

NO PROGRAM

Puerto Rico has preschool education programs that are funded by grants from various areas. This description shows how Puerto Rico, which operates as a single school district, supports several early childhood education initiatives.

Early childhood preschool programs are administered by the Administration for Integral Child Care and Development (ACUDEN) and the Department of Education has authority over early childhood special education. There are seven levels of education in Puerto Rico, and level 1 is nursery school for children under age 4, which is optional and consists of Early Head Start, Head Start and other prekindergarten programs. Level 2 is compulsory preschool, also known as kindergarten, which is mandatory for 5-year-olds. It should be noted that Puerto Rico does not have a uniform transition for kindergarten, but this is currently an ongoing activity project of the Preschool Development Grant Birth to 5 (PDG B-5), in alliance with the Department of Education.

ACUDEN is responsible for administering Federal Head Start/Early Head Start, child care and PDG B-5. The agency guarantees the provision of and access to comprehensive care and development for the neediest children from their early formative stages, and encourages the participation of fathers, mothers, caregivers and relatives of the child in the educational and formative process.

Head Start operates through 11 delegate agencies. These delegate agencies are the municipalities of Aguadilla, San Sebastián, Juana Díaz, Peñuelas, Cayey, Fundación para el Desarrollo de Hogar Propio in Caguas, Sabana Grande, Vega Baja, Dorado, Fajardo and Yabucoa. These programs have an impact on 4,229 children, 3,849 of whom are in Head Start and 384 in Early Head Start. There is an active multi-sectoral regulatory council for Head Start, which has representation from various sectors and meets every two months.

Through child care, ACUDEN funds 84 service providers and over 175 centers serving over 3,000 children. However, COVID-19 has recently diminished the promotion and dissemination of these services.

Puerto Rico has not had an active Multisector Council for Early Childhood since 2016. Under the work of the PDG B-5 grant, attempts were made to have it appointed by the Executive Branch but were not successful.

In December 2019, Puerto Rico was awarded an initial PDG B-5 grant for the purpose of updating early childhood planning efforts in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico received \$547,000 to support the development of planning and coordination of the early childhood development and education system. As part of this grant, a COVID-19 Pandemic Needs Assessment was conducted, which yielded important data on economic inequality among children in Puerto Rico, as well as mental health, access to services and system coordination. As a result of these findings, training was initiated for service providers in the area of mental health, specifically psychological recovery from trauma after disasters.

In December 2020, Puerto Rico was awarded a three-year PDG B-5 renewal grant in the amount of \$4.5 million. This grant will provide continuity to the activities designed to achieve an integrated system of early childhood services. Puerto Rico PDG B-5 is currently working on a strategic planning process and has the collaboration of more than 60 professionals representing all sectors involved in early childhood.

Puerto Rico does not currently have infant/toddler or preschool standards. However, through the PDG B-5, development standards were designed and created in collaboration with the state of Arkansas and early childhood professionals in Puerto Rico. These standards were submitted to the Department of Education and are currently under review.

Through an agreement established with the University of Puerto Rico, ACUDEN developed a pilot quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) called PASITOS in 2010, which was validated to serve as a self-assessment for participating public and private care centers. This instrument is currently under revision since it does not include several pertinent areas such as center administration and home visitation networks. Through the PDG B-5, DANDO PASITOS (Taking steps), will be developed and will contemplate all areas that imply a quality system, as well as support to reach quality levels.

ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
No Program		No Program		No Program

PUERTO RICO

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	0
School districts that offer state program	NA
Income requirement	NA
Minimum hours of operation	NA
Operating schedule	NA
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	5,320
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	22,275
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	0

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

NO PROGRAM

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$0
Local match required?	NA
State Head Start spending	\$0
State spending per child enrolled	\$0
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$0

* 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.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

