

Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC)

FY26 Early Childhood System Strategic Planning

Monday, November 17, 2025



Meeting Objectives

Nov 2025

1. Review the charge of IRMC to anchor in a shared purpose
2. Discuss Delaware's current state, a potential road map forward, and examples of success from other states



Agenda

Agenda Item	Time Allotted
Welcome: Framing and review of IRMC charge	5 mins
Presentation: Achieving ECE as a Public Good in Delaware	20 mins
Discussion	15 mins
PDG Grant Funding Opportunity	3 mins
Closing & Next Steps	2 mins
Public comment	15 mins



Welcome

IRMC Meeting Schedule

Month	Time
November 17, 2025	12 – 1 pm
December 15, 2025	10 – 11 am
February 23, 2026	2 – 4 pm
April 20, 2026	2 – 4 pm
June 22, 2026	2 – 4 pm
August 25, 2026	2 – 4 pm
October 19, 2026	2 – 4 pm
December 14, 2026	2 – 4 pm



Review the
charge of IRMC to
anchor in a
shared purpose

Overview: Purpose of IRMC

Established in 2015, Delaware's Interagency Resource Management Committee (IRMC) is charged with promoting interagency collaboration in the delivery of early childhood services.

This year, the IRMC is focused on:

- 1. Convening state leadership to align on a vision for Delaware's birth-to-5 system** that enables parents to work and that provides children with safe, trauma-free enrichment environments.
- 2. Developing a set of recommendations on how to achieve this vision** for the Governor and the General Assembly including identifying appropriate governance and investments needed to meet established goals.



Objectives for the IRMC Report

The IRMC report will offer a big-picture, long-term vision for Delaware's early childhood system—aspirational, strategic, and centered on children, families, and communities.

At a high-level this report will share a:

- Vision of early childhood as a public good that shapes decision-making
- Statement of facts about what is true of the current system, utilizing the presentations to IRMC
- Description of what would need to be added to the system to achieve the public good definition over time
- Roadmap for 2026 to bring Delaware one step closer to achieving the definition

Review: IRMC Work Thus Far

In the previous IRMC meetings, members have agreed upon a public good statement and aligned on a set of definitions that help make the charge of the committee clear.

Through the [Public Good Statement](#), IRMC members have confirmed their vision for Delaware to have an early childhood care and education system that provides each and every child with an opportunity to thrive through high-quality early childhood education.

The [Glossary of Terms](#), approved by the IRMC, helps clarify the public good statement and anchors the IRMC in a shared understanding.

Presentations from [DOE](#), [DHSS](#), and the [Office of the Controller General](#) have built IRMC understanding of the current state of Delaware's early childhood system.

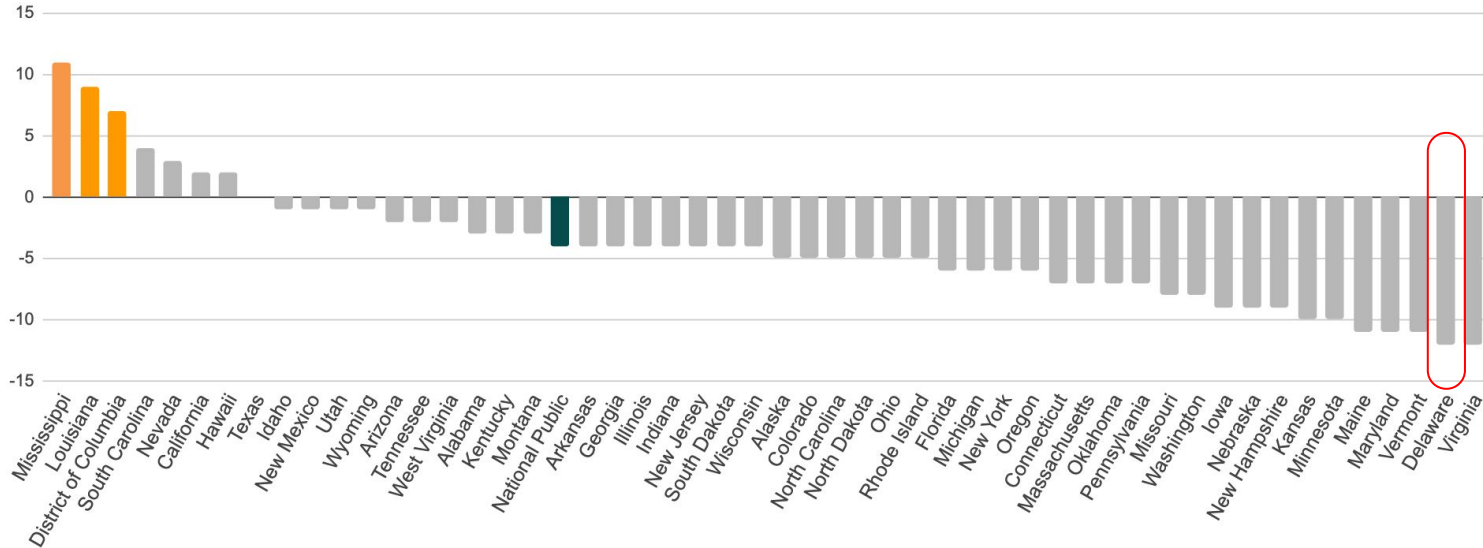
Understanding Delaware's Current Context

Starting Early in Delaware

Delaware's 49th-place NAEP improvement ranking is one data point that both illustrates the long-term impacts of the state's early learning gaps and indicates the need for urgent action now.

Percent Change "At or Above Proficient" by State (2013 to 2024)

Grade 4 Reading



DE is applying for the NGA Policy Academy to Advance Data Dashboards Measuring Student & System Success.

DE could think about opportunities to include early childhood in this work.

Where is Delaware now?

Leaders in Delaware are working hard every day to improve the lives of children. However, IRMC conversations have helped to illuminate the ways in which the structure and fragmentation of the early childhood system still creates complexity and challenges for families and providers.



State governance: Early childhood care and education is administered by multiple agencies who collaborate while leading individual components.

- *"I didn't know what ECAP was. DOE might not be clear on what POC is either."*



Funding structures: Leaders expressed interest in better understanding and ultimately reforming the funding models that undergird the current system.

- *"It is hard to change to a system that looks at funding by function, but we have to do the hard thing."*



Quality: Delaware ECE system leaders describe different orientations to quality for the various components they administer.

- *"We come at quality from the angle of monitoring." "Our quality improvement grants push providers to grow past basic health and safety standards."*



Data: Sharing data across agencies is difficult, making it hard for decision-makers to deeply understand access and demand to early childhood care and education.

- *"Our data system is unreliable given the observation and reporting timeline." "We don't collect any data on ECE mental health services."*

EARLY CHILDHOOD INVESTMENTS: DELAWARE COMPARED TO OTHER STATES

State Pre-K (ECAP)

200% Federal Poverty Level Income limit
\$64,500 for family of 4, 54% State Median Income (SMI)

Delaware ranks 43rd among 46 states with pre-k in access – **only 8% of 4 Year Olds.** (only HI, AZ, and UT are lower; 5 States have no pre-k program)

- 21 States have NO income requirement

Child Care Subsidy (Purchase of Care Program)

Delaware is ranked 44th for state income eligibility using SMI

- Federal law allows states to set eligibility up to 85% SMI
- 22 States set income eligibility at 85% or higher (and pay for families above 85% SMI with state dollars)

HOW DOES DELAWARE COMPARE: OTHER STATE EXPANSIONS

State Examples	Approach to Funding & Revenue Source	Access	
		% Federal Poverty Level	% State Median Income
New Mexico	Land Grant Permanent Fund + ECE Trust Fund (oil + 1.25% of budget)	Universal Access no family copayment	
Washington DC	Increased income tax on those making >\$250K	Universal access for 3 and 4 Child care income limit up to 300% / 58% SMI	
Vermont	Increased payroll tax	575% (\$180K)	133% SMI
Maine	General Fund	500% (\$156K)	125% SMI
New York	General Fund (2x increase in 2024)	340% (\$106K)	85% SMI
Connecticut	Reserve funds in Endowment	\$100K or less pay nothing, all families pay no more than 7% starting in 2028	
Delaware	No dedicated ECE revenue stream; relies on General Fund	200% (\$64K) (rank 38th)	54% SMI (rank 44rd)

Outcomes of these investments: increased access, increased child care capacity/supply, improved compensation for educators, greater parental workforce participation, reduced special needs identifications in K-12, improved outcomes throughout K-12

Some states have expanded access but not fully funded the program leading to waiting lists; other states have made these commitments over time but not yet achieved this level of funding/access. Access includes state funded pre-k and child care subsidy in some cases.

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Washington DC	Increase in tax revenue >\$250K	100% and 4	100% / 58% SMI
Vermont	Increase in tax revenue		133% SMI
Maine	General fund		125% SMI
New York	General fund		85% SMI
Connecticut	Reserve fund		no more than 7% starting in
Delaware	No dedicated revenue source relies on general fund		54% SMI (rank 44rd)

As Delaware considers how it will achieve ECE as a public good, the state's leadership might study what allowed early childhood systems in other states to expand.

Each state listed here identified revenue generation streams that allowed them to expand early childhood access beyond what existing funds could support.

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Current ECE Governance

Delaware administers its largest early childhood funding streams and programs across DOE and DHSS. These agencies collaborate well, but are still challenged by the limitations of multiple agencies administering ECE.

IRMC meetings have elevated that state leaders are committed to administering their system components well, and to collaborating with each other successfully.

Yet within the current structure:

- There is no unduplicated count of children accessing publicly-funded ECE that can answer questions about how many children are served vs. not, and at what level of quality
- There is no budget that looks across funding sources to define how funding spent by function within the ECE system – whether its direct services, quality improvement, workforce investments, system infrastructure, etc.
- There are gaps in understanding what the current funding levels indicate Delaware's current steady state of service should be, and what the impacts of policy and funding levers are on that number

IRMC Questions and Takeaways

“What’s the difference between ECAP and POC?”

“Who should be served through which source?”

“What are we able to do with current funds — and what would it take to do more?”

This structure is a result of well-intentioned past actions. These conversations allow the state to envision the direction of the state's future work.

For Consideration

*A possible road map to
Early Childhood as a
public good in Delaware*

Road Map towards an ECE as a Public Good

Creating an investable early childhood care and education system that is scalable takes time. As the IRMC continues to pursue the vision of early childhood as a public good in Delaware, there are several key questions the state must answer.



What Is Possible In Delaware

By creating an investable system that allows early childhood care and education to be scaled towards a public good, Delaware has the potential to shift what is true for people at all levels of the system.

When you get to an investable system, the following can start to become true:

- **Each and every child** has access to affordable, high-quality early care and education that prepares them for a thriving future and school readiness.
- **Working families** can easily navigate an early childhood system and choose a high-quality early childhood option that supports their career and their child's development.
- **Providers** are supported to focus on providing a high-quality experience for children, including attracting and retaining a qualified and well-compensated early childhood workforce.
- **Employers** benefit from strong families and high workforce participation, which support a stable and productive labor market.
- **All stakeholders** are invested in the value of early childhood, and know that every additional dollar raised for early care and education will deliver results.
- **State leaders** clearly understand their role in the system and set a vision for the state that holds them accountable to the outcomes of the system as a whole.

National Examples of Scaling ECE

Case Studies: States Enabling Improvement

States across the nation have taken steps to expand access to affordable early childhood care and education for families through unified governance, state-local collaboration, and innovative approaches.

New Mexico – Universal Eligibility

New Mexico established universal eligibility for key early childhood programs, ensuring that all families with young children can qualify for services regardless of income or employment status.

While the system does not guarantee universal access, the unified [Early Childhood Education and Care Department](#) administers an approach that simplifies access and lays the foundation for a truly universal system, even as the state continues expanding capacity to make services broadly available to all families.

Virginia – State-Local Partnerships

Virginia's [Ready Regions](#) established a unified regional governance structure that connects the state's early childhood priorities with local implementation.

Through this framework, Virginia expanded investments in preschool access and mixed-delivery programs, enabling regions to [coordinate funding and quality improvement efforts across providers](#). This state-local partnership empowers those closest to children, families, and providers to expand access to affordable, [high-quality](#) early care and education statewide.

Local Leadership

New Orleans established a dedicated [citywide millage](#) to expand early care and education for low-income families, leveraging state funds through [Louisiana's ECE State Match Fund](#).

The [Denver Preschool Program](#) provides funding for every four-year-old in the city using a sliding-scale tuition credit that builds on existing public funding streams.

Missouri's [Child Care Works](#) initiative is piloting a cost-sharing approach to expand access for ALICE families. By blending contributions from the state, families, and local partners, the model aims to make high-quality early care more accessible and financially sustainable.

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These examples illustrate how **states can use their levers to drive increased access to quality early care and education**, establishing pathways for increased public investment in early childhood through different innovative approaches.

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Discussion

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As you consider the path forward for Delaware in establishing early childhood education as a public good:

- What questions, thoughts, or takeaways would you elevate or share?
- What are some examples of first steps Delaware can start with on its multi-year journey?

FY 2025 Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B-5)

*Systems-Building Grant
Opportunity*

Grant Opportunity Forecast

The Office of Early Childhood Development within the Administration for Children and Families at the Department of Health and Human Services will be soliciting applications from eligible states and territories to carry out the Systems-Building Grant activities of the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) program. These PDG B-5 awards will support states and territories to build systems that strengthen early care and education (ECE) programs and increase parent access within a mixed delivery system based on a comprehensive, statewide birth to five needs assessment and strategic plan.

- Up to 25 states awarded; states will be eligible in funding bands
- Award Ceiling: \$15,000,00
- Award Floor: \$500,000
- Governor must appoint a lead agency for the application and administration of award

Anticipated Purpose

Funding will be targeted to:

- Maximize parent choice and knowledge of the early care and education (ECE) mixed delivery system;
- Support sharing of best practices among ECE providers to improve collaboration and efficiency of programs; and
- Improve the quality of ECE programs.

[Search Results Detail | Grants.gov](#)

If it is posted as it has been forecasted, this 70-page grant will be due on November 24, 2025.

Next Steps

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Public Comment