

# Rhode Island Early Learning Council

SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

9:00 - 11:00 A.M.

*RI DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION*

---



**EARLY LEARNING RI**

9:00	<b>Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Meeting Overview</b>	<b>Angélica Infante-Green, RIDE</b> <b>Kimberly Brito, DHS</b> <b>Elizabeth Burke Bryant, RI KIDS COUNT</b>
9:10	<b>Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems - Prenatal to Three Asset and Gap Analysis</b>	<b>Blythe Berger, DOH</b>
9:20	<b>History &amp; Context for Recommendations on Pre-K Expansion and Early Childhood Workforce Plan</b>	<b>Leanne Barrett, RI Kids Count</b> <b>Kayla Rosen, RI Children's Cabinet and Governor's Office</b>
9:30	<b>Planning Process and Small Group Discussion to Inform Pre-K/Early Childhood Workforce Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding Pre-K with Equity</li> <li>• Incorporating 3s, Early Childhood Special Education, and Transitions</li> <li>• Infant/Toddler System</li> <li>• Early Childhood Workforce: Preparing, Recruiting, Retaining a Highly Qualified Workforce with Adequate Compensation Regardless of Setting</li> <li>• Improving and Ensuring Quality Across Settings + Equitably Supporting the Mixed Delivery System</li> </ul>	<b>Kayla Rosen, RI Children's Cabinet and Governor's Office</b>
10:45	<b>Announcements, Public Comments, &amp; Next Steps</b>	<b>Elizabeth Burke Bryant</b> <b>Kimberly Brito</b> <b>Angélica Infante-Green</b>

RHODE  
ISLAND

# Early Learning Council

---

SYSTEM ASSET AND GAP ANALYSIS

Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS):

Health Integration Prenatal-to-Three Program

# P-3 (Prenatal to age 3) Systems coordination grant

---

## Goals:

- 1- Strengthen state-level infrastructure and capacity of the P-3 system through better integrating prenatal, primary care and family leaders in governance, advisory, and implementation across the system.
- 2- Increase coordination and alignment within the P-3 system focusing on greater inclusion of health care providers and families, and promoting equity
- 3- Support primary care to strengthen partnerships with all sectors of the P-3 early childhood services and programs
- 4- Coordinate with the Children's Cabinet to implement policy and financing strategies that support funding sustainability for multi-generational, evidence based preventive services that equitably support and improve outcomes.
- 5- Intentionally integrate RI's priorities and strategies to promote Health Equity within RI's work to advance early childhood systems.

# System Asset and Gap Analysis (SAGA) Purpose

---



Understand the landscape of the state's early childhood system (ECS) and existing efforts, address integration of the ECS and health sector

Identify gaps in promoting early developmental health and family well-being.

Lay the foundation for ECCS Planning

Drive a re-assessment of current or future priorities, objectives, and implementation timelines.

# SAGA Components



## **Infrastructure Development**

Capacity of ECS Leaders

Existing Structures to Advance Goals

Workforce Development

## **Health System Transformation**

Models for Health Integration and Practice Transformation

Statewide Early Childhood Systems and Health Sector Linkages

Coordinated Intake and Referral Systems (CIRS)

## **Equity**

Family Leadership

State-Community Coordination

Equitable Systems

# Discussion Questions



Following is a draft crosswalk of needs assessment findings connected to the SAGA components.

Goal of discussion today is to gather additional qualitative input on the system assets and gaps.

For each component:

- What gaps or assets were not identified by existing needs assessments?
- Do you have any recommendations to address an identified gap?
- What questions remain unanswered? For which components do we need more information?

# Infrastructure Development: Capacity of ECS Leaders



Sub-Topic	Asset/ Gap	Description	Recommendation
<i>Pathways to Leadership</i>	G	We did not find established pathways to leadership for Early Childhood. The pathways, as they exist now, are organic and generally an integrated component of a grant or specific scope of work. Leadership may come as a part of career advancement, but RI does not articulate trajectories to become a leader for an individual in the early stages of their career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• create compensation for pathways to leadership</li></ul>
<i>Opportunities for Families</i>	A	Partnership with RIPIN, participation on Advisory Councils, including Family Visiting Advisory Council	

# Infrastructure Development: Existing Structures to Advance Goals



Sub-Topic	Asset/ Gap	Description	Recommendation
<i>Data systems</i>	A	RI is building an interactive Dashboard to analyze child and provider/classroom-level metrics to ensure that policy and programmatic decisions relating to the ECCE system are data driven and evidence informed.	Support ongoing enhancement including addition of new data
<i>State-community communication</i>	G	Families report needing more information about available programs	Increase visibility of full complement of P-3 services in OB and pediatric offices; leverage family navigators in HEZs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate pediatric providers about current services available for families, use meetings such as AAP</li> </ul>
<i>Cross-entity communication</i>	A	Advisory Structures, Workgroups, list serves, electronic data sharing	

# Infrastructure Development: Workforce Development



Sub-Topic	Asset/Gap	Description	Recommendation
<i>Existing Efforts to Develop the P-3 Workforce</i>	A/G	<p>A: Certification standards, insurance reimbursement, and billing support available for RI doulas; Investments in expanding CHW and Peer Support workforce. FV programs working together on cross-system training. Inside outside advocacy for Early Educator Investment Act; recruitment and retention fund for EI providers, and minimum wage thresholds in family visiting contracts.</p> <p>G: Continued high turnover and recruitment challenges exacerbated by low wages.</p>	<p>Continue to support efforts to address workforce compensation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● create parity with the K-12 system for early childhood</li> <li>● create a cross-departmental wage scale for consistency (ie EI and FHV wages are comparable)</li> <li>● Address disparities in wages</li> <li>● Increase field experience opportunities for 0-3 workforce, placements are hard to find</li> <li>● With higher ed: increase tracks so it does not seem like EI or Special Ed are the only choices</li> </ul>
<i>Lived Experience/Linguistic Diversity</i>	G	Families have limited abilities to reach immigrant and families that speak English as a second language (esp Cape Verdean, SEA, Hispanic, ASL)	Increase interpreters, especially ASL and African languages; families want home visitors who share a culture and a language

# Health System Transformation



Sub-Topic	Asset/ Gap	Description	Recommendation
<i>Linkages Between EC Systems and Health Sector</i>	G	Doulas report little knowledge of family visiting; RI national leader on prenatal care and insurance coverage for low-income women (P-3 roadmap), but high service utilization does not continue postpartum, with little access/low capture rates for EHS, family visiting, EI (1)	Current efforts in place to enhance dev/family wellbeing knowledge of pediatric care providers in community (CTC/DULCE collab) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• infant mental health needs to be better integrated into health care</li></ul>
<i>Coordinated Intake and Referral</i>	A	Rolling out UniteUs (new statewide resource and referral system) as a mechanism for receiving family visiting referrals.	Continue efforts

# Equity



Sub-Topic	Asset/Gap	Description	Recommendation
State Community Coordination	G	Black women report significant distrust in Family visiting	
Equitable Systems	G	Non-english speaking families have lower rates of participation in FHV, EHS, and EI than other at-risk groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are disparities in child care, family child care providers have lower quality and some have not “bought into” the QRIS.</li> <li>• We currently have a waiting list for EI.</li> </ul>

# History and Context

---

PRE-K AND THE EARLY LEARNING SYSTEM IN RI

# Early Learning System

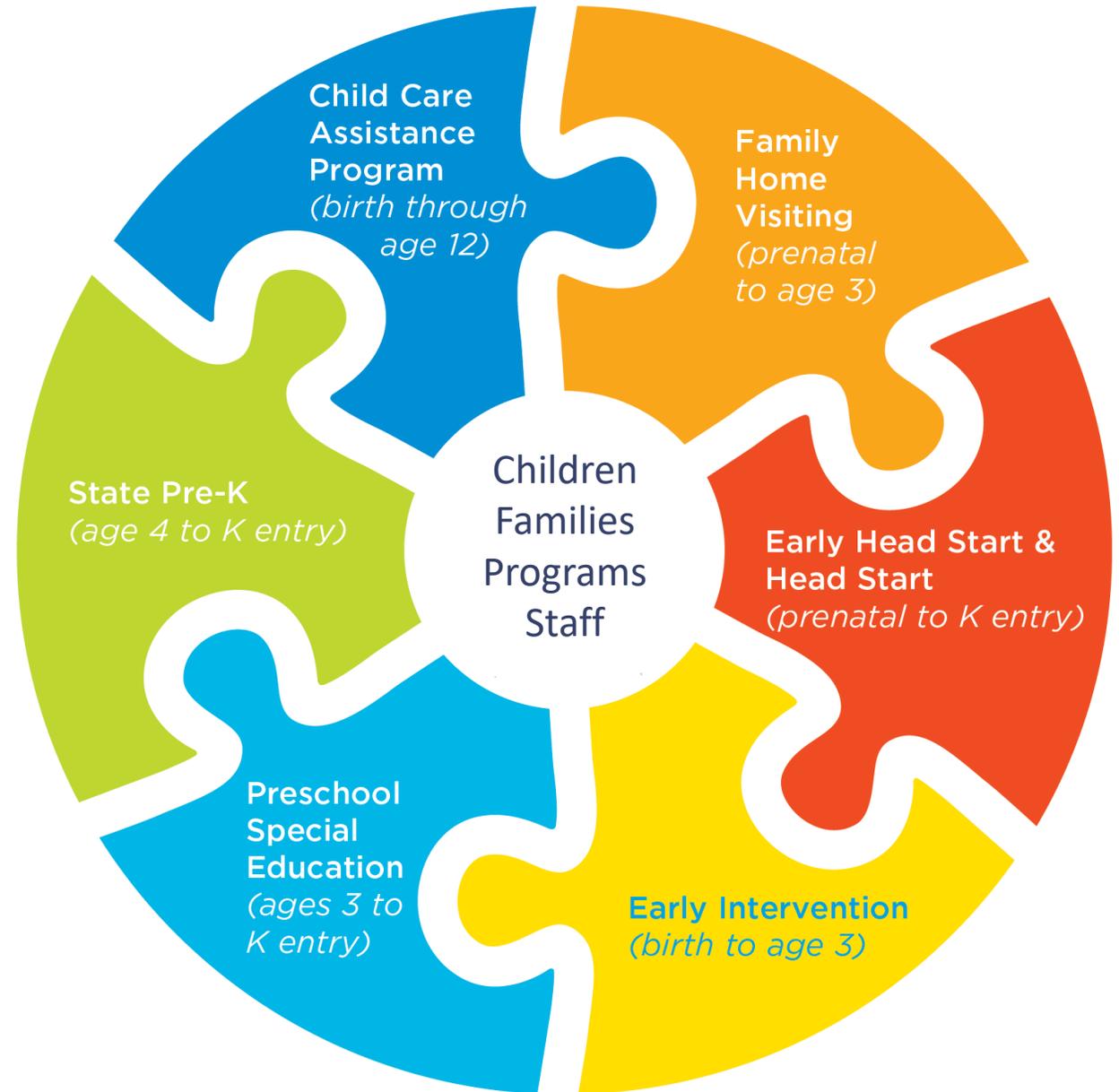
Complicated

Interconnected

Fragmented

Under resourced/Unequal resources

Variable quality standards

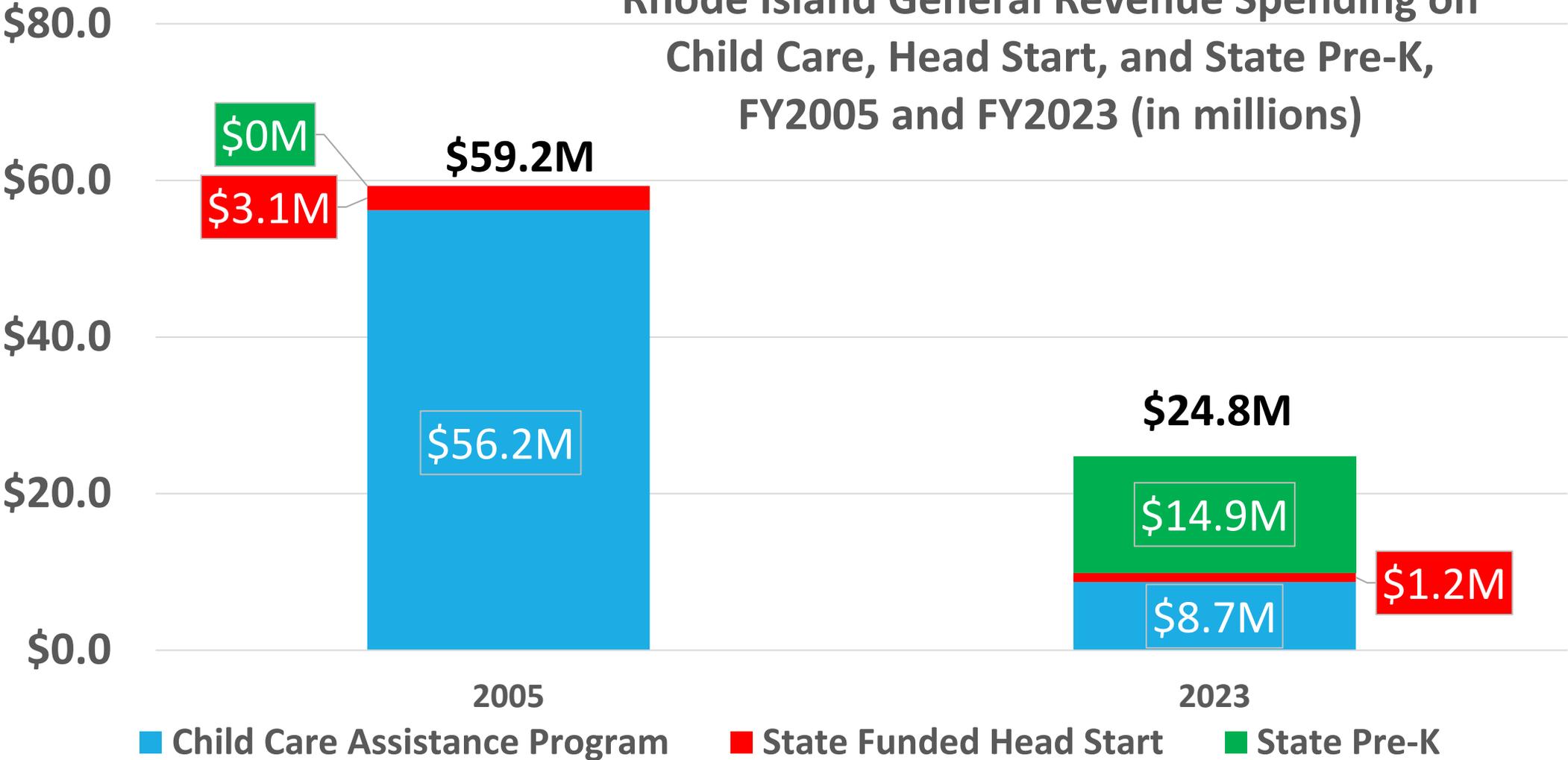


# Publicly Supported Preschool for children ages three through 5

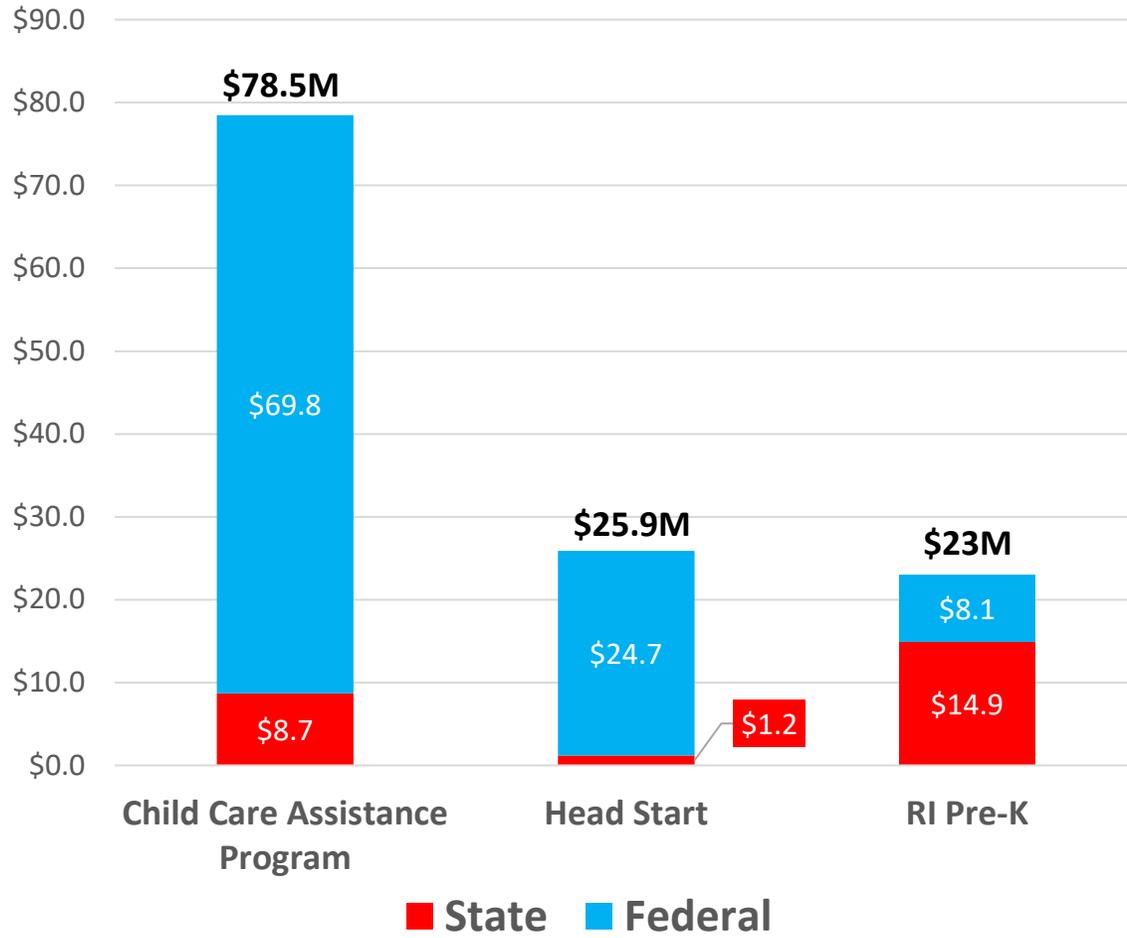
---

- Since the 1960s, **Head Start has been providing high-quality, free preschool to low-income children ages 3 through 5 statewide.** The program has never been adequately funded to serve all eligible children or to pay competitive wages to educators.
- Since the 1970s, the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* has required that **school districts provide special education services free of charge to children ages 3 through 5 who have developmental delays or disabilities.** The program has never been adequately funded and many children do not receive services in an early care/education program.
- Since 1990, the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program has provided funding to states to help families move off of welfare and **help families with low-wage jobs pay for child care for children from birth through age 12.** The program has never been adequately funded to help all families who struggle to pay for child care (9 out of 10 families cannot afford the average cost of licensed child care in RI) or to provide high-quality, enriching learning opportunities.
- After many other states had established and expanded public preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-olds, Rhode Island passed the *RI Pre-Kindergarten Education Act* in 2008, a planning bill calling for the RI Department of Education to **design and implement a high-quality preschool program for 3- and 4-year-olds that would be delivered through a mixed delivery system of child care programs, Head Start agencies, and public schools.**
- What is know as the RI Pre-K program was launched in the 2009-2010 school year as a demonstration project with 7 funded classrooms. The program has been expanded over time.

# Rhode Island General Revenue Spending on Child Care, Head Start, and State Pre-K, FY2005 and FY2023 (in millions)



## Child Care, Head Start, and RI Pre-K Funding by Source



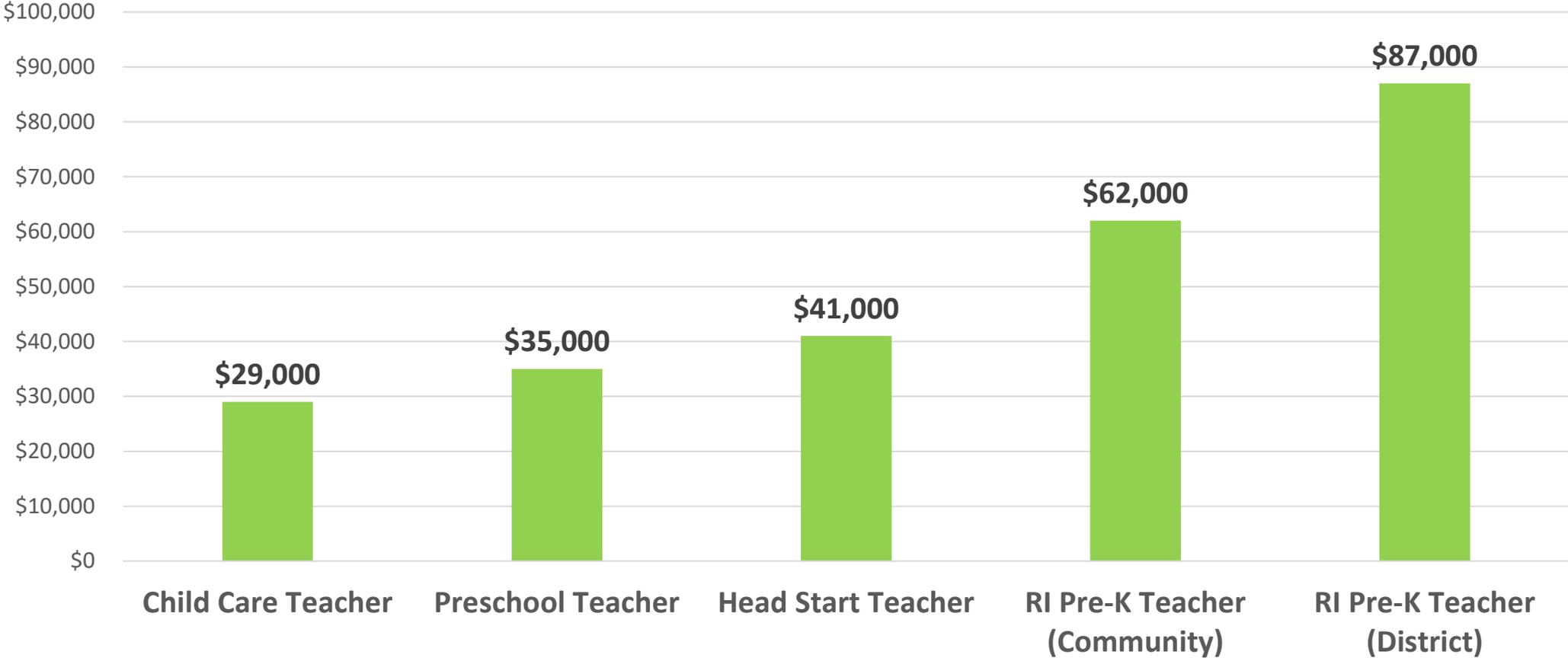
## Enrollment

**CCAP:** Combined federal and state funding serves **6,119 children ages birth through 12**. (down from 14,333 children in 2003)

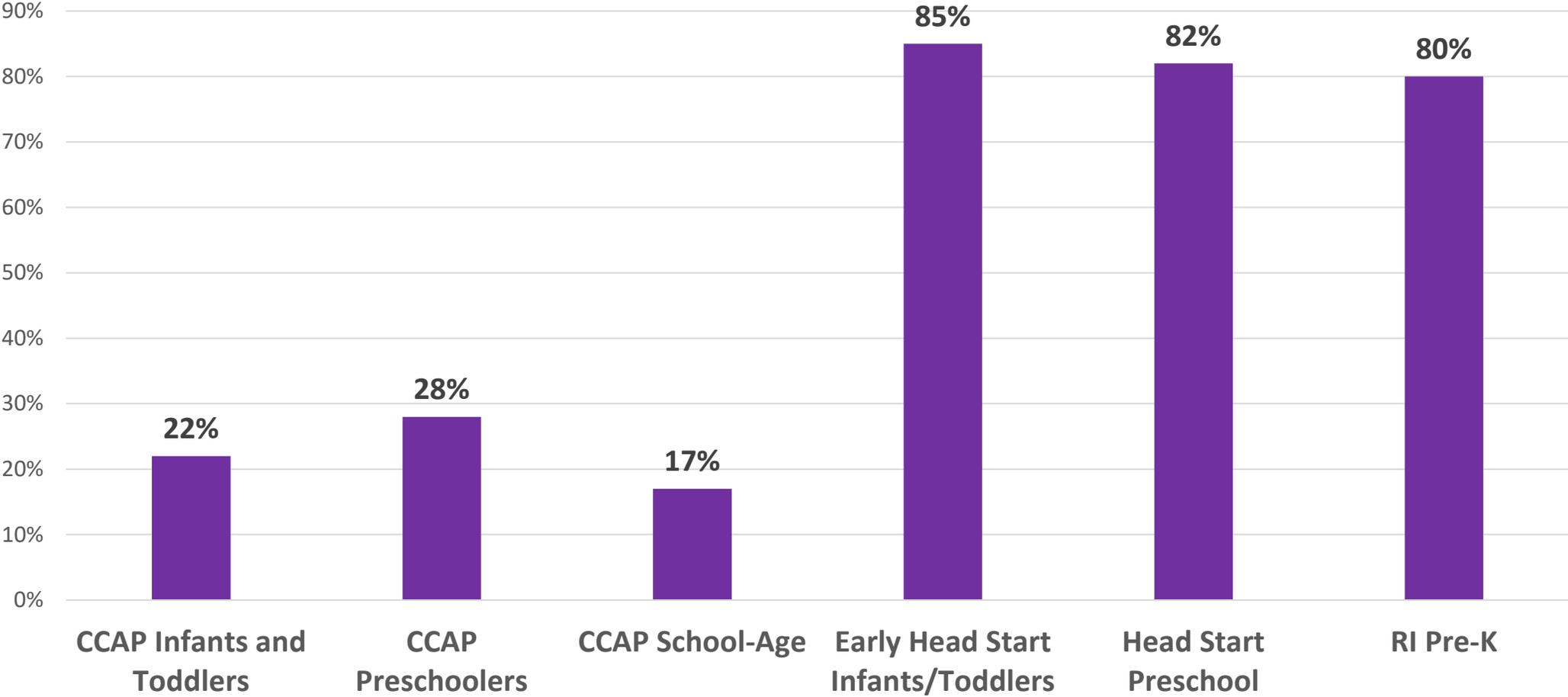
**Head Start:** Combined federal and state funding serves **2,037 children ages three through five** (down from 2,646 in 2003). Note: in 2021, there were 1,205 children ages 3-5 enrolled in Head Start (and of these about 253 were dual enrolled in Pre-K). In 2020, there were 1,177 children enrolled (176 dual enrolled) and in 2019, there were 2,010 children enrolled (140 dual enrolled)

**RI Pre-K:** Combined federal and state funding serves **2,300 children ages four through five** (up from 0 in 2003) with 253 dual enrolled in Head Start. Federal funding will expire in Summer 2023, placing 800 seats at risk of closure.

# Rhode Island Early Educators, Average Annual Wage



# % of Rhode Island Children Enrolled in High-Quality Sites by program type/funding stream



# Previous Recommendations to Consider for Pre-K Planning

---

- Striving to provide **high-quality, voluntary Pre-Kindergarten for all children in Rhode Island will help children** develop important social and cognitive skills and knowledge that prepares them to succeed in school. (2009).
- **It is important that the entire early childhood education system (0-5) infrastructure remain healthy** – especially if a diverse delivery system is desired. Without careful planning, some people feel that a new Pre-K program has the potential to negatively impact the overall early child care system and divert money from child care and Head Start.(2009)
- **High-quality learning opportunities are needed from infancy through kindergarten entry.** How can infant and toddler programs be strengthened at the same time that we focus on Pre-K for three- and four-year-olds? (2009)
- **It is critical that a workforce development program be designed and adequately funded** so that diverse providers can truly participate in Pre-K expansion by recognizing prior experience and ensuring appropriate funding for workforce development. (2009)
- **Improve the wages of teaching and caregiving staff in community-based child care and early learning programs and connect to qualifications.** Ensure a minimum living wage for entry level professionals. Close the gap in wages between community-based and public school early childhood education professionals. (2016).
- **Restore and update state funding for Head Start** to serve more three- and four-year olds (2016).
- **Adopt and use a statewide target wage scale linked to education levels that establishes goals for early educator educator wages.** The target wage scale should provide wage parity with kindergarten teachers for similarly qualified infant/toddler educators. (2019)
- **Include family child care in preschool expansion. Pay preschool educators wages and benefits equal to K-12 educators. Remove any city/town residence requirements for preschool.** (2022)
- **Develop a more coherent system of oversight, support, and monitoring for the early childhood system as a whole.** Rhode Island should create an Office of Early Learning. (2009)



# RI Pre-K Expansion Discussion

---

RHODE  
ISLAND

# The ECCE Strategic Plan is focused on achieving universal Pre-K in Rhode Island.

## ECCE Steering Committee

### Objective 1:

Rhode Island's early childhood programs meet high-quality standards for care and education as defined by our Quality Rating and Improvement System

### Objective 2:

Children and families can equitably access and participate in the early childhood care, services, and supports that will help them reach their potential and enter school healthy and ready to succeed.

### Objective 3:

All four-year olds in Rhode Island have access to high-quality Pre-K, inclusive of parental choice and student needs.

**Objective 4:** Secure the quality and delivery of ECCE through increased and sustainable funding and operational improvements.

**Objective 5:** Expand the depth and quality of family and child-level data accessible to and used by agencies, programs, and partners to drive decisions.

# The FY23 budget includes a charge to develop a plan to reach 5000 RI Pre-K seats by 2028.

## Statute Overview

By December 31, 2022, develop an annual growth plan to expand the **state prekindergarten program to five thousand (5,000) seats, for three- and four-year-old children, over five (5) years**, beginning in FY 2024, as well as recommendations for achieving universal prekindergarten in the state. The growth plan shall detail annual targets and projected funding needs, as well as how the state will:

- Equitably distribute prekindergarten funding to eligible providers
- Ensure that access to infant and toddler care is not at risk as the state prekindergarten program is expanded
- Prepare, recruit and retain a highly-qualified early childhood workforce, including adequate wages for early childhood educators, regardless of setting
- Build capacity among new and existing providers to ensure quality standards are met in all settings
- Ensure providers in the mixed-delivery system have sufficient facilities to expand access to high-quality prekindergarten services

# Where we are now: RI Pre-K – the state prekindergarten program -- is an effective & nationally recognized program, but we trail nationally in terms of access.

## Overview

RI Pre-K is a tuition free, inclusive high-quality standards-based program, built on the existing early childhood education infrastructure and aims to strengthen the birth through five system as a whole.

RI Pre-K is one of only 6 programs in the country to meet all 10 of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) quality standards.

- RI Pre-K programs serve children who are **4 years of age by September 1<sup>st</sup>** of the current year, prior to entering Kindergarten, who live in the community where the Pre-K is located.
- RI Pre-K uses a **mixed delivery system** that includes public schools, Head Start programs, and community-based childcare programs with coordinated recruitment efforts.
- RI is recognized as a national Pre-K leader because RIDE requires and supports all RI Pre-K classrooms to achieve the same high-quality standards and **achieve Comprehensive Early Childhood Education (CECE) regardless of setting**. This includes:
  - Bachelor-degree teacher
  - 6-hours a day, 180 days a year
  - High-quality, RIDE-endorsed curriculum
  - Participation in all Professional Development and Technical Assistance (PDTA) activities
  - Participation in all RIDE monitoring activities

**Yet, we are trailing in access and rank #32 in the nation. In addition, the current program only serves 4 year olds.**

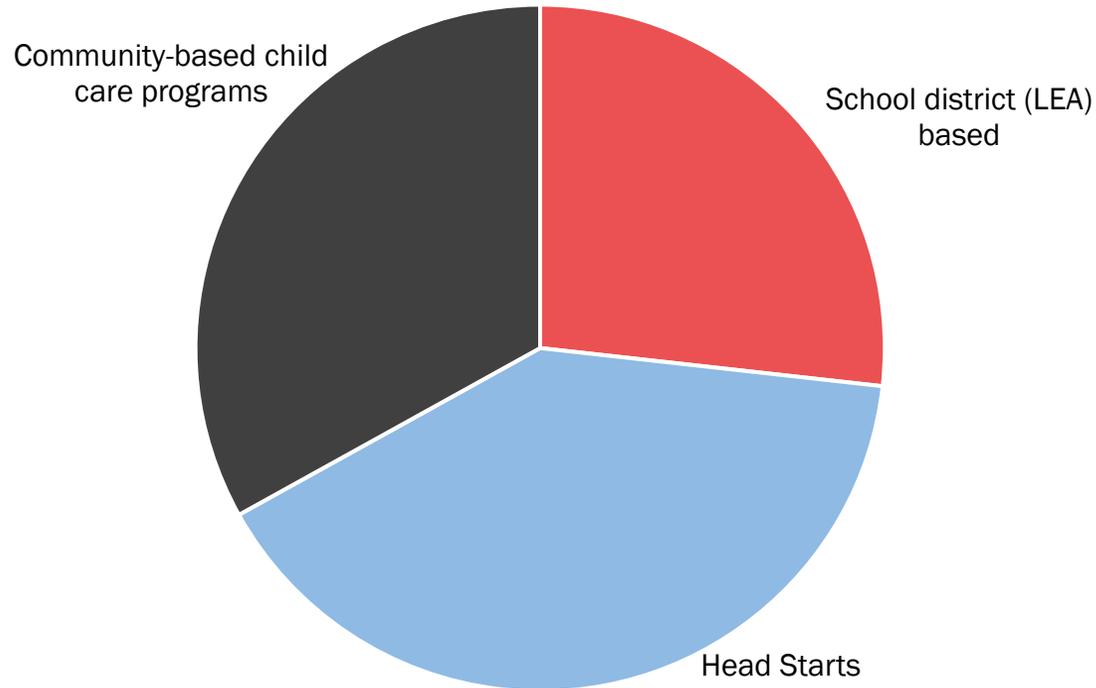
# High quality program delivery has fixed costs.

RI Pre-K costs approximately \$235,000 per classroom. While the funding for the classroom may be braided across different fund streams, the fully loaded cost is relatively fixed.

Category	Description	Cost
Classroom Costs	Staff salaries and benefits, curriculum costs, furniture, equipment, materials, education supplies and food	\$195,500
Program Costs	Includes rent, building maintenance, janitorial, utilities and insurance	\$19,500
High-Quality Assurance Monitoring	Includes PD/TA, valid and reliable assessment observations, such as ERS and CLASS, LISC, ECMH supports and on-site yearly monitoring from RIDE	\$20,000

# RI Pre-K is delivered through the mixed delivery system. At this time, the distribution of seats is relatively equal across Head Start, LEAs, and community-based programs.

RI Pre-K Classrooms by Setting, 2022-2023



## Pilot Funding Models

Beginning 2021-2022, we piloted four new service delivery models to support more providers to be eligible to participate in RI Pre-K and increase choice for families:

- *New Head Start options:*
  - Braid funding to have **above-income children** in a Head Start classroom, placed via the lottery
  - Braid funding to **extend the school year or school day** to meet the RI Pre-K 180 days, 6-hours a day
- *New CBO option:*
  - Allow children with a CCAP voucher to matriculate within the program at age 4, and blend CCAP and RI Pre-K funds to fund the classrooms
- *New LEA options:*
  - Support LEAs in moving current special education classrooms to General Education classrooms, braiding RI Pre-K funds with local funding

# As we think about expanding to another 2700+ RI Pre-K seats and include 3-year olds, there are many questions to consider.

## RI Pre-K is:

**...tuition free:** The program is free to families, with no tuition or co-pay for families.

**...inclusive:** Families face no structural barriers to participating in RI Pre-K and all families who want an RI Pre-K seat are able to secure one and the children enrolled in RI Pre-K reflect the communities the program is in, and is inclusive and welcoming for children of all backgrounds and developmental abilities.

**...high-quality standards-based program:** All classrooms meet the NIEER standards RI Pre-K quality standards.

**...built on the existing early childhood education infrastructure:** RI Pre-K is delivered through the mixed delivery system including Local Education Agencies, Community Based Organizations, Head Starts, and Family Child Care.

**...aims strengthen the birth through five system as a whole:** RI Pre-K supports increased quality, access, and stability for the entire birth through age five early education system, across all ages and components of the mixed delivery system.

## Key Considerations for Expansion:

- **Expanding RI Pre-K with Equity Lens:** How do we ensure that expansion is done with an equity lens? How can the program center families and maximize choices for families?
- **Incorporating 3 Year Olds + Early Childhood Special Education + Transitions:** How can the program – which currently only serves 4 year olds – incorporate 3 year olds? How can we ensure equitable access to RI Pre-K for children who have IEPs? How can we best facilitate transitions for children across years?
- **Early Childhood Workforce: Preparing, Recruiting, Retaining a Highly Qualified Workforce with Adequate Compensation Regardless of Setting:** How can we support our existing workforce and support a pipeline of new Pre-K teachers?
- **Improving and Ensuring Quality Across Settings + Equitably Supporting the Mixed Delivery System:** What supports does each part of the mixed-delivery system need to support Pre-K expansion?
- **Infant/Toddler System:** How do we strengthen the Infant/Toddler system and ensure that Pre-K expansion supports the system as a whole?

# Small Group Discussion -- deep dive and gathering ideas:

---

**Your input will drive the plan development to identify the key concerns and possible solutions for each consideration. These are vital inputs to understanding how the program can grow equitably.**

- **25 min:** Small Group Discussion 1: Each “key consideration” will have a small group discussion where we will dive into the questions that we need to address as we consider expansion and possible solutions and recommendations. Notetakers will capture the ideas on butcher paper on the wall.
- **10 min:** Gallery Walk: Everyone will circulate around the room to read other small groups’ brainstorm and add notes.
- **25 min:** Small Group Discussion 2: Everyone can choose a second “key consideration” small group discussion to participate in. The group notes will be added to the butcher paper.
- **15 min:** Gallery Walk: Everyone will circulate around the room to read other group notes, add notes, and “vote” on what you think is most important / solutions you want to see in the report.
- **10 min:** Reflections – open floor for reflections and discussion.
- **5 min** – Discussion of next steps

# Next steps:

---

- State team to collect all input from ELC meeting + other meetings and develop a draft report
- Discussions at upcoming early childhood related meetings (*list below includes ones where dates have been identified*):
  - Early Childhood Special Education meeting (Oct 3)
  - Head Start Association Meeting (Oct 4)
  - + will be reaching out to others to set up a time! If your group would like to host a conversation, please email Kayla (kayla.s.rosen@governor.ri.gov)
- State team to post a DRAFT report for feedback (mid-October)
- We will host two open Zoom input sessions – one in October and one in November -- for anyone who is interested in providing feedback and will share dates via the ELC and Children’s Cabinet listservs
- Input and ideas can also be submitted virtually on a survey form, which will be included in the draft document
- As always, feel free to reach out to any member of the interagency team with thoughts or ideas!

# Public Comment

---

## **Future Early Learning Council Meetings:**

- Wednesday, December 7, 2022, 9 – 11 a.m.

See [www.earlylearningri.org](http://www.earlylearningri.org) for meeting schedules, handouts, notes, and state reports