The Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP) was established in 1994 to increase the number of Head Start eligible children who have access to a comprehensive early childhood program during the year prior to kindergarten. The program follows the same comprehensive standards that apply to the federal Head Start program and serves 4-year-old children whose families have incomes below the federal poverty level. This initiative provides funding for public schools, Head Start programs, for-profit early care and education centers, and nonprofit community agencies to offer early childhood education programs. Some programs operate only with ECAP funds, while others combine ECAP and federal Head Start funds.

Delaware uses a continuous program improvement model that links four key improvement strategies: annual program self-assessment, on-site program monitoring, annual evaluations of child and family outcomes, and on-site technical assistance and training.

The Early Childhood Assistance Program received $4,456,700 in 2002–2003 and served 843 4-year-olds.