

Most Delaware Families Can't Access Publicly Funded Child Care

Nearly **51,000** children under age 5 lack access to publicly funded care.

New Castle County

Over **29,000** children unserved by publicly funded programs

16% served in publicly funded programs
only 5,600 children

13% 0-2 year-olds **19%** 3-5 year-olds

Kent County

Nearly **11,000** children unserved by publicly funded programs

12% served in publicly funded programs
only 1,500 children

9% 0-2 year-olds **16%** 3-5 year-olds

Sussex County

Almost **11,000** children unserved by publicly funded programs

13% served in publicly funded programs
only 1,600 children

7% 0-2 year-olds **22%** 3-5 year-olds

Delaware

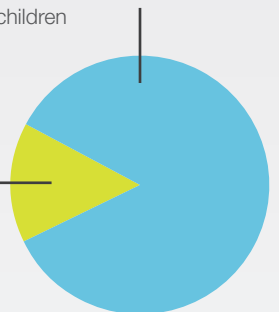
only 1 out of 7 children **have access** to publicly funded care

Only **10%** of children aged **0-2**
Only **19%** of children aged **3-5**

85% of children are **without access to publicly funded early care and education programs**

nearly 51,000 children

15% of children **have access to publicly funded care**
only 8,663 children



60,000 total children age 0-5 in Delaware

Access is decreasing:

Delaware is funding **30% fewer children** than the state funded in 2018.

Funding has remained stable or increased during this time. Access has **declined** due to **low rates**, which cause **low wages**, which have led to **closed classrooms** and shortages.

Learn more at www.firststateprek.com

What's Preventing Access?

Access includes enrollment in a part-time or full-time program for the entire year or part of the year.

The State of Delaware only funds child early care and education for a **small percentage** of children since **eligibility is limited** to low-income families earning 185%-200% of the Federal Poverty Level and those with special needs.

Today, a Delaware household of 4 would need to earn no more than \$53,000 annually or have a child with a diagnosed disability to qualify for care that would cost 0-10% of their income.

Of the children whose families **do qualify** financially, **only 36%** are in an early care and education program—and **only 26%** of eligible 0-2 year-olds are in care.

Other barriers to access include:

- ▶ Different, burdensome **paperwork processes** for 5 publicly funded programs.
- ▶ Thanks to **low state investment** levels, child care centers struggle to **hire and retain workers**, who typically make **minimum wage**.
- ▶ **Waiting lists** at child care centers are as long as 1,500 families and often years long.
- ▶ Shortage of centers especially in **child care deserts**, where **29%** of Delawareans live.

Public programs	New Castle	Kent	Sussex	Statewide
ECAP (State funded pre-K)	490	130	100	720
Early Head Start and Head Start	940	237	393	1,570
Redding Pre-K (Wilmington)	132	-	-	132
Special Education Pre-K	542	153	254	949
Purchase of Care (children not enrolled in another program) **	3,479	997	817	5,292
Public Program enrollment	5,583 (16%)	1,517 (12%)	1,564 (13%)	8,663 (15%)
Unserviced	29,195	10,757	10,934	50,887
Total children 0-5	34,778	12,274	12,498	59,550

** Purchase of Care can be used for full day, part day, and or summer programming. Estimates were made, based on income and services offered, about how many POC children are also enrolled in the other programs above and removed to avoid duplication in the count.

Notes: Adjustments were made for children enrolled in multiple programs to avoid duplicating children. These programs have varied funding amounts and quality standards ranging from basic health and safety standards to high-quality programs with certified teachers. Data sources can be found at bit.ly/3XpT7K5.

Quality Matters!

Research proves that early learning opportunities support lifelong success. And developmentally appropriate high-quality child care programs—for example, those with educational curricula, full-day, special education inclusion, and trained teachers—have the greatest impact on young children's development and success.

Quality standards vary across programs, ranging from basic health and safety standards for Purchase of Care to educational program and teacher certification requirements in other programs.