

Early Education and Care in NY State

Information provided by the NYS Council on Children & Families

Edited by Child Care Solutions

Program	Child Care
Description	<p>NY State regulations define child care as care for a child on a regular basis provided away from a child’s residence for more than 3 hours, but less than 24 hours per day by someone other than the parent, step parent, or other close relatives. Child care is typically designed to meet the needs of working parents. Most operate 9 – 12 hours per day, 52 weeks per year and are closed only on major holidays.</p> <p>Regulated child care providers include:</p> <p>Child Care Centers – State-licensed programs located in a non-residential facility caring for more than 6 children on a regular basis for more than three hours per day.</p> <p>Family Child Care – State-registered programs caring for children in a family home for 3 to 8 children. Family child care providers may care for up to 8 children at any one time. There must be one caregiver for every 2 children under 2 years of age.</p> <p>Group Family Child Care – State-licensed programs caring for children in a family home for 8 to 16 children. There must be 2 caregivers when more than 8 children are present and one caregiver for every 2 children under 2 years of age.</p> <p>School-Age Child Care – State-registered programs that care are located in non-residential facilities including schools for more than 6 children ages 5-12 years during non-school hours.</p> <p>Exempt programs:</p> <p>Center-based programs that are exempt from child care licensing include: summer day camps, religious education classes, day treatment facilities, and programs for children 3 years of age or older operated by a public or private school, and (outside of NY City) nursery schools/ preschools that care for children less than 3 hours a day.</p> <p>Family child care providers are exempt from licensing if they provide care on a regular basis for no more than 2 non-relative children or provide care only for relatives or not on a regular basis. These providers are called legally-exempt family child care providers.</p>
Target Population	Licensed and registered child care programs and providers may provide care for children 6 weeks through 12 years of age.
Number of Programs	In NY State, there are approximately 21,000 regulated child care programs serving 690,000 children ages 6 weeks through 12 years of age. Of these, there are approximately 4,000 child care centers ¹ serving 280,000 children; 6,600 family child care provider serving 50,000 children; 8,100 group family child care programs serving 122,000 children and 2,500 school-age child care centers serving 238,000.

	<p>Note: These figures include children in all programs that are licensed as child care centers, including center-based Early Head Start, Head Start, Preschool Special Education, and Universal Prekindergarten programs operated by community-based organizations.</p>
<p>Administrative and Regulatory Agencies</p>	<p>The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families Office of Child Care administers child care at the federal level.</p> <p>In NY State, the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is responsible for licensing and registering family and group family child care programs statewide, and center-based programs in areas of the state outside of NY City. The NY City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene licenses center-based programs in NY City.</p> <p>OCFS also administers the Child Care Block Grant, which supports child care subsidies for individuals on Temporary Assistance and low-income working families as well as quality improvement initiatives. At the local level, county Departments of Social Services administer child care subsidies.</p>
<p>Funding</p>	<p>Child care programs (with the exception of Head Start) generally charge tuition to the families who use their services. The cost of regulated child care is a major obstacle that prevents families from accessing services.</p> <p>Fees paid by parents are the primary source of funding for child care (approximately \$2 billion). The NY State Child Care Block Grant provides \$915 million for child care subsidies for eligible families (\$806,329,494) and quality improvement activities (\$108,670,051).</p> <p>For Fiscal Year 2012-2013 the funding for the NY State Child Care Subsidy Program includes \$205,706,709 from the federal Child Care & Development Fund, \$ 324,276,000 from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, \$208,053,700 from NYS Aid to Localities, and \$68,293,085 from maintenance of effort local government funds. Not included as part of the \$803 million is SFY 2012-2013 Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS) that social service districts are authorized to transfer to the NY State Child Care Block Grant to support child care costs. Some counties and municipalities, especially NY City, add funding to increase the amount of subsidies to low income families.</p> <p>Low-income working families who meet income guidelines (200 % of poverty or below) and need child care to work, look for work, or attend employment training are eligible for subsidies to help them pay for care. Parents receiving public assistance and participating in an approved activity (e.g., training or employment) are guaranteed assistance, as well as those who are transitioning off TANF, or receiving child care in lieu of TANF. The funding is not child-centered, but is based on parents/families meeting eligibility requirements.</p> <p>Child care subsidy funding is not an entitlement program for non-TANF families. Funding is often insufficient to meet the demand of all eligible low income families, and as a result, counties may reduce eligibility, raise parent co-pays or put eligible families on waiting lists.</p>

Involvement in QUALITYstarsNY	All licensed and registered family, group family and center-based child care programs are eligible to participate in QUALITYstarsNY. Legally exempt child care providers are not eligible.
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Program	Early Head Start
Description	Early Head Start was established under the 1994 Head Start Reauthorization Act to serve low-income pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers. While most Head Start programs offer center-based services, approximately half of all Early Head Start programs provide services through a home visiting model. Services include early education; family support; parenting education; comprehensive health and mental health services; nutrition; and ongoing support for parents through case management and peer support.
Target Population	Low-income pregnant women and families with incomes at or below the federal poverty level (currently \$15,130 for a family of 2 and \$23,050 for a family of four) with children birth to three years of age. Beginning in 2007, eligibility levels were increased to 130 percent of poverty. However, programs must serve those families most in need first.
Number of Programs	Of NY's 62 programs, 22 are located in NY City and 40 are in the rest of the state. The sponsoring organizations include 22 Community Action Agencies, 38 other community-based non-profit organizations, 1 private for profit, and 1 school district. NY's Early Head Start programs have a funded enrollment of 6,484 slots and served 9,785 children and 1,232 pregnant women during the 2011-12 program year.
Administrative Agency	US Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families directly funds and administers all Early Head Start programs. All center-based Early Head Start programs are licensed as child care programs and in addition to meeting Head Start Performance Standards, programs must meet all child care regulations.
Funding	The Office of Head Start provides approximately \$118,860,000 to support Early Head Start programs in the state. The federal government funds programs directly. The funding covers most if not all program costs. Program participation is free to eligible families.
Involvement in QUALITYstarsNY	All licensed Early Head Start programs are eligible to participate in QUALITYstarsNY.

Program	Head Start
Description	Established by Congress in 1965, Head Start programs provide early education, parent education, and family support services to low-income 3 and 4-year olds and their families. The overall goal of Head Start is to increase school readiness of children through the delivery of comprehensive services to children and their families including: early childhood education, health screening, services for children with disabilities, family involvement, and the linking of

	<p>community resources to meet family and child needs.</p> <p>The majority of programs are center-based, although some programs provide home-based services and many provide a mix of home and center-based programming. Center-based Head Start programs typically operate part- or full-day on a school schedule</p>
Target Population	<p>3-5 year old children from families living at or below the federal poverty level (currently \$15,510 for a family of 2 and \$23,550 for a family of four). Head Start programs must serve most in need first, but 10% of their enrollment can be over the income eligibility guidelines. In 2007, eligibility levels were increased to 130 percent of poverty, however, programs must serve families living at or below poverty first. A minimum of 10% of enrollment should be children with disabilities, but most programs exceed that percentage.</p>
Number of Programs	<p>The 181 Head Start programs in NY State have a funded capacity of 44,764 slots and served 56,356 children during the 2011-12 program year. Of these children, 24,150 were 3 years of age; 30,783 were 4 years of age; and 801 were 5-years-old.</p> <p><i>Note: In addition, to the programs described above, there is also a Migrant Head Start program in NY State that operates 19 sites serving children birth to 5 years of age. The St. Regis Mohawk Indian Nation and the Seneca Nation of Indians also operate Tribal Head Start programs on their reservations.</i></p>
Administrative Agency	<p>US Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families directly funds and administers all Head Start programs.</p> <p>All center-based Head Start programs are licensed as child care programs and in addition to meeting Head Start Performance Standards, programs must meet all child care regulations. Home-based programs are not licensed.</p>
Funding	<p>NYS Head Start programs receive approximately \$358 million per year in federal funding. The federal government funds programs directly through contracts, typically with not-for-profit community-based organizations (grantee agencies). The funding covers most if not all program costs. Program participation is free to eligible families.</p>
Involvement in QUALITYstarsNY	<p>All licensed Head Start programs are eligible to participate in QUALITYstarsNY.</p>

Program	Universal Prekindergarten
Description	<p>The Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) Program was established in 1997 to provide preschool education to 4-year old children to prepare them for success in school. The program is provided by school districts in schools and in partnership with community-based organizations (CBOs). School-based UPK programs typically operate part-day (2.5 - 3 hours/day) or full-day (6 hours/day) and operate on a school calendar (at least 180 days per year). When UPK is offered in a CBO, the community program may offer full-day, year-round</p>

	<p>services designed to accommodate children of working parents and serve as “wrap-around” program before and after UPK hours, summers and days when UPK does not operate.</p> <p><i>Note: NY’s UPK program was preceded by the Experimental PreK program which was established in 1966 to prepare low-income 3 and 4 year-olds for kindergarten entry. The program was later renamed the Targeted PreK program and in 2006 was merged with UPK funding. Currently a few districts (like Syracuse City) have a waiver to use some of their UPK funding to serve low-income 3 year-olds, and there are 3 BOCES that receive TPK allocations (BOCES are not eligible for UPK funds).</i></p>
Target Population	The Universal Prekindergarten Program was originally established with the intent that it would be expanded over a 10-year period until it became available to all 4-year old children in the state. The program, however, has never been fully funded. During the 2011-2012 school year, approximately 102,500 children were served by the program.
Number of Programs	Beginning in the 2007-08 school year, all 676 school districts in NY State were allocated funding to allow them to provide UPK, though all did not use it. The number of school districts eligible to apply for UPK funding was capped in 2009. Currently, 444 school districts are participating in UPK, leaving 232 districts with no state-financed UPK.
Administrative Agency	The NY State Education Department administers the Universal Prekindergarten Program. Funding is allocated to local school districts to provide the service.
Funding	<p>The UPK program (approximately \$380 million) is funded through state tax dollars. Each participating school district is allocated from \$2,700 to \$5,900 per child based on the category of need of the students in the district. Districts can operate the program themselves or contract out with community-based organizations. Unless they have received a waiver, districts must use 10 % of their funding in partnerships with community organizations.</p> <p>Approximately 55 % of the children attending UPK have the program provided by community-based organizations (e.g., child care, Head Start, nursery schools/preschools, and preschool special education programs). This allows UPK to be offered in a variety of settings and locations to meet family needs. Program participation is free to district families, but there is often a cost for extended day and summer “wrap-around” services.</p>
Involvement in QUALITYstarsNY	All Universal Prekindergarten programs are eligible to participate in QUALITYstarsNY.

Program	Nursery Schools
Description	Nursery Schools (sometimes called Preschools) encourage social, physical, emotional and intellectual development of children age 2 through 5. They are typically part-day programs and operate 2-5 days a week.

Target Population	Nursery Schools typically serve children 3-5 years of age.
Number of Programs	143 nursery schools are voluntarily registered with the State Education Department. The number of nursery school programs that are not registered is unknown because, outside of NY City, they are unregulated.
Administrative Agency	In areas outside of NY City, nursery schools or preschools in which the children spend less than three hours in any twenty-four hour period are exempt from licensure of any kind. They may elect to be registered with the Department of Education. In NY City, nursery schools are licensed as child care centers by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.
Funding	Funding is provided almost exclusively through parent fees.
Involvement in QUALITYstarsNY	Nursery Schools that choose to voluntarily register with the NYS Department of Education or are licensed as child care centers in NY City are eligible to participate in QUALITYstarsNY.

Program	Early Intervention Program
Description	The Early Intervention Program was established to identify and evaluate infants and toddlers whose development is compromised and to provide appropriate intervention to improve child and family development. The program provides an array of therapeutic and supportive services including: service coordination, evaluation, speech-language therapy, physical therapy, family counseling and training, nutrition services, and assistive technology devices. The majority of services are provided in the child's home or child care setting. A limited number of group services are provided, but most services are provided part-day and once or twice a week.
Target Population	Children birth to 3 years of age who meet eligibility criteria established in state law and regulations. To be eligible, a child must have a delay in one or more areas of development consistent with state definition of developmental delay (cognitive, physical, communication, social/emotional, or adaptive); or a diagnosed condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay.
Number of Programs	There are 1,605 approved providers of Early Intervention services. Of these, 527 are agencies or organizations that have 2 or more therapists that provide services and 1,078 are independent therapists.
Administrative Agencies	At the national level, Early Intervention (Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) is administered by the Office of Special Education Services in the Department of Education. The NYS Department of Health administers the program at the state level. In NY City, the program is administered by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. In the rest of the state, a county agency designated by the county executive administers the program. In most cases, that agency is the local health department.

Funding	Services are funded through a combination of Federal Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Medicaid, commercial third party insurance, and state and local funds. Municipalities and the State share cost (50/50) not covered by Medicaid /commercial insurance. Total funding for this program is approximately \$737 million annually.
Involvement in QUALITYstarsNY	The majority of Early Intervention services are provided to individual children in their homes for short periods of time. However, some children receive Early Intervention services in child care and Early Head Start settings that could be included in QUALITYstarsNY.

Program	Preschool Special Education
Description	<p>Statewide Preschool Special Education Programs provide special education services to children 3 through 5 years of age who have an identified disability that affects their learning. Services are provided in the least restrictive environment and are intended to support learning and prepare children for kindergarten.</p> <p>Special education and related services (e.g., speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, assistive technology, parent education and training, counseling) are provided in programs approved by the NY State Education Department.</p>
Target Population	Preschool children three through 5 years of age with a disability who are not eligible for kindergarten.
Number of Programs	Services are provided in all 681 school districts covering all areas of the state. Approximately 80,000 children and their families receive services. There are currently 518 approved providers to conduct evaluations, provide classroom-based special classes and/or Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT) services to preschool students with disabilities.
Administrative Agencies	At the national level, Preschool Special Education (Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)) is administered by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The NYS Education Department's Office of Special Education administers the program at the state level. At the local level, the county or municipality is responsible for payment for the costs of programs, services, and transportation, and is then reimbursed by the State at 59.5% of these costs. School districts are responsible for identifying children in need of services, evaluating the child, and developing a plan for services (referred to as an Individualized Education Program or IEP).
Funding	Federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act; state, and county tax dollars. Approved expenditures for the program were approximately \$894 million in the 2011-12 school year.
Involvement in QUALITYstarsNY	All Preschool Special Education center-based programs are eligible to participate in QUALITYstarsNY.
