

Universal vs. Targeted early
childhood programs: *Can we cut and
invest at the same time?*

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Why Targeted Programs in the US?

Three key arguments:

Targeted programs, such as Head Start and Early Head Start, are believed to be more efficient, cost the public less, and have shown positive long-term effects for poor children.

They are considered higher in quality because they are focused and generally offer an intensive delivery of integrated services.

Targeted programs are consistent with historical preferences of keeping children with their families, while providing center-based care for those children believed to be in less desirable home care settings (Barnett, Brown & Shore, 2004).

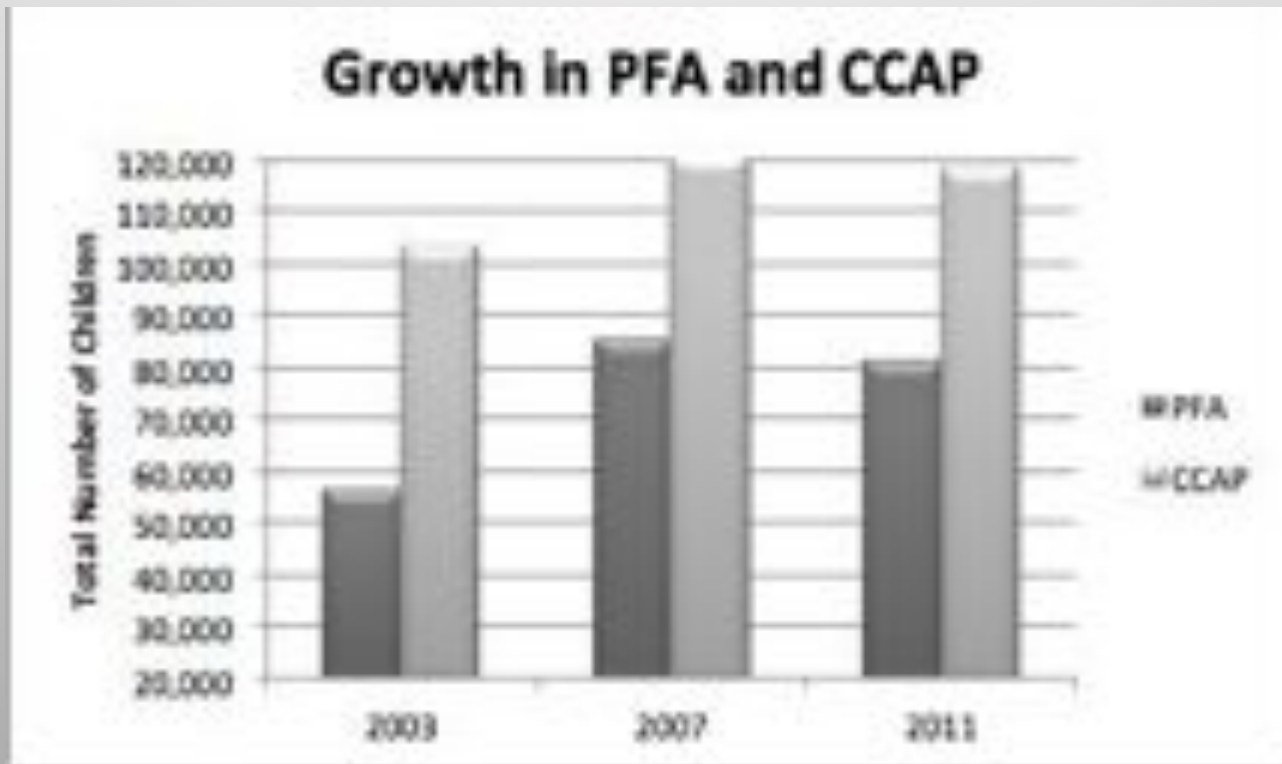
Current national ECE policy landscape

- Total state funding for pre-K programs decreased by nearly \$60 million nationwide with a \$30 million decrease in 2009-2010
- 127 million in federal funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) in some states spending has not been replaced
- State funding per child for pre-K declined in 26 of 39 states with programs only, 11 states increased per-child spending, Eight states cut per-child spending by 10 percent or more from the previous year.

Recent Trends

- School readiness debate and the need for the nation to compete globally has increased political will to expand services to 3 and 4 year olds and create greater access (universal access in some states)
- State budget short falls has threatened investment, program quality and caused many states to focus more on increasing access to programs that meet minimum quality standards

Pre school for All and Childcare Assistance Program



Total number of children participating in these programs has soared from 156,000 children in 2003 to nearly 200,000 children in 2011, a 28% increase. In particular, the total number of children participating in high quality Preschool for All programs grew by 45%, from 56,000 in 2003 to 81,000 in 2011.

Low-income families in Illinois

Children From Low-Income Families by Age	Number of children from Low-Income families in the State	Children from Low-Income families as a percentage of all children in the State
Infants under age 1	73,546 / 181,133	40.6%
Toddlers ages 1 through 2	141,216 / 359,555	39.3%
Preschoolers ages 3 to kindergarten entry	174,975 / 442,915	39.5%
Total number of children, birth to kindergarten entry, from low-income families	389,737 / 983,603	39.6%

Children participating in High Needs Programs, by age

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
State-funded preschool	--	--	80,101	80,101
Early Head Start and Head Start	1,646	5,741	43,404	50,791
Programs and services funded by IDEA	2,010	17,008	36,488	55,506
Title I and ESEA	--	--	4,579	4,579

Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning Programs

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Total number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Early Head Start and Head Start	40,110	39,461	39,461	42,015	42,015
Programs and services funded by IDEA	54,800	55,939	55,669	54,700	Not yet available
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA			4,194	5,170	4,579
Home Visiting Programs	19,483	21,894	22,891	22,650	20,811

Opportunities and Challenges

- On-going debate of Access vs. Quality in lean times given changing demographics and community needs
- How to think about integrated systems and what that might look like in terms of governance structures and funding and the implications for children and families