

Research on Departments of Early Childhood

The following research is intended to inform discussions on the structure and governance of California’s ECE system.

Key Highlights: Based on a review of five existing ‘Departments of Early Childhood’

- ❖ All Departments were established in the past 20 years, with three out of five created in the last six years
- ❖ In addition to child care programs, several Departments oversee home visiting programs, foster care and adoption services, and child protective services
 - One Department also oversees juvenile justice programs and services
- ❖ Two out of five Departments are led by both a Commissioner and a Board
- ❖ In several states, the Governor has a strong role in determining the Department’s leadership

Recommendations from the 2019 California Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education (report accessed [here](#))

- ❖ The Blue Ribbon Commission report calls for a robust Early Childhood Policy Council to partner with an Interagency Work Group to coordinate implementation of its recommendations and improve the state’s ECE system, rather than changing existing organizational charts and systems
 - Recommendations include greater alignment and streamlining of regulations and requirements across agencies
 - The Interagency Work Group would consist of representatives from the California Department of Education (CDE), Department of Social Services, Department of Developmental Services, Employment Development Department, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Health Care Services, and Department of Public Health
- ❖ The report also recommends establishing an augmented Division or Office of Early Childhood Education and providing CDE with sufficient resources and staff to support this work

State Profiles:

	Connecticut	Georgia	New Mexico	Massachusetts	Washington
Title	Office of Early Childhood	Bright from the Start: Department of Early Care and Learning	Early Childhood Education and Care Department	Department of Early Education and Care	Department of Children, Youth and Families
Year Established	2014	2004	2020	2005	2017
Programs Overseen	-Incorporates early childhood programs previously under the Department of Education, Social Services, Board of Regents, Developmental	-Combined the state’s Office of School Readiness, programs within the Department of Human Services and the Georgia Childcare Council	-Consolidates early childhood initiatives that range from prenatal programs to services for children from birth to age five	-Oversees formal programs for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school age children (during out of school time), as well as group homes, foster care and	-Oversees several services previously offered by the Department of Social and Health Services and the Department of Early Learning

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	Connecticut	Georgia	New Mexico	Massachusetts	Washington
	<p>Services, and Public Health</p> <p>-Programs include Birth to Three (IDEA Part C Early Intervention), Care 4 Kids (child care assistance), Child Day Care Contracts, Even Start (family literacy and parent education), Home Visiting, School Readiness Preschool Grant Program, Smart Start (funds to establish/expand preschool programs in public schools), and the State Head Start Supplement program, as well as child abuse prevention efforts and other services for children with special needs</p>	<p>-Administers the state’s Pre-K program, child care centers and home-based child care licenses, Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, Quality Rated (the state’s child care rating system), and the Head Start Collaboration Office</p>	<p>-Programs include Home Visiting, the Family Infant Toddler Program – IDEA Part C, child care, Pre-K, the Head Start Collaboration Office, and Early Childhood Special Education (IDEA Part B 619)</p>	<p>adoption placement agencies, residential schools for children with special needs, informal settings such as home visiting, and community-based family engagement networks</p> <p>-Also provides TA, including assisting programs in increasing quality and accessing professional development</p>	<p>-Programs and services include Child Protective Services, licensed foster care, adoption support, and all Department of Early Learning programs (such as the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program for preschoolers, Working Connections Child Care, and Home Visiting)</p> <p>-As of 2019, the Department also oversees Juvenile Rehabilitation and the Office of Juvenile Justice</p>
Governance Structure	<p>-Led by a Commissioner who is appointed by the Governor and approved by the General Assembly</p> <p>-Cabinet-level agency</p>	<p>-Created by the Governor and Assembly</p> <p>-Led by a Commissioner who is appointed by the Governor, as well as a Board of 14 members representing the state’s Congressional districts</p>	<p>-Established by the Legislature</p> <p>-Led by a Cabinet Secretary, who is appointed by the Governor</p> <p>-Guided by the PDG Birth Through Five statewide needs assessment and resulting 3 year strategic plan</p>	<p>-Led by a Commissioner of Early Education and Care who is appointed by an 11-member Board of Early Education and Care (some of whom are selected by the Governor)</p> <p>-Part of the Executive Office of Education, overseen by the Education Secretary</p>	<p>-Created based on recommendations from a Blue Ribbon Commission convened by the Governor</p> <p>-Cabinet-level agency</p>

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