

Early Childhood Issue Brief

Emily Rosen, Dan Finkelstein, Jessica F. Harding, Rachel Bleiweiss-Sande, and Diane Paulsell

Strategies to Increase Access to Early Care and Education

An increasing number of young children regularly attend early care and education (ECE), defined as formal and informal nonparental care for children from birth to age 5 who are not yet in kindergarten (Morrissey 2019). ECE is particularly important for single-parent and two-parent households in which parents or other caregivers are employed or attend school. These families often require some type of ECE, such as center-based care; family child care; or family, friend, and neighbor care while family members work or study. For families with low income, access to regular ECE is critical to helping parents work and achieve financial security (Adams et al. 2006).

Families with low and middle incomes have lower rates of participation in ECE and experience gaps in affordability, including an inequitable cost burden within the current ECE system (NASEM et al. 2018). Subsidized ECE stems from a variety of federal, state, and local funding sources listed in Exhibit 1. This system is not sufficient to serve all families that face financial barriers: in 2018, only 15 percent of all children eligible under federal rules and 23 percent of all children eligible under state rules received subsidized child care (Chien 2021). Head Start served less than 7 percent of eligible 3- and 4-year-olds in 2020–2021 (Friedman-Krauss et al. 2021).

Exhibit 1. ECE programs and funding sources






	Strategy	Age
 Early Head Start/Head Start	Federally funded program that provides comprehensive ECE, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to income-eligible children and their families.	Prenatal to 3 (Early Head Start) 3 and 4 (Head Start)
 State and district pre-K programs	State- or district-level publicly funded pre-K programs that aim to provide high-quality education to children before they enter kindergarten. There is considerable variation in program features and whether programs are focused or universal.	3 and 4
 Child Care and Developmental Fund	Federal block grants to states to provide child care subsidies to families with low income to access child care so primary caregivers can work or attend job training/education. Grants are subject to federal regulations, but states have considerable discretion on how they implement programs.	Birth to 13
 Child and dependent care tax credit	Provides a tax credit of as much as \$3,000 (one child) or \$6,000 (two or more children) tax credit for expenses paid for child care. This tax credit is nonrefundable, meaning it cannot reduce tax balance beyond zero.	Birth to 13
 Private pay or parent copayments	Parents often pay for child care in part or full.	Any

Exhibit 2. Characteristics of ECE that make it accessible to families



High-quality ECE is considered accessible when it meets criteria related to availability and affordability. An expert panel identified four key dimensions of ECE access (Friese et al. 2017; Exhibit 2). Each dimension affects ECE access, and no one dimension is more important than another.

Families may have inequitable access to ECE opportunities based on their income and geographic location. Parents with low incomes are more likely to have unpredictable, inflexible, and nonstandard work hours (Schilder et al. 2022) that make it difficult to access high-quality ECE. Among households with at least one working parent, parents work an average of 14 nonstandard hours per week, and single-parent workers and parents with lower incomes are more likely to need nonstandard nonparental care (NSECE 2017). Some states restrict state care subsidies to the schedules or hours that parents work, which can limit access to child care for families with unstable work hours

(Johnson-Staub et al. 2015). Families might also lack access to high-quality ECE based on where they live or the availability of public transportation. For example, as of 2020, only 12 states serve more than half of 4-year-olds in publicly funded pre-K programs (Friedman-Krauss et al. 2021). State child care subsidy policies also vary greatly; for example, states' eligibility and redetermination requirements can be burdensome and contribute to families losing subsidies (Ha 2020).

Families of color experience barriers in access to ECE disproportionately. For example, Latino children are less likely to attend center-based ECE, even though they are as likely to attend public pre-K and Head Start (Brookings Institution 2017). In addition, only 6 percent of income-eligible Latino children and 7 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native children received subsidies from the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) in 2016, compared with 15 percent of eligible Black

children (Ullrich et al. 2019). Latino families’ lower participation rates in CCDF could be due to complex application, enrollment, eligibility, and redetermination policies that are challenging for families with language barriers and a limited supply of ECE that meets their language needs (Schmit and Walker 2016).

This brief presents findings from research on equitable access to ECE supports conducted by 11 grantees of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Equity-Focused Policy Research grant program (Exhibit 3). The research (Exhibit 4) highlights changes to policy and practices that could help address inequalities (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 3. Equitable access and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Equity-Focused Policy Research grant program

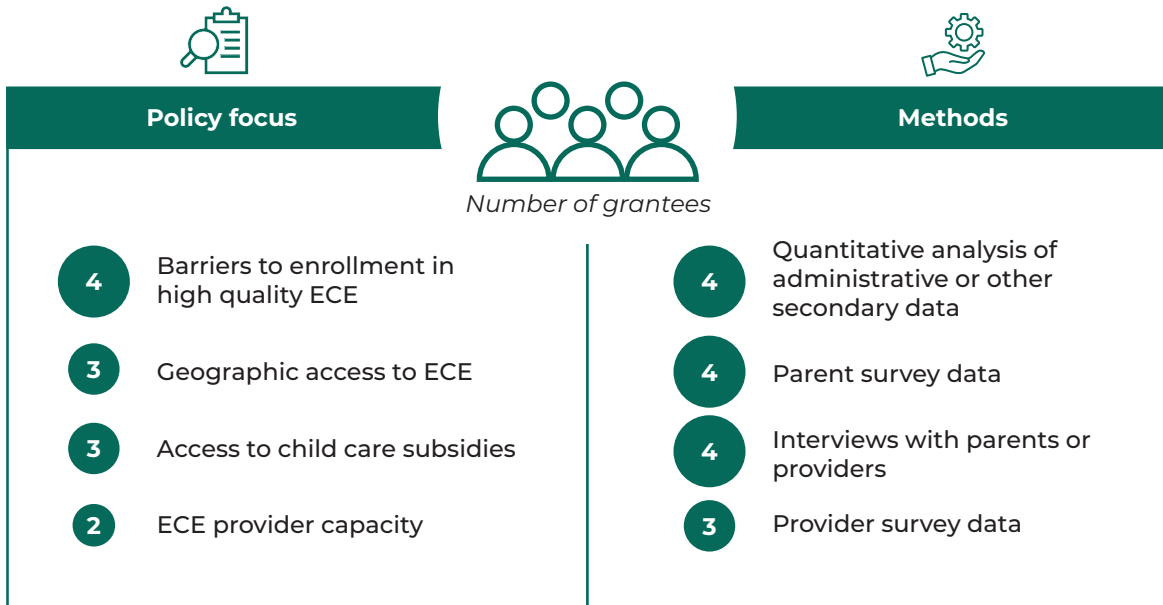
Equitable access means all families—regardless of race, ethnicity, geography, or other factors—have equal access to supports to promote children’s well-being. Promoting equitable access involves addressing specific barriers faced by families that have the most difficulty accessing supports.

The **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Equity-Focused Policy Research** grant program funded action-oriented research to build on strategies to increase equitable access to supports for families with young children. This brief focuses on grantees’ research on early care and education. Other grantees focused on income and nutrition supports.

Studies incorporated principles articulated by the **Equitable Evaluation Initiative**. According to these principles, evaluations should advance equity; answer questions about the drivers of inequity, the effects of policies on different populations, and the role of cultural context; and be valid multiculturally and encourage participant ownership.

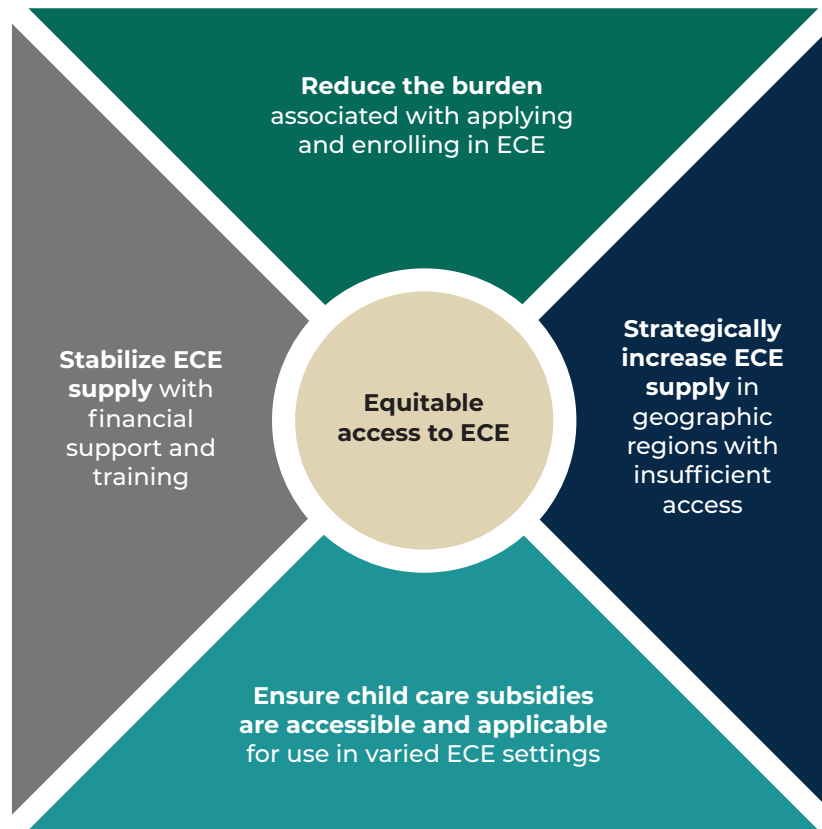
See Appendix Table 1 for a summary of the projects presented in this brief. See <https://www.equitableeval.org/> for details on the Equitable Evaluation Initiative.

Exhibit 4. Policy focus and methods of the grantee research



Note: Projects can fall into more than one policy focus and method.

Exhibit 5. Changes suggested by findings



Reduce the burden associated with applying and enrolling in ECE

Applying for and enrolling in ECE can be time consuming and confusing for families, particularly those that face barriers related to language or access to technology. The grantees’ research highlights strategies that could improve equitable access to ECE by supporting families during the application and enrollment process, reducing the burdens that are felt disproportionately by families facing barriers in these areas.

Improve technology to streamline application and enrollment. Applying for and enrolling in ECE can be burdensome and difficult. Enrollment sites do not always work on mobile devices, which might be the main source of internet access for many families with low income, and sometimes, parents must enter the same paperwork multiple

Strategies identified by grantee research to make applying and enrolling easier

- Improve technology to streamline application and enrollment.
- Provide support and develop tools that connect families to ECE programs.

times for different agencies or programs (CCHMC et al. 2021b). Modernizing and streamlining the application and enrollment process could address parents’ concerns about excessive or tedious enrollment paperwork. Such solutions could include online checklists with required documents and steps, a universal ECE application for families applying to multiple programs, or a cloud-based host to store application materials in a centralized location (CCHMC 2021).

Provide support and develop tools to connect families with ECE programs. Applying for an ECE program can leave families feeling confused and distrustful. Calls to the ECE agency might go unanswered, or staff might fail to follow up on enrollment questions or connect families with other agencies, leaving parents concerned about the safety of their personal information and the level of care their children will receive (CCHMC et al. 2021b). Some parents report they prefer ECE teachers who reflect their and their child’s racial and ethnic identity (CCHMC et al. 2021b). The grantees’ research suggest that tools and resources that make it easier for families to find an ECE program that meets their needs and preferences could improve equitable access to ECE among vulnerable families. For example, agencies could develop policies, such as a Families First Policy, to encourage referrals to other ECE services outside of their programs to find the best fit for families. Agencies could also engage community partners, such as health care organizations and agencies that administer the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program, to provide culturally appropriate ECE referrals based on their culturally competent insights into a family and its surrounding community.

Strategically increase ECE supply in geographic regions with insufficient access

The geographic locations of ECE providers and lack of transportation can be important barriers to accessing ECE that disproportionately affect families facing adversity. Implementing strategies to address the insufficient supply of ECE providers in many communities, and improving awareness of local options among families for whom geographic access to ECE is a challenge, could strengthen equitable access to ECE.

Prioritize funding of ECE programs for selected communities. Many families lack accessible ECE options near their homes because of insufficient supply or living in “child care deserts” (DeBaryshe et al. 2022). One grantee analyzed differences in access to ECE options and found Black and Hispanic

Strategies identified by grantee research to increase supply and awareness of local ECE options

- Prioritize funding of ECE programs for selected communities.
- Improve options for transportation between families’ and providers.
- Increase families’ and policymakers’ awareness of local ECE options.

children were more likely to be located farther from high-quality preschool options, which in turn affected their enrollment in preschool (McCormick et al. 2021). Strategic investments in ECE options serving priority populations can strengthen equitable access. For example, the best ECE access in Hawai’i is in “rural, low-income predominantly Native Hawaiian communities,” where strategic investments have been made in public preschools, Head Start programs, and private programs that are limited to Native Hawaiians (DeBaryshe et al. 2022).

Improve options for transportation between families’ locations and providers. Parents from families with low incomes and families of color report that transportation is a challenge to accessing ECE enrollment centers and child care centers (CCHMC et al. 2021b). Similarly, an analysis of spatial-transportation mismatch shows that families with low incomes and Black and Latino families are more likely to be limited by the number of vehicles in their household than families with higher incomes and Asian and Non-Hispanic White families (Ong and Pech 2021). Allocating funding to provide subsidized transportation options and strategically connecting families to programs located in areas with more ECE providers could improve equity (CCHMC et al. 2021b; Ong and Pech 2021).

Increase families’ and policymakers’ awareness of local ECE options. Often, families do not know what ECE options are available near their home (CCHMC et al. 2021b). Grantees suggested that providing families with enrollment coaches can help them identify preschool options in their area (CCHMC

et al. 2021b). In addition, geospatial mapping could be used as a tool to identify geographic access to ECE options, inequities, and changes over time (DeBaryshe et al. 2022).

Ensure child care subsidies are accessible and applicable for use in varied ECE settings

Parents frequently identify cost as a significant barrier to enrolling children in ECE programs (CCHMC et al. 2021b). Child care subsidies could ease this burden for families, but there is a need to improve uptake of and equitable access to these subsidies (Morrissey et al. 2023).

.....

Strategies identified by grantee research to ensure subsidies address the needs of families

- Promote awareness of child care subsidy programs.
 - Establish child care subsidy programs that can support child care during nontraditional hours, including in license-exempt and home-based care settings.
 - Reduce the frequency with which families must prove eligibility for child care subsidies.
-

Promote awareness of child care subsidy programs. Families are often unaware that financial assistance is available to support their child care needs. Even families that are aware of child care subsidies might not realize they qualify for assistance or might not know how to apply for subsidies. Strategic investments in communication campaigns and partnerships with organizations already engaged with families that could share information about subsidy programs could help disconnected families better access ECE options (Heinz et al. 2023).

Establish child care subsidy programs that can support child care during nontraditional hours, including in license-exempt and home-based care settings. Although families of color, families with low incomes, and single-parent households

are more likely to have primary caregivers with jobs that require them to work nontraditional hours (defined as 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. on weekdays and any hours on the weekend), restrictions might prevent families from using subsidies to pay for care provided during nontraditional hours (Adams et al. 2022). Similarly, some policies require family, friend, and neighbor caregivers to receive the same training as licensed providers before they can receive subsidy payments and reimbursements, further limiting families' options for selecting and paying for care (Alexander et al. 2022). Reducing these restrictions on child care subsidy use could lead to more equitable ECE access.

Reduce the frequency with which families must prove eligibility for child care subsidies. Often, families that have previously used subsidies to pay for child care stop participating in subsidy programs when their eligibility period lapses, requiring them to undergo recertification. Arduous recertification procedures, such as making in-person visits to a welfare office, might discourage families from participating in subsidy programs (Morrissey et al. 2023). Longer eligibility periods can lead to fewer program exits (Hong et al. 2021).

Stabilize ECE supply with financial support and training

ECE providers experience financial fragility during normal times, and feel the most intense effects during economic downturns. Professional development in business operations can bolster the capacity, sustainability, and quality of providers' operations (Zeng et al. 2022; Zinsser et al. 2023).

.....

Strategies identified by grantee research to strengthen the capacity of ECE programs

- Offer trainings aimed at improving programs' business and management practices.
 - Develop a safety net for ECE programs for use during external interruptions, such as public health emergencies or economic downturns.
-

Offer trainings aimed at improving programs’ business and management practices. Trainings that focus on strengthening providers’ knowledge of business operations can improve their business management skills and confidence, access to support, and leadership efficacy, enabling them to maintain continuous operations for the children and families they serve (Zeng et al. 2022). In addition, providers that undergo professional development such as implicit bias training might be better equipped to avoid the need for exclusionary practices, such as expulsion, which further burden families trying to navigate a limited supply of ECE (Zinsser et al. 2023).

Develop a safety net for ECE programs for use during external interruptions, such as public health emergencies or economic downturns. The COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges to the financial viability and operations of many ECE providers and highlighted vulnerability to future disruptions. Although pandemic-related assistance was available, many providers reported confusion about their eligibility and challenges navigating the administrative burdens of applying for support (Henly and Alexander 2022). This finding suggests ECE providers are not reaping the full benefits of support during periods of emergency, threatening a provider network that is already limited in supply.

Conclusions

ECE grantees’ research generated important new findings on the structural factors that shape inequalities in families’ access to ECE for their young children. It highlighted concrete changes to ECE policy and practices that could help address these inequalities and move ECE programs in the United States toward a model that more fully and equitably supports access.

.....
This brief was created by Mathematica through a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support synthesis and dissemination for the Equity-Focused Policy Research program.
.....

Grantee documents reviewed

American University

Allard, S., E. Pelletier, and T. Morrissey. “The Changing Geography of Early Childhood Education - Geographic Variation in Access to Early Care and Education: Implications for Children’s School Readiness.” Presentation at the Association for Public Policy & Management 2021 Fall Conference, Austin, TX, March 2022. <https://appam.confex.com/appam/2021/meetingapp.cgi/Paper/39760>

Morrissey, T., S. Allard, and E. Pelletier. “Access to Early Care and Education in Rural Communities: Implications for Children’s School Readiness.” *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, in press.

Morrissey, T., S. Allard, and E. Pelletier. “Understanding How Geography Shapes Opportunities and Outcomes for Children – Geographic Variation in Access to Early Care and Education: Implications for Children’s School Readiness.” Presentation at the Association for Public Policy & Management 42nd Annual Fall Research Conference, virtual, November 2020. <https://appam.confex.com/appam/2020/meetingapp.cgi/Paper/37053>

Cincinnati Children’s Hospital and Medical Center

Copeland, K. “Understanding and Reducing System Barriers to Early Childhood Education Enrollment Through Quality Improvement.” Pediatric Academic Societies 2021 Conference, virtual, May 2021.

Cincinnati Children’s Hospital and Medical Center (CCHMC), Design Impact, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). “Equity Through Co-Design and Quality Improvement: Identifying and Testing System Solutions to Barriers to Early Care and Education Enrollment in Cincinnati.” n.d.

CCHMC and Design Impact. “Equity in Early Childhood Education: Provider Synthesis.” June 2020a.

CCHMC and Design Impact. “Equity in Early Childhood Education: Creative Session.” July 2020b.

CCHMC and Design Impact. “Equity in Early Childhood Education: Creative Session.” August 2020c.

CCHMC, Design Impact, and RWJF. “Equity in Early Childhood Education: System Change Concepts.” October 2021a.

CCHMC, Design Impact, and RWJF. “Equity in Early Childhood Education: System Change Concepts.” December 2021b.

CCHMC. “ECE_concepts. Original. Presented October 2021.” October 2021b.

Gerker, H., and A. King. "Community Based Participatory Research and Collective Impact: Examining Early Childhood Education Enrollment Systems" Presentation at the 18th International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, virtual, 2022.

White, C., A. King, and K. Copeland. "Session Code: E05 Executing an Early Childhood Learning System in the Community." Presentation at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement Forum, virtual, 2021.

MDRC

McCormick, M.P., J. Hsueh, C. Weiland, A. Weissman, S. Xia, and A. Shapiro. "The Role of Student, School, and Community Characteristics in Promoting Equitable Access to High-Quality Prekindergarten: Evidence from Boston." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, virtual, September 2021.

McCormick, M.P., and S. Huang. "Analysis: 2 Strategies for States' COVID Relief Funds – Make Early Childhood Programs Better, and Make Sure Low-Income Parents Know About Them." *The 74*, March 2021. <https://www.the74million.org/article/analysis-2-strategies-for-states-covid-relief-funds-make-early-childhood-programs-better-and-make-sure-low-income-parents-know-about-them/>.

Weiland, C., J. Sachs, M. McCormick, J. Hsueh, C. Snow, and A. Taylor. "Balancing Rigor and Timeliness in the Time of COVID-19." Princeton University – Brookings Institution, January 2022. https://futureofchildren.princeton.edu/sites/futureofchildren/files/weiland_et_al.pdf

Syracuse University

Morrissey, T., C. Heflin, and W. Fannin. "Room to Grow: Examining Participation and Stability in Child Care Subsidies Using State Administrative Data." *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* vol. 62, 2023, pp. 150-162.

Morrissey, T., C. Heflin, and W. Fannin. "The U.S. Child Care Subsidy Program Is Underused but Well-Positioned to Promote Racial Equity." Syracuse University, October 2021a. <https://surface.syr.edu/lerner/154/>

Morrissey, T., C. Heflin, and W. Fannin. "The U.S. Must Invest More in the Child Care Subsidy Program." Syracuse University, October 2021b. <https://surface.syr.edu/lerner/155/>

The Regents of the University of California, Los Angeles

Ong, P., and C. Pech. "Spatial-Transportation Mismatch and Early Childhood Education and Care." UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge, September 2021.

United Way of Massachusetts Bay

Zeng, S., A. Douglass, Y. Lee, and B. DelVecchio. "Effects of A Small Child Care Business Management Program on Providers' Outcomes: A Randomized Controlled Trial." Unpublished manuscript. United Way of Massachusetts Bay, 2022.

University of Chicago

Alexander, D., J. Henly, and M. Stoll. "Unintended Equity Impacts of a Key 2017 Policy Change License-Exempt Home Child Care." Policy research brief. Illinois Action for Children, 2022.

Henly, J. "Policy Measures to Increase Child Care Stability for Low-Income Families: Equity Impacts of CCDBG Reform." Presentation, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2021.

Henly, J., and D. Alexander. "Policy Reform to Advance Equity in Illinois Child Care Subsidy Program." The University of Chicago Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice, 2022.

Henly, J., K. Gehring, J. Lewittes, F. Shokry, and L. Lara. "COVID-19 Relief to the Child Care Industry: Perspectives from Child Care Providers Seeking Support." Presentation to the Association for Public Policy & Management, 2022.

Hong, Y.S., J. Henly, D. Alexander, M. Stoll, and L. Lara. "Did Illinois' Response to 2014 CCDBG Reauthorization Increase Equity and Child Care Stability." Presentation at the Society for Research in Child Development 2021 Biennial Meeting, virtual, 2021.

University of Hawai'i

Azuma, J., B. DeBaryshe, K.T. Gauci, and I.R. Stern. "Mapping Access to Early Childhood Education and Care: A Tool for Planning and Policy." Virtual poster. National Research Conference on Early Childhood, Arlington, VA, 2021.

Azuma, J., B. DeBaryshe, and I.R. Stern. "Access to Early Childhood Education and Care in Hawai'i." Center on the Family, University of Hawai'i, 2021. <https://sites.google.com/hawaii.edu/ecemappingupdated2021-08/home>

Azuma, J., B. DeBaryshe, and I.R. Stern. "Measuring Access to Early Care and Education: Technical Report." Center on the Family, University of Hawai'i, 2022.

DeBaryshe, B., J. Azuma, K.T. Gauci, and I.R. Stern. "Equitable Access to Childcare: Mapping as a Tool for Planning and Policy." Symposium presented at the Society for Research in Child Development 2021 Biennial Meeting, virtual, 2021.

DeBaryshe, B., J. Azuma, and I. Stern. "Equitable Access to ECE: Mapping as a Tool for Planning and Policy." Presentation at the Early Childhood Action Strategy All-Teams Meeting, Honolulu, 2021.

DeBaryshe, B., J. Azuma, I. Stern, and K. Gauci. "Mapping Multiple Dimensions of ECE Access: Innovative Techniques to Inform Policy and Decision-Making." Workshop presented at the Hawai'i DXP Annual Data Summit, Honolulu, 2021.

DeBaryshe, B., I.R. Stern, and J. Azuma. "Measuring Access to Early Care and Education: Family-Focused Indexes." White paper. Center on the Family, University of Hawai'i, 2022.

University of Illinois Chicago

Brown-Hollie, J., S. Coba-Rodriguez, and J. Dohrmann. "Understanding Preschool Families' Exclusionary Experiences." Presentation. American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, 2023.

Coba-Rodriguez, S., K. Zinsser, and J. Browne-Hollie. "You're Not Welcomed Back." Poster. National Council on Family Relations Conference, virtual, 2021.

Coba-Rodriguez, S., K. Zinsser, and J. Browne-Hollie. "They Didn't Know How to Handle a Kid That Didn't Fit Their Mold: A Mixed-Method Study on Families' Experiences of Exclusionary Discipline in Early Childhood." Poster. National Research Conference on Early Childhood, virtual, 2022.

Dohrmann, J., S. Coba-Rodriguez, and K. Zinsser. "I Didn't Want Her To Feel Ashamed: The Messages Parents Tell Their Preschoolers After Being Expelled." Poster. University of Illinois Chicago, 2023.

Shenberger, E., V. Jackson, S. Coba-Rodriguez, and K. Zinsser. "Understanding Factors Differentiating Retained and Excluded Children Following Behavior Warnings From Early Childhood Education Programs." Presentation to the American Educational Research Association, University of Chicago, 2023.

Zahid, R., J. Brown-Hollie, S. Coba-Rodriguez, and K. Zinsser. "It Affected Both of Our Lives: Understanding the Emotional, Financial, and Home Life Impact of Early Childhood Exclusion." Presentation to the American Educational Research Association, University of Chicago, 2023.

Zahid, R., S. Coba-Rodriguez, and K. Zinsser. "Stressors and Supports: The Aftermath of Preschool Expulsion." Poster. University of Illinois Chicago, 2023.

Zinsser, K., S. Coba-Rodriguez, and A. Lowe-Fotos. "A Qualitative Comparison of Parents' Experiences with Early Childhood Expulsion Following a Legislative Ban." University of Illinois Chicago, 2023.

Zinsser, K., V. Jackson, and S. Coba-Rodriguez. "How Are They Told to Leave and Where Do They Go Next? Families' Experiences With Being Excluded From Early Childhood Education Programs." Poster. National Council on Family Relations Virtual Conference, 2021.

University of New Mexico

Breidenbach, A., H. Heinz, D. Castillo, R. Juarez, Y. Cordova, M. Fiorella Asencio Pimentel, B. Acharya, and D. Bell. "Child Care Use, Needs, and Preferences of Diverse New Mexico Families in the Context of COVID-19: Results from a Survey of Families with Young Children." University of New Mexico, 2023.

Castillo, D., and H. Heinz. "Families' Child Care Needs and Challenges During COVID-19 and Beyond." University of New Mexico, 2023.

Heinz, H., D. Bell, D. Castillo, A. Breidenbach, R. Juarez, Y. Cordova, R. Fowler, B. Acharya, A. Kaminsky. "Child Care Access, Needs, and Preferences of Diverse New Mexico Families in the Context of the COVID-19 Recovery." University of New Mexico, 2023.

Urban Institute

Adams, G., C. Lou, P. Willenborg, and D. Schilder. "Parents with Nontraditional Work Schedules in Connecticut." Urban Institute, 2021a. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/parents-nontraditional-work-schedules-connecticut>

Adams, G., C. Lou, P. Willenborg, and D. Schilder. "Parents with Nontraditional Work Schedules in the District of Columbia." Urban Institute, 2021b. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/parents-nontraditional-work-schedules-district-columbia>

Adams, G., C. Lou, P. Willenborg, and D. Schilder. "Parents with Nontraditional Work Schedules in Oklahoma." Urban Institute, 2021c. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/parents-nontraditional-work-schedules-oklahoma>

Adams, G., D. Schilder, L. Wagner, C. Lou, and P. Willenborg. "Executive Summary: What Child Care Arrangements Do Parents Want During Nontraditional Hours?" Urban Institute, 2022.

Adams, G., P. Willenborg, C. Lou, and D. Schilder. "To Make the Child Care System More Equitable, Expand Options for Parents Working Nontraditional Hours." Urban Institute, 2021. <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/make-child-care-system-more-equitable-expand-options-parents-working-nontraditional-hours>

Schilder, D., G. Adams, L. Wagner, C. Lou, and P. Willenborg. "What Child Care Arrangements Do Parents Want during Nontraditional Hours?" Urban Institute, 2022. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/what-child-care-arrangements-do-parents-want-during-nontraditional-hours>

Other works cited

Adams, Gina, Pamela Holcomb, Kathleen Snyder, Robin Koralek, and Jeffrey Capizzano. "Child Care Subsidies for TANF Families: The Nexus of Systems and Policies." Urban Institute, 2006.

Andrews, Colin, Aude de Montesquiou, Inest Arevalo Sanchez, Puja Vasudeva Dutta, Boban Varghese Paul, Sadna Samaranayake, Janet Heisey, Timothy Clay, and Sarang Chaudhary. "The State of Economic Inclusion Report 2021: The Potential to Scale." World Bank, 2021. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/34917>

Barnett, W. Steven, and Allison H. Friedman-Krauss. "State(s) of Head Start." National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers University Graduate School of Education, 2016.

Brookings Institution. "The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects." Duke Center for Child and Family Policy, 2017. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/duke-prekstudy_final_4-4-17_hires.pdf

Cheng, Tyrone. "Racial Inequality in Receiving Transitional Support Services and Being Sanctioned Among TANF Recipients: A Group Threat Hypothesis." *Journal of Social Service Research*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2009, pp. 115–123. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01488370802678835>

Chien, Nina. "Factsheet: Estimates of Child Care Eligibility and Receipt for Fiscal Year 2018." Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2021. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/reports/estimates-child-care-eligibility-receipt-fy-2018>

Davison, Genevieve, Stephen P. Roll, Samuel H. Taylor, and Michal Grinstein-Weiss. "The State of State EITCs: An Overview of Their Implications for Low- and Moderate-Income Households." Research Brief 18-04. Center for Social Development, Washington University in St. Louis, 2018.

Duncan, G.J. "A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty." *Academic Pediatrics*, vol. 21, no. 8, 2021, pp. S97–S101.

English, B., and D. Paulsell. "Income Supports and Work Requirements Policies: An Equity-Focused Policy Research Agenda." Mathematica Policy Research, 2018.

Friedman-Krauss, Allison H., W. Steven Barnett, Karin A. Garver, Katherine S. Hodges, G. G. Weisenfeld, Beth Ann Gardiner, and T. M. Jost. "The State of Preschool 2020." National Institute for Early Education Research, 2021.

Friese, S., V. Lin, N. Forry, and K. Tout. "Defining and Measuring Access to High Quality Early Care and Education: A Guidebook for Policymakers and Researchers." OPRE Report #2017-08. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2017.

Ha, Yoonsook, Pamela Joshi, Kate Giapponi Schneider, and Erin Hardy. "Can Administrative Changes Improve Child-Care Subsidy Stability?." *Social Service Review*, vol. 94, no. 2, 2020, pp. 285-338.

Hahn, Heather, Eleanor Pratt, Eva Allen, Genevieve Kenney, Diane K. Levy, and Elaine Waxman. "Work Requirements in Social Safety Net Programs: A Status Report of Work Requirements in TANF, SNAP, Housing Assistance, and Medicaid." Urban Institute, 2017.

Johnson-Staub, Christine, Hannah Matthews, and Gina Adams. "Job Hours and Schedules: Implications for State Child Care and Development Fund Policies." The Center for Law and Social Policy, Washington, DC, 2015. <https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public-resources-and-publications/publication-1/Job-Hours-and-Schedules.pdf>

Larson, Cindy, and Bevin Parker-Cerkez. "Investing in Child Care Fuels Women-Owned Businesses & Racial Equity." *LISC*, March 2022. <https://www.lisc.org/our-stories/story/investing-child-care-fuels-women-owned-businesses-racial-equity/>

Morrissey, Taryn. "The Effects Of Early Care And Education On Children's Health." Health policy brief. *Health Affairs*, April 25, 2019. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20190325.519221/full/>

Mustard, J.F. "Experience-Based Brain Development: Scientific Underpinnings of the Importance of Early Child Development in a Global World." *Paediatrics & Child Health*, vol. 11, no. 9, November 2006, pp. 571–572. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pch/11.9.571>

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM); Health and Medicine Division; Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education; Board on Children, Youth, and Families; and Committee on Financing Early Care and Education with a Highly Qualified Workforce. *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*, edited by E.P. Backes and L.R. Allen. National Academies Press, 2018. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK518908/>

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. "Connecting the Brain to the Rest of the Body: Early Childhood Development and Lifelong Health Are Deeply Intertwined." Working Paper 15. Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2020. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/connecting-the-brain-to-the-rest-of-the-body-early-childhood-development-and-lifelong-health-are-deeply-intertwined/>

National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE). "Provision of Early Care and Education During Non-Standard Hours" Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/factsheet_nonstandard_hours_provision_of_ece_toopre_041715_508.pdf

NSECE Project Team. "Snapshot: Parent Work Schedules in Households with Young Children." OPRE Report #2017-48. Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2017.

National Women’s Law Center. "Set Up for Success: Supporting Parents in Low-Wage Jobs and Their Children: An Agenda for Action." 2016. <https://nwl.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Set-Up-for-Success.pdf>

Schmit, Stephanie, and Christina Walker. "Disparate Access: Head Start and CCDBG Data by Race and Ethnicity." The Center for Law and Social Policy, 2016. <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/Disparate-Access.pdf>

Shrider, Emily A., Melissa Kollar, Frances Chen, and Jessica Semega. "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2020." U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Report P60-273. U.S. Government Publishing Office, September 2021.

Ullrich, Rebecca, Stephanie Schmit, and Ruth Cosse. "Inequitable Access to Child Care Subsidies." The Center for Law and Social Policy, 2019. https://www.clasp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2019_inequitableaccess.pdf

Appendix Table 1. Summary of grantee projects

Grantee	Research focus	Summary of project based on dissemination products
American University	ECE program provision and funding	Analyzed administrative and survey data for all types of ECE to examine program provision and expenditures, focusing on areas with high rates of poverty to identify opportunities to increase equitable access
Cincinnati Children’s Hospital and Medical Center	Barriers to enrollment in high-quality ECE	Conducted parent interviews and focus groups with ECE professionals to identify barriers to ECE enrollment families with low incomes and families of color face and to develop solutions to address the barriers
MDRC	Access to high-quality prekindergarten	Analyzed district enrollment and demographic data, school quality indicators, and school location to assess differential access to high-quality prekindergarten to evaluate whether and how proximity affects ECE enrollment for students from different demographic backgrounds
Syracuse University	Participation in child care subsidy program	Analyzed panel data to examine who participated in the child care subsidy program in Virginia in 2019 and how subsidy participation varies by children’s characteristics including race, ethnicity, and geography
The Regents of the University of California, Los Angeles	Geographic access to ECE	Analyzed survey and child care facility licensing data to examine spatial-transportation mismatch (defined as geographic distance between place of residence and opportunities, as well as lack of transportation resources to overcome the distance) by examining families’ differential access to nearby ECE, including child care centers and family child care homes, and to household vehicles

Grantee	Research focus	Summary of project based on dissemination products
United Way of Massachusetts Bay	ECE business operations	Evaluated an intervention to improve ECE business management services for providers serving high-poverty communities using trainings that covered business management skills, business practice confidence, business support via a shared services model, and leadership efficacy; study included family child care and small ECE center providers
University of Chicago	Access to child care subsidy program	Analyzed the impact of two child care subsidy changes in Illinois on equitable participation in subsidized child care, including new training requirements for license-exempt home-based providers serving subsidized families and extending eligibility period for families in the program from six to 12 months; performed an additional evaluation examining how COVID-19 impacted providers
University of Illinois Chicago	ECE business operations related to exclusionary practices	Conducted surveys and interviews with parents to evaluate the perspectives and experiences of families expelled by Illinois early childhood programs following a 2018 legislative ban on expulsion enacted in Illinois
University of New Mexico	ECE needs related to hours, location, transportation, and affordability	Conducted parent focus groups, individual interviews, and surveys with families in New Mexico from traditionally underserved populations to identify their ECE needs and constraints related to affordability, care hours, location, and transportation
Urban Institute	ECE needs during nontraditional hours	Evaluated the needs, preferences, and constraints faced by parents seeking child care for nontraditional work hours by examining existing survey data, interviewing parents and key stakeholders, and reviewing policy documents (from Connecticut, Washington, DC, and Oklahoma)
University of Hawai'i	Geographic access to high-quality ECE	Used geographic information system mapping to study differential access to ECE, including regulated home care, licensed centers, and public preschool classrooms in Hawai'i by looking at the number children per nearby seat, affordability of nearby options, and quality of nearby programs

Notes: This summary is based on dissemination products we received from 11 of the 15 grantees.