Wage for Child Care Worker as Percent of State Median Income

\$4,995

Average Annual Cost of Child Care for 4-year-old

[VIEW DATA RESOURCE HERE](#)

\$13.55

Median Hourly Wage Preschool Teacher

68%

Median Wage for Preschool Teacher as Percent of State Median Income



Pre-Kindergarten Policy

ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE/ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE

ACCESS	Family Income - Eligibility	200% of FPL; 90% or more of the children meet the income criteria; other children may qualify with other characteristics and/or be on a sliding fee scale
	Other Risk Factors - Eligibility	Child disability or developmental delay; Low parental education; History of abuse, neglect, or family violence; Homelessness or unstable housing; Home language other than English; Parental substance abuse; Risk that child will not be ready for kindergarten; Teen parent; Low birth weight or other child health risk; Child history of foster care; Other risk factor(s)
	Child Age	3- and 4-year-olds
	Required District Participation	Not required, but funding is awarded on a competitive basis
FUNDING	State Agency	Arkansas Department of Education (ADE); Arkansas Department of Human Services - Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE)
	Total Spending (2016)	\$159,805,560
	Funds by Source	State, \$105,000,000; Federal, \$11,204,760; Required local, \$43,600,800
	Dedicated Revenue Source for State Funds?	Yes: General state revenue: \$103,500,000
	Agencies Eligible to Receive Funding	Public schools, Head Start, Private agencies, Faith-based centers, Family child care homes, Education Service Cooperatives, University Related Programs
	Permitted Subcontracting Agencies	Public schools
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	Minimum Daily Hours	7
	Minimum Days Per Week	5 days per week
	Annual Operating Schedule	School or academic year
	Maximum Class Size	20
	Screening/Referral and Support Services	Vision; Hearing; Height/weight/BMI; Blood pressure; Immunizations; Psychosocial/behavioral; Developmental; Full physical exam

THREE- AND FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

As states begin to develop and fund pre-Kindergarten program, eligibility and quality requirements have also been adopted.

Questions To Consider

Does my state support pre-K enrollment? If so, for which children?

What are the funding sources for pre-K?

What requirements must providers meet in order to be eligible for the state pre-K program?

ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE/ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS – CONTINUED

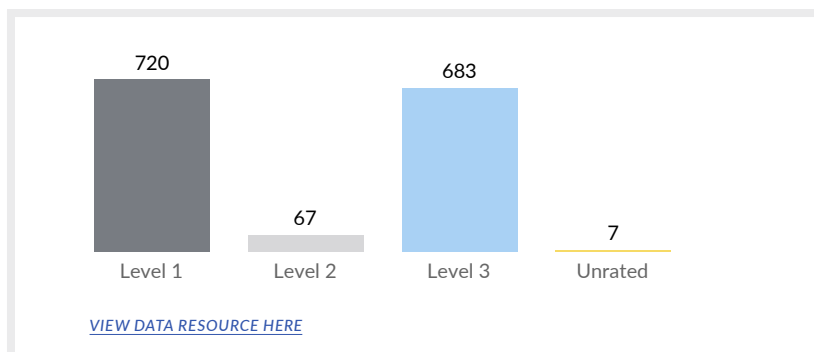
STANDARDS	Early Learning and Development Standards	Arkansas Early Learning Education Frameworks
	Year Revised	2016
	Alignment with College and Career Ready Standards for Early Grades	Yes
EDUCATORS	Teacher Degree	BA
	Required Specialization in ECE	Yes
	Assistant Teacher Degree	CDA
ACCOUNTABILITY	Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)	Better Beginnings
	Required Participation in QRIS	Yes
	Number of Levels	3
	Required Rating for Funding	N/A

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Quality Ratings of Child Care Programs

In recent years, many states have designed Quality Ratings and Improvement Systems (QRIS) to evaluate child care providers. The QRIS rating is often a reflection of various measures such as teacher-child interactions, classroom environment, family engagement, and staff educational attainment. Often voluntary, QRIS systems are meant to help improve the quality of child care providers and help families choose the right provider for their children.

Child Care Providers By QRIS Level



THREE- AND FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

Questions To Consider

Are pre-K standards aligned with goals of the K-12 system?

Does my state require pre-K teachers to have a certain degree? If so, what?

Has my state developed a system to assess the quality of pre-K and child care providers? Is participation mandatory for state pre-K programs?



K-3 Policy

	K-3 COMPONENT	ARKANSAS
ATTENDANCE	Compulsory Age of Attendance ¹	5
	Kindergarten Entrance Age ¹	5 on or before 8/01
	State-Required Full-Day Kindergarten ¹	Yes, full-day kindergarten is required.
	State-Required Half-Day Kindergarten ¹	No
	Required Kindergarten Attendance ¹	Yes
STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS	Required Kindergarten Entrance Assessment (KEA) ²	Districts must administer the uniform school readiness screening upon a student's entry to kindergarten.
	Statewide KEA ³	Yes
	KEA Results Use ²	Results of the KEA must be provided to the student's parent.
	K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium Member ³	No
	Dual Language Learner (DLL) Assessment ⁴	English Language and Proficiency Assessment (ELPA21)
	Number of States Using DLL Assessment ²	7
	3 ^d -Grade Reading Retention Law ²	Third grade retention is required, with good cause exemptions. Students may be promoted to the fourth grade upon completion of an academic improvement plan or if the student passes the state-mandated assessment.
EDUCATORS	Early Childhood Education License Required for Kindergarten Teachers ³	No
	Science of Reading Test Required for Elementary Teachers ⁶	Arkansas requires elementary teacher candidates to pass the Praxis II Multiple Subjects (5001) test, which includes reading as a topic; this assessment does not generate a separate reading score.
	Teacher-to-Student Ratio Requirement ²	1:20 (1:22, with aide) for kindergarten. No more than 1:23 average for grades 1-3.

FIVE- TO EIGHT-YEAR-OLDS

At age five, children are eligible to begin kindergarten—generally considered the start to their formal education. In these early grades, there is a strong focus on learning to read due to research indicating that 3rd-grade literacy is crucial for success in school and life.

Questions To Consider

Are districts required to offer full-day kindergarten?

At what age are children eligible to attend school? At what age is attendance compulsory?

How are children assessed in grades K-3? What are assessment results used for?

[VIEW DATA RESOURCE HERE¹](#)

[VIEW DATA RESOURCE HERE³](#)

[VIEW DATA RESOURCE HERE⁵](#)

[VIEW DATA RESOURCE HERE²](#)

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