



**Indiana Early Learning  
Advisory Committee**

**2018**

**Annual  
Report**

# Acknowledgments



The Indiana Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) would like to thank several organizations for their assistance in the development of this report. The following organizations were critical partners in providing data: Early Learning Indiana, Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children, Indiana Department of Education, Indiana Department of Workforce Development, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, First Steps, and Indiana State Department of Health. The appointed members of the Committee and Chairs of the seven ELAC workgroups provided valuable input and feedback.

Lastly, the members of the ELAC Data Coordination and System Integration workgroup contributed significantly to the development of this report: Co-Chair Charlie Geier, Indiana Youth Institute; Co-Chair Matt Hetzel, Management Performance Hub; Sara Abdalla, Indiana State Department of Health; Paul Fruits, Family and Social Services Administration; Cathy Gray, Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation; Christina Hage, United Way of Central Indiana; Amber Johnson, Southeastern Indiana Economic Opportunity Corporation; Eric McKeown, Ice Miller; Susan McKinney (Burow), Early Learning Indiana; Brandon Myers, Indiana Department of Education; Jeff Milkey, Indiana Department of Education; Cheryl Miller, Indiana Head Start Association; John Peirce, Big Goal Collaborative; Ann Puckett-Harpold, M.A. Rooney Foundation; Sally Reed-Crawford, Indiana University; Stephen Reynolds, Ice Miller; Betty Walton, Indiana University.

The co-chairs of the ELAC Evaluation of Child and Family Outcomes workgroup, Megan Purcell, Purdue University, and Karen Ruprecht, Early Learning Indiana, also contributed to writing the Featured Section in this report.

The report was written and designed by the team at Transform Consulting Group: Amanda Lopez, Sara Anderson, Amanda Schortgen, and Lora Stephens.

The completion of the ELAC needs assessment and development of this report was funded by the FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning.

# **L**etter From The **CHAIRMAN**

Governor Holcomb and the Indiana General Assembly:

One of ELAC's primary statutory responsibilities is to assess where Indiana stands on the all-important topic of early childhood education. This Annual Report – the fifth in a series – thoroughly answers that question across a variety of important aspects of this work.

This year's report shows increasing progress. More families are accessing high-quality care and education for their children birth to age 5. More providers are increasing the quality of their services. And importantly, through the joint efforts of the Executive and Legislative branches to expand On My Way Pre-K, many families in twenty Indiana counties will be able to afford high-quality settings for their four-year-olds.

But obstacles remain to the full realization of accessible, affordable, high-quality care and education. Access to high-quality care still varies tremendously across Indiana counties. And although many low-income families can now tap into subsidized care, others outside the income limits of On My Way Pre-K still struggle to cover the \$8,818 average tuition cost – an investment to prepare their four-year-olds for future school and employment success.

For the first time, in this year's Annual Report, ELAC created an interactive version of the needs assessment (statewide and by county) in a dashboard format. Interested stakeholders can drill down to see their county's status, as a springboard for collaborative efforts to implement proven practices in their localities.

As my two terms of chairing ELAC come to a close, I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity. Thank you to those elected officials who have moved this work aggressively forward in the last four years. ELAC will endeavor to always provide a ready resource for accurate data and best-practice based recommendations to inform this foundational work.

Sincerely,



Kevin R. Bain  
Chairman, Early Learning Advisory Committee



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# Executive Summary

Each year, Indiana's Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) conducts a comprehensive needs assessment on critical early learning indicators and presents recommendations to the Governor's Office and the Indiana Legislative Council on ways to address the identified needs.

This report focuses on the care and education of young children ages 0-5. It highlights both Indiana's progress and areas where improvement is needed based on the needs assessment completed last year in 2017. The data presented in this report is compiled from multiple sources and provides a comprehensive overview about the state of young children in Indiana.

## What Is ELAC's Vision?

ELAC is working to ensure that children ages birth to eight (8) years and their families have access to affordable, high-quality early childhood care and education programs that keep children healthy, safe, and learning.

## In Which Areas Has Indiana Made Progress?

Thanks to the hard work of many early childhood professionals, business leaders, legislators, and community stakeholders, Indiana made progress in improving early childhood care and education for young children in 2017.

- ✓ There are more high-quality early childhood care and education programs available.
- ✓ More children are enrolled in high-quality programs.
- ✓ Indiana consolidated its two pre-K pilot programs and expanded state-funded pre-K access to 15 additional counties.
- ✓ The Indiana General Assembly authorized state funding to be used for capacity-building to address infrastructure needs in Indiana's early learning system.
- ✓ More communities are organized to support and invest in early childhood care and education in their community as reflected through the expansion of On My Way Pre-K to 15 additional counties and participation in the Indiana Summit for Economic Development via Coalition Building.

## In Which Areas Could Indiana Improve?

- ❑ There are communities in Indiana with no high-quality early childhood care and education programs.
- ❑ The tuition cost of high-quality early childhood care and education programs is unaffordable, and the available financial assistance for low-income families is insufficient.
- ❑ Infants and toddlers have less access to high-quality early childhood care and education programs than older children.
- ❑ Indiana does not have a uniform method of assessing kindergarten readiness of children.

ELAC Data Sources



Indiana State Department of Health



INDIANA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

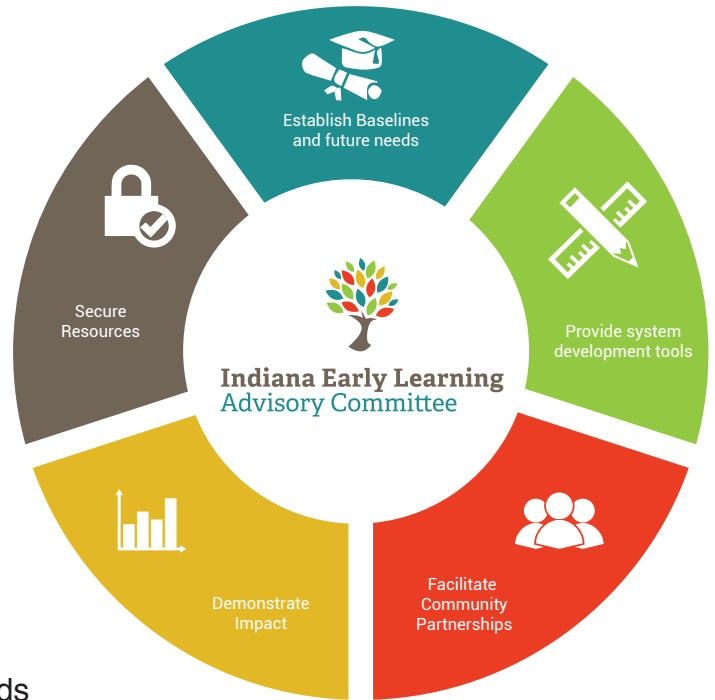


United States Census Bureau

# What Are ELAC's Key Strategies?

ELAC is focused on the following 5 key strategies to address the need and ensure that critical local and statewide early childhood infrastructure will be in place and delivering increased accessibility, affordability, and quality.

1. Establish baselines and identify future needs.
2. Provide system development tools.
3. Facilitate community partnerships.
4. Demonstrate impact.
5. Secure resources.



# What Has ELAC Accomplished?

With support from its partners and collaborative relationships, ELAC has accomplished the following in the past year.

- ✓ Created an interactive version of the ELAC needs assessment (statewide and by county) in a dashboard format available here: [elacindiana.org](http://elacindiana.org).
- ✓ Provided expert testimony to both the Indiana House and Senate Committees on Education regarding the state of pre-K in Indiana.
- ✓ Reviewed and updated the Family Engagement Toolkit.
- ✓ Jointly led the second annual Indiana Summit for Economic Development via Early Learning Coalitions with key partners where almost 400 diverse stakeholders attended representing 59 counties and over 100 cities/towns.
- ✓ Developed a draft policy on suspension and expulsion for early childhood care and education programs, being reviewed by the FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning.
- ✓ Worked on developing a Data-Driven Decision Making Toolkit.
- ✓ Worked on developing an Early Learning Coalition Building Toolkit.

# Who Are The ELAC Appointed Committee Members?

**Kevin Bain**, Chairman, Welborn Baptist Foundation, Inc.

**Cindy Frey**, Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce

**Connie Sherman**, St. Mary's Child Center

**Nicole Norvell**, FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning

**Lacey Kottkamp**, Indiana Head Start State Collaboration Office

**Christopher Stokes**, Eli Lilly and Company

**Nathan Williamson**, Indiana Department of Education

# Based On This Needs Assessment, What Are ELAC's Recommendations?

While Indiana is making strides, there are key areas that could be strengthened.

1. Target resources, such as capacity-building grants, to areas where there are no available high-quality early childhood care and education programs. There is an opportunity to increase the number of high-quality registered ministries and school-based programs.
2. Expand access to affordable, high-quality early childhood care and education programs, especially for infants and toddlers.
3. Develop new and build on existing coalitions and partnerships in order to encourage community-wide investments in early learning.
4. Develop a uniform method of determining whether or not children are ready for kindergarten.
5. Continue to evaluate the effects of high-quality early childhood care and education programs on children past third grade since the positive impact of strong social-emotional skills continues to emerge well past that developmental period.
6. Support programs through professional development and on-site consultation that specifically address how to develop children's social-emotional skills.
7. Strengthen the Paths to QUALITY™ system to include a stronger emphasis on assessing quality levels by measuring children's outcomes in addition to program attributes.
8. Conduct a feasibility study on the advantages and disadvantages of requiring public assistance resources (e.g., CCDF) to only be used in high-quality settings.



**YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**



Young Children Ages 0-5

2016  
**506,761**

2012 512,466

Young Children Living in Poverty

2015  
**25%**

=

2012 25%

Percent of Income a Single Parent in Poverty Pays for High-Quality Care

2017  
**54%**

▼

2011 41%

Children Living in Households Where All Parents Work

2015  
**65%**

=

2012 65%

**HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION**



Children Enrolled in Known Programs

2017  
**133,270**

▲

2014 109,681

Children Enrolled in High-Quality Programs

2017  
**49,300**

▲

2012 10,956

High-Quality Enrollment in Known Programs

2017  
**37%**

▲

2014 33%

High-Quality Enrollment for Children With All Parents Working

2017  
**15%**

▲

2012 3%

**EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION WORKFORCE**



Early Childhood Care and Education Workforce

2017  
**30,762**

▲

2012 30,454

Early Childhood Care and Education Workforce with Any BA Degree

2015  
**27%**

▲

2010 23%

Annual Median Salary for Preschool Teachers

2016  
**\$23,370**

▼

2011 \$23,890

Projected Early Childhood Care and Education Workforce Deficit

2016  
**8,195**

▼

2014 8,043

**KINDERGARTEN READINESS**



Children Enrolled in Kindergarten

2017  
**90.7%**

▲

2012 87%

Children Retained in Kindergarten

2017  
**4.4%**

▼

2012 3.7%

Cost of Retention

2017  
**\$22,672,339**

▼

2013 \$21,609,375

Children Ready for School

2017  
**?**



# Young Children & Families

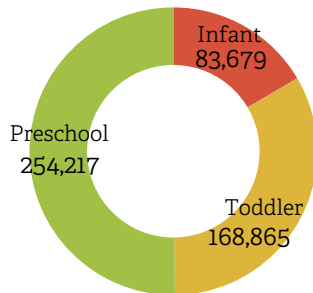
## Key Indicators

| Indiana's Young Children 2016 (Ages 0-5) | Infants | One-Year-Olds | Two-Year-Olds | Three-Year-Olds | Four-Year-Olds | Five-Year-Olds |
|--|---------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 506,761                                  | 83,679  | 84,138        | 84,727        | 84,874          | 84,569         | 84,774         |

Data Source: Puzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (09/2017). Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2016. Online. Available: <https://www.ojdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>

Indiana has approximately half a million young children ages 0-5. Approximately 84,000 babies are born in Indiana annually, and the number of children remains consistent across the early years.

Figure 1: What is the population by age group?<sup>1</sup>

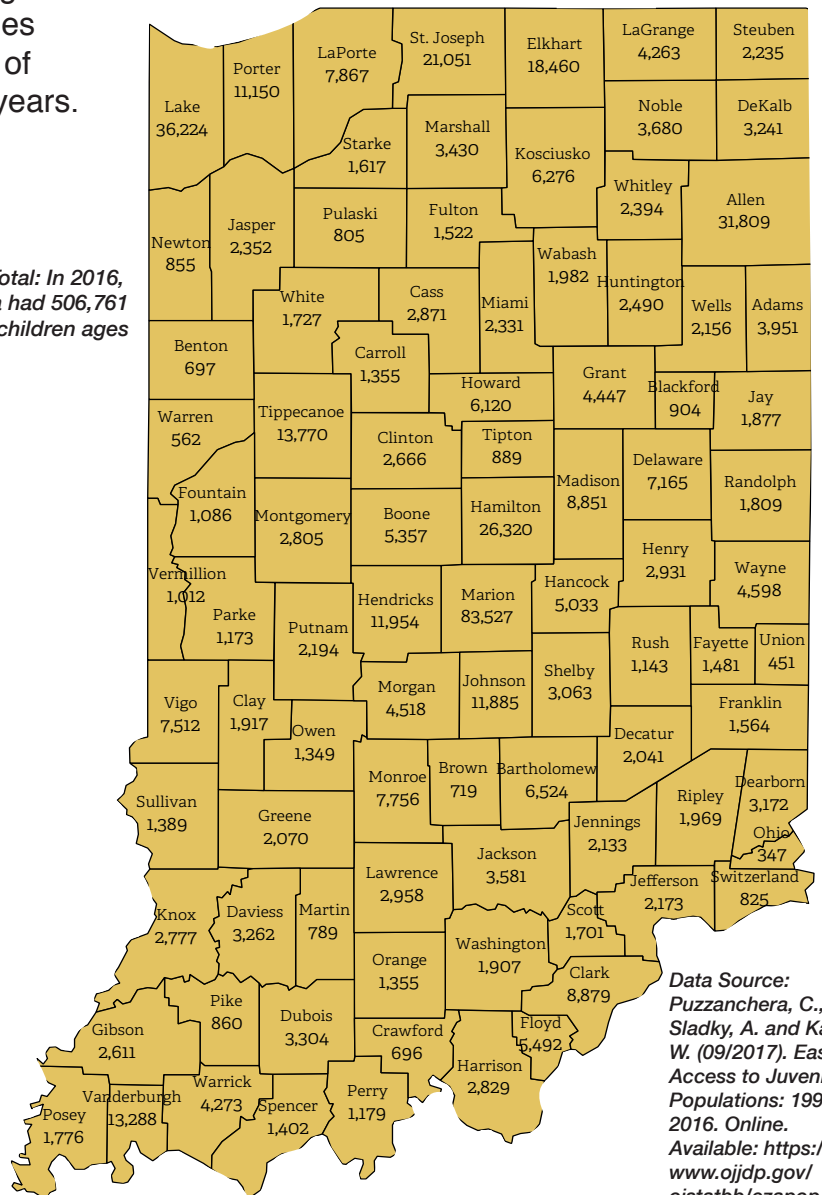


State Total: In 2016, Indiana had 506,761 young children ages 0-5.

Data Source: Puzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (09/2017). Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2016. Online. Available: <https://www.ojdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>

The Indiana county map shows how many children ages 0-5 there are by county. Early Childhood Care and Education focuses on infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children. Infants, birth to age one, make up 17% of young children; toddlers, ages 1 and 2, make up 33%; and preschool-age children, ages 3 through 5, make up 50%.

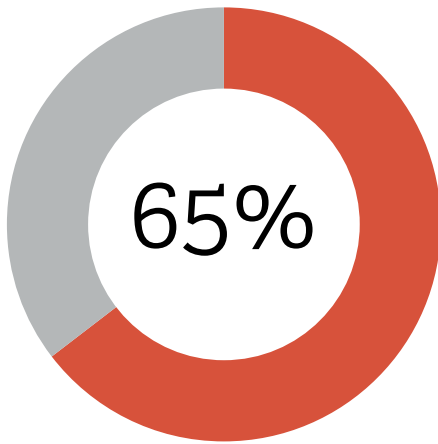
Figure 2. How many young children ages 0-5 are there across Indiana?



Data Source: Puzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (09/2017). Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2016. Online. Available: <https://www.ojdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>

1. Infants are children birth to age 1; Toddlers are children ages 1 and 2; Preschool-age children are ages 3 through 5.

Figure 3: How many children need care because all parents are working?



In Indiana, the majority of families with young children are working families, contributing to the economy. Based on Census data, two-thirds of families with young children ages 0-5 need early childhood care and education due to all parents in their household working.

**Two-thirds of families need early childhood care & education while parents work.**

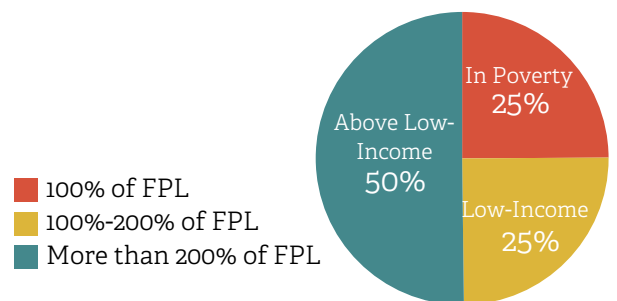
Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B23008. Online. Available: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

## How Many Young Children In Indiana Are Living In Poverty?

Despite so many parents engaging in the workforce, half of all families with young children are still considered low-income, and one-fourth live in poverty.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 5 shows the federal poverty guidelines by family size and income level.

Figure 4: How many young children are living within the federal poverty levels?



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B17024. Online. Available: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

Figure 5: What are the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Guidelines?

|  | <b>Less than 100% FPL</b>   | <b>100%-125% FPL<sup>3</sup></b>   | <b>125%-185% FPL</b>   | <b>185%-200% FPL</b>   |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Family Size</b>                                   | A family in 100% poverty makes less than the following annual income. | A family within 100% to 125% of poverty makes less than the following annual income. | A family within 125% to 185% of poverty makes less than the following annual income. | A family within 185% to 200% of poverty makes less than the following annual income. |
| <b>Two People (One Parent, One Child)</b>            | \$16,240  | \$20,300   | \$30,044   | \$32,480   |
| <b>Three People (e.g., Two Parents, One Child)</b>   | \$20,420  | \$25,525   | \$25,525   | \$40,840   |
| <b>Four People (e.g., Two Parents, Two Children)</b> | \$24,600  | \$30,750   | \$45,510   | \$49,200   |

2. Those at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) are in poverty, those between 100-200% FPL are considered low-income, and those above 200% FPL are above low-income. Income levels can be found on the Federal Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/01/31/2017-02076/annual-update-of-the-hhs-poverty-guidelines>.

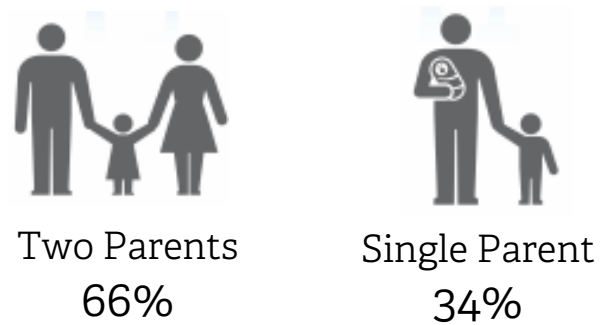
3. Federal Poverty Levels are noted at 100% of FPL. The other FPL percentages were calculated based on their respective percent above 100% (i.e. Income for one parent, one child at 100% of FPL is \$16,240. To calculate that at 125% of FPL, take \$16,240 multiplied by 1.25 to get \$20,300.)

# What Is The Structure Of Hoosier Families?

In Indiana, the structure of families with children varies widely. Two-thirds of children live in two-parent households, and the other third live in single-parent households. Within this family structure, a growing trend is emerging in Indiana of grandparents raising their grandchildren.

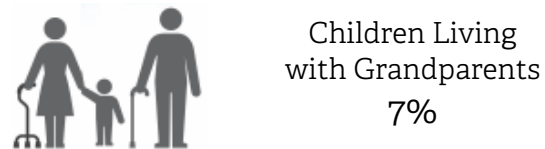


Figure 6: What is the family structure of households in Indiana?



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S1101. Online. Available: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

Figure 7: How many children are living with grandparents?<sup>4</sup>

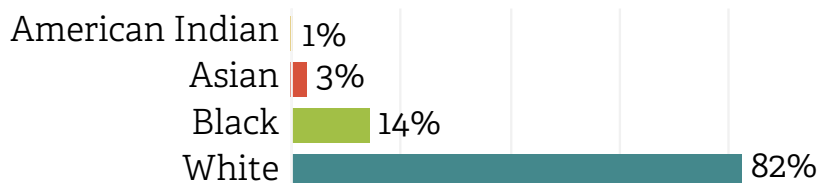


Data Sources: Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (09/2017). Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2016. Online. Available: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B10002. Online. Available: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

# What Is The Race Of Young Children?

The majority of young children in Indiana are white; fourteen percent of children are black.

Figure 8: What is the race of young children?



Data Source: Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (09/2017). Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2016. Online. Available: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>

4. Children living with grandparents represents children under 18 years old.  
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# **A**ccessibility

## **2020 ELAC Goal:**

High-quality early childhood care and education will be **accessible** for all children and families.



# Key Indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Young Children Who Are Likely in Need of Care</p> <p><b>326,985</b></p> | <p>Young Children Enrolled in Known Programs</p> <p><b>133,270</b></p> | <p>Known Early Childhood Care and Education Programs</p> <p><b>5,278</b></p> | <p>Young Children Who Need Care Enrolled in Known Programs</p> <p><b>41%</b></p> | <p>Individuals Employed in Early Childhood Care &amp; Education Workforce</p> <p><b>30,762</b></p> |
|--|--|--|--|--|

Data Sources: Early Learning Indiana, 2017; FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, SFY 2016-17; Indiana Department of Education, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey Survey 5-Year Estimate, Table B23008. Online. Available: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

## How Many Young Children In Indiana Need Care Because Parents Are Working?

The majority of Indiana families are working families, with all parents in the workforce. This means an estimated 326,985 children need early childhood care and education outside the home while their parent(s) works. However, the state is only able to identify that 133,270 children (41%) are enrolled in known early childhood care and education programs. This means that more than half (59%) of young children who need care are in an informal setting where there are no regulations regarding health, safety, and quality--such as with a relative, friend, or neighbor.

Figure 9: Children Enrolled in Formal and Informal Early Childhood Care and Education



Data Sources: Early Learning Indiana, 2017; FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, 2017; Indiana Department of Education, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B23008. Online. Available: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

Families enroll children in informal care settings for various reasons. For some parents, informal care from a relative or friend is their top choice, and they may not have searched for formal care at all. Other parents may wish to be able to choose a formal setting for their child but cannot due to a lack of availability at programs in their community. In particular, there is a lack of capacity for infants and young toddlers in many communities in Indiana. Some families may not realize there is a difference in the type of formal and informal care programs available.

In taking a closer look across the state, the percentage of children who need care and are enrolled in formal programs varies by county. The majority of counties have 25-50% of their children who need care enrolled in a known program.



# What Types Of Formal Early Childhood Care And Education Programs Are Available?

Indiana has different formal early childhood care and education program options available to families. There are 5,278 registered, licensed, and exempt early childhood care and education programs that enroll young children ages 0-5.

The greatest number (over 50%) of early childhood care and education programs are family child care (see p. 16 for definitions). However, they have limited capacity to serve children in their homes and therefore only serve 17% of children ages 0-5. The highest number (41%) of children receive early childhood care and education in a licensed child care center. Registered ministries and school-based programs - which include public and non-public schools - enroll the next highest amount of children.

Figure 11: Indiana's Formal Early Childhood Care and Education



Data Sources: Early Learning Indiana, 2017; FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, 2017; Indiana Department of Education, 2017.



# Early Childhood Care And Education Program Options<sup>5</sup>



**Licensed Child Care Center:** Licensed Child Care Centers typically have multiple classrooms, each geared toward children of a particular age--infants, toddlers, or preschoolers. Child care centers are also often open 10-12 hours per day to accommodate parents who work during the day. They have the highest number of standards to meet to receive licensure. Most licensed child care centers are stand-alone facilities but some operate within a school, hospital, or factory. There are some schools that operate a licensed child care center within their school building. Head Start programs may also include a licensed child care center.



**Family Child Care:** Family child care programs are located in residential homes and provide care to a much smaller number of children than other programs. Their hours typically accommodate working families--with some home providers offering overnight and weekend care for families who work 2nd and 3rd shifts. Family child care providers may accept children of various ages, who are likely to spend time together in a mixed-age setting. Some family child care programs are licensed, meeting health and safety standards. Licensed family child care programs can participate in Paths to QUALITY™ and earn a high-quality designation. However, if family child care providers care for only up to 5 children who are unrelated to them, then they can legally operate without a license, meaning these programs are not regulated for safety and quality.



**Registered Ministry:** Another option for families is registered ministries, which are non-profits that are not required to be licensed. Registered ministries have to meet many health and safety requirements, but the regulations are not the same as licensing regulations. Many registered ministries are structured like Licensed Child Care Centers with similar hours and classrooms for children of the same age group. Some registered ministries are operated inside churches while others might be a stand-alone facility like a Child Care Center.



**School-Based Program:** School-based programs, which include public, charter, and non-public schools, are a growing trend of early childhood care and education program options. Most school-based programs do not serve infants and young toddlers, primarily focusing on preschool-age children. Many school-based programs are partial-day programs operating 2-3 hours per day, with only some schools offering full-day options for working families. Many school-based programs are exempt from the requirement to be licensed or registered.

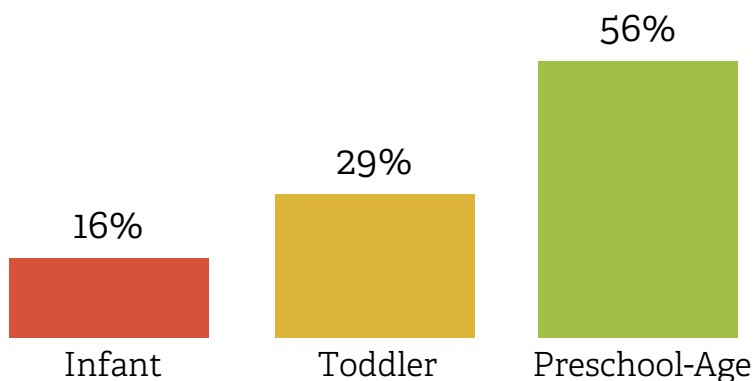
5. Program definitions can be found in the Early Learning Advisory Committee's *Indiana Glossary on Early Learning Terms and Organizations*, 11/2016. Available: <http://www.elacindiana.org/elacindiana/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Final-Glossary-1220.pdf>



# Which Formal Early Childhood Care And Education Programs Are Available By Age Group?

As indicated on p. 13, of the young children ages 0-5 who need care, less than half (41%) are enrolled in a formal early childhood care and education program. The majority of the children enrolled in formal early childhood care and education programs are preschool-age children. There are significantly fewer infants enrolled in formal early childhood care and education.

Figure 12: How many children are enrolled by age?



**The majority of the children enrolled in formal early childhood care and education programs are preschool-age children.**

Data Sources: *Early Learning Indiana, 2017; Indiana Department of Education, 2017.*

There are many reasons why fewer infants and toddlers are enrolled in early childhood care and education:

- A family may want to use informal early childhood care and education (family member, friend or neighbor) to watch their infant or toddler.
- There may be a lack of openings for infants and toddlers at formal programs in a family's community.
- The formal infant and toddler program options may be considered too expensive for a family, given that infant and toddler care and education is more expensive than that of preschool-age children (see p. 27).

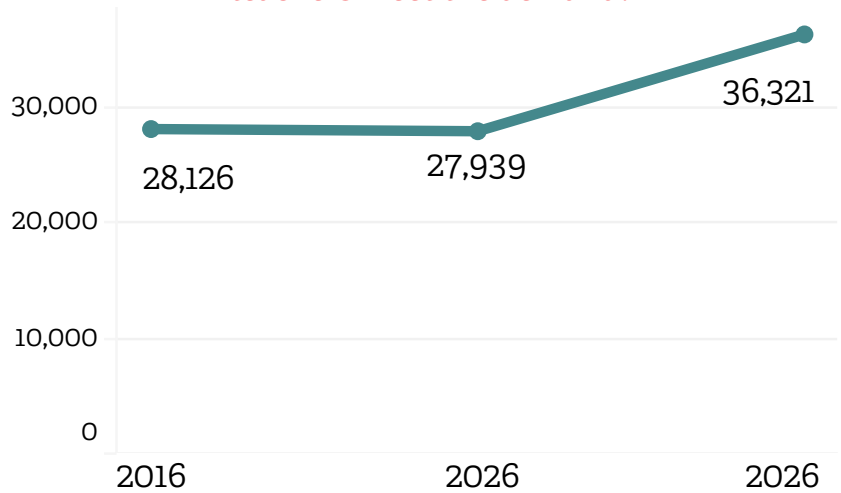
The growing body of research (Business case for early childhood investments, n.d.) demonstrates that the first three years are particularly crucial since 80 percent of the brain is developed by age 3.



# Can The Supply Of Early Childhood Care And Education Teachers Meet The Demand?

The capacity to care for and educate all of Indiana’s young children is dependent on attracting and retaining a qualified early learning workforce. Two state agencies collect information on Indiana’s early learning workforce: Indiana’s Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) and the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). Based on data gathered from both agencies, 30,762 individuals make up the early childhood care and education workforce.

Figure 13: Can the supply of early childhood care and education teachers meet the demand?



Data Source: Indiana Department of Workforce Development, 2017.

Indiana’s Department of Workforce Development tracks information and provides forecasts, using the categories “child care workers” and “preschool teachers.” In order to continue to meet the future demand in formal settings, there will be a projected shortfall of 8,195 child care workers and preschool teachers by 2026, accounting for a 30% annual turnover rate. The projected shortfall is a conservative estimate, because it does not account for those providing informal care to young children and other people employed in formal settings, such as cooks, bus drivers, and administrators.

**There will be a projected shortfall of 8,195 child care workers and preschool teachers by 2026**

## What Is The Unmet Need For Access To Early Childhood Care And Education?

Based on the data collected for this year’s needs assessment, the following unmet needs have been identified:

- We only know where 41% of young children who need care are enrolled. We don’t know the type or quality of care the other 59% are receiving.
- The majority of young children enrolled in “informal” care (friend, family, neighbor) are infants and toddlers.
- There are not enough individuals in the workforce to support the future demand.



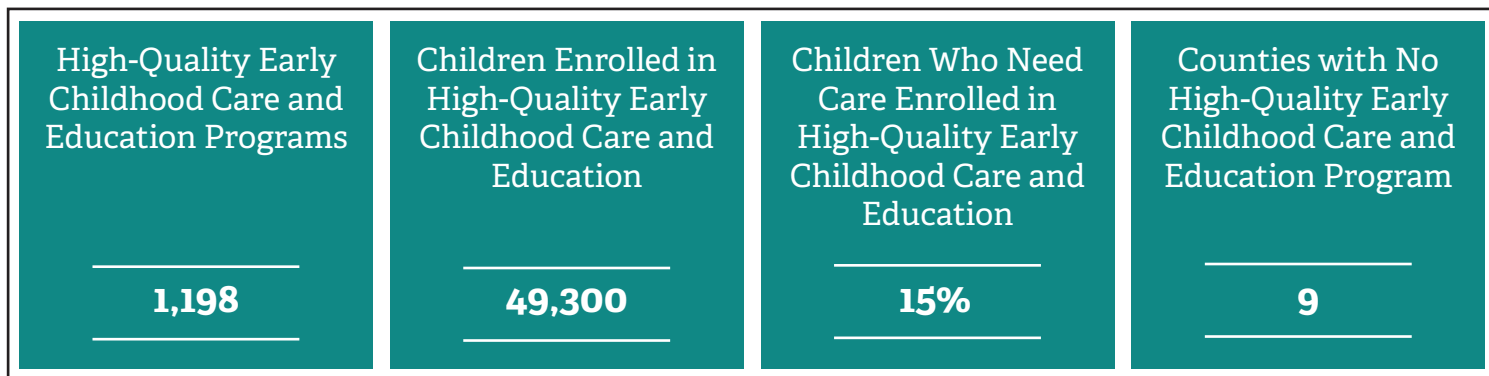
# High-Quality

**2020 ELAC Goal:**

**High-quality** early childhood care and education will be aligned around best practices in all communities.



# Key Indicators



Data Sources: *Early Learning Indiana, 2017; FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning; Indiana Department of Education, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B23008. Online. Available: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.*

A growing body of research demonstrates that children - especially low-income children - enrolled in high-quality early childhood care and education programs achieve positive academic, social, and economic outcomes (Nelson, Brodnax, & Fischer, 2016). In response to this research (Nelson et al., 2016), Indiana has been working to increase the availability and capacity of high-quality early childhood care and education programs.

## What Is ELAC's Definition Of High-Quality?

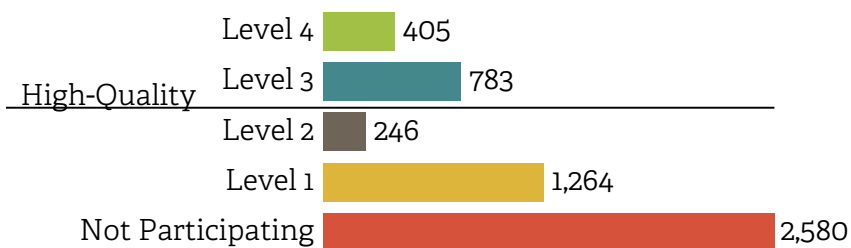
ELAC defines a high-quality program as meeting Level 3 or Level 4 on Indiana's voluntary quality rating system, Paths to QUALITY™ (PTQ), or being nationally accredited by an approved accrediting body. The standards outlined by PTQ and accrediting bodies are aligned to best practices that are grounded in research on positive child outcomes (Elicker, 2007).

Programs that are high-quality have these key components:

- ✓ Have an age-appropriate educational curriculum throughout the year
- ✓ Have teachers who are trained and receive ongoing professional development each year
- ✓ Have teachers who observe children to assess their strengths and weaknesses, as they continuously interact with children to develop their skills in all areas
- ✓ Meet the other requirements in Levels 2 and 1



Figure 14: How many programs are participating in Paths to QUALITY™?



Data Sources: FSSA, Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, 2017; Indiana Department of Education, 2017.

childhood care and education programs that are nationally accredited and meet ELAC’s definition of high-quality but are not participating in PTQ.

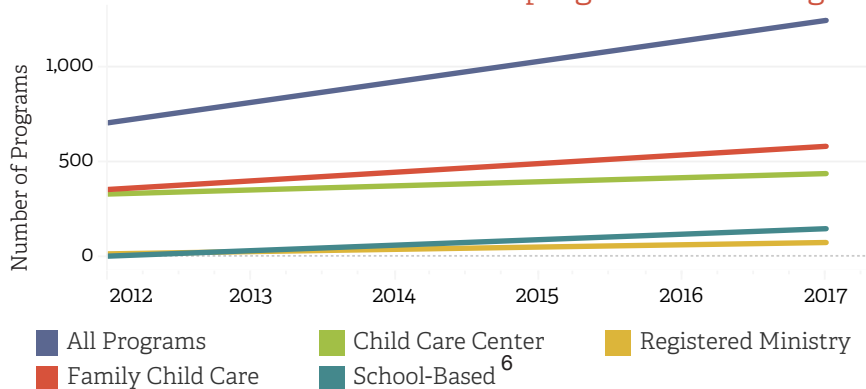
## How Has The Number Of High-Quality Programs Changed Over Time?

Six years ago, Indiana only had 708 high-quality early childhood care and education programs with just under 11,000 children enrolled. In 2017, there are now 1,198 high-quality early childhood care and education programs with 49,300 children enrolled.

In the past year alone, **Indiana has added 100 additional high-quality early childhood care and education programs and enrolled over 4,300 more children in high-quality programs.**

Many programs not yet rated as high-quality are making progress toward becoming high-quality. Before reaching Level 3 on Paths to QUALITY™ (PTQ), there are several steps that programs must take. Participation in PTQ is voluntary; therefore new and existing early childhood care and education programs first have to learn about PTQ and decide to enroll. Then, there are many steps they need to take toward quality enhancement before achieving the high-quality designation of Level 3.

Figure 15: Are the number of high-quality early childhood care and education programs increasing?



Data Sources: Early Learning Indiana, 2017; FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, 2017; Indiana Department of Education, 2017.

6. The definition of program types has changed over time. In 2015, Indiana implemented an additional pathway for public preschools to participate in Paths to QUALITY™.

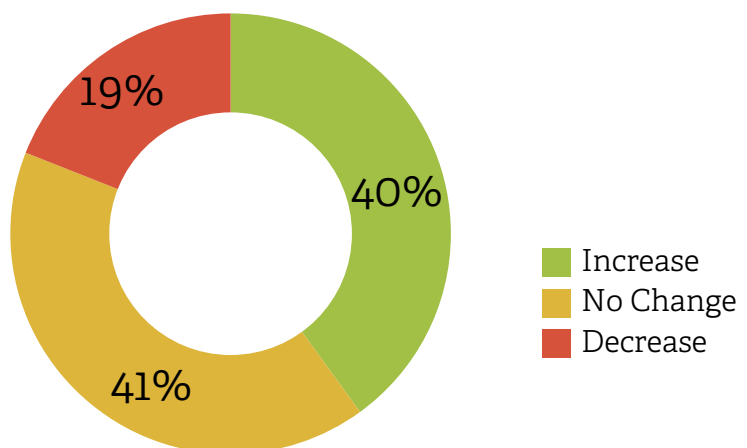


## How Does Access To High-Quality Vary By Location?

Statewide, the number of high-quality programs is increasing. Over half of the counties increased their number of high-quality programs compared to last year. Many counties with less than three high-quality programs have added more. However, several counties have lost some of their high-quality programs or had no increase in the number of high-quality programs.

Even if a county showed no increase, they could still be taking steps to ultimately increase their total number of high-quality programs by adding more Level 1 and Level 2 PTQ programs. For instance, there were 20 counties that saw an increase in the number of Level 2 PTQ programs over the last year.

Figure 16: How does the change in the number of counties with high-quality programs compare from 2016 to 2017?

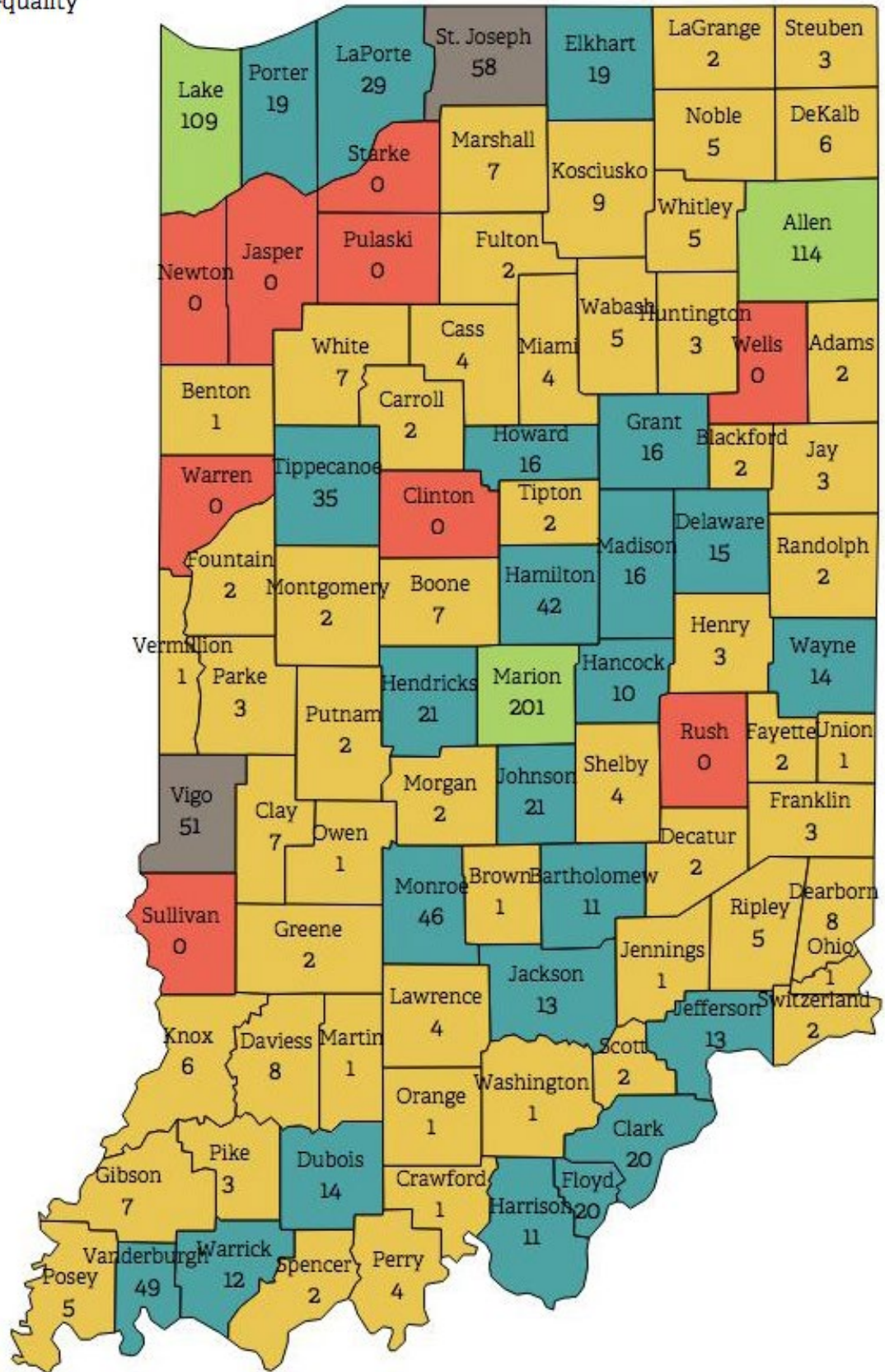


Data Source: FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, 2017.

Figure 17: How many high-quality programs are available in Indiana communities?

State Total: 1,198 high-quality programs

- No HQ Programs
- Less than 10
- 10-49
- 50-99
- More than 100



Data Source: Early Learning Indiana, 2017; FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, 2017.

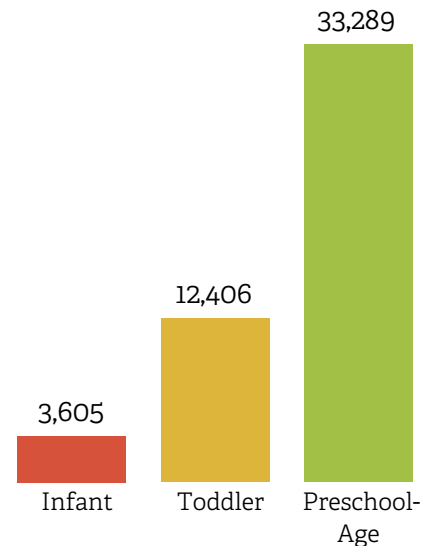
# How Does Access To High-Quality Vary By Age?

Access to high-quality early childhood care and education programs not only varies by community but also by the age of the child. **Similar to formal care, most available high-quality seats are for preschool-age children. There are significantly fewer high-quality seats available for infants and toddlers.**

Of the more than 4,000 additional children enrolled in high-quality early childhood care and education programs since last year, over 3,000 (or 69%) of them were preschool-age children. This is partly due to On My Way Pre-K expansion that has resulted in more high-quality preschool programs and additional seats in existing high-quality programs. However, there was also an increase in infants and toddlers enrolled in high-quality early childhood care and education programs. Some programs that improved their level of quality in order to participate in On My Way Pre-K also serve infants and toddlers.

Based on the information shared in the first section, many infants and toddlers still need care due to their families working. Most infants and toddlers who need care are receiving it through informal care—neighbors, family members, and friends—where the quality of care is unregulated.

Figure 18: How many children are enrolled in a high-quality program by age?



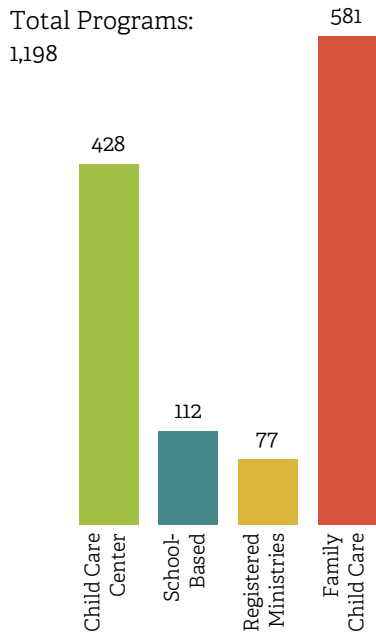
Data Source: Early Learning Indiana, 2017.





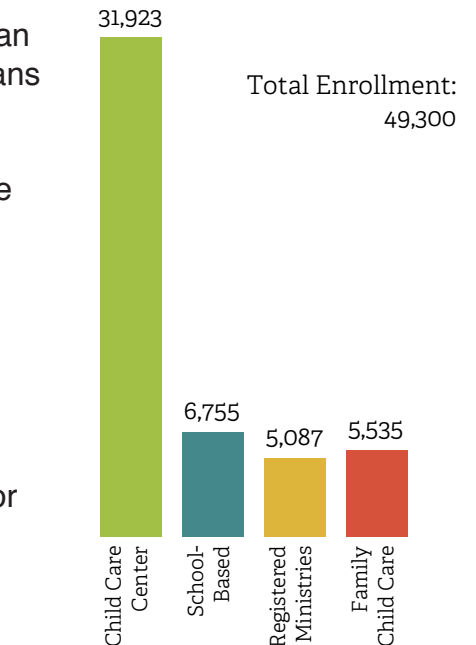
# How Does Access To High-Quality Vary By Program?

Figure 19: What types of high-quality program options are available?



Depending on a family’s community, access to high-quality early childhood care and education programs can vary. Indiana has many counties with less than three high-quality programs, which means families may not be able to choose the program option they want. Family child care and licensed child care centers are the largest number of high-quality programs. Licensed child care centers have the highest capacity to enroll children. The number of school-based programs becoming high-quality is increasing, which is also adding more options for families - although school-based programs primarily have seats for preschool-age children, not infants and toddlers.

Figure 20: How many children are enrolled in a high-quality program?



Data Sources: Early Learning Indiana, 2017; FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, 2017.

Data Source: Early Learning Indiana, 2017.

## What Is the Unmet Need For Access To High-Quality Early Childhood Care And Education?

Based on the data collected for this year’s needs assessment, the following unmet needs have been identified:

- Access to high-quality early childhood care and education is not available for most families who need care.
- There is less access to high-quality early childhood care and education for our youngest.
- Hoosiers—infants and toddlers—which is the opposite of what is needed based on the research that identifies this age as a critical growth period.
- There is disparity across communities regarding access to high-quality early childhood care and education.
- The greatest growth opportunity for expanding the number of high-quality seats in early childhood care and education is through registered ministries and school-based programs as well as focusing on advancing Level 1 and Level 2 PTQ programs.



# Affordability

**2020 ELAC Goal:**

**High-quality** early childhood care and education will be affordable for at-risk families.



# Key Indicators

|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>Average Annual Tuition Cost of All Early Childhood Care and Education</p> <hr/> <p><b>\$7,534</b></p> | <p>Average Annual Tuition Cost of High-Quality Early Childhood Care and Education</p> <hr/> <p><b>\$8,818</b></p> | <p>Percentage of Income Paid Annually by a Single Parent with 1 Child in Poverty for High-Quality Early Childhood Care and Education</p> <hr/> <p><b>54%</b></p> | <p>Percentage of Income Paid Annually by a Low-Income Family of 2 for High-Quality Early Childhood Care and Education</p> <hr/> <p><b>27%</b></p> |
|--|---|--|---|






Data Source: Department of Health and Human Services, 01/2017. Online. Available: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/01/31/2017-02076/annual-update-of-the-hhs-poverty-guidelines>; Early Learning Indiana, 2017.

Annual tuition for programs of any quality level range from \$6,100 to \$10,100 per child depending on the age of the child and type of program, making them unaffordable for low-income families. The tuition of high-quality early childhood care and education is even more of a financial burden to low-income families, adding on average almost \$1,000 more annually than the average tuition cost of programs of all quality levels.

## How Much Does High-Quality Early Childhood Care And Education Cost?

As stated in previous sections, families have different choices when selecting early childhood care and education. However, the tuition cost varies tremendously based on the age of the child(ren) and the type of program.

Figure 21: What is the average tuition cost of high-quality care by program type and age?

|   | Infant   | Toddler  | Preschool | Total Ages 0-5 |
|---|----------|----------|-----------|----------------|
|  Child Care Centers  | \$12,468 | \$11,115 | \$9,304   | \$10,451       |
|  Registered Ministry | \$11,126 | \$9,873  | \$8,311   | \$9,224        |
|  Family Child Care   | \$7,475  | \$7,012  | \$6,539   | \$7,020        |
|  School-Based        | N/A      | N/A      | \$7,279   | \$7,304        |
|  State Average       | \$11,239 | \$10,300 | \$7,957   | \$8,818        |

Data Source: Early Learning Indiana, 2017.



The tuition cost that parents pay by age varies tremendously. For example, the cost for infants is significantly more than the cost for preschool-age children. The main cost driver for infants is the requirement to have a lower staff-to-child ratio when caring for infants, due to their increased needs. This increases the cost for the program to offer infant care and for families to afford it.

The tuition cost can also vary based on the program type and setting. In general, licensed child care centers tend to be more expensive primarily due to building and facility costs that some other program options may not have to cover and additional standards required (e.g., providing food). By comparison, family child care tends to be more affordable than the other program options.

Based on a cost study that the ELAC Funding Streams workgroup completed last year and included in the 2017 ELAC Annual Report, the cost to run school-based programs is higher than other program options, driven primarily by the higher wages paid to teachers and transportation provided for children. However, schools tend to cover more of their costs with their funding (e.g., General funds and Title 1 funds) instead of relying only on parent fees, making their tuition costs a more affordable choice for families than some of the other program options. In addition, many school-based programs are part-day and not providing 8-12 hours of full-day wraparound care for working parents like the other program types which lowers the cost for schools.

## How Does The Tuition Cost Of High-Quality Early Childhood Care And Education Vary Across Indiana?

The tuition cost of high-quality early childhood care and education also varies significantly by geographic location. In general, urban areas and higher median income areas have higher tuition costs compared to rural communities.



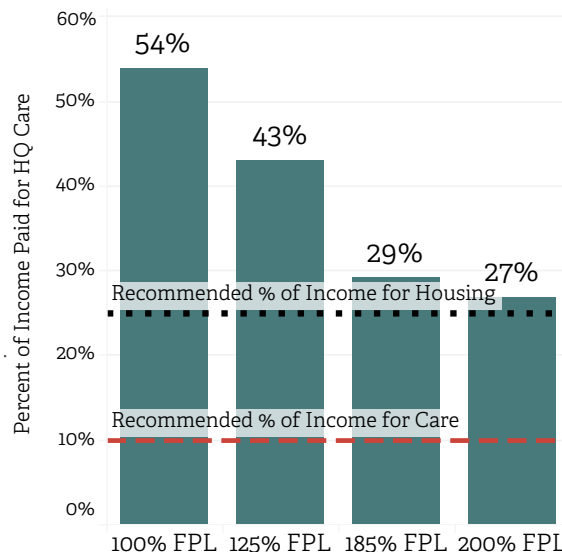
# How Affordable Is Early Childhood Care And Education?

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has put forward a benchmark defining affordable care: no more than 10% of family income. In Indiana, the tuition cost of early childhood care and education is unaffordable for low-income families. It can even be a burden for middle class families.

A single parent living in poverty would have to dedicate more than five times the recommended benchmark and over half of their income to secure high-quality early childhood care and education for only one child. Even a single parent in the middle class would have to pay almost a quarter of their household income for access to high-quality early childhood care and education for only one child.

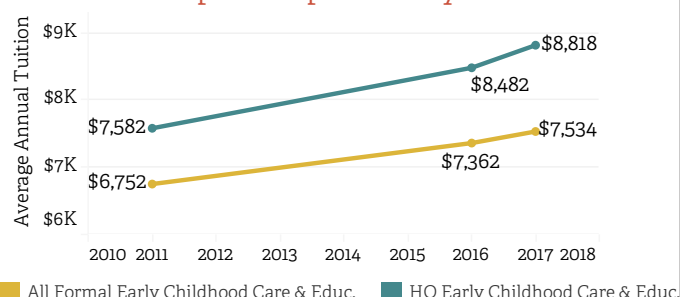
In the last year, the tuition cost of both high-quality early childhood care and education, as well as the average cost of all formal care, has increased. While the cost of early childhood care and education has increased, the average wages for families has remained stagnant over the past few years. The net result is family purchasing power has failed to keep up with the rising costs of early childhood care and education.

Figure 23: How much does a single parent with one child pay for high-quality early childhood care and education?



Data Sources: Early Learning Indiana, 2017; Department of Health and Human Services, 01/2017. Available: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/01/31/2017-02076/annual-update-of-the-hhs-poverty-guidelines>; U.S. Government Printing Office. 05/20/2013. Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program; Proposed Rules. Federal Register (78(97). Retrieved August 23, 2013 from <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-05-20/html/2013-11673.html>; Schwartz, M and Wilson, E. (2006). Who Can Afford To Live in a Home?: A look at data from the 2006 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

Figure 24: How does the tuition cost of early childhood care and education compare to previous years?



Data Sources: Early Childhood Education, 2017; FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, 2017.

In addition, most families with young children are just beginning their career--earning their lowest wages and being asked to shoulder the majority (65%) of the costs for early childhood care and education. At the other end of the spectrum, families with older children pursuing college are often further developed in their career and in a much better financial position to help pay for their child's post-secondary education.

As a point of reference, the average tuition cost of one year of high-quality early childhood care and education (\$8,818), is about the same cost as

tuition to send one child to one of Indiana's high-quality public universities.

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 Year of Tuition at Indiana State University | Cost of High-Quality Early Childhood Care And Education | 1 Year of Tuition at Ball State University |
| <b>\$8,546</b>                                | <b>\$8,818</b>  | <b>\$8,992</b>                             |

Data Source: [www.collegecalc.org](http://www.collegecalc.org), using data sourced from the U.S. Department of Education IPEDS Surveys for school years 2015-2017 and 2015-2016 and was last updated in July 2017

Based on established research (Business case for early childhood investments, n.d.), children who enroll in a high-quality preschool program were four times more likely to graduate from college. Therefore, one compelling strategy to get more individuals to attain a post-secondary education degree is to begin investing in the early years.

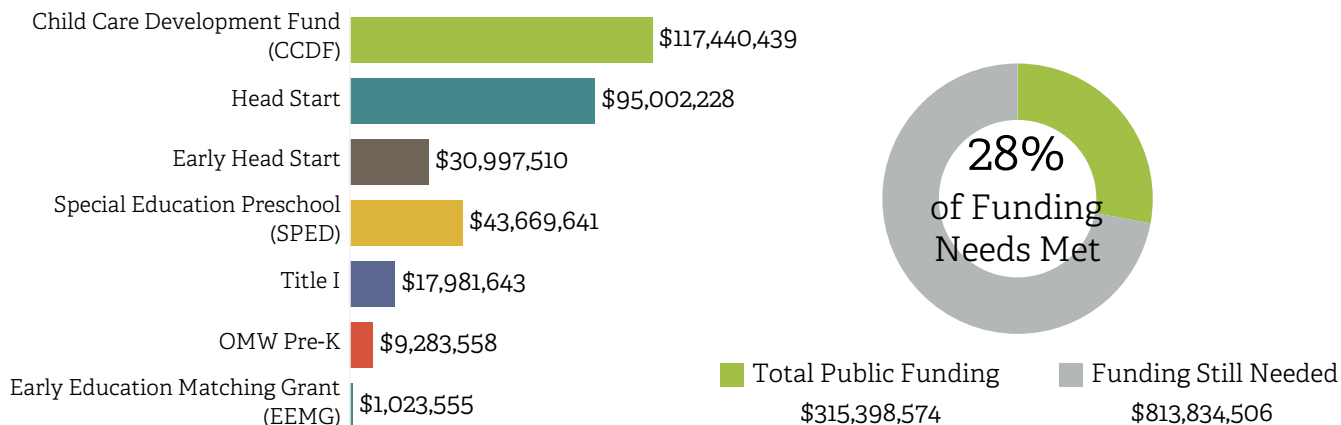
**Children who enroll in a high-quality preschool program were four times more likely to graduate from college.**



## What Kind Of Public Assistance Is Available To Support Families?

Indiana leverages several different public funding sources to support families with young children, especially those who are at-risk. In total, Indiana used \$315 million in public funding to support early childhood care and education for families. In looking closer at families with young children in poverty, a total of \$1.1 billion is needed to support their ability to access and afford high-quality early childhood care and education.

**Figure 25: How much public assistance is available to help families pay for high-quality early childhood care and education?<sup>7</sup>**



*Data Sources: Early Learning Indiana, 2017; FSSA Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, 2017; Head Start Enterprise System, 2016-2017; IDOE-SE, Indiana APC Report, Indiana Part B Allocations, SY2016-17; Indiana Department of Education, 2017; Region V, 2017; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B17024.*

The amount of public early learning financial assistance provided to communities through a combination of federal, state, and local funding varies tremendously as demonstrated in the map on the next page.

7. For additional information on the funding sources listed here, please see the Indiana's Early Childhood Program Funding Analysis at [www.elacindiana.org/resources/](http://www.elacindiana.org/resources/)





# Public Assistance For Early Childhood Care And Education

**CCDF** - The largest source of funding that supports working families in accessing early childhood care and education is the **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)**. This past year there were 30,943 children ages 0-5 who received a CCDF child care voucher, a five percent increase over last year. CCDF does not require parents to choose high-quality programs. As a result, less than half of those working families used their CCDF voucher to enroll their children in a high-quality program.

Parents have to weigh many factors when choosing early childhood care and education, so there could be a variety of reasons parents do not use their CCDF voucher at a high-quality program. They may not have access to one in their community; there might not be any openings for their child; some parents may not know about Indiana's Paths to QUALITY™ (PTQ) rating system and therefore do not use PTQ ratings in their decision-making process.

**Head Start** - The next largest source of funding available for families is **Head Start**. Head Start is available in every county and served 1,205 preschool-age children last year. Head Start does have certain eligibility requirements, such as income, that might restrict some families from accessing it. In addition, most Head Start programs do not provide full-day care that would meet the needs of working families. In many cases, children enrolled in Head Start may also be enrolled in another early childhood care and education program that accommodates the schedules of working families. Some Head Start programs have formed formal partnerships with licensed child care centers or schools to help provide full-day options for working families.

**Early Head Start - Early Head Start**, which is available for children up to age three as well as pregnant women, is offered in 49 counties and served 2,383 infants and toddlers last year. In 2014, the federal government issued a new grant that blended Early Head Start and CCDF funds to provide high-quality early childhood care and education to infants and toddlers. There are five programs across Indiana that received one of these grants and are able to provide this comprehensive, full-day care for families.

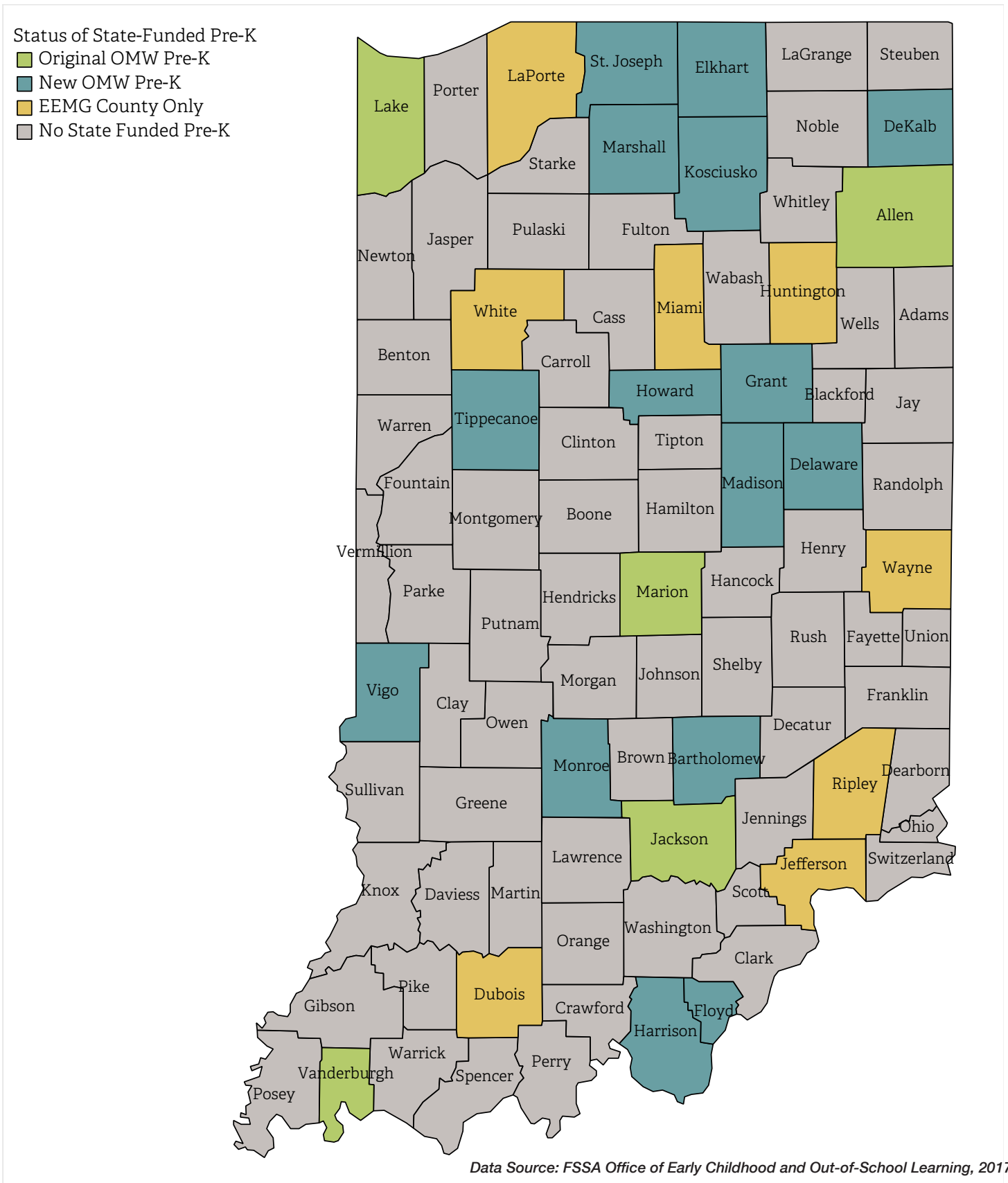
**Special Education** - By federal and state law, Indiana provides **special education** to children with an identified delay, including preschool-age children. In the last school year, Indiana spent \$43.6 million for 17,812 preschool-age children across every Indiana county to receive special education services. The array of special education services provided includes developmental preschool (often approximately 2 hours per day, a few days per week), speech therapy, occupational therapy, and other services identified in a child's individual education plan. Children do not need to meet an income eligibility requirement. Instead, they must have an identified delay.

One of the many benefits of a child being enrolled in a high-quality early childhood care and education program is that they can be identified with a developmental delay earlier than they otherwise would have been and referred for early intervention and special education services. Research (Koegel, Koegel, Ashbaugh, & Bradshaw, 2014) shows that this saves the community \$187,000-\$203,000 per child ages 3-22 and over \$1 million through age 55. Each dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education contributes to an estimated 12 percent reduction in the incidence of special education and an 18 percent reduction in the incidence of remediation and grade repetition among children who attend a high-quality program (Nelson et. al., 2016).

**Title 1** - In the past few years, a growing number of school districts have begun using their **Title 1** funding to support early childhood care and education. In the past school year, 30 Indiana counties had districts that used Title 1 funding to support early childhood care and education. Schools are also using their general funds, but the dollar amount of general funds that local school districts use for early learning is not reported to the Indiana Department of Education.

**On My Way Pre-K / EEMG** - In the past school year, the state invested over \$10 million in scholarships for low-income four-year olds to attend high-quality pre-K in five On My Way Pre-K counties and 19 Early Education Matching Grant (EEMG) programs across 15 counties. In this past legislative session, the state decided to expand On My Way Pre-K to an additional 15 counties bringing the total to 20 counties. In addition, the EEMG programs had the option to be grandfathered in as an On My Way Pre-K site which added eight more counties. This means 28 counties will be providing high-quality pre-K to low-income four-year olds.

Figure 27: What is the status of state-funded pre-K?



# What Is The Economic And Workforce Impact Of Unaffordable Early Childhood Care And Education?

When early childhood care and education is not affordable, it can negatively impact families, their employers, and the local economy. Families who cannot afford the high tuition cost of formal care may have to piece together a plan for early childhood care and education in one or more informal settings. These informal arrangements can be less reliable, meaning that parents may have to miss work more often-negatively impacting both the families and the parents' employers.

When working parents can rely on high-quality, affordable child care, their productivity increases, absenteeism is reduced, and turnover is minimized. The cost and inaccessibility of early childhood care and education programs often forces tough choices for employees who may have to choose between their family and their job.

Often, companies or individuals considering relocation to a state weigh the availability of affordable early childhood care and education. The absence of sufficient providers may be a deterrent, which potentially inhibits Indiana's efforts to attract new, well-paying jobs.

**Research (Parents and the high cost of child care, 2016; Shellenback, 2004) shows that over a six-month period:**

- **Almost half (45%) of parents are absent from work at least once due to child care issues, missing an average of 4.3 days.**
- **Two-thirds (65%) of parents' work schedules are affected by child care challenges an average of 7.5 times.**
- **These child care challenges cost U.S. employers an estimated \$3 billion annually.**

# What Is The Unmet Need For Affordability Of High-Quality Early Childhood Care And Education?

Based on the data collected for this year's needs assessment, the following unmet needs have been identified:

- The price of early childhood care and education is unaffordable for most families.
- Financial assistance for low-income families is insufficient to meet the need.
- Financial assistance varies depending on a family's location.
- The tuition cost of care is increasing while wages for families remain stagnant.



# **Kindergarten Readiness**

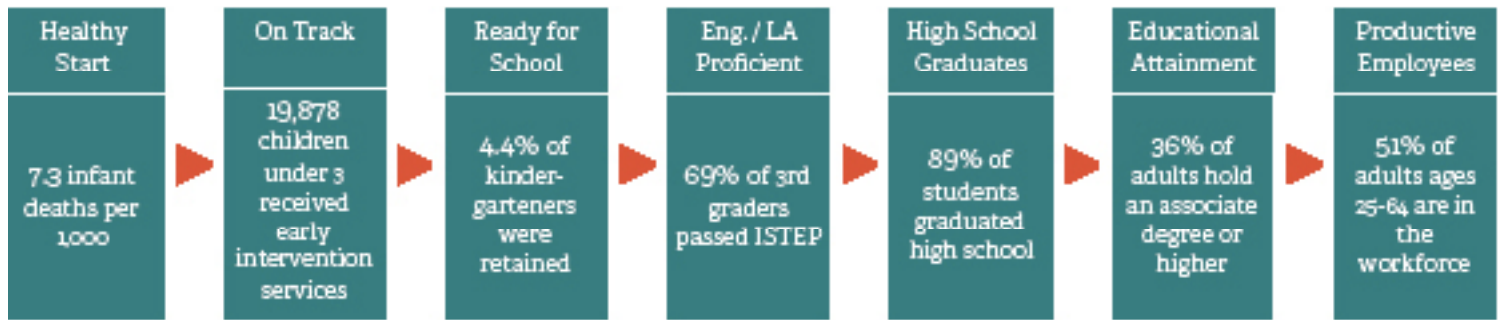
**2020 ELAC Goal:**

High-quality early childhood care and education will help all children achieve **kindergarten readiness**.



# Key Indicators

How does early learning relate to other success indicators?



When young children are on track developmentally from the beginning, positive outcomes occur. This puts our youth and future leaders on a pathway to success that includes being ready for school, reading at grade level, graduating from high school, pursuing postsecondary education, and becoming a productive employee. These positive mile markers are dependent upon young children having a strong start from the beginning. When children are not on track in realizing these important mile markers, it makes it very difficult and costly to help them catch up in later years and grades.

**ELAC defines Kindergarten Readiness as follows:** In Indiana we work together so that every child can develop to his or her fullest potential - socially, emotionally, physically, cognitively, and academically. Through growth in all of these domains, the child will become a healthy, capable, competent, and powerful learner.

## How Many Students Are Ready For Kindergarten?

One of the first critical positive outcomes is children starting kindergarten optimally ready to learn. Improving early childhood care and education in Indiana supports the goal of all children being ready, by the time they enter kindergarten, to successfully begin their school career.

Since Indiana does not have a uniform measurement tool for kindergarten readiness, ELAC is unable to determine progress toward the goal of kindergarten readiness. In order to measure the impact of increasing investments in pre-K, Indiana needs a consistent, reliable assessment tool. In the interim, a proxy measure that ELAC uses to assess kindergarten readiness is the number of students who are retained in kindergarten.

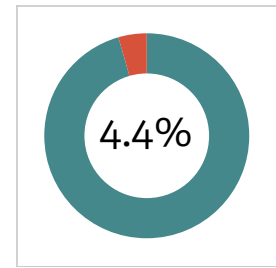


Currently Indiana has no uniform way to measure kindergarten readiness across the state.

# How Much Does Indiana Spend On Kindergarten Retention?

Since ELAC has been tracking kindergarten retention rates and costs over the past five years, the cost of retaining kindergarteners has increased. It's also important to note that during this same time period, the state also changed the funding formula for kindergarten. Schools now receive funding for kindergarten similar to other grade levels, making the cost of retention that much higher. Until this past school year, where modest reductions were seen, the number of students being retained in kindergarten had been increasing each year.

Figure 28: How many children were retained in kindergarten?

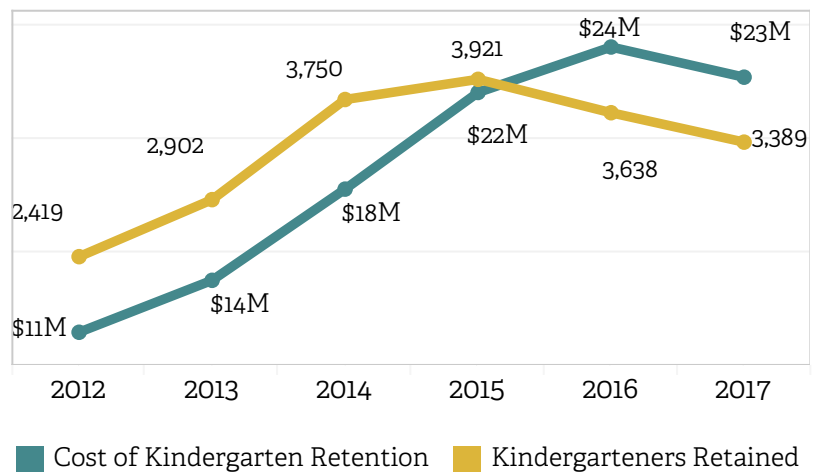


■ Percent Not Retained in Kindergarten  
 ■ Percent of Kindergarteners Retained

Data Sources: Indiana Department of Education, 2016 & 2017.

**In the 2016-2017 school year, 3,389 students repeated kindergarten. It cost the state \$23 million in funding to retain these students.**

Figure 29: How has kindergarten retention changed over time?

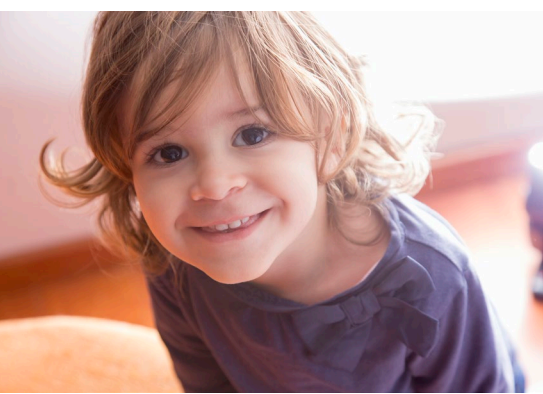


Data Sources: Indiana Department of Education, 2015, 2016 & 2017.

## How Does Kindergarten Retention Vary Across The State?

There is no consistent, statewide policy for determining whether to retain students in kindergarten. Since it is determined at the discretion of local school districts, teachers, and parents, there is variation in retention rates across counties and regions of the state as depicted in the map on p. 39. The kindergarten retention rates range from 1.4% to 21.7%. Throughout Indiana, 57 counties (62%) have a higher kindergarten retention rate than the state average of 4.4%.





## 2018 Featured Section

# How Does High-Quality Early Childhood Care And Education Support Employability?

A national poll (Beakey, Bishop-Josef, & Watson, 2017) found that 92% of employers agreed that children’s experiences from birth-5 were critical in laying the foundation for future success in the workforce. And, the key to this success, according to these business leaders, was how children’s social-emotional development was shaped in the first five years of life.

In another poll of 900 business leaders (Davidson, 2016), 93% said that social-emotional skills were equally important or more important than technical skills. In addition, 89% of these business leaders indicated they had difficulty finding a workforce with adequate social-emotional skills.

Social-emotional skills – referred to as “employability skills” in the workforce – include being able to communicate well, work effectively on teams, and complete tasks on time. One important way the future workforce learns these skills is through interacting with their teachers and peers while participating in high-quality early childhood care and education programs.

### Defining Social-Emotional Development

Researchers and practitioners have used different terms to define aspects of social-emotional development but generally include the following skills (Beakey et al., 2017):

- ✓ Manage emotions and impulses
- ✓ Solve problems
- ✓ Engage in learning
- ✓ Take initiative
- ✓ Persist at tasks
- ✓ Maintain flexibility
- ✓ Communicate with and work well with others
- ✓ Demonstrate empathy



# How Are Key Social-Emotional Skills Obtained At Various Ages?

What happens when children receive the important social-emotional supports and learn the skills needed to be successful as an adult?



**Infant/  
Toddler**



**Preschool**



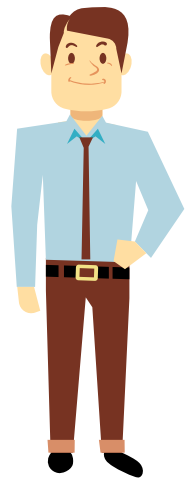
**Early  
Elementary**



**Middle  
School**



**High School**



**Adulthood**

- Children develop secure attachment relationships
- Children's brain development explodes
- Children's brain development continues
- Children learn through interaction with teachers/peers
- Children learn to read
- Children learn to persist through more difficult tasks and longer-term impact of pre-K begins to emerge
- Children graduate high school, stay out of trouble, continue their education
- Children become employable adults

Children are not born with social-emotional skills, but they are born with the capacity to develop them. If children do not develop these skills, all other aspects of children's learning are affected because social-emotional development is the foundation on which all learning occurs (Center for Developing Child, n.d.). Children learn these skills through interactions with other children and with capable, trained teachers. High-quality early childhood care and education programs are well-suited to helping children develop these lifelong skills.

As children continue in high-quality early childhood care and education programs, a focus on social-emotional skills becomes integrated into all aspects of learning. **Teaching children social-emotional skills can only happen when children have the opportunity to learn from adults and their peers.** Through interactions with their teachers and peers, children learn how to make choices for themselves, follow rules, work alongside others, listen to and follow instructions, and participate fully in engaging activities. When children have these skills, they are more likely to perform better academically than their peers who do not have these skills (Kindergartners' approaches to learning, family socioeconomic status, and early academic gains, 2016).

**Teaching children social-emotional skills can only happen when children have the opportunity to learn from adults and their peers.**

# What Does The Research Say About The Importance Of Social-Emotional Skills?

Research shows how social-emotional skills formed in early childhood impact the workforce (Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015). For example, Jones et al. analyzed a 20-year study that examined 800 kindergarteners and followed them until age 25.

Other research has shown that building children's social-emotional skills in the early years contributes to children's lifelong success and their employability prospects. For example, Nobel Memorial Prize Laureate Professor of Economics, James Heckman, and his colleagues found that social-emotional skills developed as a child through participation in a high-quality early childhood care and education program not only increased their academic achievement scores, but it also "spilled over" to other adult outcomes, such as their employment, earnings, and other health behaviors (Heckman, Pinto, & Savelyev, 2013).

For every slight increase in a young child's social-emotional skills, research (Jones et al., 2015) demonstrated the child was:

- More than half (54%) are more likely to earn a high school diploma;
- Twice as likely to attain a college degree; and
- Almost half (46%) are more likely to have a full-time job at age 25.

## What Is The Lasting Impact Of Social-Emotional Skills?

Being ready for kindergarten is more than just learning letters and numbers, just like being ready for the workforce is more than just receiving a technical or college degree. Early childhood care and education programs and business leaders know that supporting young children's social-emotional growth contributes to school success and a future robust workforce.



Developing social-emotional skills does not stop with high-quality early childhood care and education programs. Like any other skill, social-emotional development needs to be supported in early learning, kindergarten, and beyond. Studies have shown that when preschool children experience high levels of quality emotional support from their teachers in both their pre-K and kindergarten years, these children are more likely to demonstrate better social skills and fewer behavioral problems in kindergarten and first grade compared to their peers who did not experience high levels of emotional support from their teachers (Broekhuizen, Mokrova, Burchinal,

Garrett-Peters, & The Family Life Project Key Investigators, 2016).

And, research by Heckman and his colleagues (2013) suggests that measuring the benefits of high-quality early childhood care and education programs on academic skills alone is an incomplete picture of the true impact of these programs. Heckman's research found that the most impactful benefits of the program on children's learning and adult outcomes, such as employment, were a result of social-emotional skills.

# What Is Indiana Doing To Address The Importance Of Social-Emotional Skills?

Indiana is working hard to address the important social-emotional skills children need to be successful in the workforce through:

- ✓ Increasing early childhood care and education program's participation in Paths to QUALITY™, which requires programs at Levels 3 and 4 to have a planned curriculum. Research evidence (Heckman et. al., 2013) shows that implementing an age-appropriate curriculum results in better child outcomes.
- ✓ Expanding access to high-quality early childhood care and education programs through state initiatives, such as On My Way Pre-K (OMW).

In reviewing the evaluation results of Year 2 for EEMG (Conn-Powers, Hall, & Herron, n.d.) and the status update of Year 1 for OMW programs (On My Way Pre-K year one update, 2016), the following findings were identified:

- ✓ The EEMG and OMW progress reviews demonstrate that **high-quality preschool experiences result in significant gains and overcoming delays for the majority of the children involved.**
- ✓ Children in EEMG programs show significant gains in social-emotional skills.
- ✓ Children who were identified as having moderate to high levels of at-risk behaviors at the start of the year show a **significant decline in at-risk behaviors** by the end of the year.
- ✓ Of the **children identified as delayed at the start of the program year, the majority exited at or above** their age level by the end of the program year.
- ✓ Children in OMW programs also show **greater gains than the comparison group in developmental skills of executive functioning and social skills, leading to reduced behavior problems.**

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## What Is The Unmet Need For Achieving Kindergarten Readiness?

Based on the data collected for this year's needs assessment, the following unmet needs have been identified:

- ❑ Indiana is unable to determine how many children are ready for kindergarten and make recommendations to address gaps.
- ❑ The number of children retained in kindergarten is significantly higher than the number of students retained at other grade levels.
- ❑ Indiana needs to reduce the number of children who repeat kindergarten, which would reduce the \$23 million spent on retaining students in kindergarten-funding which could be deployed to improve children's kindergarten readiness.

# Recommendations

While Indiana is making strides, there are key areas that could be strengthened.

1. Target resources, such as capacity-building grants, to areas where there are no available high-quality early childhood care and education programs. There is an opportunity to increase the number of high-quality registered ministries and school-based programs.
2. Expand access to affordable, high-quality early childhood care and education programs, especially for infants and toddlers.
3. Develop new and build on existing coalitions and partnerships in order to encourage community-wide investments in early learning.
4. Develop a uniform method of determining whether or not children are ready for kindergarten.
5. Continue to evaluate the effects of high-quality early childhood care and education programs on children past third grade since the positive impact of strong social-emotional skills continues to emerge well past that developmental period.
6. Support programs through professional development and on-site consultation that specifically address how to develop children's social-emotional skills.
7. Strengthen the Paths to QUALITY™ system to include a stronger emphasis on assessing quality levels by measuring children's outcomes in addition to program attributes.
8. Conduct a feasibility study on the advantages and disadvantages of requiring public assistance resources (e.g., CCDF) to only be used in high-quality settings.



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