OVERVIEW


WHAT'S NEW

In 2017-2018, the state expanded eligibility for Delaware Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP)-funded programs to 3-year-olds to move toward a system of continuity within the state.

The Delaware Department of Education was awarded a Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five award in 2018 for $4.2 million. Through this opportunity, Delaware seeks to understand the experiences of families and early childhood professionals navigating the existing birth to five system through its comprehensive needs assessment. As a result, subsequent policy and identified solutions will be found through an analysis of the true needs of Delaware's children and families. The subsequent strategic plan will renew the state's current five-year early childhood strategic plan that ended in 2018.

BACKGROUND

The Delaware Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP) began in 1994, providing comprehensive early learning services for 4-year-olds eligible for the federal Head Start program. Eligibility expanded to 3-year-olds in 2017-2018.

Modeled after the federal Head Start program, ECAP requires participating programs to follow the federal Head Start Program Performance Standards. Ten percent of enrollment slots are reserved for children with disabilities; the majority of participating children must live in families with incomes at or below 100% FPL, but since 2007 up to 35% of enrolled children may live in households up to 130% of FPL. ECAP grants are available to for-profit child care, Head Start agencies, public schools, community-based organizations, and private and faith-based centers, based on Community Needs Assessment Data determinations.

Additional changes are expected as programs adjust policies, procedures, and practices to meet the new requirements in the 2016 update to the Head Start Program Performance Standards. Delaware is providing professional development and technical assistance to help programs meet these new standards. For example, each ECAP program is awarded a Training/Technical Assistance award to utilize towards individualized program professional development. In addition, every ECAP program is allotted funds for covering on-site training(s) provided by the Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC).

In 2012, Delaware began requiring all ECAP programs to participate in Delaware Stars, the state quality rating improvement system (QRIS) for early childhood programs, which is aligned with the Head Start Program Performance Standards. All ECAP programs are required to maintain at least a Star 4 rating.
DELAWARE EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ECAP)

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment ......................................................... 845
School districts that offer state program ................................. 100% (counties)
Income requirement ................................................................. 100% FPL
Minimum hours of operation ......................................... 3.5 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule .......................................................... Determined locally
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ......................... 1,650
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ............ 1,369
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ................. 295

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
<th>DE PRE-K REQUIREMENT</th>
<th>BENCHMARK</th>
<th>REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early learning &amp; development standards</td>
<td>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</td>
<td>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum supports</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher degree</td>
<td>BA (public); AA (nonpublic)</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher specialized training</td>
<td>ECE, CD, ECE SpEd</td>
<td>Specializing in pre-K</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant teacher degree</td>
<td>HSD (public); CDA (nonpublic)</td>
<td>CDA or equivalent</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff professional development</td>
<td>90 hours/5 years (public teachers); 18 hours/year (nonpublic teachers &amp; assistants); 15 hours/year (public assistants) PD plans; coaching (some teachers)</td>
<td>For teachers &amp; assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum class size</td>
<td>17 (3-year-olds); 20 (4-year-olds)</td>
<td>20 or lower</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-child ratio</td>
<td>2:17 (3-year-olds); 1:10 (4-year-olds)</td>
<td>1:10 or better</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening &amp; referral</td>
<td>Vision, hearing, health &amp; more</td>
<td>Vision, hearing &amp; health screenings; &amp; referral</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous quality improvement system</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending ......................................................... $6,149,300
Local match required? ................................................................. No
State Head Start spending ......................................................... Not reported
State spending per child enrolled ............................................ $7,277
All reported spending per child enrolled* .................................. $7,277

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE

![Graph showing percent of population enrolled in public ECE]

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

![Graph showing spending per child enrolled]

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
** Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.
*** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

Data are for the 2017-2018 school year, unless otherwise noted.