

NO PROGRAM

Although the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) does not provide state-funded preschool as defined in this report, the territory does support early education in other ways. Since 1984, the CNMI Public School System has operated the Head Start program in ten centers across multiple islands, providing two center-based program options: double-session/half-day (3.5 hours, four days per week, 152 days per year) and full-day (7 hours, five days per week, 160 days per year). The CNMI Head Start program had 396 preschool-aged Head Start slots and 64 Early Head Start slots in 2023-2024.

During the 2024-2025 school year, Head Start served children in fifteen classrooms, accommodating up to nineteen children in the full-day option and seventeen in the double-session option. A total of 170 children were enrolled in the double-session option and 188 children in a standard full-day format. There are seven Head Start centers on Saipan, one on Rota, and one on Tinian. Saipan classrooms are located in the villages of Chalan Kanoa, Dandan, Chinatown, Kagman, Oleai, San Antonio, and Tanapag. These nine centers continue to provide center-based program options, with two paid staff in each classroom. The program plans to establish a partnership with a family child care center, bringing the total to eight partnership slots.

Early Head Start served children in eight classrooms, with eight children per class. The program operates for 7 hours of instruction for a total of 202 instructional days from August 2024 to July 2025. There are a total of six Early Head Start grantee-operated classrooms located in Chalan Kanoa, Dandan Kagman, Susupe, and Tanapag. The Chalan Kanoa, Dandan, Kagman, and Tanapag classrooms are situated at Head Start sites. The Susupe site will be located within the campus of the largest high school on Saipan, upon completion of building renovations. Child Care Partnership slots are designed to offer services for a full working day, year-round.

In December 2019, the CNMI was awarded \$2,125,989 under the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five competition to support development, planning, and coordination of the territory's early learning system. The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs (DCCA) was named as the lead agency overseeing this award to coordinate and collaborate efforts across early childhood programs.

CNMI has early learning guidelines for children birth through age five which address multiple domains, including logic and reasoning, social studies, physical development and health, language development, literacy, mathematics, science, English language development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, and creative arts expression. The guidelines are aligned with the Head Start Child Development and Learning Framework.

CNMI developed a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), called Reach Higher, CNMI, that provides reviews, ratings, coaching, and technical assistance to eight local care providers. Program quality assessment tools are already used for quality assurance and monitoring and are now incorporated as one component of the QRIS.

ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
None Served		None Served		No Program

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

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	56
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	358
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	Not reported

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

NO PROGRAM

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$0
Local match required?	NA
State Head Start spending	Not reported
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

