



MAINE DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION

Cohort 1 & 2 Collaboration in the Mixed Delivery System April 2 & 9, 2025

Presented by:

**Office of Special Services and Inclusive Education
Early Learning Team
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Mixed delivery early care and education (ECE) is the coordinated effort to support early childhood services and programming across a range of settings to help meet the varied needs of children and families.

Agenda:

Understanding the Mixed Delivery System

1. Overview of Maine's ECE Mixed Delivery System

- Public Preschool
- Licensed Child Care (providers of early care and education)
 - Child Care Facilities
 - Family Child Care Programs
 - Head Starts

2. Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network

- MRTQ PDN's role and services
- Understanding the Rising Stars for ME rating system
- Maine's career lattice for the ECE workforce

3. Connecting with Local Early Care and Education Programs

- How to find and engage with ECE programs

4. Next Steps

- April 16, 2025, Cohort 1 & Cohort 2 meeting
- Developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with an early care and education (ECE) program.
- Developing a contract with an ECE program.

Child Care Facility (Center)

The program might be named:

Childcare, Child Care Center, Preschool, Early Learning Center, Child Development Center, Learning Academy, Daycare, Montessori School, or Nursery School



- Child Care Center: care and early learning, more than 12 children, 6 weeks-12 years old, any part of the day (Head Starts are licensed as child care centers)
- Nursery School: care and early learning, 3 or more children, 3-8 years-old, 3.5 hours a day
- Small Child Care Facility: care and early learning, 3-12 Children, 6 weeks-12 years old, not the residence of the provider, any part of the day
- Other:
 - Any care and early learning program for Children under 5 years of age that is located in a private school
 - Programs that contract with Child Development Services are required to be licensed as a Child Care Facility (i.e., collaborative Public Pre-K programs that include Head Start, Child Development Services, or privately funded child care).

Approval, Monitoring, Credentialing

- Programs are approved, licensed, and credentialed by the Office of Child and Family Services at DHHS
- Programs are monitored with annual unannounced site visits for compliance and implementation of a safe program that supports healthy child development
- All programs must join Maine's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) called Rising Stars for ME
- Portfolio applications and onsite visits verify the quality of care and early learning.

Family Child Care

***The program might be named:**

**Child Care, Early Care & Education Center,
Daycare, Nursery School, Preschool, Learning
Academy, Learning Center**

Definition

- Family Child Care: care and early learning in the provider's home, 3-12 children, 6 weeks-12 years old, any part of the day

Approval, Monitoring, Credentialing

- Programs are approved, licensed, and credentialed by the Office of Child and Family Services at DHHS
- Programs are monitored with annual unannounced site visits for compliance and implementation of a safe program that supports healthy child development
- All programs must join Maine's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) called Rising Stars for ME
- Portfolio applications and onsite visits verify the quality of care and early learning.

Family child care providers frequently care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-aged children. This mixed-age setting fosters social development as children learn to interact with peers of different ages and abilities. Younger children learn from the activities and behaviors of older children, while older children develop leadership and mentorship skills. Mixed-age groups help children develop a sense of community and belonging.



***In Child Care Choices, family child cares are often listed by the name of the provider/owner.**

Head Start

Early Head Start and Head Start Preschool services may be in child development centers, public schools, family child care partnership, or offered via home visiting model

- Publicly-funded early care and education for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers through a federal-to-local funding model and locally-designed to meet the specific needs in their service area.
- Services focus on early learning and development, health, and family well-being. Programs actively engage parents, recognizing family participation throughout the program as key to strong child outcomes.
- Eligible children have family incomes at/below the federal poverty level, or who receive TANF, Supplemental Security Income, SNAP public assistance services, foster care, or are experiencing homelessness. Head Starts may also accept a limited number of children who do not meet those eligibility criteria.
- Programs are licensed and monitored by the Office of Head Start at the US Department of Health & Human Services and the Office of Child and Family Services at Maine DHHS.
- Programs must meet the national Head Start Program Performance Standards and join Rising Stars for ME at a Star 5.
- Children receive a current child development screening within 45 days of entering the program.



- Nearly **half** of children with disabilities in Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start programs are determined eligible **after** they enroll.
- All programs are required to ensure that 10% of their actual enrollment includes children eligible for services under IDEA, ensuring that children with disabilities and delays have access to Head Start comprehensive services.
- All Programs have Disabilities Services and Education Coordinators who support work related to screening, referrals, service coordination, education, and transitions.
- Some grantees have funding for Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnerships, which expand high-quality early learning environments in local communities by integrating EHS comprehensive services and resources into family child care and child care centers.



Professional Development

Did you know that Maine DOE, in partnership with Maine Roads to Quality, offers a cohort training series each year called *Leading Early Learning: PreK to 3rd Grade* for public school administrators?

Public Preschool

Maine Public Pre-K can be delivered in:

A school district building, a Child Care Facility, a Family Child Care, or a Head Start Preschool

Public Preschool Resources

- [Chapter 124](#): Basic Approval Standards for Public Preschool – the governing document for public preschool programming statute
- [Pre-K Guidebook](#): A guide to high-quality publicly funded preschool in Maine
- [Pre-K Program Self-Assessment Tool](#): A continuous quality improvement tool to assess publicly funded preschool programs
- All public preschool staff must join the Maine Roads to Quality Registry.
- Support for partnerships: Michelle.Belanger@maine.gov

MRTQ PDN, Maine's QRIS and ECE workforce Registry

- Maine Roads to Quality manages the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) called Rising Stars for ME and Maine's ECE workforce Registry
- Rising Stars for ME is a system for the PROGRAM. An early care and education program submits data on how they meet specific standards to receive a rating from 1 to 5 stars.
 - [Facility Standards](#)
 - [Family Child Care Standards](#)
- The Registry is a system for INDIVIDUALS. The MRTQ Registry uses hours of training, credentials, degrees, and education credits, as well as years of experience to assign ECE professionals a level on a [career lattice](#).



Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network offers a wide range of facilitated training for all early childhood professionals in Maine. For a full list of current training and links to register, you can search the [Online Training Calendar](#). There are also self-paced on-demand trainings, including for the Preschool Maine Early Learning and Development Standards (Preschool MELDS)

Next Steps...connecting with your local ECE programs

1. Look up the early care and education programs (licensed providers) in your catchment area on Child Care Choices.
2. Contact the ECE Program Quality Specialist and Head Start agency in your region to learn about ECE meetings already taking place in your area.
3. Work with your local CDS Support and Service hub to understand current ECETA programming.
4. Host a meeting for the providers in your area or join a standing early care and education meeting

Resources



- [Child Care Choices](#) is a website with a child care search function and information about Rising Stars for ME, Child Care Licensing, and the Child Care Affordability Program
- Learn about training, technical assistance, and the workforce Registry at Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network's website <https://www.mrtq.org/>
- Find out about [Public Preschool technical assistance](#) from the Maine DOE Early Learning Team and how you can build strong partnerships with early care and education programs in your community
- Read about the [Maine Early Learning and Development Standards](#) (MELDS) and the alignment between Maine's infant and toddler standards, preschool standards, and Maine Learning Results

Child Development Services: Partnerships in FAPE

- CDS partners with community programs and local childcare to support the provision of FAPE to children with disabilities ages three to five in high quality settings.
- There are two types of programs we approve and partner with: ECETA and Special Ed. Programming. Each category has its own set of requirements for approval and agreed upon methods of collaboration.



ECETA Setting

A **Private Preschool or Child Care** may apply for an Early Childhood Education Tuition Agreement (ECETA). This approval would add you to a list that Regional CDS Site(s) would have access to and contact you in the event of needing an Early Childhood Education setting (50% or less of the children enrolled in the program have an IEP) as the least restrictive environment (LRE). CDS personnel would come to your location to provide IEP services.

Special Education Program

An **Early Childhood Special Education program** (50% or more children enrolled have an *Individualized Education Program (IEP)*) can apply for approval with CDS to provide special education services in an Early Childhood Special Education setting. The agreement for services would make clear that the staff at the approved location will provide the CDS services on behalf of CDS.



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