

Early Care and Education Research Resources: Access to Early Care and Education (Annotated Version)

The Child Care and Early Education Research Connections collection catalogs resources that researchers, policymakers, and other professionals find and use for child care and early education research. The items outlined in this resource list examine families' access to early care and education (ECE). They were published between 2016 and 2022 in the United States and are categorized by research topic.

This resource list contains a sampling of the research housed in the Research Connections collection. We have provided a topical curated list of additional resources in the Research Connections library for further reading. You may find additional resources in the Research Connections library by searching for keywords such as “access” or “affordability.”

Resource List Topics

Topics in this research resource include the following:

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Affordability

Adams, G., Giannarelli, L., Sick, N., & Dwyer, K. (2022). [Implications of providing child care assistance to parents in education and training](https://www.workrisenetwork.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/workrise-attis-child-care-reportfinal-queries-v3.pdf). WorkRise.
<https://www.workrisenetwork.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/workrise-attis-child-care-reportfinal-queries-v3.pdf>

“This report explores the potential implications of a hypothetical policy change that makes child care assistance through the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)—the nation’s primary child care assistance program for families with lower incomes—more available to families in which the parents are in school or training (student parents). This hypothetical policy change has three components: providing sufficient funding to serve all eligible parents who want assistance, relaxing

current education and training–related eligibility constraints (including work requirements for student parents), and ensuring resources can be used to pay for the kinds of child care they need.”

Adams, G., & Pratt, E. (2021). [Assessing child care subsidies through an equity lens: A review of policies and practices in the Child Care and Development Fund.](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/104777/assessing-child-care-subsidies-through-an-equity-lens.pdf) Urban Institute. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/104777/assessing-child-care-subsidies-through-an-equity-lens.pdf>

“This is a description of the parent experience of getting and keeping a child care subsidy. It is also a discussion of the role of child care subsidy policy in addressing racial inequalities among families with young children. Each section contains recommendations to change policy in ways to promote the use of child care subsidies as a tool for promoting racial equity in the United States.”

Azuma, J. T., DeBaryshe, B. D., Gauci, K. T., & Stern, I. R. (2020). [Mapping access to affordable early childhood education and care: Methodology and application to community advocacy.](https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s42413-020-00096-1.pdf) *International Journal of Community Well-Being.* Advance online publication. <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s42413-020-00096-1.pdf>

“Accessible and affordable early childhood care and education (ECE) is crucial to child, family, and community well-being. High quality ECE programs set the stage for lifelong learning, health, and overall well-being and yield a high rate of return on public investment. Equitable access to ECE remains an intractable challenge in the U.S. and elsewhere. We used spatial analysis to create a single micro-level indicator of ECE affordability for an urban county. This indicator combined information on supply (number of nearby seats), demand (number of children competing for these seats), and cost burden (cost as a percentage of median family income). We measured and mapped the affordability of programs within a 3-mile driving distance of a prototypical family home using a two-step floating catchment area method. Overall, affordability was low, with only 14% of young children having access to ECE that met the federal affordability threshold. Although affordability was inversely related to neighborhood income, not all low-income areas were under-resourced. The ECE affordability indicator can arm community advocates and help policymakers identify inequities and direct resources to the highest-need communities. The computational procedures and mapping techniques applied are flexible and can be scaled up to visualize inequities across large areas (e.g., a province or state), or used at a micro level to identify where in a community a new child care center would have the most impact.”

Hains, D., & Neuenswander, A. (2021). [The state of child care for babies: The need to do better for our youngest children.](https://www.zerotothree.org/document/1871) *Zero to Three.* <https://www.zerotothree.org/document/1871>

“This brief draws on data reported in the 2020 Yearbook to highlight how a lack of public investment in child care leads to high costs for families. The first section of the report focuses on data related to children’s access to child care and state policies impacting the quality of care available. The second section highlights specific state strategies working to enhance children’s access to quality child care, while the third provides recommendations to federal policymakers to do the same.”

Hardy, E., & Park, J. E. (2022). [2019 NSECE snapshot: Child care cost burden for U.S. households with children under age 5](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/opre-2019-nsece-cost-of-care-jan2022.pdf) (OPRE Report #2022-05). United States, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/opre-2019-nsece-cost-of-care-jan2022.pdf>

“This NSECE snapshot examines child care and early education [CCEE] cost burdens for households that used regular CCEE and had at least 1 child under age 5 (0 to 59 months). Cost burdens are compared across 4 income levels (below 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL), 100-200% FPL, 200-300% FPL, over 300% FPL). Cost burdens include all CCEE expenses of the household for any child under age 13 (not just those for children under age 5). For example, for a household with a 3- and a 6-year-old, the costs for both children were added to calculate CCEE cost burden.”

Let's Grow Kids, & Vermont Commission on Women. (2018). [Women, work, and child care: A white paper on the intersection of child care, the economy and gender equity in Vermont](https://letsgrowkids.org/client_media/files/WVCC%20WP%20FINAL.pdf). Let's Grow Kids; Vermont Commission on Women. https://letsgrowkids.org/client_media/files/WVCC%20WP%20FINAL.pdf

“In the U.S., women, more than men, fill the role of primary caregivers for young children. While some women intentionally make the choice to leave the workforce or scale back work arrangements to care for children, research has found that many women don't have a choice in the matter, instead making these arrangements due to child care challenges—particularly the inability to find or afford quality child care. When a community offers a comprehensive early care and learning system that includes access to paid family and medical leave as well as child care options that are high-quality, affordable and easily accessible, parents and guardians—especially women—are able to make balanced decisions about what works best for their families.”

Madill, R., Lin, V.-K. B., Friese, S., & Paschall, K. W. (2018). [Access to early care and education for disadvantaged families: Do levels of access reflect states' child care subsidy policies?](https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/OPREResultsBriefAccessDisadvantaged-FamiliesUpdate_ChildTrends_March1.pdf) (Child Trends Report No. 2018-07). Child Trends. https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/OPREResultsBriefAccessDisadvantaged-FamiliesUpdate_ChildTrends_March1.pdf

“To our knowledge, no studies have asked which combinations of subsidy policies are associated with better access to ECE for low-income families (relative to higher-income families), from either a demand perspective (i.e., the perspective of the family) or a supply perspective (i.e., the availability of high-quality ECE providers serving subsidized children). The fact that subsidy funds are limited makes it essential to understand the benefits and consequences of different combinations of subsidy policies as they relate to parents' access to high-quality ECE.”

Public Policy Associates, Incorporated. (2021). [The impact of child care subsidy changes on access to quality care in Michigan: Evidence from administrative data](https://publicpolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/The-Impact-of-Child-Care-Subsidy-Changes-on-Access-to-Quality-Care-in-MI.pdf). <https://publicpolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/The-Impact-of-Child-Care-Subsidy-Changes-on-Access-to-Quality-Care-in-MI.pdf>

“Following the 2014 reauthorization of the federal Child Care Development Block Grant, which provides child care assistance, Michigan adopted key changes to its CDC program. These changes occurred in three clusters: instituting a graduated exit and extending the eligibility period to 12 months (2015), delinking provider assignment from subsidy approval (2016), and increasing income-eligibility limits and raising provider payment rates (2017). The overarching goal of these changes was to improve low-income parents' access to child care. This brief focuses on two key

outcomes: length of time in the program and continuity of care. Length of program participation is measured here as the number of continuous program pay periods when a subsidy is in use. Continuity of care refers [to] how long a particular child remains with the same provider.”

Ullrich, R., Schmit, S., & Cosse, R. (2019). [Inequitable access to child care subsidies](https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2019/04/2019_inequitableaccess.pdf). Center for Law and Social Policy. https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/publications/2019/04/2019_inequitableaccess.pdf

“This brief examines children’s access to CCDBG–funded child care in states by race and ethnicity using publicly available data from fiscal year (FY) 2016, building upon CLASP’s previous Disparate Access research.”

United States, Office of Child Care. (2021). [Supporting working families and increasing access to high-quality child care: Voices from the field: Roundtables report](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/occ/Roundtables_Report.pdf). https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/occ/Roundtables_Report.pdf

“The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF) focuses on finding innovative solutions to improve working families’ access to affordable, high-quality child care. ACF also investigates how access to child care affects America’s workforce, present and future. In order to inform federal policy, research, and technical assistance—and to help expand access to affordable, quality health care—the Trump Administration committed to engaging a broad group of stakeholders and hearing directly from those providing and receiving child care services. From September through November 2019, the White House Office of Economic Initiatives partnered with ACF to plan and implement a comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy. To gather formal input from the field, ACF issued a Request for Information (RFI) in October 2019. A critical element was speaking to those most directly impacted by child care access and affordability. To accomplish this, ACF convened a series of half-day roundtables in 10 locations across the country.”

University of Texas at Austin, Child and Family Research Partnership, Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center. (2021). [Prenatal-to-3 policy clearinghouse evidence review: Child care subsidies](https://pn3policy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ER.07B.0921_ChildCareSubsidies.pdf) (ER 07B.0921). https://pn3policy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ER.07B.0921_ChildCareSubsidies.pdf

“This evidence review began with a broad search of all literature related to the policy and its impacts on child and family well-being during the prenatal-to-3 period. First, we identified and collected relevant peer-reviewed academic studies as well as research briefs, government reports, and working papers, using predefined search parameters, keywords, and trusted search engines. From this large body of work, we then singled out for more careful review those studies that endeavored to identify causal links between the policy and our outcomes of interest, taking into consideration characteristics such as the research designs put in place, the analytic methods used, and the relevance of the populations and outcomes studied. We then subjected this literature to an in-depth critique and chose only the most methodologically rigorous research to inform our conclusions about policy effectiveness. All studies considered to date for this review were released on or before February 24, 2021.”

Winter, P., & Mena, C. (2018). [Workplace connections: Gender equity, family-friendly policies, and early childhood care and education](http://www.bayareaeconomy.org/files/pdf/WorkplaceConnectionsWeb.pdf). Bay Area Council Economic Institute. <http://www.bayareaeconomy.org/files/pdf/WorkplaceConnectionsWeb.pdf>

“Employees and their families—regardless of their incomes—should be able to access services and benefits that allow them to prosper. The positive outcomes of implementing family-friendly

policies such as paid parental leave and support for affordable early childhood care and education are immense, and continued delay in enacting changes to provide these supports ultimately hurts both businesses and families. Businesses and policymakers need to make it a priority to implement both private-sector practices and public policies that support employees in managing the competing demands of work and family.”

Wolters, B., Jerrett, D., Bagley, A., & Smith, L. K. (2021). [The economic impact of America's child care gap: The cost of the child care gap to parents, businesses, and taxpayers.](https://bipartisanpolicy.org/download/?file=/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/BPC-Economic-Impact-Report_R01-1.pdf) Bipartisan Policy Center. https://bipartisanpolicy.org/download/?file=/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/BPC-Economic-Impact-Report_R01-1.pdf

“This report estimates ranges of the potential future economic impacts of inadequate child care supply in 34 states and Washington, DC. It also separately estimates future impacts on households, businesses, and tax revenues. The analysis includes both low and high estimates.”

Explore more [resources on child care affordability in this curated list](#) from Research Connections.

Building Infrastructure

Banghart, P., Hill, Z., Guerra, G., Covington, D., & Tout, K. (2021). [Supporting families' access to child care and early education: A descriptive profile of states' consumer education websites](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/ccepra-consumer-education-report.pdf) (OPRE Report No. 2021-161). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/ccepra-consumer-education-report.pdf>

“This descriptive study explored the ECE–related consumer education activities described in the FY 2019-2021 CCDF State Plans and the types of consumer education information available on states' ECE consumer education websites (i.e., states' official consumer education website, quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) website, and child care search engines). Using a multidimensional family-centered definition of access, we sought to understand how states' ECE consumer education websites support access to child care information. We examined the extent to which information is easy to find, addresses affordability, helps parents understand how ECE supports child development, and addresses parents' needs (for example, accommodates their work schedules and their geographic location).”

Hardy, E., Joshi, P., Leonardos, M., & Acevedo-Garcia, D. (2021). [Advancing racial equity through neighborhood-informed early childhood policies: A research and policy review.](https://www.diversitydatakids.org/sites/default/files/file/neighborhood-informed-early-childhood-policies_final_2021-09-27.pdf) Heller School for Social Policy and Management. https://www.diversitydatakids.org/sites/default/files/file/neighborhood-informed-early-childhood-policies_final_2021-09-27.pdf

“This report synthesizes existing research and presents the findings of a novel policy review that together point to neighborhood-informed approaches as a potentially valuable tool for advancing the goals of U.S. early childhood policies. Neighborhood-informed approaches are not a silver bullet, and alone they cannot address the overarching policy challenges in the field, including insufficient investment, high unmet need, and the fragmentation of a mixed-delivery system. However, our research synthesis indicates that neighborhood-informed approaches could play a role in improving policy efficiency, effectiveness, and racial equity if more systematically integrated into federal early childhood policies. Particularly as the early care and learning field continues to expand and to rebuild and reform in the post-COVID-19 era with unprecedented investments from

the American Rescue Plan, the findings of this report suggest that neighborhood-informed approaches warrant increased consideration from leaders and decision-makers in the field.”

Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development. (2021). [Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding: Commission report of findings and recommendations.](https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/Early%20Childhood%20Funding%20Commission%20Full%20Report.pdf)
<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Documents/Early%20Childhood%20Funding%20Commission%20Full%20Report.pdf>

“The Commission strongly recommends that the state seize this moment to reimagine and adequately invest in a system that leads with racial equity; prioritizes community and stakeholder engagement in decision-making at the program, community, and state levels; ensures quality and access to comprehensive early childhood education and care (ECEC) experiences; and provides transparency and accountability. To operationalize our vision and make it sustainable, the Commission offers three specific recommendations to make ECEC work better for Illinois children, families, and providers. We acknowledge implementing these will be a heavy lift, especially in light of the state’s current economic realities, but we also acknowledge the urgency of our charge and the timing, given the need to address racial and economic injustice related to child and family access, quality, cost of services, and child outcomes.”

Klumpner, S., & Woolley, M. E. (2021). [Expanding after school program access for vulnerable students: Examining the efficacy of federal policy and funding.](https://doi.org/10.1177/00131245211004550) *Education and Urban Society*, 53(9), 987-100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00131245211004550>

“The current research examined the efficacy of the 21st CCLC grant program to expand access to quality after school programming for low-income students attending low-income schools. The following research question guided the analyses: What are the student and school characteristics of the schools providing 21st CCLC funded programs? We further anticipated that school setting, geographical region, and total school enrollment may also be predictive of whether a school has a specific type of after school program; however, our examination of such patterns was exploratory.”

Michie, M., Weisner, K., Markowitz, A. J., Bassok, D., Hearington, M., Kiscaden, S., Rothenberg, A., & Smith, A. E. (2021). [Creating coordinated early childhood systems: Lessons from Louisiana's Ready Start communities.](https://www.see-partnerships.com/uploads/1/3/2/8/132824390/ready_start_aim_1_summary_report.pdf) University of Virginia, EdPolicyWorks. https://www.see-partnerships.com/uploads/1/3/2/8/132824390/ready_start_aim_1_summary_report.pdf

“Louisiana’s first cohort of Ready Start Networks provides seven case studies in how communities can build more coordinated, higher quality ECE systems. This report and the accompanying profiles are the first in a set that aim to learn from these seven exemplary networks: Iberville, Jefferson, Lafayette, Orleans, Rapides, St. Mary, and Washington. Based on interviews with network leaders, they describe these networks’ experiences in the years prior to Ready Start, highlighting the common challenges network leaders faced and the successful strategies they used when responding to Act 3 and working to increase quality, access, and coordination. The report and profiles summarize key lessons and perspectives from the network leaders that may aid other communities—in Louisiana and across the country—in their efforts to build stronger local ECE systems.”

Smith, L. K., Bagley, A., & Wolters, B. (2021). [Child care in 35 states: What we know and don't know: Quantifying the supply of, potential need for, and gaps in child care across the country](https://childcaregap.org/assets/Child%20Care%20in%2035%20States.pdf). Bipartisan Policy Center.
<https://childcaregap.org/assets/Child%20Care%20in%2035%20States.pdf>

“This report, accompanied by an interactive map, describes BPC’s mapping methodology, insights gleaned from the data collection process that states can use to optimize the ways they collect supply data, and national findings on the gap in child care according to geographic location and socioeconomic factors across the country. The report also includes an important discussion about the further need to fully understand parents’ child care choices at the national and local levels in order to accurately apply these findings to policy decisions.”

Explore more [resources on building infrastructure in early care and education in this curated list](#) from Research Connections.

Children with Special Needs

Chen, C.-C., Cheng, S.-L., Xu, Y., Spence, C., Zhang, F., & Adams, N. B. (2022). [Child developmental and special education service receipt: The intersection of health and poverty](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2022.101269). *Disability and Health Journal*. Advance online publication.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2022.101269>

“Background: Children born of low birth weight (LBW) and/or premature may have developmental delays and difficulties. The vulnerability, without early intervention, would have detrimental lifelong effects. Objectives: This study examined 1) the relationship between LBW and prematurity and the occurrence and timing of children's receipt of developmental and special education services and 2) whether poverty intersects with LBW and prematurity affecting service receipt. Methods: This population-based study used cross-sectional data from the National Survey of Children's Health, which consisted of approximately 52,000 participants aged 1–17 between 2017 and 2018 in the United States. We conducted logistic regression to analyze the predictive relationship of BW/prematurity and the occurrence of receiving developmental and special education services. We then conducted ordered logistic regression to examine whether LBW and prematurity predicted the timing of receiving developmental and special education services. Further, we conducted moderating analyses to examine whether the predictive relationships above varied with poverty. The analyses listed above were weighted to reflect the population drawn. Results: Children born with LBW and prematurity were more likely to receive developmental and special education services and they tended to receive services earlier than those born at normal weight and term. Educational disparities were evident among children in low-income families. Children of LBW in low-income families were less likely to receive earlier services than those in affluent families. Conclusions: This study indicates developmental and special education needs of children born LBW and/or premature. With restrained assets, low-income families may need more assistance to promote optimal development for their children.”

Costanzo, M., & Magnuson, K. A. (2019). [Child care for families raising children with disabilities: The role of federal policy in equitable access](https://cfsrdrc.wisc.edu/files/working-papers/WI19_03_Costanzo.Magnuson_FinalPaper_11.11.19-(1).pdf). University of Wisconsin-Madison, Center for Financial Security, Retirement and Disability Research Center.
[https://cfsrdrc.wisc.edu/files/working-papers/WI19_03_Costanzo.Magnuson_FinalPaper_11.11.19-\(1\).pdf](https://cfsrdrc.wisc.edu/files/working-papers/WI19_03_Costanzo.Magnuson_FinalPaper_11.11.19-(1).pdf)

“Access to affordable and appropriate child care is a crucial employment support for families and may be particularly salient for families with young children with disabilities. Without access to quality child care, parents may not be able to find and maintain employment, increasing the

likelihood of economic precarity for families that are already likely to experience economic hardship. In this study, we use data from the ECLS-B to examine whether child care arrangements differ by disability status. We find that having an identified disability in childhood, and particularly IEP receipt, is associated with increased likelihood of attending center-based and part-time care as well as lower child care costs. We employ a difference-in-difference framework to examine changes in maternal employment rates at kindergarten enrollment by disability status; the results of the difference-in-difference analysis are generally not significant, but they do show a smaller rate of change in maternal employment at kindergarten enrollment for parents of children with disabilities compared to parents of typically developing peers. These results are consistent with the conclusion that current federal policies support access to child care for children with disabilities.”

Gillispie, C. (2021). [Our youngest learners: Increasing equity in early intervention](https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Increasing-Equity-in-Early-Intervention-May-2021.pdf). Education Trust (American Association for Higher Education). <https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Increasing-Equity-in-Early-Intervention-May-2021.pdf>

“There are several strategies states can use to address systemic racial inequities in the health and education systems in which early intervention services take place. In this report, we identify the strengths of state approaches and opportunities for increasing equity in providing early intervention services.”

Explore more [resources on access for children with special needs in this curated list](#) from Research Connections.

Definitions of Access

Paschall, K. W., Davis, E. E., & Tout, K. (2021). [Measuring and comparing multiple dimensions of early care and education access](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/CCEEPRA-measuring-access-february-2021.pdf) (OPRE Report No. 2021-08). United States, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/CCEEPRA-measuring-access-february-2021.pdf>

“Describing access across multiple dimensions provides decision makers with a deeper understanding of families’ ECE needs and emphasizes the need for multifaceted policy solutions. Yet measuring and comparing access from different perspectives requires available data and a clear measurement approach that can be conveyed concisely. This report describes an exploratory study using data from the 2012 National Study of Early Care and Education (NSECE) to model the complexity of ECE access and to consider how ECE access varies for families across the United States.”

Thomson, D., Cantrell, E., Guerra, G., Gooze, R. A., & Tout, K. (2020). [Conceptualizing and measuring access to early care and education](#) (OPRE Report No. 2020-106). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.

“A recent report, *Defining and Measuring Access to High-Quality Early Care and Education (ECE): A Guidebook for Policymakers and Researchers* (Access Guidebook), supports movement toward more consistent definitions, analysis, and reporting on access. The report offers a family-centered definition of access that emphasizes the importance of considering multiple dimensions of access, including the degree to which families are able to secure ECE with reasonable effort, the affordability of ECE, if ECE meets the parents’ needs, and if ECE supports the child’s development. This current report builds on this work by providing findings from a review of literature that investigates and catalogues recent efforts to define and operationalize access with a focus on the

extent to which current work at the state and federal levels aligns with the multidimensional definition of access proposed in the Access Guidebook. For example, this literature review documents the extent to which current research and policy efforts have expanded beyond indicators of the availability of ECE slots and affordability to include indicators, such as the availability of ECE information, the quality of ECE programs, the provision of services that support the child's development and the family's needs, and the removal of structural barriers to ECE for socially or economically disadvantaged or at-risk populations. A multidimensional definition of access can be further nuanced by determining if indicators of access are rooted in a system-level perspective (with a focus on the supply side, such as availability and cost) or in a family-level perspective (with a focus on demand issues, such as geographic proximity of ECE to the home and workplace). This current review documents and discusses the balance of system- and family-level perspectives in the field's efforts to define and measure access in the context of the multidimensional framework provided by the Access Guidebook.”

United States. Administration for Children and Families. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. (2022). [*A multi-dimensional definition of child care and early education access that is centered on families.*](#) United States, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation; Child Trends.

“This one-page brief presents an infographic that illustrates a definition of access to child care and early education. It’s a definition being presented by the Child Care and Early Education Policy and Research Analysis (CCEPRA) project. This definition of access centers around the experience of parents and families and consists of four dimensions: reasonable effort, affordability, supports child's development, and meets parents’ needs.”

Explore more [resources on defining access in this curated list](#) from Research Connections.

Geographic Distribution

Bishop-Josef, S. J. (2021). [*Early childhood programs' scarcity undermines Nebraska's rural communities.*](#) Council for a Strong America.
<https://strongnation.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/1265/7adc7a82-ed66-46eb-ab7e-5c4ebe1ce5ec.pdf?1614100435&inline;%20filename=%22Early%20Childhood%20Programs%E2%80%99%20Scarcity%20Undermines%20Nebraska%E2%80%99s%20Rural%20Communities.pdf%22>

“High-quality early childhood care and education programs can help ameliorate the challenges faced by Nebraska children living in rural communities. These programs also strengthen the current and future workforce, contribute to a strong economy and public safety, and enhance national security in the long run. Policymakers must support tailored investments for children in rural communities to help ensure the future strength of our state.”

Davis, E. E., Lee, W. F., & Sojourner, A. J. (2019). [*Family-centered measures of access to early care and education.*](#) *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 47(2), 472-486.

“This study proposes new family-centered measures of access to early care and education (ECE) services with respect to quantity, cost, and quality and uses them to assess disparities in access across locations and socio-demographic groups in Minnesota. These measures are distance-based and use available geographic data to account for the fact that families can cross arbitrary administrative boundaries, such as census tract or ZIP code lines, and thus better reflect the real

experiences of families than conventional area-based measures. Combining synthetic family locations simulated from Census demographic and geographic data and information on ECE provider locations, we calculate travel time between the locations of families with young children and ECE providers to measure families' access to providers of different types. The results yield a map of areas with low and high relative ECE access. The average family in Minnesota lives in a location where there are nearly two children for every nearby slot of licensed capacity, however, access to ECE supply varies considerably at the local level. The supply measure can also serve as a weight useful in computing family-centered measures of ECE quality and access costs, incorporating both prices and travel costs, to further characterize the local ECE market from the perspective of families. Improving the measures of variation in families' access to ECE quantity, cost, and quality is valuable as policymakers consider expansions to public supports for early learning and ECE entrepreneurs decide where to invest.”

Ehrlich, S. B., Connors, M. C., Stein, A. G., Francis, J., Easton, J. Q., Kabourek, S. E., & Farrar, I. C. (2020). [Closer to home: More equitable pre-k access and enrollment in Chicago](https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/2020-10/Pre-K%20Enrollment-Access%20Closer%20to%20Home-Oct%202020-Consortium_NORC_Start%20Early.pdf). University of Chicago Consortium on School Research; NORC; Start Early. https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/2020-10/Pre-K%20Enrollment-Access%20Closer%20to%20Home-Oct%202020-Consortium_NORC_Start%20Early.pdf

“As prekindergarten (pre-k) expands across the country, school districts are making choices about where to place pre-k classrooms and developing policies for how families can apply and which children are enrolled. In doing so, districts are pulling policy levers that influence students' access to pre-k. Research shows that some families have less access to pre-k than others, which contributes to inequitable enrollment within districts. This descriptive study explores whether and how Chicago's school-based pre-k system was more equitable after the district implemented a set of policies focused on changing access to and enrollment in school-based pre-k. Specifically, we compare patterns of enrollment and geographic access (i.e., distance from home to a school with pre-k and number of pre-k classrooms nearby), and use multilevel logistic regression analyses to examine how access was related to enrollment for different student groups before and after the policy changes. Results show that both access to, and enrollment in, full-day pre-k expanded substantially among Black students, lowest-income students, and students living in mostly Black neighborhoods, even as overall school-based pre-k enrollment remained relatively constant. There was a modest association between access to and enrollment in full-day pre-k (but not any pre-k), and this relationship became stronger following the policy changes, especially for high-priority student groups. Findings demonstrate that the geographic distribution of school-based pre-k (particularly full-day) may be an important policy lever for addressing inequities in student access and enrollment in Chicago and have implications for other school districts implementing similar efforts nationwide.”

Fuller, B., Leibovitz, T., Chin, D., Du, K., Garcia, N., & Kim, Y. (2020). [Equity and institutions: Distributing preschool quality in New York City](https://gse.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/nyc_pre-k_study_-_july_2020_update.pdf). University of California, Berkeley. https://gse.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/nyc_pre-k_study_-_july_2020_update.pdf

“The shutdown of child care and preschools will likely worsen gaps in children's early learning, just as the nation revisits racial disparities that persist in public institutions. Can robust pre-k programs—such as New York City's ambitious initiative—mitigate against inequities in child development? Or, do preschools display unfair variation in quality tied to the racial or economic features of neighborhoods? This report maps differing levels of quality observed among 1,610 pre-k sites with complete data over the 2016–2018 period. We find that preschools situated in economically secure neighborhoods or enrolling smaller shares of Black children host higher quality classrooms and teaching practices. Elements of one quality measure deployed by city

monitors reveal these disparities, along with uneven learning activities gauged by a second yardstick of classroom quality. One-third of all children attend severely segregated pre-k sites. Programs hosted by city schools display lower quality than sites operated by community organizations. We discuss how to mitigate against forces that regressively distort well-intentioned entitlements like universal preschool.”

Gulosino, C., & Maxwell, P. (2018). [A comprehensive framework for evaluating Shelby County school district's voluntary preschool program: The challenges of equity, choice, efficiency, and social cohesion](https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085918801885). *Urban Education*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085918801885>

“In this article, the Tennessee's Voluntary Prekindergarten (TN-VPK) program in general and the Shelby County Schools' VPK program in particular are analyzed using the policy instruments of regulation, finance, and support services. The geospatial analysis (geographic information systems or "GIS") indicates that many of VPK's site locations are unable to provide access to all qualified applicants. For both TN-VPK and Shelby County Schools, it is useful not only to analyze the varied aspects of state and federally funded public-choice Pre-K programs, but also to evaluate the consequences to equity, freedom of choice, productive efficiency, and social cohesion in a geospatial context.”

Morning Consult. (2021). [Understanding rural parents child care needs](https://bipartisanpolicy.org/download/?file=wp-content/uploads/2021/10/BPC-Rural-Parents-Analysis-9.14-Additional-Analysis-min.pdf). Bipartisan Policy Center. <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/download/?file=wp-content/uploads/2021/10/BPC-Rural-Parents-Analysis-9.14-Additional-Analysis-min.pdf>

“The research conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of the Bipartisan Policy Center seeks to understand current use of and demand for child care among parents in rural communities. Specific research objectives include: 1. Understand child care needs among rural parents 2. Explore accessibility of child care providers in rural communities 3. Understand the extent rural parents have considered formal child care options when selecting a care arrangement and top-of-mind considerations when choosing a child care provider. 4. Use of financial supports for child care, including federal tax credits.”

Morrissey, T., Allard, S. W., & Pelletier, E. (2022). [Access to early care and education in rural communities: Implications for children's school readiness](https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2022.8.3.04). *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 8(3), 100–123. <https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2022.8.3.04>

“This study links county-level early care and education (ECE) program, economic, and demographic data to child-level data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort of 2010–2011 to examine geographic variation in ECE program participation and provision. We find that public ECE programs, particularly Head Start, occupy a larger role in nonmetropolitan communities than in metropolitan areas. By contrast, children in rural counties are less likely to attend private center-based ECE, and nonprofit childcare program expenditures in rural areas lag. We also find rural-metropolitan differences in school readiness diminish when geographic characteristics are controlled. Results suggest that county-level context and state-level policy features shape children's early experiences, and that public ECE investments are key in narrowing disparities in ECE attendance and in children's outcomes.”

Olson, A. (2021). [Expensive and inaccessible: Childcare in Sioux Falls, South Dakota](https://siouxfallsthive.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Childcare-Collaborative-Final-Report.pdf). Augustana University, Augustana Research Institute. <https://siouxfallsthive.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Childcare-Collaborative-Final-Report.pdf>

“Child care deserts have been documented at a statewide level, and workforce implications have

been measured nationally, but the existence or extent of local child care gaps has yet to be demonstrated at a local level in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. In conjunction with the Sioux Falls Childcare Collaborative (which is facilitated by Sioux Falls Thrive) and the Beacom Research Fellows Program at Augustana University, this study set out to research child care locally by distributing two surveys: one to state-licensed child care centers and a second to local employers to understand each of their perspectives. Recognizing the specific child care problems at a local level will help to measure the extent of any gaps and understand how to close them in order to support Sioux Falls families.”

Paschall, K. W., & Maxwell, K. (2022). [Defining and measuring access to child care and early education with families in mind](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/opre_defining-measuring-access-highlight_feb2022.pdf) (OPRE Report #2021-232). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation.
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/opre_defining-measuring-access-highlight_feb2022.pdf

“The authors propose an expansion of the definition of access in the field of child care and early education. The definition discussed goes beyond supply and demand and brings in the concept of the preferences of families. This fact sheet also discusses the ways in which family-centered access can be measured and mapped in a community.”

Explore more resources on [geographic distribution in this curated list](#) from Research Connections.

Head Start–Early Head Start

National Head Start Association (U.S.). (2022). [Head Start united: Removing barriers to access for children and families](https://nhsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Head-Start-United-Removing-Barriers-to-Access-for-Children-and-Families-1.pdf). <https://nhsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Head-Start-United-Removing-Barriers-to-Access-for-Children-and-Families-1.pdf>

“Throughout 2021, the National Head Start Association (NHSA) led a multifaceted research and stakeholder process to identify the top current barriers to access; explore which barriers limit access differentially by race, ethnicity, family income and other factors; and coalesce around policy solutions. Our findings—presented in this brief—affirm the importance of Head Start’s focus on local design, family partnership, and community engagement to support equitable access. The enduring mission of the Head Start community and NHSA is to support success in school and in life for all vulnerable children. Removing barriers to access is a core concern of Head Start as a means toward this critical mission.”

Silver, H. C., & Coba-Rodriguez, S. (2022). [“There’s no off-switch for us:” Head Start family engagement amidst COVID-19](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2022.106475). *Children and Youth Services Review*, 137, Article 106475. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2022.106475>

“Head Start center closures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic required providers to innovate to continue engaging families and building relationships. Family engagement has long been a pillar of Head Start’s holistic approach to working with children and families in poverty. The present study provides a unique qualitative, longitudinal perspective of 20 Illinois-based Head Start–Early Head Start center directors regarding their engagement and communication strategies with families prior to, during, and after state-mandated center closures. Findings indicate that staff developed novel approaches to working with families within the context of COVID-19, some of which may have an important place in a post-pandemic world.”

University of Texas at Austin, Child and Family Research Partnership, Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center. (2021). [Prenatal-to-3 policy clearinghouse evidence review: Early Head Start \(ER 10B.0821\)](https://pn3policy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ER.10B.0821_EarlyHeadStart.pdf). https://pn3policy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ER.10B.0821_EarlyHeadStart.pdf

“This evidence review began with a broad search of all literature related to the policy and its impacts on child and family well-being during the prenatal-to-3 period. First, we identified and collected relevant peer-reviewed academic studies as well as research briefs, government reports, and working papers, using predefined search parameters, keywords, and trusted search engines. From this large body of work, we then singled out for more careful review those studies that endeavored to identify causal links between the policy and our outcomes of interest, taking into consideration characteristics such as the research designs put in place, the analytic methods used, and the relevance of the populations and outcomes studied. We then subjected this literature to an in-depth critique and chose only the most methodologically rigorous research to inform our conclusions about policy effectiveness. All studies considered to date for this review were released on or before February 25, 2021.”

Explore more [resources on Head Start and Early Head Start in this curated list](#) from Research Connections.

High Quality Programming

Ahearn, S., Reidt-Parker, J., & Stricklin, S. B. (2022). [Jefferson Parish early learning: Capacity and access landscape analysis](https://jeffersonreadystartnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/JeffParish_LandscapeAnalysis2022.pdf). Start Early; Jefferson Ready Start Network. https://jeffersonreadystartnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/JeffParish_LandscapeAnalysis2022.pdf

“The childcare landscape in Jefferson Parish is complex and multifaceted, with factors as diverse as geography, economics, COVID-19, language, and workforce impacting both supply and demand. One of the key goals of the Jefferson Ready Start Network is to make high-quality early care and education available to all children in Jefferson Parish and to ensure that all children enter kindergarten healthy and ready for success. With only 12.4% of Jefferson children considered ready to learn when entering kindergarten, based on the kindergarten entry assessment, this work is urgent. Changing these outcomes requires ensuring an adequate supply of affordable, accessible, and high-quality child care, as well as building robust demand from families. Based on our comprehensive review of data about Jefferson Parish’s population, economic conditions, and child care supply/demand data, combined with qualitative and anecdotal data gathered from focus groups, surveys, and interviews, we identify several key findings and suggest a number of aligned recommendations.”

Archambault, J., Cote, D., & Raynault, M.-F. (2020). [Early childhood education and care access for children from disadvantaged backgrounds: Using a framework to guide intervention](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-019-01002-x). *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 48(3), 345-352. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-019-01002-x>

“Early childhood education and care (ECEC) can have substantial beneficial effects on overall child development and educational success for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Unfortunately, it is well documented that they are underrepresented in quality ECEC programs. In order to improve access to quality ECEC, it is important to understand the factors leading to these inequities. This paper is based on a synthesis of published literature on interventions aimed at improving access to ECEC. We propose a framework identifying the spectrum of factors influencing

access to quality ECEC for disadvantaged populations. We also present, in the context of our proposed framework, different interventions that have been taken to improve access to ECEC opportunities for children from low socioeconomic and/or new immigrant backgrounds. We believe that the framework proposed in this paper serves not only as a framework by which to understand the overlapping processes, factors, and stages affecting access to ECEC, but also as a model to help decision-makers coordinate their efforts and maximize their impact toward more equity in access to quality early childhood education.”

Coogle, C. G., Storie, S., & Rahn, N. L. (2022). [A framework for promoting access, increasing participation, and providing support in early childhood classrooms.](#) *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 50, 867–877. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-021-01200-6>

“The purpose of this paper is to provide an inclusive framework for supporting all children in early childhood education classrooms while also considering early learning standards, curricula, and everyday activities and routines. We describe universal design for learning, multitiered systems of support, embedded learning opportunities, and how these practices can be intertwined to support the early development and learning of all young children. Within universal design for learning we describe the multisensory ways early childhood educators can represent information, engage young learners, and facilitate expression. Multitiered systems of support promote intentional and individualized instructional decision-making guided by data to support children in attaining target learning objectives. We describe embedded learning opportunities which are intentional and naturalistic opportunities to work on specific skills throughout daily activities and routines. Sample informal assessments and additional resources to learn more about each of these practices are included.”

Hilty, R., Boddicker-Young, P., Hegseth, D., Thompson, J. A., Bultinck, E., Fojut, J., & Early, D. M. (2021). [Understanding equitable access to public Montessori pre-K: A case study of Montessori recruitment and enrollment practices.](#) Child Trends. https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/EquitableAccessMontessoriReport_ChildTrends_March2021.pdf

“Ensuring equitable access to high-quality early education for families from all racial, ethnic, and income backgrounds is a critical component for addressing systemic racism and inequality within the public education system. This study examined one piece of this issue by investigating access to public Montessori pre-k, as well as barriers that may hinder equitable access. Barriers to accessing high-quality educational opportunities often disproportionately affect Black and Latine families and families experiencing poverty, and these barriers may contribute to what researchers call the ‘opportunity gap.’”

Rhode Island Kids Count. (2020). [Early learning fact sheet: Access to high-quality, publicly-funded preschool.](#) <https://www.rikidscount.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Fact%20Sheets/Preschool%202020.pdf>

“This fact sheet presents 2019–2020 data from the Rhode Island Department of Education about enrollment in Head Start and Rhode Island’s state pre-k program for 3- and 4-year-olds.”

Rhode Island Kids Count. (2020). [Early learning fact sheet: Funding safe, healthy, quality child care.](https://www.rikidscount.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Fact%20Sheets/HQCC%202020.pdf)

<https://www.rikidscount.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Fact%20Sheets/HQCC%202020.pdf>

“In Rhode Island, children enrolled in Early Head Start, Head Start, and Rhode Island pre-k are much more likely to be enrolled in a high-quality program than children in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Across the U.S., early care and education programs vary markedly in quality, and many families cannot find or afford high-quality care. Inadequate public funding levels, low staff education and compensation, and inconsistent monitoring and support for quality improvement are key barriers to improving access to quality child care.”

Explore more [resources on high quality programs in this curated list](#) from Research Connections.

Impacts of COVID-19

Cascio, E. U. (2021). [COVID-19, early care and education, and child development.](https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.dartmouth.edu/dist/d/1987/files/2021/10/cascio_seanWP_oct2021.pdf) Dartmouth College. https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.dartmouth.edu/dist/d/1987/files/2021/10/cascio_seanWP_oct2021.pdf

“This paper explores the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for child development in the United States by way of changes in participation in center-based child care and preschool, or early care and education (ECE). The pandemic appears to have reduced ECE enrollment and exacerbated existing inequalities in ECE participation. However, these effects have varied in timing across demographic groups and in intensity across states. The unique set of forces driving the participation declines—as well as pandemic impacts on ECE quality in addition to quantity—also suggest care in generalizing from pre-pandemic research findings when contemplating the impacts for child development. Prior research is still helpful, however, and it offers frameworks for understanding the drivers of more localized ECE effects and their implications. I conclude with thoughts on the long-standing challenges in ECE that were brought into sharp relief by the pandemic.”

“These findings raise questions about the availability of pre-k programs in high-poverty areas. The study also found that program quality is similar across local education agencies with different population sizes and poverty rates, suggesting that Act 166 allows for an equitable pre-k system in terms of program quality for families in rural and low-income areas of the state. The findings also suggest that continuing to allow families to access pre-k in locations other than their local education agency of residence might maximize pre-k availability for families in local education agencies with few—sometimes only one—pre-k programs. Private programs reported being open for more hours per day and for more weeks per year than public school programs were, which might reduce the need for transitions throughout the day and year for children in private programs who need additional child care beyond the 10 hours per week funded by the state.”

First Five Years Fund. (n.d.). [The child care crisis: Why the status quo is failing families, early educators, and our economy.](https://www.ffyf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Meeting-The-Need-2.18.22.pdf) <https://www.ffyf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Meeting-The-Need-2.18.22.pdf>

“The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed both parents and the child care sector to the brink, exacerbating longstanding challenges of supply and demand, while also placing a spotlight on the essential role child care providers play in supporting families, businesses, and our economy.”

Robeson, W. W. (2021). [Accessing child care during the Coronavirus pandemic in Massachusetts](https://wcwonline.org/images/pdf/2021-robeson-accessing-childcare-massachusetts-covid19-pandemic.pdf). Wellesley Centers for Women. <https://wcwonline.org/images/pdf/2021-robeson-accessing-childcare-massachusetts-covid19-pandemic.pdf>

“The present study explored the ‘new normal’ of child care and the implications for parents who require child care to work, including how families with children under the age of 5 are accessing child care during the pandemic, the experiences and perceptions of the multiple dimensions of early child care among parents requiring care to work, and the implications for parents’ daily lives as well as their employment, economic mobility, work hours, and advancement. A phenomenological approach was applied to the interviews to understand how parents experience and ascribe meaning to child care decision points and a grounded-theory approach was used in order to identify emerging categories of themes.”

Tekin, E., Jones, J., & Kagan, S. L. (2022). [Addressing the impact of COVID-19 on the early care and education sector](http://nap.edu/26463). National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. <http://nap.edu/26463>

“The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated challenges in the early care and education (ECE) sector, including preexisting structural flaws; insufficient funding mechanisms; sector fragmentation; inadequate support for the workforce; and inequalities, such as the lack of access to high-quality care among low-income, rural populations, and communities of color. Addressing the impacts of the pandemic and the resulting economic recession on the ECE sector will require that state, local, and Tribal decision makers use available COVID-19 relief funds to mitigate those impacts while also laying the foundation for longer-term solutions. This rapid expert consultation identifies mitigation strategies (Box 1) that could be implemented to achieve these goals.”

Explore more [resources on impacts of COVID-19 in this curated list](#) from Research Connections.

Special Populations

Adams, G., Lou, C., Willenborg, P., & Schilder, D. (2021). [Parents with nontraditional work schedules in Connecticut: Implications for child care](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/103481/parents-with-nontraditional-work-schedules-in-connecticut_updated.pdf). Urban Institute. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/103481/parents-with-nontraditional-work-schedules-in-connecticut_updated.pdf

“The challenges Black and Latino families face, and larger concerns about structural inequities for communities of color, have only grown during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, many parents have struggled to balance the need to work with protecting their children’s health and safety, all while child care programs have closed or reduced services. Parents who are essential workers and those who cannot move to telecommuting (Adams 2020) face difficult tradeoffs. Further, these challenges disproportionately affect communities of color. Black and Latino parents are in a particularly challenging situation given the greater impact of the economic downturn on their employment and income, their disproportionate representation in some parts of the essential workforce, the fact that they were significantly less likely to move to telecommuting (Adams 2020), and the higher COVID-19 health risks they and their families face because of structural inequities in health care. A first step in working to address these inequities is to understand the extent of the problem. Specifically, it is important to know how many children have parents who work NTH schedules and how this varies across children and families with different characteristics. This brief—part of a larger series—provides this information for the state of Connecticut and examines

the extent to which Connecticut children younger than age 6 with working parents had parents who worked NTH schedules. It first presents the information overall, describing variation across groups of children (including those in families with low incomes and children of color), and then explores variation for children with one or more parents working in essential industries. It then briefly explores the implications of these findings for child care and concludes with a brief discussion of some policy questions and issues that policymakers should consider.”

Ferrette, T. (2021). [Supporting immigrant providers and families through child care relief funds](https://www.clasp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2021_Supporting20Immigrant20Providers20Families20CC20Funds_0.pdf). Center for Law and Social Policy. https://www.clasp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2021_Supporting20Immigrant20Providers20Families20CC20Funds_0.pdf

“The majority of children living in immigrant households are U.S. citizens. According to federal rules, eligibility for child care benefits is based on the child’s status and not that of the adults in the household. However, mixed-status immigrant families have traditionally had less access to the child care subsidy system due to obstacles including language barriers, confusion regarding eligibility rules, fear of accessing public benefits, and lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach about eligibility and access. ARPA’s [American Rescue Plan Act] funding and guidance provide the opportunity to acknowledge this paradigm and disrupt these barriers.”

Greenberg, E., Michie, M., & Adams, G. (2018). [Expanding preschool access for children of immigrants](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/96546/expanding_preschool_access_for_children_of_immigrants). Urban Institute. [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/96546/expanding_preschool_access_for_children_of_immigrants.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/96546/expanding_preschool_access_for_children_of_immigrants)

“This study is the second project, and it explores strategies in four communities with unusually high rates of enrollment among low-income immigrant families and negligible (or nonexistent) gaps in enrollment between children of immigrants and children of U.S.-born parents. We focus on children’s involvement in state-funded preschool initiatives, also known as prekindergarten, in Dearborn, Michigan; Atlanta, Georgia; King County, Washington; and Houston, Texas. These communities are situated within diverse preschool and immigration policy contexts and represent a mix of old and new immigrant destinations, homogeneous and heterogeneous immigrant populations, and countries of origin. We selected these communities to provide a range of perspectives, seeking to identify common themes and key strategies as well as site-specific adaptations to preschool enrollment barriers. Understanding how to reduce barriers to preschool access for immigrant families is key to informing preschool programs and policies in states and communities nationwide. The analyses in this report are based on individual and group interviews with parents and stakeholders. Between November 2016 and February 2017, we spoke with 134 parents from immigrant families and 106 stakeholders across the four study sites.”

Guzman, L., Hickman, S., Turner, K., & Gennetian, L. A. (2017). [How well are early care and education providers who serve Hispanic children doing on access and availability?](https://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Hispanic-Center-Providers-Brief-FINAL-V21.pdf) (Publication No. 2017-49). National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families. <https://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Hispanic-Center-Providers-Brief-FINAL-V21.pdf>

“After decades of lagging behind, Latino children—including those who are low-income—are enrolling in ECE programs at rates approaching those of their low-income white peers, at least among preschool-aged children. However, we still know little about the providers of ECE programs (both formal and informal) who care for and serve Latino children. Given the increasing enrollment of Hispanic children in ECE programs, what do the programs that serve this population look like? This brief provides a national portrait of providers serving a large proportion of Hispanic children,

focusing on characteristics that shape access to and availability of ECE programs. We find that roughly one in five providers serve a high proportion of Hispanic children (also referred to as high-Hispanic-serving), in which 25 percent or more of the children enrolled are Hispanic. Collectively, our findings suggest many ways in which providers—and home-based providers in particular—are likely responding to the needs of Hispanic families, as well as possible areas of unmet need.”

Shaw, S. H., Hirilall, A., & Halle, T. (2020). [Facilitating access to early care and education for children experiencing homelessness](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/facilitating_access_to_early_care_and_ed.pdf). (OPRE Research Brief No. 2020-12). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/facilitating_access_to_early_care_and_ed.pdf

“The experience of homelessness is a known risk factor for young children, ages birth to 5. Children experiencing homelessness benefit from early care and education (ECE); however, states, communities and ECE providers face many barriers to ensuring access to care for these young children. The purpose of this brief is to (1) discuss the barriers to accessing ECE among families experiencing homelessness and (2) describe ways in which states and communities support the enrollment of children experiencing homelessness in ECE. We provide a summary of the methods and findings from a series of key informant interviews with agency or organization leaders in selected states and communities. To conclude, we summarize interview themes, highlight relevant resources, and discuss the next steps for supporting ECE access for this population.”

Smith, J. M., Crosby, D. A., & Stephens, C. (2021). [Equitable access to high-quality early care and education: Opportunities to better serve young Hispanic children and their families](https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162211041942). *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 696(1), 80–105. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162211041942>

“Significant investments in public early childhood care and education (ECE) have yielded higher Hispanic enrollment in preschool-age programs, but progress has been uneven and inconsistent, especially for the youngest Hispanic children and low-income families. We review how ECE has contributed to Hispanic children’s development, offering a detailed review of Hispanic children’s participation in ECE, including evidence of effectiveness from ECE programs such as Early Head Start and Head Start, and state pre-k programs. We conclude with a discussion of why Hispanic children remain underserved by ECE and what policy changes could increase participation in these programs among Hispanics. We argue for expansion of established high-quality ECE into Hispanic-dense communities, for strategies that enroll and retain Latino children in ECE in ways that are family-centered and culturally responsive, and that ECE must adapt to better serve Hispanic families and dual language learners who require culturally appropriate pedagogy.”

Explore more [resources on special populations in this curated list](#) from Research Connections.

Universal Prekindergarten

Chan, E. W. (2020). [Preschool for all?: Enrollment and maternal labour supply implications of a bilingual preschool policy](https://doi.org/10.1080/00036846.2019.1646881). *Applied Economics*, 52(9), 970–986. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00036846.2019.1646881>

“Previous research supports the effectiveness of preschool in various contexts, yet there is limited evidence whether universal-type preschool policies induce changes in enrollment. While certain states have enacted universal preschool policies, some have also considered bilingual preschool

mandates, either as a supplementary or stand-alone policy, requiring schools to open up bilingual classrooms for children from non-English speaking families. The question of whether bilingual preschool policies can induce enrollment and close achievement gaps between English learners and English speakers is particularly important today for urban cities and states with large immigrant populations. In this study, I exploit exogenous variation from the first bilingual prekindergarten mandate in Illinois to estimate the causal effects on preschool enrollment and maternal labour supply of recently immigrated and Hispanic families. Utilizing a difference-in-differences strategy, estimates suggest significant effects on preschool enrollment between 18% and 20% and no effects of increasing maternal labour supply in Illinois. Estimates are robust to various specifications, control groups, and timeframes. I use the analysis to further discuss whether universal preschool policies are designed sufficiently for access and inclusion of various student types, and contribute to our understanding on the effectiveness of using childcare subsidies to increase the welfare of low-income families.”

Hill, L. E., & Prunty, E. (2022). [Setting the stage for universal preschool: Is transitional kindergarten serving students equitably?](https://www.ppic.org/publication/setting-the-stage-for-universal-preschool/) Public Policy Institute of California.
<https://www.ppic.org/publication/setting-the-stage-for-universal-preschool/>

“California is on the cusp of implementing universal preschool—a step that could help level the playing field for young children. Over the next few years, all four-year-olds will become eligible for Transitional Kindergarten (TK), which has been part of the state’s early learning programs since 2012. To help prepare for an equitable expansion, we provide a demographic portrait of TK students and the districts and schools offering TK, highlighting existing gaps in participation and access.”

Hill, L. E., & Prunty, E. (n.d.). [Setting the stage for universal preschool: Is transitional kindergarten serving students equitably? : Technical appendices](#). Public Policy Institute of California.

“This resource includes data sources, additional figures and tables related to the report “Setting the Stage for Universal Preschool.” Most data were obtained from the California Department of Education Transitional Kindergarten enrollment data, 2019–20.”

Irwin, C. W., & Gallo, A. (2021). [Characteristics of approved universal prekindergarten programs in Vermont in 2018/19](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2021070.pdf) (REL 2021-070). Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands.
https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2021070.pdf

“In an effort to increase access to high-quality prekindergarten (pre-k) programs for all young children in Vermont, the state passed universal pre-k legislation in 2014 (Act 166). All 3- and 4-year-olds have access to 10 hours a week of state-funded pre-k through a mixed-delivery system of public school and private programs. Families can enroll their children at no cost in any approved pre-k program across the state regardless of location. In efforts to better understand program availability, program quality, and characteristics related to family choice among universal pre-k programs in Vermont, this study examined the characteristics of approved pre-k programs overall, public school and private programs separately, and programs in local education agencies with different population sizes and poverty levels. The study found that in 2018/19 fewer than 50 percent of programs were at pre-k capacity and that a higher percentage of private programs than of public school programs and a higher percentage of programs in high-poverty local education agencies than of programs in low-poverty local education agencies were at pre-k capacity.”

Explore more [resources on universal pre-k in this curated list](#) from Research Connections.

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