

Puerto Rico

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 One is nursery school for children under age four, which is optional and consists of Early Head Start, Head Start and other prekindergarten programs. Level Two is compulsory preschool, also known as kindergarten, which is mandatory for 5-year-olds.

ACUDEN is responsible for administering Federal Head Start and Early Head Start (as the largest grantee), is the lead agency for the Child Care Program funds, and is in charge of the PDG B-5 project. 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. ACUDEN also funds child care service providers and centers.

Head Start operates throughout Puerto Rico. In 2022-2023, there were 19,381 federally-funded Head Start slots and 5,158 Early Head Start slots. There is an active multi-sectoral regulatory council for Head Start, which has representation from various sectors and meets every two months.

Puerto Rico has not had an active Multisector Council for Early Childhood since 2016. However, thanks to the efforts of the PDG B-5 Project, the Governor of Puerto Rico signed an executive order to reactivate the Multisectoral Council for Early Childhood in October 2023.

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 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 \$4,682,916. This grant provides continuity to the activities designed to achieve an integrated system of early childhood services. To date, Puerto Rico successfully disseminated the Needs Assessment, developed Early Learning Guidelines, held Virtual Wellness Cafes for over 5,000 participants, and provided workshops and professional development opportunities to early childhood professionals, among other activities.

In August 2022, through the collaboration of the PDG B-5 Project and the Department of Education, Puerto Rico developed and approved the 0-60 Month Education and Development Standards, which are currently being implemented.

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. In 2023, ACUDEN commissioned the Department of Social Work of the Inter-American University of Puerto Rico, Metropolitan Campus to update the referred measurement instrument. This instrument, called Centers of the Future, evaluates services offered by early childhood centers from the private and public centers and is a voluntary self-assessment process.

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
No Program	

RESOURCE RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
No Program	

TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
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	6,567
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	18,525
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

