Expanding Access to High-Quality Early Learning Services
Early Learning Indiana is on a mission to ensure children throughout Indiana are empowered with essential skills to be successful in kindergarten and beyond.

We accomplish this by addressing systemic barriers to early education, introducing new solutions for the field and operating a network of early learning schools.
Our Work

Operate 11 early learning centers in central Indiana, including at the Academic Health Center campus, teaching more than 1K children each day.

Leading industry-wide transformation to improve the access, quality and affordability of early care and education with support of $40M investments from Lilly Endowment, Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, State of Indiana and IU Health.

Voice of statewide advocacy efforts, providing subject matter expertise to policymakers and other stakeholders.
Getting Started: What’s in a Name?

Whether we refer to it as:

• Early Learning
• Early Childhood Education
• Childcare
• Daycare

We’re talking about learning that happens out of the home (in a licensed child care center, registered ministry, family childcare home or school setting) for the vital years between 0 and 5 years old.

Questions? Email heatherp@earlylearningindiana.org
Making the Case

• Approximately **85% of a child’s capacity to learn** is developed by the age of five.

• High-quality early care and education during this period can have a **meaningful impact on a child’s success** in school and beyond, however systemic barriers prevent children and families from maximizing this opportunity, limiting their future choices.

• Parents are faced with difficult decisions about child care, **inhibiting their ability to work** or seek further education and training that might improve their social mobility.

• For businesses and communities, **the effect is two-fold**. They experience real-time economic impact from the loss of today’s workforce and fail to realize the full potential of tomorrow’s talent pipeline.
Taking Stock in Indiana’s Landscape

The Early Learning Access Index – A new method of analysis to both qualify and quantify access along the following dimensions:

• **Capacity** – how sufficient the capacity of the early learning programs in the geographic area is, based on estimated need for care.

• **Quality** – how pronounced the capacity of the programs rated level 3 or level 4 on Paths to QUALITY™ in the geographic area is.

• **Affordability** – how the average cost of care in the area compares to median incomes of the population and the prevalence of programs offering subsidized care.

• **Choice** – how much choice families have among program characteristics that may be preferential.
Early Learning Access Index

• Statewide Score: **60.5 = moderate access** statewide

• 29% of counties have moderate access, **71% have inadequate** access. 2.6% of census tracts have adequate access, and 52.9% of tracts have moderate access.

• The **highest access counties** are Vanderburgh (72.8), Marion (72.4), Grant (72), Tipton (71.8) and Posey (70.8).

• The **lowest access counties** are Warren (27.2), Switzerland (29.3), Rush (32.2), Fountain (33.5), and Randolph (33.8).

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Early Learning Access Index by Census Tract

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Early Learning Access Index by County

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Capacity Sufficiency Rate (CSR)

• CSR gauges how well the capacity or supply in a given area is able to meet the demand.

• Statewide, the Capacity Sufficiency Rate (CSR) is 60.7%.

• CSR values vary widely based upon locality, ranging from 11.6% in Benton County to over 100% in Marion County.

• 65% of counties had a CSR under 50%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, RCCS, 2021; Child Care Aware of America, National Data System, Indiana, 2022; Indiana Department of Education, IVN, 2022.
Quality

• Throughout Indiana, **46.0% of all early learning capacity is high quality.**

• The **percentage of children** in Indiana who can be served through high-quality capacity is **27.9%**.

• **72%** of counties only have enough high-quality capacity to serve **25%** of area children

• Benton County had the highest high-quality capacity rate (86%) and Switzerland county had the lowest rate (0%).

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, RCSIS, 2022; Child Care Aware of America, National Data System, Indiana, 2023; Indiana Department of Education, INview, 2022
Affordability

• The overall cost-to-income ratio in Indiana is 12%.

• Cost-to-income ratios statewide average from 2.4% in Union County to 13.8% in Madison County.

• 87.3% of programs offer one or more of the four subsidized options examined in this report, they are not always located in areas with the greatest need.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Indiana Family and Social Services Administration; ICASA, 2022; Child Care Aware of America; National Data System, Indiana, 2022; Indiana Department of Education; ISE, 2022.
Choice

- 32% of programs statewide do not offer infant/toddler care.
- 7 counties have no high-quality infant/toddler care.
- 27.6% of programs offer non-traditional hours.
- 12 counties, notably rural, have no access to non-traditional hours.
- The median Auspice Score (possible range of 0 to 1, with 1 being the best) among Indiana counties is 0.652.

Sources:
- Non-Traditional Hours Availability by Census Tract: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, ICCEC, 2022; Child Care Aware of America, National Data System, Indiana, 2022; Indiana Department of Education, NWEA, 2022.
- Program Type Variation by Census Tract: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, ICCEC, 2022; Child Care Aware of America, National Data System, Indiana, 2022; Indiana Department of Education, NWEA, 2022.
Create a Targeted Approach

The ultimate goal of this report is not only to shed light on access to early learning opportunities within communities, but to equip stakeholders, communities and providers with the data necessary to make informed and strategic choices related to expanding access along any of the four dimensions of capacity, quality, affordability or choice.

Questions? Email laureno@earlylearningindiana.org
Explore

Drill into data by census tract, focusing on:

- Local access scores
- Layers of capacity, quality, affordability and choice
- Known pain points, like infant and toddler care

Consult our experts:

- laurenol@earlylearningindiana.org
- tyloral@earlylearningindiana.org

https://earlylearningin.org/closing-the-gap/
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Source: Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning
Thank you

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