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Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Early Childhood Programs (Section 619 and Part C)

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Summary

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the main federal program providing special education and related services to children with disabilities. The largest and most often discussed part of IDEA is the Part B grants to states program, which mostly funds programs for school-age children with disabilities and accounts for nearly 90% of funding for the Act. In addition to the Part B grants to states program, IDEA authorizes two other state grant programs aimed at younger children: Part C, the Infants and Toddlers program, which serves disabled children from birth to 2 years of age, and Section 619 of Part B, the Preschool program, which generally serves children ages 3 to 5. This report summarizes the provisions of these two grant programs and, in the final section, provides an overview of selected other federal programs that serve these age groups.

Part C requires that states receiving grants create and maintain “a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency system that provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.” Services focus on children experiencing “developmental delay” with respect to physical, mental, or other capacities, and their families. Services are detailed for each child and his or her family in an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Services are to be provided, to the maximum extent feasible, in “natural environments,” including the home, with other infants and toddlers who are not disabled. States are required to identify a state lead agency, which might be the state educational agency (SEA) but could be other state agencies, to coordinate the program. Part C is funded at \$417 million for FY2002.

Section 619 of IDEA authorizes grants to states for preschool programs serving children with disabilities generally ages 3 to 5. States are eligible for these grants if they are eligible for grants under the Part B grants to states and make available free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all disabled children ages 3 to 5 in the state. In recent years, all states qualify and receive preschool grants under this section. Since Part B grants to states are used to serve children with disabilities as young as 3 years of age (as well as school-age children), Section 619 is not so much a separate program as it is supplementary funding for services to this age group. In general, the provisions, requirements, and guarantees under the grants to states program that apply to school-age children with disabilities also apply to children in this age group. As a result, Section 619 is a relatively brief section of the law, which deals mostly with the state and substate funding formulas for the grants and state-level activities. Section 619 received \$390 million for FY2002.

Other federal programs provide early childhood services and in some cases may contribute to services for young children with disabilities. Largest among these programs that explicitly provide early education and care are Head Start and funding for early childhood programs under Title I, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

This report will be updated only if legislative activities warrant.

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Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Early Childhood Programs (Section 619 and Part C)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the main federal program providing special education and related services to children with disabilities. The largest and most often discussed part of IDEA is the Part B grants to states program, which mostly funds programs for school-age children with disabilities and accounts for nearly 90% of funding for the Act. In addition to the Part B grants to states program, IDEA authorizes two other state grant programs aimed at younger children: Part C, the Infants and Toddlers program, which serves disabled children from birth to 2 years of age and Section 619 of Part B, the Preschool program, which generally serves children ages 3 to 5. This report summarizes the provisions of these two grant programs and, in the final section, provides an overview of selected other federal programs that serve these age groups.¹

The IDEA Infants and Toddlers Program (Part C)

The state grant program for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families was created by P.L. 99-457 in 1986. Originally enacted as Part H of IDEA, the program is now authorized under Part C, as a result of the consolidation of several other parts of the Act into Part D by the 1997 amendments (P.L. 105-17). The general purpose of Part C is to aid each state to create and maintain “a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency system that provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.”

In many respects, the requirements for these statewide systems resemble the requirements under IDEA Part B for special education and related services for children with disabilities served in school systems. However, statewide coordinated systems to serve very young children (the analog to state educational agencies (SEAs)) do not exist in all states. Thus Part C differs in some respects from Part B in that it helps to create the state structure in which services can be delivered to infants and toddlers with disabilities.

Target Populations and Services. The target populations for the Part C program are children under the age of 3 experiencing developmental delay² in one or

¹For further information on IDEA, see CRS Report RL31259, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: Statutory Provisions and Selected Issues*, by Nancy Lee Jones and Richard N. Apling. (Hereafter cited as CRS Report RL31259, *IDEA Provisions*.)

²The Act (Section 602(3)(B)(i)) leaves the definition of developmental delay to the states except to enumerate that delays may occur in one or more areas (physical, cognitive, (continued...))

more physical, mental, or social skill areas; children diagnosed with physical or mental conditions with high probabilities of resulting in such delays; and, at the state's discretion, children at risk of developing such delays. According to the U.S. Department of Education (ED), about 250,000 infants and toddlers are served by the program.³

The Act has an extensive definition of 'early intervention services,' which provides a useful overview of what services the statewide systems can provide and how these services should be provided.⁴ These services are required to be provided under public supervision and at no cost "except where Federal or State law provides a system of payments by families, including a schedule of sliding fees."⁵ In general, the services must meet the developmental needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities.

The Part C definition of early intervention services permits a wide variety of direct and support services that could be provided, including family training and home visits, special instruction, service coordination, identification and assessment, medical services (limited to diagnosis and evaluation) and health services,⁶ assistive technology, and transportation necessary to benefit from services. The definition also includes a list of providers, ranging from educators and therapists to pediatricians and other physicians. Analogous to the least restrictive environment requirements of Part B, Part C requires that "to the maximum extent feasible" services be provided in "natural settings" or "natural environments," including the home and in the community with children who are not disabled.⁷

²(...continued)

communication, social/emotional, or adaptive development) and to require that appropriate diagnostic assessments are to be used to determine such delays.

³U.S. Department of Education FY2002 Budget Justifications, p. H-30.

⁴Section 632(4).

⁵For example, under the Childcare and Development Block Grant, states set sliding scales for parents' co-payments based on income.

⁶A distinction is made between medical services, which are provided by a physician, for which payments are limited to services related to determining eligibility, and health services, which are provided by other health professionals and paraprofessionals and for which IDEA payments are not limited.

⁷ED issued proposed amendments to the Part C regulations (65 FR 162, p. 53808-53869, September 5, 2000). One purpose of these proposed regulations was to clarify the interpretation of "natural environments." In the discussion of the proposed regulations, ED points out that "while 'natural environments' are the legally preferred settings for providing early intervention services, it would be appropriate, under Part C of the Act and these regulations, for a given child to receive one or more of the early intervention services in another setting, if the child's IFSP team, after reviewing the relevant information about the child, makes that determination." p. 53810. ED has withdrawn these proposed regulations (67 FR 7, p. 1409-1410). Apparently ED decided to postpone any changes to the regulations until after Part C is reauthorized.

The specific services for an individual infant or toddler are to be detailed in an individualized family service plan (IFSP),⁸ which is analogous to the individualized educational plan (IEP) required under Part B for older children with disabilities. Part C provides extensive details on the nature of the plan. The written plan is based on a “multidisciplinary assessment” of the child’s strengths and needs and “a family-oriented assessment” of the family’s resources, concerns, and priorities. A multidisciplinary team, including the parents develops the plan. The plan includes statements of:

- The child’s current level of development;
- The family’s resources, concerns, and priorities;
- Major expected outcomes for the child and timelines for achieving these outcomes;
- Specific services required to meet the child’s needs;
- The natural environment in which services will be provided or justification regarding the extent to which services will not be provided in a natural environment;
- Dates of initiation and duration of services;
- Who will be the child’s service coordinator, who will be directly responsible for implementing the plan; and
- Steps to be taken to ensure transition of the child from the program to preschool or other appropriate services.

Overview of Requirements for Statewide Systems. Like other federal grants programs including Part B of IDEA, Part C details requirements for states to be eligible for grants. States then are required to assure and describe in state applications their procedures for meeting statutory requirements. In general, to be eligible for a Part C grant, a state must make available appropriate early intervention services to all infants and toddlers with disabilities and have a statewide system to do so.

Part C specifies that, at a minimum, a statewide system must have various components, including:

- A state definition of “developmental delay”;
- A comprehensive “child find system (another analogue to Part B) to identify and refer to service providers potentially eligible children in the state;
- Procedures for evaluating each child’s needs and the family’s concerns and resources;
- An IFSP, as discussed above, for each child and family;
- Policies and procedures to ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, services are provided in natural environments;
- A comprehensive personnel development system to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified service providers (also analogous to Part B requirements);
- Related to the personnel system, the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure proper training of service providers;

⁸Section 636.

- A lead state agency identified by the Governor to provide overall oversight of the system and coordinate with other state, federal, local, and private programs that serve disabled infants and toddlers;
- Creation of a state interagency coordinating council, appointed by the Governor, composed of various individuals (such as parents and representatives of relevant state agencies);⁹ and
- Policies ensuring procedural safeguards discussed below.

To be eligible, a state must have an approved state application that, among other things, provides assurances that the requirements for the statewide system are fulfilled. Unless there are changes in law, regulation, or interpretation of law or regulations, a state's application submitted under Part H may still fulfill this requirement of Part C.

Overview of Procedural Safeguards. Like Part B,¹⁰ Part C guarantees certain rights for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.¹¹ However, Part C's procedural safeguards are described as "minimum procedures" for statewide systems and are not as detailed as those for school-aged children under Part B. In addition to the right of parents to be involved in the IFSP discussed above, Part C guarantees:

- The right of confidentiality of personally identifiable information;
- The right to accept or refuse some services without jeopardizing the right to other services;
- The opportunity to examine records;
- Procedures to ensure the child's rights if parents are unknown or unavailable;
- The right of written prior notice of decisions to change services or the place where services are provided;
- The right of parents to be fully informed in their native language, and the right to mediation as provided under Part B.

Parental disputes are to be resolved administratively in a timely manner. Like Part B, Part C provides any party in disagreement with an administrative resolution the right to bring civil action in the appropriate state court or in a U.S. district court. Finally, like Part B, the child's services and placements continue while a dispute is being resolved unless the state agency and the parents agree otherwise.

Selected Additional Provisions of Part C. By reference to Sections 616, 617, and 618 of Part B, Part C grants certain powers and responsibilities to the Secretary and extends certain Part B state information requirements to Part C grantees. Section 616 empowers the Secretary to withhold grant funds as a result of state or local failure to comply with requirements of Part C. Section 616 also provides states with the right of federal judicial review of the Secretary's decision with respect to the state's eligibility under IDEA. Section 617 grants the Secretary

⁹Part C also requires a federal interagency coordinating council.

¹⁰See Section 615.

¹¹Section 639.

the right to issue regulations and to hire personnel to assist in carrying out duties under the act. The section also requires that the Secretary provide technical assistance to the states in providing special education and complying with the Act. Section 618 requires states receiving grants to provide the Secretary with certain information and data on children served under the Act.

Part C requires that funds under the part be used, for the most part, as “payor of last resort.” The basic principle is that Part C funds should not be used to pay for services that otherwise would have been provided from other public or private source if Part C did not exist. The exception is that Part C funds may be used initially to ensure prompt services, under the assumption that these funds will be reimbursed by the agency with ultimate responsibility for providing the services. Part C explicitly prohibits states to use Part C funding to reduce medical or other assistance for or to alter eligibility of infants and toddlers with disabilities available under the Maternal and Child Health Act Block Grant or under Medicaid.¹²

Funding and Allocations to States. As Table 1 shows, compared to the overall funding for IDEA, funding for Part C has grown relatively modestly between FY1997 and FY2002, increasing by a total of about 32%. Although funding has grown faster than funding for the preschool program, overall IDEA funding more than doubled during this period — due mainly to increases in funds for the Part B grants to states program. As a result, funding for Part C today accounts for a smaller share of total IDEA funding (4.8%) than it did in FY1997 (7.8%).

**Table 1. Funding for IDEA Early Childhood Programs
(Section 619 & Part C) and IDEA Total Funding (FY1997-FY2002)**
(dollars in 1,000s)

	FY1997	FY1998	FY1999	FY2000	FY2001	FY2002	Percentage change FY1997- FY2002
Preschool grants (Section 619)	\$360,409	\$373,985	\$373,985	\$390,000	\$390,000	\$390,000	8.2%
Grants for infants and families (Part C)	315,754	350,000	370,000	375,000	383,567	417,000	32.1%
Total IDEA	\$4,035,979	\$4,810,646	\$5,334,146	\$6,036,196	\$7,439,948	\$8,672,804	115.0%

Appropriations for the Act are authorized through FY2002 with an additional year of authorization (i.e., through FY2003) automatically provided under Section 422 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA). For FY1998, the Act

¹²For an overview of the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, see CRS Report 97-350, *Maternal and Child Health Block Grant*, by Sharon Kearney. For an overview of the Medicaid program, see CRS Report RS20245, *Medicaid: A Fact Sheet*, by Jean Hearne.

authorized \$400 million. The Act authorizes “such sums as may be necessary” for fiscal years through FY2002.

The Act permits the Secretary of Education to reserve up to 1% of funds appropriated for Part C for outlying areas (Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands), and 1.25% of appropriations for payments by the Secretary of the Interior to tribes and other entities providing services to Indian infants and toddlers with disabilities. The actual reservation for the outlying areas for FY2002 is about 0.77%. Of the remainder, the Secretary is directed to allocate to the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico amounts in proportion to each state’s share of children under the age of 3; except no state shall receive less than the state minimum grant of 0.5% of the amount allocated to states or \$500,000, whichever is the greater amount (if funds are sufficient).¹³ If funds are insufficient, the Secretary is required to ratably reduce funds to all states. There is no substate formula because the state through the lead agency may contract with service providers as well as provide direct services and coordinating services provided by other state entities.

The IDEA Preschool Program (Section 619)

Section 619 of IDEA authorizes grants to states for preschool programs serving children with disabilities ages 3 to 5.¹⁴ States are eligible for these grants if they are eligible for grants under the Part B grants to states and make available free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all disabled children ages 3 to 5 in the state.¹⁵ Currently all states qualify and receive preschool grants under this section. Since Part B grants to states are used to serve children with disabilities as young as 3 years of age (as well as school-age children), Section 619 is not so much a separate program as it is supplementary funding for services to this age group. In general, the provisions, requirements, and guarantees under the grants to states program that apply to school-age children with disabilities also apply to children in this age group.¹⁶

¹³At current appropriations levels, the minimum state grant under Part C is based on 0.5% of the total allocation. For FY2002, this amount is about \$2 million. Twelve states currently receive this minimum grant amount.

¹⁴Section 619(a)(2) permits states to serve children as young as 2 years of age under Part B if they will turn 3 during the school year.

¹⁵At the state’s discretion, children experiencing developmental delay (as defined by the state) with respect to, for example, physical, cognitive, social, or emotional development may be included as children with disabilities eligible for services.

¹⁶For a brief overview of the provisions of Part B, see CRS Report RL31259, *IDEA Provisions*. The Part B requirements for preschool programs do not completely parallel the requirements for school-age children with disabilities. For example, the IEPs for all children covered by Part B must assess the child’s present level of academic performance. For school-age children with disabilities, these assessments are made with respect to the general curriculum in the school. This benchmark may not be appropriate for preschool programs. So the benchmark for preschool children with disabilities is “the child’s participation in appropriate activities.” (Section 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(II)) The requirement of the least restrictive environment applies to serving preschool children with disabilities as it does to services to

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As a result, Section 619 is a relatively brief section of the law, which deals mostly with the state and substate funding formulas for the grants and state-level activities.

Funding for Section 619. Appropriations are permanently authorized for Section 619 under Section 619(j), which authorizes \$500 million for FY1998 and “such sums” thereafter. As **Table 1** above indicates, funding for Section 619 has been relatively stable since FY1997. Funding for preschool grants grew from \$360 million in that fiscal year to \$390 million for FY2002, about an 8.2% increase. During the same period, funding for IDEA overall more than doubled from about \$4 billion to nearly \$8.7 billion. Most of this increase occurred in the Part B grants to states program (the school-age program under IDEA). As a result, Section 619 funding, which accounted for about 8.9% of total IDEA funding in FY1997, makes up about 4.5% of total FY2002 funding. It should be noted that although funding for the preschool program has been relatively stable, overall federal funding for preschool children with disabilities probably has grown more substantially in some states because funds provided under the grants to states program can also be used to serve children in this age group.¹⁷

State and Substate Formulas. The state and substate formulas for Section 619 are similar to those for the Part B grants to states program.¹⁸ The Act directs the Secretary of Education to allocate funds¹⁹ (if funds for that fiscal year are greater than funds for the preceding fiscal year) to states²⁰ based on the following principles:

¹⁶(...continued)

school-age children. To the maximum extent possible these children must be served with their nondisabled peers. However, this does not require that a state provide free public education to all preschool children in order to meet this requirement. The least restrictive environment (LRE) can be met by serving disabled preschoolers “in a variety of settings, including public or private preschool programs, regular kindergarten, Head Start programs, or childcare facilities.” U.S. Department of Education Budget Justifications for FY2002, p. H-21.

¹⁷According to the FY2002 ED Budget Justifications (p. H-24), about two-thirds of the states and outlying areas use funds from the grants to states program to serve preschoolers with disabilities.

¹⁸For further information, see CRS Report RL30810, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Issues Regarding “Full Funding” of Part B Grants to States*, by Richard N. Apling.

¹⁹The Act specifies that the Secretary shall allocate remaining funds after reserving funds for studies and evaluations under Section 674(e), which permits the Secretary to reserve up to one-half of 1% from funds for Parts B and C to carry out studies and evaluation and limits this amount, once it reaches \$20 million, to amounts based on inflation-adjusted increases. In recent years, the Secretary has reserved somewhat less than \$20 million for these purposes. Apparently all of this reserve is taken from appropriations for Part B grants to states. Thus the Secretary allocates the total appropriation for Section 619 to the states.

²⁰Section 619 defines ‘state’ as the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. There is no set aside for outlying areas, such as American Samoa or the U.S. Virgin Islands. Section 619 requires the Secretary to increase the 1998 allotments for outlying areas under Section 611 (the grants to states program) by the amount they received in FY1997 under Section 619. According to the House Report accompanying the bill (H.R. 5), the intent is to

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- Each state first receives the amount it received in 1997 (when the program was last substantially revised) as a base grant;²¹
- 85% of remaining funds are allocated to states based on states' shares of population ages 3 to 5;
- 15% of remaining funds are allocated based on states' shares of all children ages 3 to 5 living in poverty;
- These initial allocations are then adjusted to ensure that no state receives less than a series of hold harmless and minimum amounts and that no state receives more than a maximum grant amount. A major limit on how much a state gains when funds increase from one year to the next year is that no grant increase is more than the percentage growth in overall appropriations plus or minus 1.5 percentage points.²²

Since overall appropriations for the preschool grants have increased only modestly since FY1997, most of the amounts for subsequent fiscal years are based on the 1997 grant amounts, which in turn were based on numbers of children with disabilities ages 3 to 5 in the various states. In addition, since appropriations have not changed over the last 3 fiscal years, state grants have remained unchanged.

States are allowed to reserve certain amounts from their grants for administration and other state-level activities. The Secretary calculates and reports these amounts to each state. The overall amount for each state is calculated by increasing the state's prior year amount by: the rate of inflation or the percentage increase from the prior year in the state's overall Section 619 grant whichever is less.²³ The state may use not more than 20% of the reserve for administering the grant. The remaining 80% of the reserve is used for other state-wide activities.

²⁰(...continued)

“eliminate funding for the Outlying Areas under the Preschool Grants program and add an amount equivalent to the amount they received in fiscal year 1997 to the fiscal year 1998 allocations the Outlying Areas would otherwise receive under the Grants to States program. This would maintain overall funding for the Outlying Areas while eliminating paperwork associated with their allocations under the Preschool Grants program, which is unduly burdensome for the Outlying Areas given the nominal amount of funding involved.” H.Rept. 105-95, p. 115.

²¹This provision differs from the grants to states formula, which had a trigger appropriation for the new formula. The trigger for that formula was exceeded in FY2000. Thus the base grant for the Part B grants to states formula is each state's FY1999 grant.

²²For example, if overall appropriations were to grow by 20% from one fiscal year to the next, state grant increases would most likely fall between 18.5% (20%-1.5%) and 21.5% (20% + 1.5%).

²³The base amount for the state set-aside was 25% of the FY1997 grant. Since appropriations have grown relatively minimally since FY1997 and not at all in the last 3 fiscal years, state's set-aside amounts presumably have changed very little.

The state allocates the remaining amount (after subtracting the reserve for state activities) to eligible local educational agencies (LEAs)²⁴ based on a formula similar to the federal-to-state formula:

- First the state determines a base grant for each LEA based on what the LEA would have received under the prior-law version of Section 619 as if the state had allocated 75% of its grant to the local level;
- 85% of the remaining funds are allocated based on each LEA's share of public and private school enrollment in the LEA's jurisdiction;
- The remaining 15% is allocated based on each LEA's share of children in poverty, "as determined by the State."; and
- There are no minimum or maximum LEA grant amounts.

State-Level Activities. As noted above, states are limited to using 20% of the state-activities reserve for administering Section 619. This includes coordination with and providing technical assistance to other programs providing services to children with disabilities. If the state educational agency (SEA) is the lead agency for the Part C program (see above), administrative funds from Section 619 may also be used for administering that program.

Section 619 directs states to use the remaining reserved funds for:

- Support services for children with disabilities,
- Certain direct services for preschool children with disabilities,
- Development of a state improvement plan, as required under Subpart 1 of Part D,
- Activities related to performance goals required for all of Part B under Section 612(a)(16), and
- Development and implementation a statewide coordinated services system.²⁵

Characteristics of Children Served. According to ED, nearly 600,000 children with disabilities are being served by the Preschool Grants program. Participation in the program grew rapidly during the early and mid 1990s from about 370,000 to its current level, presumably as a result of more states qualifying for and taking advantage of the program. More recently, growth in participation has leveled off. For example, ED reported an increase of 2.5% in 2000 over the prior year.

ED reports the following breakdown of preschoolers with disabilities:

- 55% are children with speech or language impairments,
- 12% have learning disabilities,

²⁴LEAs are eligible if they are eligible under the Part B grants to states as established by Section 613.

²⁵These systems are more fully described in Section 613(f) with respect to local eligibility under the grant to state program. A major purpose of these systems is to coordinate services provided under IDEA with services provided under other relevant federal programs, such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Medicaid. The state may use not more than 1% of its grant for this purpose.

- 7% are identified with developmental delays,
- 2% are mentally retarded,
- 2% have serious emotional disturbance,
- 2% have other health impairments,
- 2% have physical impairments,
- 2% are autistic,
- 2% have multiple disabilities,
- 1% have hearing impaired, and
- 14% could not be identified using the study sample.²⁶

Other Federal Programs Serving Preschoolers and/or Infants and Toddlers²⁷

Other federal programs support early childhood services. Since IDEA requires coordination with many of these programs, it is useful to briefly consider several of them. These programs currently provide funding for education and care, services to education and care facilities, and tax credits to families for child care. Only the largest programs which explicitly permit funds to be used in part for early education and care are discussed here.²⁸

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is the largest federal program serving disadvantaged children, particularly school-aged children. In addition, after Head Start, it is the largest program providing early education and care to young children. In the 1999-2000 school year, Title I funded approximately \$407 million in preschool services (total Title I funding was approximately \$7.9 billion during that period). School districts that received this funding served approximately 313,000 preschool children (8% of the future kindergarten population in this age group). However, preschool services are not separately funded under Title I — such spending occurs if local educational agencies (LEAs) choose to use some of their Title I funds for this purpose.

The **William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Programs** provide education and related services jointly to parents lacking a high school diploma (or equivalent) and to their young children. Even Start services include basic academic instruction and parenting skills training for the adults, and early childhood education for their children through age 7 (children 8 and older may receive services if they are provided in collaboration with ESEA Title I, Part A), along with necessary supplementary services such as child care or transportation. Even Start received \$250 million in funding for FY2002.

²⁶The U.S. Department of Education FY2002 Budget Justifications, p. H-25. Total may exceed 100% due to rounding.

²⁷This section was prepared by Gail McCallion, based on her CRS Report RL31123, *Early Childhood Education: Federal Policy Issues*.

²⁸Tax credits and programs without early education as a primary focus, are not discussed here. For a discussion of all federal childcare programs including tax credits, see CRS Report RL30944, *Child Care Issues in the 107th Congress*, by Melinda Gish.

The new initiative **Early Reading First, authorized by Title I, Part B Subpart 2 of the No Child Left Behind Act**, will provide competitive grants to LEAs and community based organizations (CBOs) from the Secretary of Education to: provide preschool age children (particularly those from low income families) with greater opportunities for exposure to high-quality language and literature-rich environments, support professional training, support acquisition of scientifically-based instructional material on reading for preschoolers, and promote integration of these materials into existing programs serving preschoolers. This new program received \$75 million in funding for FY2002.

The largest federal program with early education and care as its primary mission is **Head Start**. The program is authorized through FY2003. For FY2002, Head Start's appropriation is \$6.5 billion (\$5.1 billion available in FY2002, \$1.4 billion available in FY2003.)²⁹ The Head Start program provides educational services as well as health, nutrition and other services to low income children to prepare them to enter kindergarten. Grantees are required to reserve at least 10% of their slots for children with disabilities. In 1994 Early Head Start was established so that children younger than 3 could be served in greater numbers by the program. The law mandates that certain amounts of the total Head Start appropriation be set-aside each year for Early Head Start; in FY2002 and FY2003 the set-asides will be 10% each year.

The **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)** is primarily a program to provide child care subsidies to low-income parents and welfare recipients, but also contributes to early education. It is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and is distributed as block grants by formula to the states. FY2002 funding for the program is \$2.1 billion.³⁰ This program's authorization expires at the end of FY2002.

The **Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), authorized by Title XX of the Social Security Act**, is a block grant to states. States are authorized to use SSBG funds for social services, including child care. SSBG is administered by HHS. It is a capped entitlement, with state allocations based on population.³¹ FY2002 funding for the program is \$1.7 billion. In 1999, approximately 13% of SSBG funds were used for child care.

A new program, the **Early Learning Opportunities Act**, proposed by the Clinton Administration was authorized by the FY2001 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 106-554). This program provides grants to communities to enhance school readiness for children under 5 which is administered by HHS; specifically by funding

²⁹ For information on Head Start, see CRS Report RL30952, *Head Start: Background and Funding*, by Alice Butler and Melinda Gish.

³⁰ See CRS Report RL30785, *The Child Care and Development Block Grant: Background and Funding*, by Alice Butler and Melinda Gish.

³¹ States are entitled to their share, according to a formula, of a nationwide funding ceiling or 'cap' which is specified in the statute. See CRS Report 94-953, *Social Services Block Grant (Title XX of the Social Security Act)*, by Melinda Gish.

efforts to improve the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development of these children. This program received \$25 million in funding for FY2002.