The Hunt Institute

The Early Childhood Landscape in
SOUTH CAROLINA

OVERVIEW

School readiness is shaped by many factors, each with the power to influence learning and development – both for better and for worse – from the days young children are born. For this reason, policymakers interested 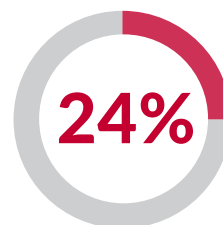in promoting the long-term academic and life success of children must be prepared to consider their needs on a holistic basis – addressing not just access to high-quality early learning environments, but their health, safety, social-emotional development, and the economic and other stressors facing their families. While far from comprehensive, this state data profile is intended to provide a snapshot of both risk and reach. That is: what are the significant risk factors experienced by the children of my state, and how well are services reaching the children and families for whom they are intended?

Number of Children Age 8 and Younger, 2018

< 1 yr	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr	4 yr	5 yr	6 yr	7 yr	8 yr
55,932	57,248	59,123	60,341	59,747	59,672	60,542	60,810	62,069

Total Children, Age 0-8
535,484
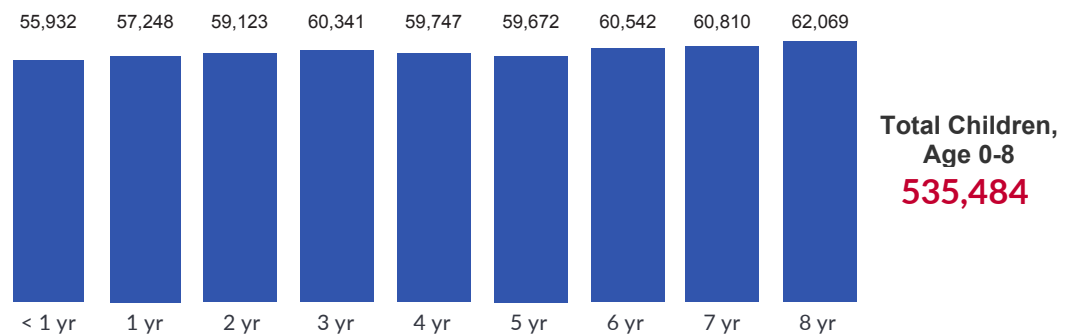
69%
Children with All Available Parents in the Labor Force
Age 0–5 (2018)

24%
Children in Poverty*
Age 0–5 (2018)

29%
Children in Low-Income Working Families*
Age 0–5 (2018)

Children in Poverty, by Race, 2018

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/Pac. Islander	American Indian	All
South Carolina	11%	39%	37%	N/A	N/A	23%
United States	11%	32%	26%	11%	31%	18%
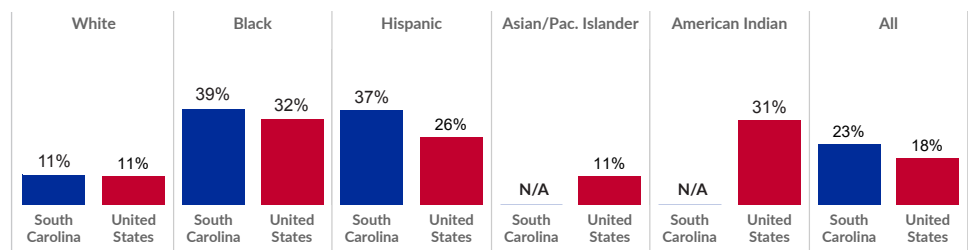
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*The federal poverty level for a family of four was $24,600. "Low income" is defined as having a family income less than twice the federal poverty level.

INFANT AND TODDLER SUPPORT

The first three years of life are a unique and critical period of development, during which up to 1 million new neural connections are formed in the developing brain each second. Infants and toddlers develop and learn at exponential rates as they explore and engage with the environments and adults around them. In order to best support their **health and development**, families 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 through home health visits, regular well-baby checks or both?

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

Current Status of Infant and Toddler Well-Being

INDICATOR	SOUTH CAROLINA	NATION
Unintended Pregnancy[1] (% of all pregnancies)	50%	45%
Prenatal Care Before 3rd Trimester[2] (% of live births)	93%	87%
Home Health Visit[1] (% of children ages 0-3)	18%	14%
Well-Baby Check[3] (% of babies)	91%	91%
Developmental Screening[2] (% of children ages 10 months to 5 years)	30%	31%

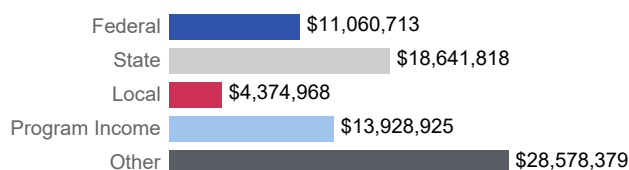VIEW DATA RESOURCE 1   VIEW DATA RESOURCE 3

VIEW DATA RESOURCE 2

Maternal and Child Health Grant

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

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

- **Well-Woman Visit**
- **Risk-Appropriate Perinatal Care**
- **Breastfeeding**
- **Safe Sleep**
- **Developmental Screening**
- **Physical Activity**
- **Medical Home**
- **Smoking**

South Carolina MCH Funds by Source

Source	Amount
Federal	$11,060,713
State	$18,641,818
Local	$4,374,968
Program Income	$13,928,925
Other	$28,578,379

South Carolina | MCH 2017 Expenditures

POPULATION SERVED	INDIVIDUALS SERVED	2017 EXPENDITURE
Pregnant Women	9,303	$414,476
Infants	839	$678,010
Children (Age 1-22)	27,615	$6,196,664
Children with Special Needs	4,912	$9,114,838
Others	29,150	$54,799,322
Total	71,819	$71,203,310

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INFANT AND TODDLER SUPPORT

Questions To Consider

Are disparities in access evident in your state's data? What steps might be taken to increase access to - and utilization of - prenatal care by expectant mothers?

Are there racial/ethnic disparities evident in the teen birth data? What steps is my state taking to reduce teenage pregnancy?
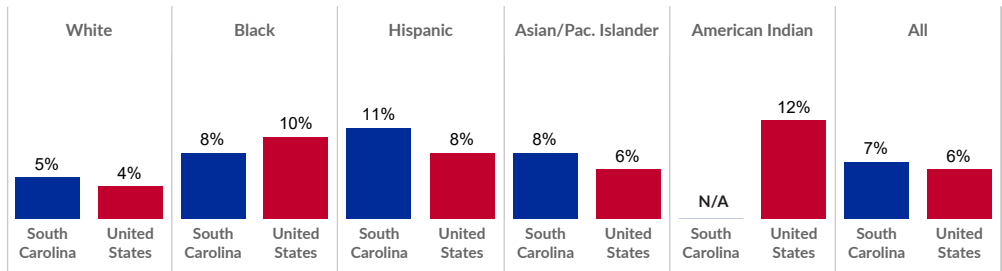
Are there disparities evident in the number of children born at low birthweight? What steps might be taken to reduce the prevalence of this outcome, particularly among high-risk populations?

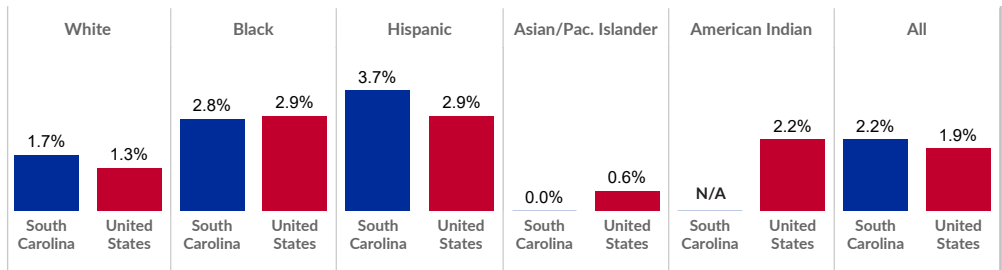## Prenatal Care and Birth Outcome, By Race

Receiving appropriate prenatal care helps reduce the likelihood of negative birth outcomes, including low birthweight and premature births, which are often linked to developmental delays and elevated rates of early school failure. Furthermore, births to teenage mothers increase risk for both children (increasing the likelihood of being born at a low birthweight and infant mortality) and their mothers (who are less likely to graduate from high school, maintain steady employment).

Often these outcomes vary significantly across demographic groups, which results in systematic inequities in infant and maternal health and well-being.
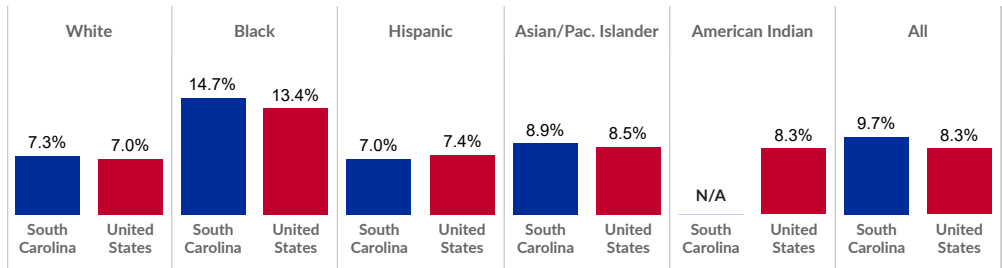
Births to Women Receiving Late or No Prenatal Care

	White		Black		Hispanic		Asian/Pac. Islander		American Indian		All	
	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States
	5%	4%	8%	10%	11%	8%	8%	6%	N/A	12%	7%	6%

Teen Births

	White		Black		Hispanic		Asian/Pac. Islander		American Indian		All	
	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States
	1.7%	1.3%	2.8%	2.9%	3.7%	2.9%	0.0%	0.6%	N/A	2.2%	2.2%	1.9%

Low Birthweight

	White		Black		Hispanic		Asian/Pac. Islander		American Indian		All	
	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States	South Carolina	United States
	7.3%	7.0%	14.7%	13.4%	7.0%	7.4%	8.9%	8.5%	N/A	8.3%	9.7%	8.3%

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INFANT AND TODDLER SUPPORT

Questions To Consider

What is the prevalence of paid family leave across the country? Are conversations about paid family leave happening in my state?

What percentage of at-risk families are able to access evidence-based home visiting programs in my state? Are post-partum home visits an MCH priority in my state?

What home visiting models is my state utilizing? Are these models recognized as evidence-based? How are different models used to support families' unique needs?

Paid Family Leave

Paid family leave policies support employees requiring time off to bond with a newborn baby, adopted or foster child – or to care for a seriously ill family member.
South Carolina does not have a statewide paid family leave policy.

States with Paid Family Leave Policies

Nine states (reflected on the map below) have implemented universal paid family leave policies, while eight additional states have enacted paid family leave provisions for state employees only. These are: Arkansas, Delaware, Indiana, Kansas, New Mexico, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.
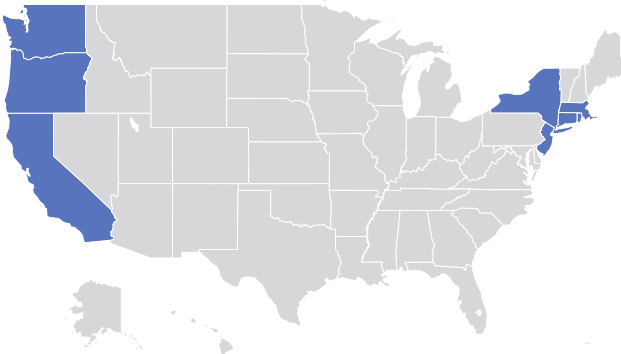
State	First Year	# Weeks	Benefit (% Income)
CA	2004	6	Up to 70%
CT	2021	12	Up to 95%
DC	2020	8	Up to 90%
MA	2021	12	Up To 80%
NJ	2009	6	Up to 66%
NY	2018	8	Up to 50%
OR	2023	12	Up to 100%*
RI	2014	4	Up to 60%
WA	2020	12	Up to 90%

*Up to 100%, not to exceed 120% of state average weekly wage

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.

3,797
Number of Families Served Through Home Visits in 2017

58,613
Number of Home Visits Provided in 2017

South Carolina uses the following evidence-based models for home visiting programs:

- **Early Head Start Home-Based Option**
- **Healthy Families America**
- **Nurse-Family Partnership**
- **Parents as Teachers**

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INFANT AND TODDLER SUPPORT

Questions To Consider

Are state funds used to supplement federal investments in children aged birth to three?

Does your state draw down its full share of CCDF funding? Are Early Head Start services aligned with the state's child care regulations and early learning guidelines?

Are services within the state's CCDF-funded programming prioritized for use by infants and toddlers?

Are mechanisms in place to support the successful transition of Early Head Start students into either Head Start preschool services or state prekindergarten?

Is CCDF spending on infants and toddlers sufficient to address the higher costs of their care?

Price and Affordability of Infant Care

Licensed child care is delivered in both center-based and home-based settings. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this care is affordable if it costs no more than 10 percent of a family's income, with efforts underway in some states to ensure subsidized child care costs are capped at no more than 7 percent.

$6,475
Average Annual Price of Infant Care in **South Carolina**

13%
Infant Care Price as a Share of Median Family Income in **South Carolina**

43%
Families in **South Carolina** that can Afford Infant Care (10% standard)

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Federal Expenditures on Infants and Toddlers

While many states have invested heavily in prekindergarten programs serving three- and four-year olds, services to children aged zero to three are most commonly underwritten through a pair of federal programs: the **Child Care and Development Fund** (CCDF), a federal block grant that supports both child care subsidies and quality enhancement initiatives, and **Early Head Start** (EHS). Compared to preschool programs for older children, the infant and toddler slots funded by these programs are typically available to fewer children. CCDF subsidies for infants and toddlers often reimburse providers for less than the actual cost of care.

CCDF & EHS | Number of Children Served 0-2 [1, 2, 3]

CCDF 4,480
EHS 2,067
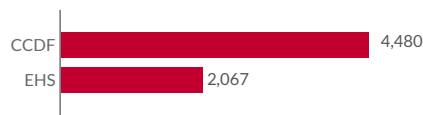
CCDF | Number of Children Served By Age [1]

784 — 0
1,792 — 1
1,904 — 2
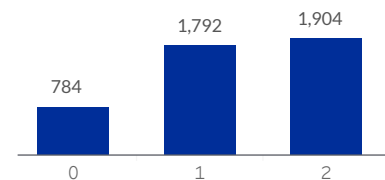
$6,603
CCDF | Average Per Child Expenditure, Ages 0-2 [1]

$12,757
EHS | Average Per Child Expenditure, Ages 0-2 [3, 4]

2.6%
Percentage of All Children Ages 0-2 Receiving CCDF Subsidy Supports [1, 2, 3, 4]

1.2%
Percentage of All Children Ages 0-2 Receiving Early Head Start Services [1, 2, 3, 4]

*Head Start programming includes both the Head Start preschool program for children ages three and four and Early Head Start, which serves children under three. The figures above depict enrollment and investment in Early Head Start.

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THREE- AND FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

At ages three and four, children may be eligible to enroll in one or more types of publicly-funded pre-kindergarten. This includes state-funded pre-K, often delivered in both public and private settings, and Head Start, a federally-funded preschool program operated by local grantees. State funded pre-K programs generally incorporate child eligibility and provider quality requirements. These programs are typically not compulsory.

Questions To Consider

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

Are certain populations more likely to attend pre-K?

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

Do the wages depicted for the early childhood workforce permit for the hiring and retention of highly-qualified early childhood educators?

Pre-Kindergarten Trends Within Publicly Funded Programs

9%

3- and 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in **Head Start** Program (Estimated **10,385** children)

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23%

3- and 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in **State Funded Pre-K** Program (Estimated **27,443** children)

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Parent-Reported Percentage of 3- and 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in Any Type of Preschool Program

Including Both Public Programs and Private Programs Supported by Parent Tuition

White	43.0%
Black	50.6%
Hispanic	44.9%
Two or More Races	41.5%
Average	45.5%

The following group(s) have enrollment rates in preschool programs that are below the state average: **White, Hispanic, Children of two or more races**

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Wages and Price

$19,570

Median Annual Wage Child Care Worker (2018)

58%

Median Wage for Child Care Worker as Percent of State Median Income (2018)

$23,130

Median Annual Wage Preschool Teacher (2018)

69%

Median Wage for Preschool Teacher as Percent of State Median Income (2018)

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$5,863

Average Annual Price of Child Care for 4-Year-Old

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THREE- AND FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

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?

Pre-Kindergarten Policy

CHILD EARLY READING DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION PROGRAM (CERDEP)/ SOUTH CAROLINA EIA CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (EIA 4K)

ACCESS	Family Income - Eligibility	Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, or 185% of Federal Poverty Line
	Other Risk Factors - Eligibility	CERDEP: None; EIA 4K: Determined locally
	Child Age	4 by September 1
	Required District Participation	Required for all
FUNDING	State Agency	State Department of Education: Office of Early Learning and Literacy; State Office of School Readiness or Early Childhood: South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness
	Total Spending (2016-17)	$84,506,429
	Funds by Source	State: $77,572,655; Federal: $6,933,774
	Dedicated Revenue Source for State Funds?	Yes
	Agencies Eligible to Receive Funding	Public schools, Head Start, Private agencies, Faith-based centers, Federally licensed military centers serving students in eligible districts may be approved as First Steps 4K providers
	Permitted Subcontracting Agencies	First Steps: Head Start, Private agencies, Faith-based centers, Other
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	Minimum Daily Hours	CERDEP: 6.5; EIA 4K: 4
	Minimum Days Per Week	5 days per week
	Annual Operating Schedule	School year or academic year
	Maximum Class Size	20
	Required Screenings	Immunizations; Developmental

CHILD EARLY READING DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION PROGRAM (CERDEP)/ SOUTH CAROLINA EIA CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (EIA 4K) – CONTINUED

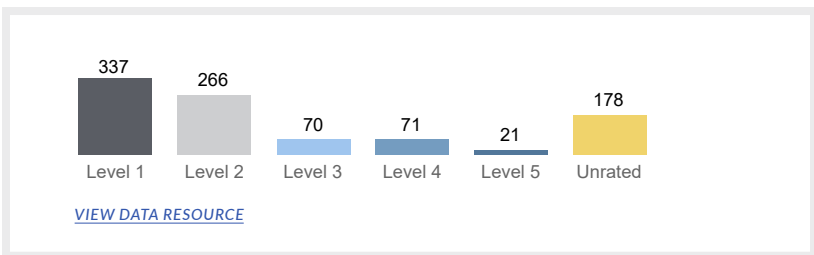| STANDARDS	Early Learning and Development Standards	South Carolina Early Learning Standards (SC-ELS)
	Year Revised	2017
	Alignment with College and Career Ready Standards for Early Grades	Yes
EDUCATORS	Teacher Degree	BA
	Required Specialization in ECE	Early Childhood Education (public); Early Childhood Education, Child Development (nonpublic)
	Assistant Teacher Degree	High School Diploma or Equivalent

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Quality Ratings of Child Care Programs

In recent years, many states have designed Quality Ratings and Improvement Systems (QRIS) to provide parents with information about the quality of individual 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. Typically voluntary, QRIS systems are meant to help improve the quality of child care providers and help families choose the right provider for their children.

ACCOUNTABILITY	Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)	ABC Quality	
	Provider Participation	**Voluntary** Licensed center-based programs, Head Start/Early Head Start, Licensed family child care, School-operated early childhood programs, School-aged programs	**Mandatory** Programs with children receiving CCDF subsidies
	Number of Levels	5	
	Tiered Reimbursement	Yes	
	Other Financial Incentive	Yes	

Child Care Providers By QRIS Level

337	266	70	71	21	178
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Unrated

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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?

K–3 Policy

	K–3 COMPONENT	SOUTH CAROLINA
ATTENDANCE	Compulsory Age of Attendance[1]	5 before 9/01
	Kindergarten Entrance Age[1]	5 on or before 9/01
	State-Required Full-Day Kindergarten[1]	Yes
	State-Required Half-Day Kindergarten[1]	No
	Required Kindergarten Attendance[1]	Yes
STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS	Required Kindergarten Entrance Assessment (KEA)[2]	Every student entering publicly funded pre-kindergarten and kindergarten is administered a readiness assessment focused on assessing early language and literacy development, mathematical thinking, physical well-being, and social-emotional development.
	KEA Results Use[2]	Results are used to inform instructional strategies and developmental activities. The results must be reported to parents or guardians and the Read to Succeed Office.
	Dual Language Learner (DLL) Assessment	ACCESS for ELLS
	Number of States Using DLL Assessment	36
	3rd-Grade Reading Retention Law[2]	Third grade retention is required for students who fail to demonstrate reading proficiency, with a good cause exemption.
EDUCATORS	Early Childhood Education License Required for Kindergarten Teachers[2]	Early Childhood Certification, pre-kindergarten through grade 3.
	Science of Reading Test Required for Elementary Teachers[3]	Partially. Teachers must pass a test that includes multiple topics.
	Teacher-to-Student Ratio Requirement[2]	Average 1:21 based on average daily enrollment in reading and mathematics class in grades K-3. Maximum 1:30 for grades K-3.

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