NIEER

The State of Preschool 2021

STATE PRESCHOOL YEARBOOK

The National Institute for Early Education Research

RUTGERS
Graduate School of Education

THE STATE OF PRESCHOOL 2021

STATE PRESCHOOL YEARBOOK

By Allison H. Friedman-Krauss, Ph.D.
W. Steven Barnett, Ph.D.
Karin A. Garver, M.A.
Katherine S. Hodges, M.A.
G.G. Weisenfeld, Ed.D.
Beth Ann Gardiner, M.S.Ed
Tracy Merriman Jost, M.Ed

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS – The opinions expressed in this report are solely those of the authors. We wish to thank the Heising-Simons Foundation for supporting data collection and the development, production, and dissemination of this publication. Established in 2007 by husband and wife Mark Heising and Elizabeth (Liz) Simons, The Heising-Simons Foundation is dedicated to advancing sustainable solutions in the environment, supporting groundbreaking research in science, and enhancing the education of the nation's youngest learners. In addition, we wish to thank the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for their support of the State of Preschool report. Finally, the authors would like to extend our thanks to Sandy Ogilvie for her assistance on this report.

This publication is a product of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), a unit of the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. NIEER supports early childhood education policy by providing objective, nonpartisan information based on research.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
EARLY EDUCATION RESEARCH

Design: Sandy Ogilvie Graphic Design sandyogilvie@optonline.net

Table of Contents

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR ACCESS TO ALL DATA WWW.NIEER.ORG/YEARBOOK

Executive Summary

The pandemic has highlighted and intensified longstanding problems in early childhood education (ECE). The pandemic wiped out a decade of progress increasing enrollment in state-funded preschool programs. Large enrollment losses also afflicted preschool special education and Head Start (down by one-third). Yet, even after the nation recovers from the pandemic, most children will lack access to publicly-funded preschool programs, and access to adequately funded programs that meet basic quality standards will remain even less common. Without major changes in public policies, there is no prospect for access to high-quality preschool to meaningfully improve in most of the nation any time soon.

The *2021 State of Preschool* report covers the 2020-2021 school year, the first school year to be fully impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nationwide enrollment in state-funded pre-K declined by more than a quarter-million children from the prior year. All but six states with state-funded preschool programs experienced enrollment declines (See Figure 1), and in some states, enrollment decreased by more than five percentage points. Not surprisingly, state spending on pre-K also fell, but not as much as enrollment because some states protected total funding despite pandemic-induced enrollment declines. However, many states used federal COVID-19 relief funding to offset decreases in state funding, and in some cases, even used these federal funds to increase spending compared to the prior year (See Figure 2). Nevertheless, state funding declined nationwide with reductions in 26 states — some massive. Were it not for the use of federal COVID-19 relief funds and the willingness of some states to sustain preschool spending despite the enrollment declines, the pandemic's impact on funding would have been much worse.

PANDEMIC INTENSIFIED PROBLEMS IN PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT, QUALITY, & FUNDING

ENROLLMENT PROBLEMS

- Enrollment in state-funded preschool dropped for the first time in 20 years, erasing a decade of growth with a decline of more than 298,000 children in one year. The greatest negative impacts have been on low-income and minority preschoolers and their families.[1]
- Even if states recuperate from losses due to the pandemic and return to prior enrollment growth rates, states are likely to enroll just 40 percent of 4-year-olds and 8 percent of 3-year-olds ten years from now.

QUALITY PROBLEMS

- The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously disrupted programs by posing significant health risks, creating staffing shortages, and forcing policy waivers and other accommodations to mitigate risks, which has strained budgets and impeded best practices for children.
- Inadequate quality was a serious concern prior to the pandemic as many states lack policies essential for success.
- Unfortunately, failure to implement effective practice to produce lasting benefits is common and COVID-19 has made it even more difficult and expensive to provide developmentally appropriate activities while mitigating risks of infection through everything from physical distancing to improved ventilation to periodic closures.

SPENDING PROBLEMS

- State spending declined by $254 million (adjusted for inflation) compared to the prior year. However, when including $440 million in federal COVID-19 relief funds, spending increased by $186 million.
- Despite its inadequate level, state spending per child (currently about $5,867) has not improved appreciably in two decades. Consequences of insufficient funding included limiting preschool to a few hours per week in part-day programs, poor pay and benefits, excessive class sizes and ratios, and skimping on supports for implementation of effective practices.

FIGURE 1: PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT DECLINED IN NEARLY EVERY STATE

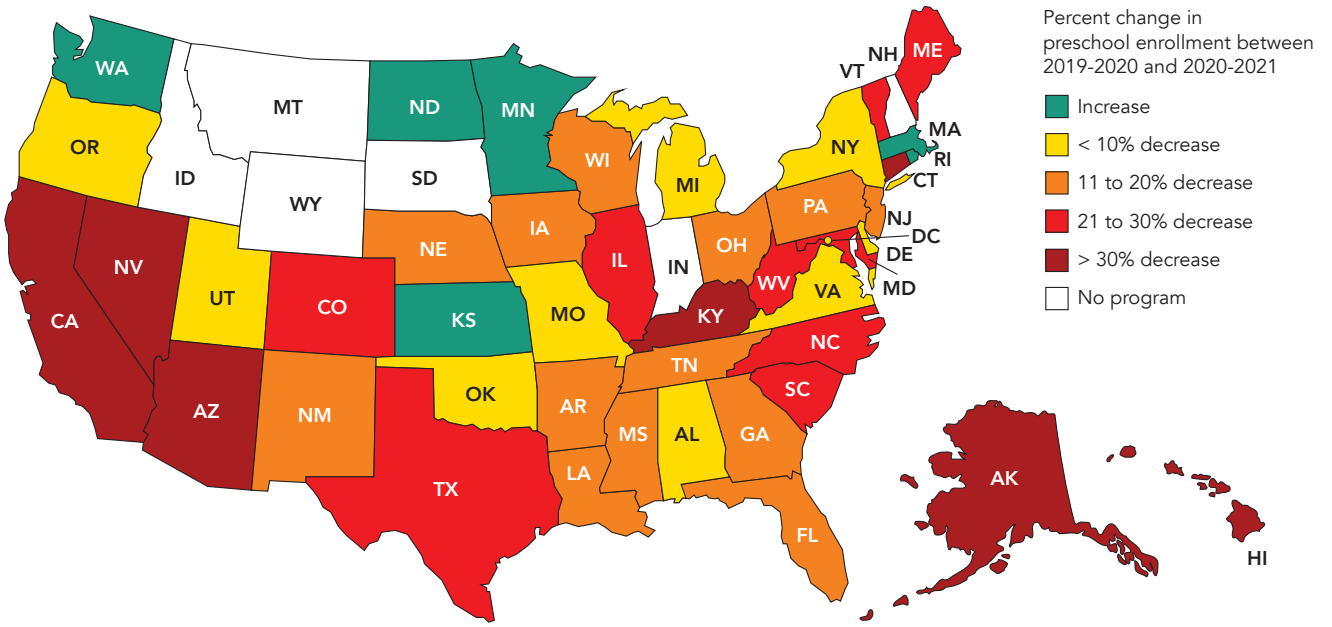
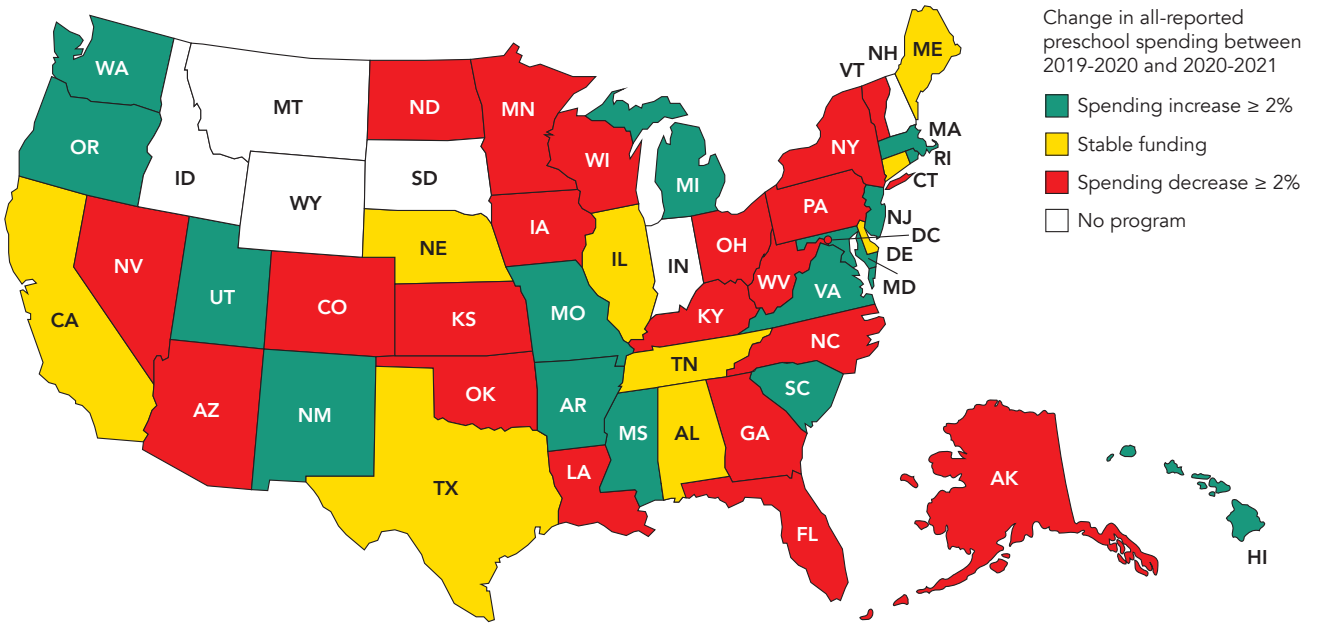


FIGURE 2: PRESCHOOL SPENDING DECLINED IN MANY STATES AS A RESULT OF THE PANDEMIC



FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS ARE POSSIBLE

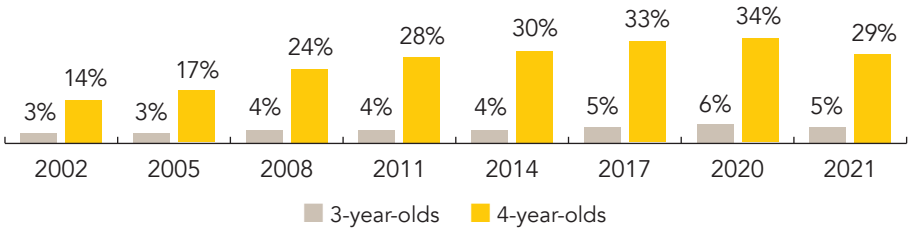
FEDERAL SOLUTIONS

- The preschool provisions in Build Back Better could rapidly improve access to quality, full-day preschool programs. Should this bill not move forward, even a small matching grants program could greatly accelerate progress. For example, a five-year commitment of just $1 billion in Year 1 with another $1 billion added each year up to $5 billion in Year 5, could increase enrollment in high quality programs by one million children within five years. We saw first hand this year that even modest federal funding for preschool can have a meaningful impact.
- The federal government should invest in two streams of preschool research: best practices to mitigate health risks from COVID-19; and best practices to support children's learning and development, school readiness and success, and to prevent any negative impacts, however rare.

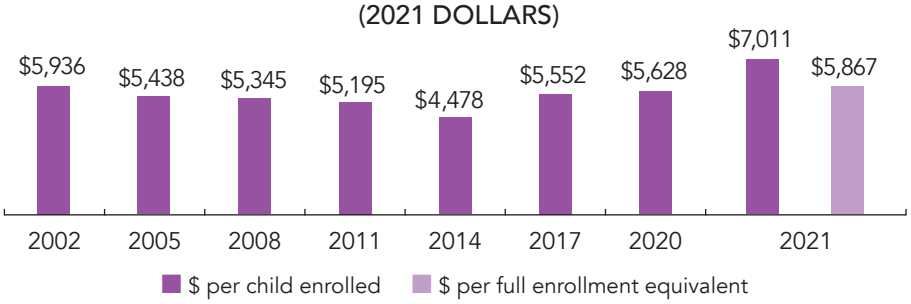
STATE SOLUTIONS

- States should expand access to quality preschool programs particularly for children in low-income and underserved ethnic and racial minority families. States should report the percentage of children served in preschool by income and race/ethnicity annually, as is done for K–12 education. Currently only 60% of preschool programs can do so.
- States that have committed to universal high quality preschool should make this a reality by removing funding caps that limit access and increasing quality where it is far below commonly accepted standards, including pay parity for teachers (See Figure 3).
- States with more limited (or no) preschool program should develop plans to reach at least all low-income children while also improving quality standards. Partnerships with Head Start and child care agencies in mixed-delivery systems that meet high standards for quality could expedite preschool expansion while also leveraging existing physical and human infrastructure (See Figure 4).

PERCENT OF U.S. POPULATION ENROLLED IN STATE-FUNDED PRESCHOOL



AVERAGE STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2021 DOLLARS)



Where is Universal Preschool for 4-Year-Olds Within Reach?

- Including state preschool, Head Start and special education, six states (Florida, Iowa, Oklahoma, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin) and DC were already serving at least 70% of their population of four-year-olds prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Georgia, Maine, and New York, and recently California have committed to universal preschool for 4-year-olds but still have some work to do to reach that goal.
- There are seven other states within striking distance of serving at least 70% of 4-year-olds. In Figure 3, we estimated the number of 4-year-olds these ten states would need to enroll to reach 70% of 4-year-olds.
- We also estimated the Full Cost of serving the unserved 4-year-olds in a preschool program that meets all 10 quality standards benchmarks in a full-day program that provides salary parity for teachers. We also estimate a "state share" of this funding which represents the cost of serving these additional children at current state funding levels.

FIGURE 3: TEN STATES THAT ARE CLOSE TO SERVING 70% OF THE 4-YEAR-OLD POPULATION

State	% of 4-year-olds served in 2019-2020	Enrollment gap to reach 70% of 4-year-olds	Additional funding needed to serve 70% of 4-year-olds	
			Full cost	State share
Georgia	63%	8,696	$100,091,892	$39,136,539
Maine	47%	2,965	$33,430,665	$12,392,887
New York	60%	19,195	$317,213,375	$135,352,501
Arkansas	48%	8,599	$92,420,532	$45,342,300
California	46%	110,787	$1,707,675,146	$878,305,270
Louisiana	45%	15,327	$167,817,953	$30,626,758
Maryland	48%	16,454	$226,182,219	$121,995,435
New Mexico	55%	3,582	$46,470,602	$22,288,161
South Carolina	53%	9,931	$114,822,222	$30,908,206
Texas	54%	60,812	$753,892,023	$178,860,335

What is needed to serve all low-income 3- and 4-year-olds in high quality preschool?

According to the 2019 Community Population Survey, an average of about 54% of low-income preschoolers nationally do not attend any early childhood education program. Figure 4 illustrates enrollment gaps in each state for reaching all low-income 3- and 4-year-olds, as well as estimated full and state costs, as explained above.

FIGURE 4: STATES SHOULD COMMIT TO SERVING AT LEAST ALL LOW-INCOME PRESCHOOLERS

State	Enrollment gap to reach all low-income 3- & 4-year-olds	Additional funding needed	
		Full cost	State share
Alabama	26,592	$260,734,560	$164,517,120
Alaska	3,833	$60,661,058	$16,748,077
Arizona	43,423	$462,498,373	$173,409,224
Arkansas	19,559	$209,711,598	$103,135,787
California	171,904	$2,649,728,256	$1,362,829,632
Colorado	22,521	$263,135,364	$70,026,011
Connecticut	9,282	$146,219,346	$78,340,220
Delaware	5,589	$70,706,439	$40,672,707
District of Columbia	4,020	$77,239,834	$77,239,834
Florida	107,023	$1,219,634,108	$237,803,812
Georgia	54,923	$632,163,730	$247,179,867
Hawaii	6,955	$90,250,641	$90,250,641
Idaho	10,949	$119,234,610	$119,234,610
Illinois	41,755	$504,692,685	$202,436,396
Indiana	36,589	$411,589,661	$411,589,661
Iowa	12,821	$148,287,686	$48,274,386
Kansas	15,376	$168,505,584	$75,984,985
Kentucky	30,654	$353,501,928	$134,812,501
Louisiana	33,058	$361,952,042	$66,056,208
Maine	4,395	$49,558,020	$18,371,365
Maryland	21,367	$293,710,782	$158,418,177
Massachusetts	20,976	$315,311,232	$31,721,423
Michigan	50,254	$617,571,406	$349,657,809
Minnesota	22,867	$288,078,466	$136,692,086
Mississippi	21,198	$213,485,058	$53,418,808
Missouri	26,333	$308,728,092	$101,262,611
Montana	5,515	$65,054,940	$65,054,940
Nebraska	10,345	$126,529,695	$20,644,046
Nevada	19,301	$238,502,457	$119,142,671
New Hampshire	3,362	$41,601,388	$41,601,388
New Jersey	28,097	$443,298,445	$443,298,445
New Mexico	16,342	$212,021,108	$101,689,250
New York	70,641	$1,167,413,166	$498,126,197
North Carolina	53,965	$557,890,170	$203,161,322
North Dakota	3,780	$42,638,400	$1,586,009
Ohio	72,588	$864,595,668	$290,352,000
Oklahoma	28,421	$271,250,024	$131,958,081
Oregon	21,028	$304,422,356	$268,905,751
Pennsylvania	41,529	$506,695,329	$294,386,378
Rhode Island	3,720	$50,778,000	$28,985,728
South Carolina	30,983	$358,225,446	$96,428,249
South Dakota	5,614	$54,006,680	$54,006,680
Tennessee	36,435	$399,036,120	$162,494,753
Texas	166,649	$2,065,947,653	$490,144,580
Utah	17,201	$178,769,993	$14,308,307
Vermont	1,561	$19,417,279	$9,492,389
Virginia	29,603	$403,281,669	$118,709,868
Washington	25,055	$352,122,970	$243,109,737
West Virginia	8,153	$84,799,353	$55,276,718
Wisconsin	25,130	$309,626,730	$88,934,594
Wyoming	3,325	$44,541,700	$44,541,700
U.S. Total	**1,552,559**	**$19,459,357,298**	**$8,456,423,736**

TABLE 1: STATE RANKINGS AND QUALITY CHECKLIST SUMS

STATE	Access for 4-year-olds rank	Access for 3-year-olds rank	Resources rank based on state spending	Resources rank based on all reported spending	**Quality standards checklist sum (maximum of 10)**
Alabama	16	None served	18	12	10
Alaska	42	27	30	37	2
Arizona	45	24	34	39	3
Arkansas	24	6	12	6	8
California	22	19	8	18	4.5
Colorado	26	13	39	31	4
Connecticut	32	9	7	16	5.1
Delaware	40	25	13	21	9
District of Columbia	1	1	1	1	4
Florida	4	None served	41	44	2
Georgia	8	None served	27	35	8
Hawaii	44	None served	3	3	9.6
Illinois	23	4	24	29	8
Iowa	3	22	36	40	7
Kansas	11	8	22	33	5
Kentucky	25	16	26	19	8
Louisiana	21	32	28	36	7.9
Maine	15	None served	32	14	9
Maryland	18	21	11	5	7
Massachusetts	14	3	43	32	5.5
Michigan	19	None served	17	24	GSRP: 10; DK: 1
Minnesota*	35	31	21	26	5.4
Mississippi	38	None served	40	25	10
Missouri*	39	26	35	41	4.1
Nebraska	17	7	42	13	7
Nevada	41	None served	6	11	5
New Jersey	20	5	2	2	8
New Mexico	13	11	10	20	9
New York	9	17	16	23	7
North Carolina	27	None served	19	15	8
North Dakota	33	None served	45	45	2
Ohio	37	23	33	38	5
Oklahoma	2	20	25	7	9
Oregon	34	12	4	4	7
Pennsylvania*	28	10	15	22	6.8
Rhode Island	31	None served	9	10	10
South Carolina	12	33	38	42	7
Tennessee	29	30	29	30	9
Texas	10	14	31	34	4
Utah	43	28	44	43	3
Vermont	5	2	20	28	7
Virginia	30	29	23	17	6
Washington	36	15	5	9	ECEAP: 9; TK: 6
West Virginia	6	18	14	8	9
Wisconsin	7	34	37	27	3
Idaho	No program	No program	No program	No program	No program
Indiana	No program	No program	No program	No program	No program
Montana	No program	No program	No program	No program	No program
New Hampshire	No program	No program	No program	No program	No program
South Dakota	No program	No program	No program	No program	No program
Wyoming	No program	No program	No program	No program	No program

* At least one program in these states did not break down total enrollment figures into specific numbers of 3- and 4-year-olds served. As a result, enrollment by single year of age was estimated.

NATIONAL ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment, all ages 1,358,247

State-funded preschool programs ..... 63 programs in 44 states and DC[1]

Income requirement ..... 34 state programs have an income requirement

Minimum hours of operation ..... 24 part-day; 14 school-day; 6 extended-day; 19 determined locally[2]

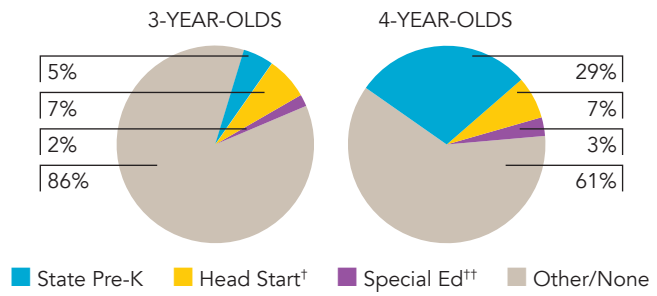
Operating schedule ..... 1 full calendar year; 45 school/academic year; 17 determined locally

Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 410,931

Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ..... 622,259[3]

State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ..... 12,705[4]

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN ECE



† Some Head Start children may also be counted in state pre-K.
†† Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST SUMMARY

POLICY	BENCHMARK	OF THE 63 STATE-FUNDED PRE-K INITIATIVES, NUMBER MEETING BENCHMARK
Early learning & development standards	**Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive**	**58**
Curriculum supports	**Approval process & supports**	**55**
Teacher degree	**BA**	**36**
Teacher specialized training	**Specializing in pre-K**	**51**
Assistant teacher degree	**CDA or equivalent**	**19**
Staff professional development	**For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; Individual PD plans; Coaching**	**18**
Maximum class size	**20 or lower**	**47**
Staff-child ratio	**1:10 or better**	**49**
Screening & referral	**Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral**	**41**
Continuous quality improvement system	**Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement**	**39**

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

NATIONAL RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending $9,420,322,443

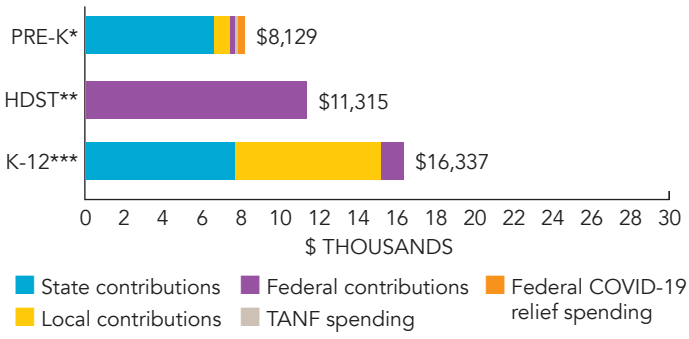
Local match required? 11

State Head Start spending ..... $274,808,955[5]

State spending per child enrolled ..... $7,011[6]

All reported spending per child enrolled* $8,129

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED



* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.

** Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.

*** K–12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

[1] Throughout this report, the District of Columbia is included like a state, resulting in a list of 45 states for rankings. In 2015-2016, Guam began offering a "state"-funded pre-K program but is not included in totals or rankings in this report.

[2] NIEER's definitions of hours of operation are as follows: part-day programs serve children for fewer than 4 hours per day; school-day programs serve children at least 4 hours per day but fewer than 6.5 hours per day; and extended-day programs serve children for 6.5 or more hours per day. Some programs offer multiple hours of operation but only the minimum one is listed here.

[3] The enrollment figures for federal Head Start include children enrolled in the program in all 50 states, DC, and the U.S. territories, as well as enrollment in the Migrant & Seasonal and American Indiana/Native Alaskan programs. These numbers do not include children funded by state match.

[4] This figure is based on the Head Start enrollment supported by state match as reported by ACF and additional information from surveys of state supplemental Head Start programs. This figure includes 11,661 children who attended programs that were considered to be state-funded preschool programs and are also included in the state-funded preschool enrollment total.

[5] This figure includes $178,269,573 also included in the total state pre-K spending.

[6] This figure included federal TANF funds and federal COVID-19 relief funds directed toward preschool at states' discretion.

WHAT'S NEW?

RESOURCES

- Total state funding for preschool programs in 2020-2021 declined for the first time since 2014, the largest decline since the Great Recession (See Figure 5). States spent $8.98 billion on pre-K, an inflation adjusted decrease of almost $254 million (3%) from the previous year. When including nearly $440 million in federal COVID-19 relief funding, preschool funding increased by $186 million (adjusted for inflation).
- Twenty-six states reported inflation-adjusted decreases in state spending for preschool. Many states reported preschool funding was held harmless to protect the program infrastructure during the pandemic. Nine states increased spending on preschool by more than $10 million, led by Maryland with an $84 million increase and New Jersey with a $78 million increase as both states expanded preschool access with an emphasis on quality.
- Average state funding per child enrolled was $7,011 in 2020-2021, an inflation adjusted increase of $1,383 or 25% (See Figure 6). This is mostly the result of pandemic-related declines in enrollment while many states maintained spending to keep program capacity in place, though a few states such as Maryland increased spending.
- For 2020-2021 a more accurate metric for comparison with prior years is spending per full enrollment equivalent (FEE), which accounts for capacity rather than actual enrollment. We can only estimate this, but nationally, funding per FEE was approximately $5,867, which is still an increase of $240 from the prior year, adjusted for inflation.
- All-reported spending, which includes local and federal dollars, to the extent states can report them, was $10.94 billion, an inflation-adjusted increase of 2.7%. All-reported spending per child was $8,129. All-reported spending per FEE was $6,804.

FIGURE 5: TOTAL STATE SPENDING ON PRESCHOOL HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES, ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION (IN BILLIONS)

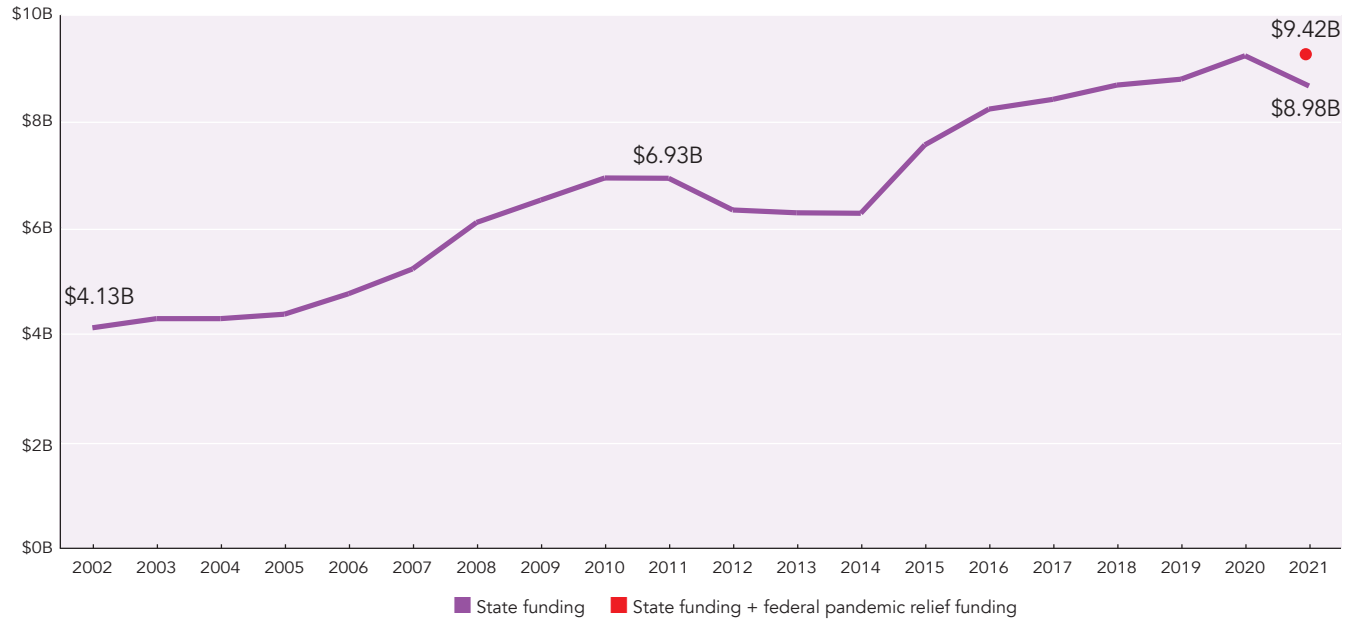
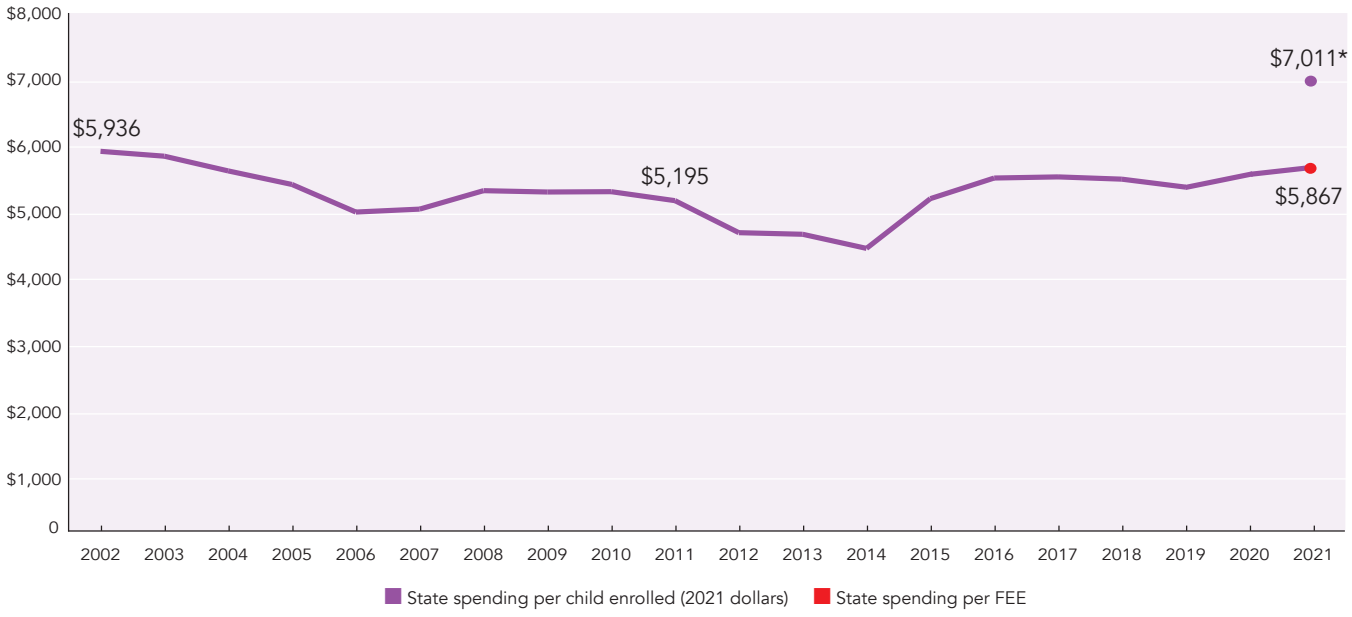


FIGURE 6: STATE SPENDING PER CHILD HAS NOT CHANGED IN TWO DECADES, ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION



*Spending per child enrolled was artificially high compared to spending per child in planned enrollment (actual capacity) due to enrollment declines from the COVID-19 pandemic. Full enrollment (capacity) spending per child is reported as the most relevant figure for long-term trend analysis.

ENROLLMENT

- States enrolled almost 1.36 million children in state-funded preschool, including 1.15 million 4-year-olds and 187,000 3-year-olds. Almost all the enrollment increase over the past decade was erased in the pandemic (See Figure 7). States served 29% of 4-year-olds and less than 5% of 3-year-olds in 2020-2021.
- Enrollment in state-funded preschool nationwide decreased by 298,000 children, or 18%. This is the first time in 20 years there has been a decline in state-funded preschool enrollment nationally. Additionally, many children included in the enrollment totals experienced remote learning for at least part of the school year.
- Six states had an increase in total preschool enrollment. Several other states had planned expansion of preschool programs but did not see enrollment increases even though they had the capacity and funding to do so.
- DC and six states served more than 50% of 4-year-olds. Only D.C. served more than 70% of 4-year-olds (84%). DC was also the only one to enroll more than 50% of 3-year-olds (64%). See Figures 8 and 9.
- Across all public programs — preschool general and special education plus federal- and state-funded Head Start — 39% of 4-year-olds and 14% of 3-year-olds were served. The pandemic negatively impacted enrollment in early childhood special education (down 16%) and Head Start (down 33%) as well as state-funded preschool.
- Twelve states, DC, and Guam offer at least a school-day (at least 4 hours per day) pre-K program to all children enrolled. Eleven other states serve at least 80% of children in school-day programs (See Figure 10).
- Nearly all states serve a portion of children enrolled in state-funded preschool programs outside of the public schools (See Figure 11). In 2020-2021, at least eight states served more than half of children in state-funded preschool outside of public schools in settings such as private child care and Head Start. Models for providing mixed delivery of preschool vary from state to state.

FIGURE 7: THE PANDEMIC WIPED OUT A DECADE OF PROGRESS IN PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

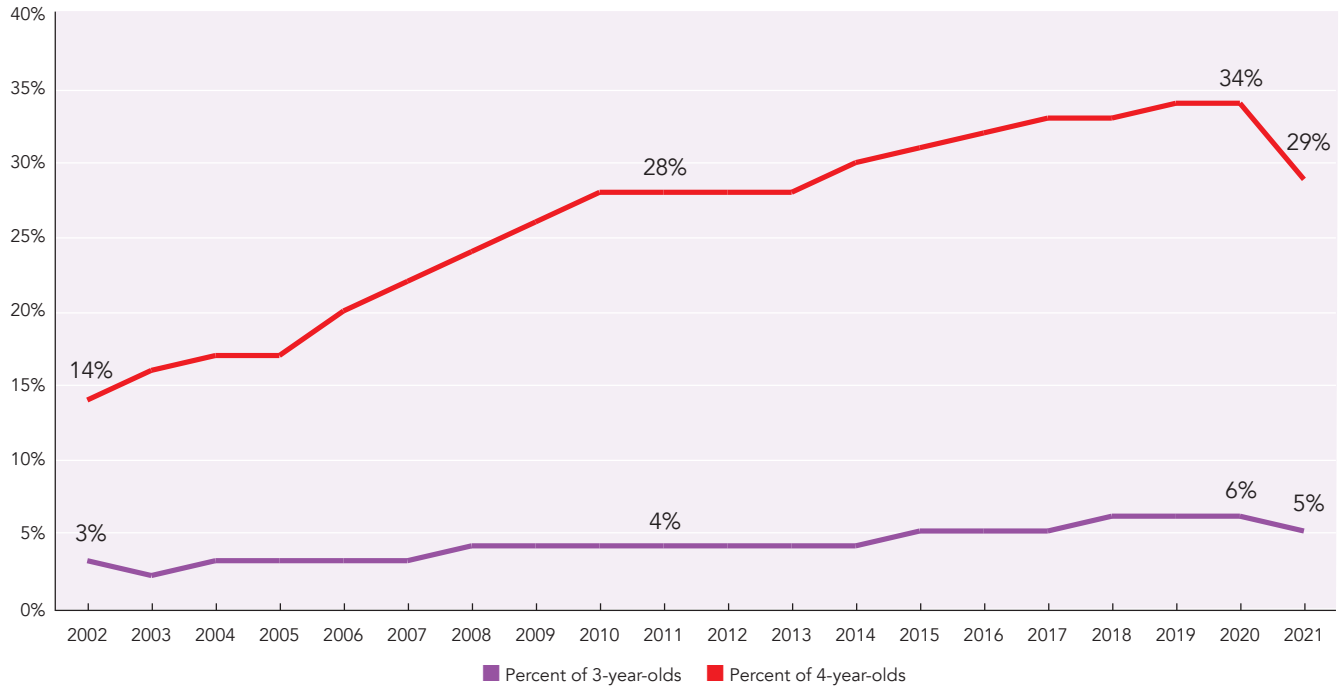


FIGURE 8: LARGE INEQUITIES BETWEEN STATES IN PRESCHOOL ACCESS FOR 4-YEAR-OLDS

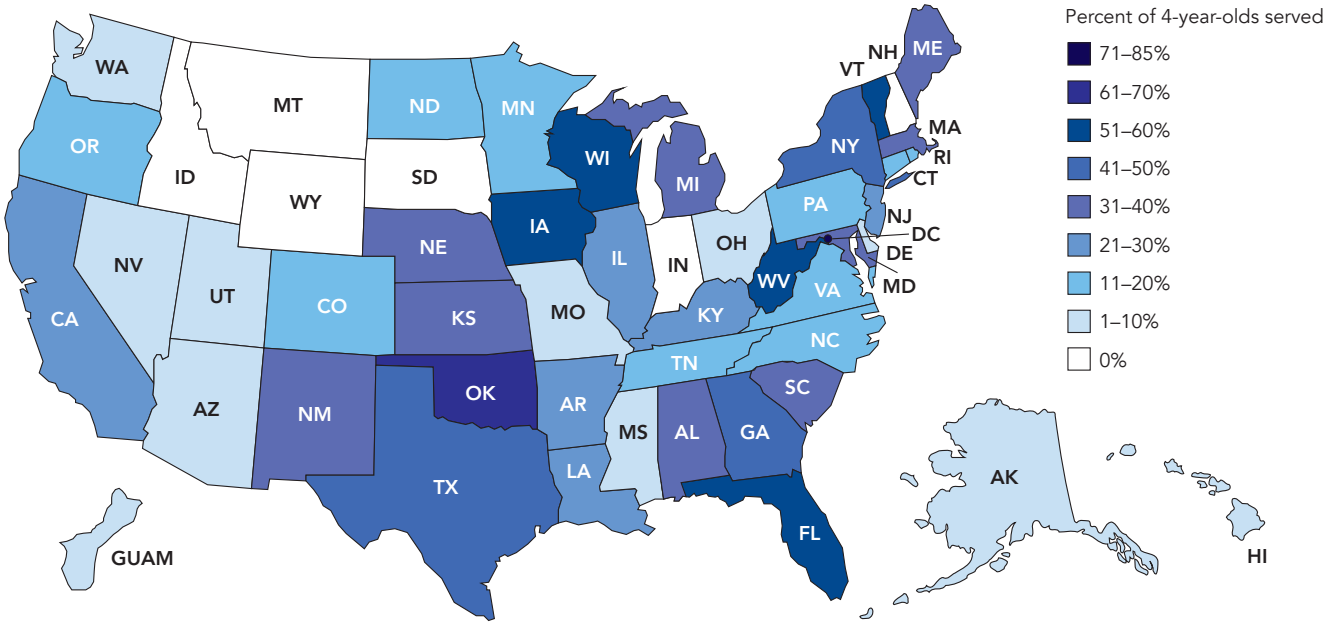


FIGURE 9: ONLY DC SERVED MORE THAN HALF OF 3-YEAR-OLDS

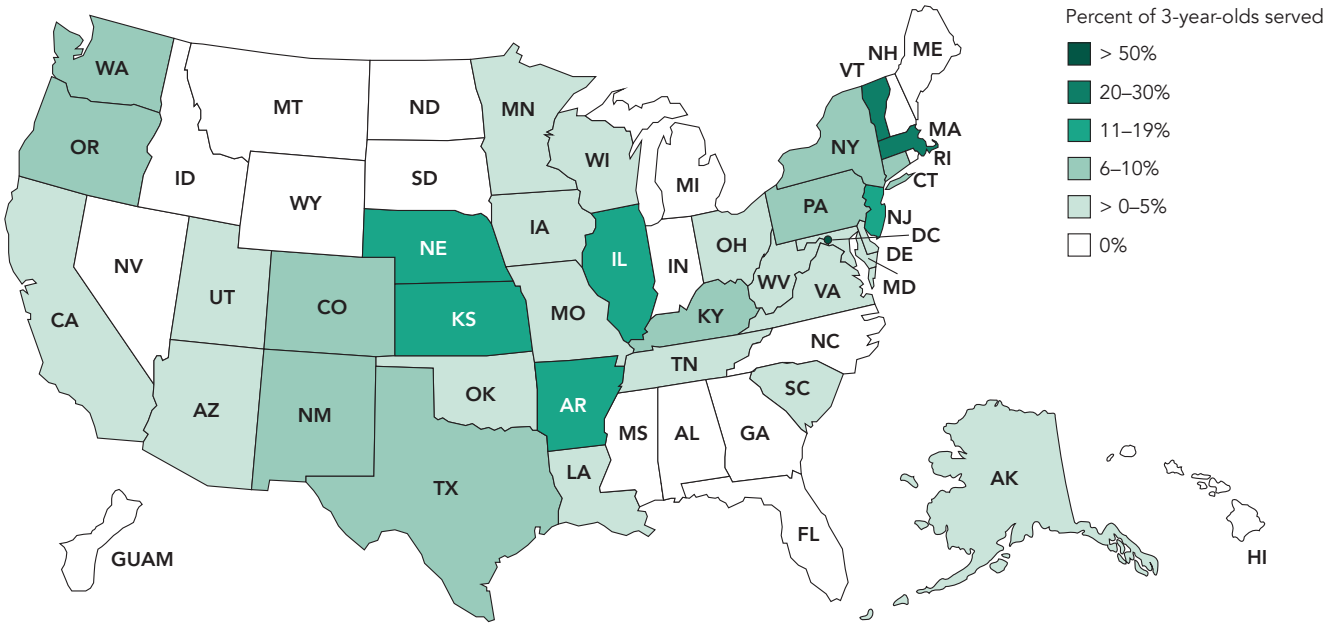


FIGURE 10: MOST STATES PROVIDED AT LEAST A SCHOOL-DAY PROGRAM TO THE MAJORITY OF PRESCHOOLERS

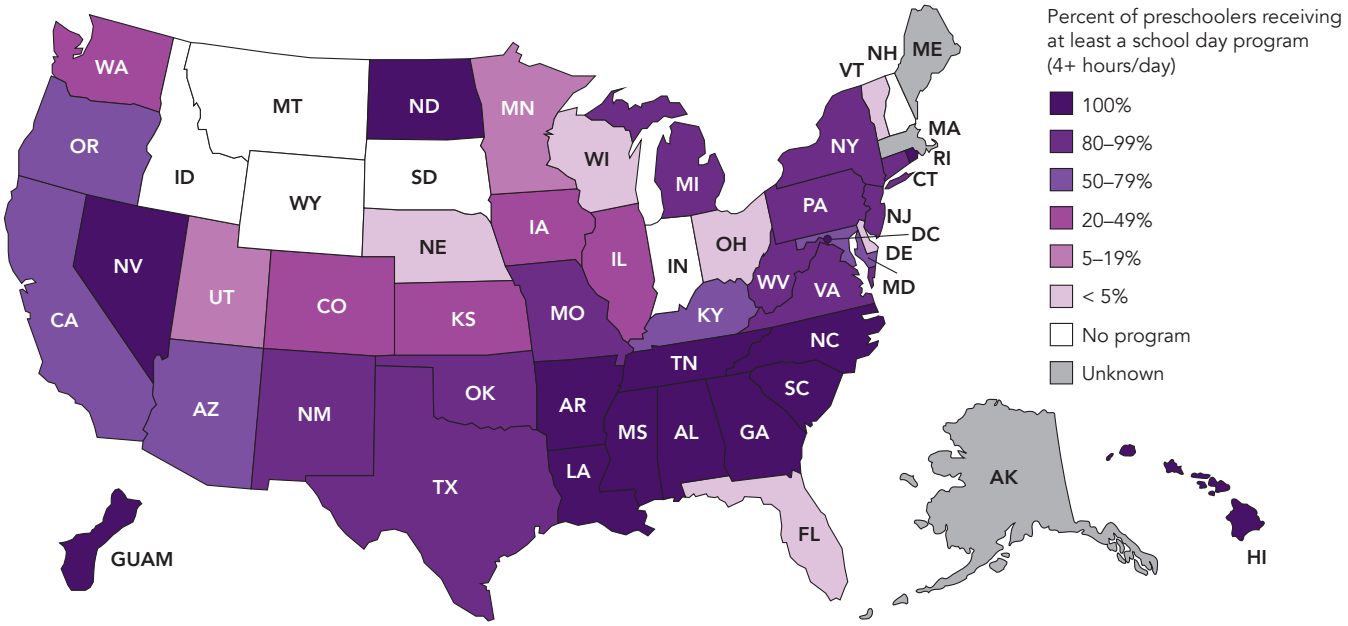
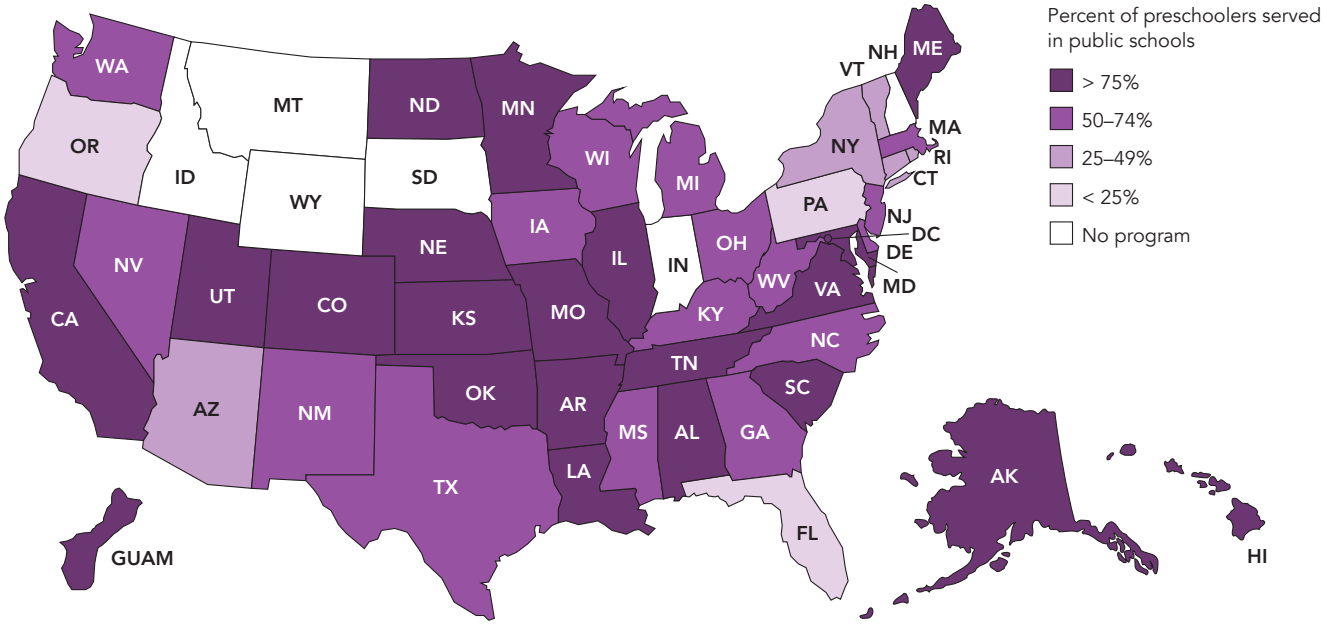


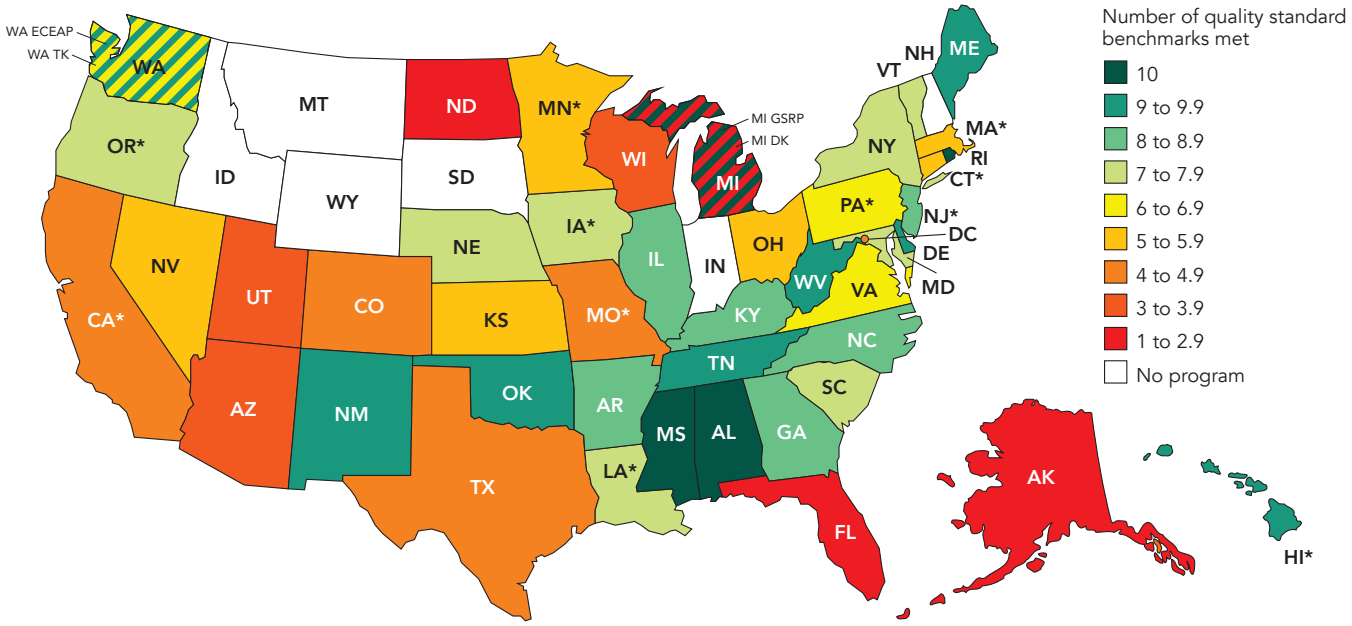
FIGURE 11: MOST STATES SERVED THE MAJORITY OF PRESCHOOLERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



QUALITY STANDARDS

- Alabama, Hawaii's Executive Office on Early Learning Public Prekindergarten Program, Michigan's Great Start Readiness Program, Mississippi, and Rhode Island remained the only programs to meet all 10 of NIEER's benchmarks for minimum state preschool quality standards (See Figure 12).
- Three state-funded preschool programs gained one quality standard benchmark as a result of a policy change: Kansas reduced class sizes and newly meets the class size benchmark. Utah required classroom observations in randomly selected classrooms, meeting the continuous quality improvement system benchmark for the first time. And Washington Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program required both lead and assistant teachers to have annual individualized professional development plans, meeting the staff professional development benchmark for the first time.
- Fourteen state-funded preschool programs met fewer than half of the quality standard benchmarks, including three of the four largest programs. Thirty-eight percent of children in state-funded preschool were in a program meeting fewer than half of the quality standards benchmarks. Only 11% were in a program meeting 9 or 10 benchmarks.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many states made exceptions to policies. The most common waivers were to classroom observations, child assessments, and staff qualifications. For this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NIEER's determination of benchmarks met was based on policy, rather than exceptions to the policies related to the pandemic. Therefore, actual standards related to quality may have been lower in some places.

FIGURE 12: TOO MANY STATES MET FEWER THAN HALF OF THE STANDARDS FOR MINIMUM PROGRAM QUALITY



*For states with more than one state-funded preschool program, the weighted average number of quality standards met is shown on the map.

IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

- Two new programs are included in this report for the first time: Michigan's Developmental Kindergarten served 9,018 children and Washington's Transitional Kindergarten served 856 children. The addition of these two programs to this report reflects a trend of locally controlled education programs for preschool-age children.
- The Wisconsin Head Start State Supplement is no longer included in the report as a state-funded preschool program as it no longer meets the report's definition of a state-funded preschool program.
- A supplemental survey about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on state-funded preschool found these impacts, in addition to those on enrollment and spending:
  - More than half of states made changes to required preschool assessments including waiving them completely, requiring fewer time points, and/or doing them virtually.
  - Eight programs provided recruitment and/or retention bonuses for lead teachers.
  - Thirteen states offered a summer learning program as a result of the pandemic.
  - Nearly all states provided a mix of remote learning and in-person instruction during the 2020-2021 but began the 2021-2022 school year with in-person instruction.

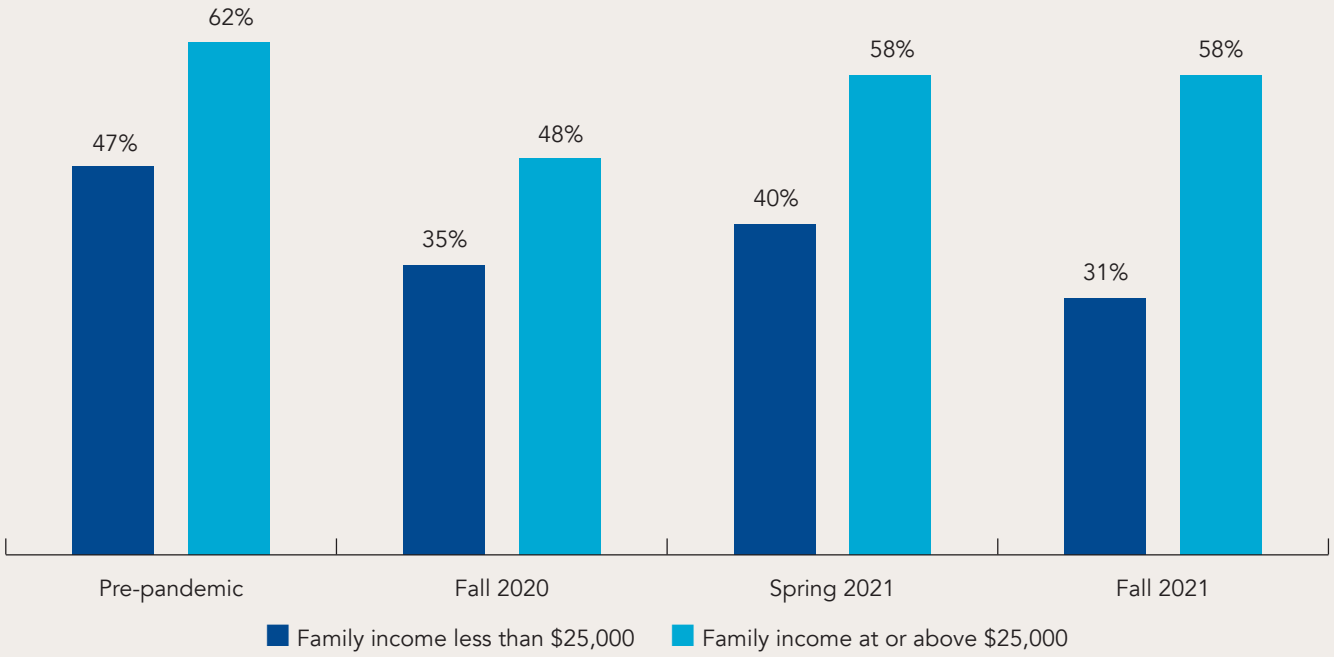
This 19th edition of the *State of Preschool*, the National Institute for Early Education Research's (NIEER) report on our annual survey of state preschool policies, includes information for every state on child enrollment, funding, staffing, and quality standards. It also includes information about where children are served, characteristics of the children served, preschool program operating schedules, eligibility requirements, and other program features. The survey focused on the 2020-2021 school year and now includes 20 years of data dating back to 2002. Our report summarizes valuable information from the survey for policy-makers regarding the long-term trends and the immediate impacts of the pandemic.

Beyond the Yearbook Survey

NIEER has conducted a series of national surveys of parents of preschool-age children since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. These surveys provide additional information not available from the State of Preschool survey, for example, on preschool enrollment in the current year and with breakdowns by family income. Particularly noteworthy are two findings for the current school year.

- Enrollment in all preschool programs, including public and private, rebounded by Fall 2021 from the 2020-2021 school year but remained about five percentage points lower than before the pandemic. All the ground lost has not been regained.
- The reduction in preschool participation in 2020-2021 and in Fall 2021 due to the pandemic is much larger for children in low-income families than for others (See Figure 13).

FIGURE 13: THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC DISPROPORTIONALLY AFFECTED PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT FOR LOW-INCOME CHILDREN



Note: Preschool enrollment includes children enrolled in in-person, virtual, and hybrid learning in both public and nonpublic early childhood education programs

[1] Barnett., W. S., & Jung, K. (2021). Seven Impacts of the Pandemic on Young Children and their Parents: Initial findings from NIEER's December 2020 Preschool Learning Activities Survey. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.

TABLE 2: STATE PRESCHOOL ACCESS BY STATE

ACCESS FOR 4-YEAR-OLDS RANK	STATE	PERCENT OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN STATE PREKINDERGARTEN (2020-2021)			NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN STATE PREKINDERGARTEN (2020-2021)		
		4-year-olds	3-year-olds	Total (3s and 4s)	4-year-olds	3-year-olds	Total (3s and 4s)
1	District of Columbia	84%	64%	74%	7,220	5,596	12,816
2	Oklahoma	64%	3%	34%	34,456	1,623	36,079
3	Iowa	59%	3%	31%	23,697	1,116	24,813
4	Florida	58%	0%	29%	136,142	0	136,142
5	Vermont	57%	30%	44%	3,425	1,778	5,203
6	West Virginia	56%	5%	31%	10,540	1,015	11,555
7	Wisconsin	56%	.1%	28%	37,843	42	37,885
8	Georgia	49%	0%	25%	66,554	0	66,554
9	New York	46%	6%	26%	102,400	13,197	115,597
10	Texas	41%	7%	24%	169,796	26,425	196,221
11	Kansas	39%	14%	27%	15,111	5,037	20,148
12	South Carolina	35%	.1%	18%	21,061	38	21,099
13	New Mexico	34%	8%	21%	8,540	1,848	10,388
14	Massachusetts	34%	22%	28%	24,275	15,469	39,744
15	Maine	33%	0%	17%	4,413	0	4,413
16	Alabama	31%	0%	16%	18,906	0	18,906
17	Nebraska	31%	15%	23%	8,254	4,026	12,280
18	Maryland	31%	3%	17%	22,840	2,225	25,065
19	Michigan	31%	0%	16%	35,793	0	35,793
20	New Jersey	29%	16%	22%	30,435	16,460	46,895
21	Louisiana	28%	.2%	14%	17,363	100	17,463
22	California	27%	5%	16%	132,559	21,444	154,003
23	Illinois	27%	17%	22%	41,621	24,840	66,461
24	Arkansas	27%	16%	21%	10,421	5,879	16,300
25	Kentucky	21%	6%	14%	11,690	3,246	14,936
26	Colorado	20%	7%	14%	13,431	4,757	18,188
27	North Carolina	19%	0%	10%	23,718	0	23,718
28	Pennsylvania	19%	8%	13%	26,586	11,380	37,967
29	Tennessee	18%	1%	9%	14,959	642	15,601
30	Virginia	17%	1%	9%	17,234	822	18,056
31	Rhode Island	16%	0%	8%	1,848	0	1,848
32	Connecticut	15%	9%	12%	5,643	3,120	8,763
33	North Dakota	12%	0%	6%	1,354	0	1,354
34	Oregon	11%	7%	9%	5,336	3,293	8,629
35	Minnesota	11%	1%	6%	7,743	394	8,137
36	Washington	10%	6%	8%	9,860	5,567	15,427
37	Ohio	9%	2%	5%	12,621	2,431	15,052
38	Mississippi	7%	0%	4%	2,727	0	2,727
39	Missouri	7%	1%	4%	5,350	1,023	6,374
40	Delaware	6%	2%	4%	661	169	830
41	Nevada	5%	0%	3%	1,969	0	1,969
42	Alaska	5%	1%	3%	520	116	636
43	Utah	3%	1%	2%	1,566	517	2,083
44	Hawaii	2%	0%	1%	391	0	391
45	Arizona	2%	2%	2%	1,821	1,358	3,179
No program	Idaho	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0
No program	Indiana	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0
No program	Montana	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0
No program	New Hampshire	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0
No program	South Dakota	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0
No program	Wyoming	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0
	50 states + DC	**29%**	**5%**	**17%**	**1,150,694**	**186,994**	**1,337,688**
	Guam	2%	0%	1%	50	0	50

For details about how these figures were calculated, see the Methodology section and Roadmap to the State Profile Pages.
*Nationwide, an additional 20,559 children of other ages were enrolled in state prekindergarten, for a total of 1,358,247 children.

TABLE 3: CHANGE IN PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT OVER TIME

	ENROLLMENT CHANGES FROM 2001-2002 TO 2020-2021				ENROLLMENT CHANGES FROM 2019-2020 TO 2020-2021			
	Change in 3-year-olds		Change in 4-year-olds		Change in 3-year-olds		Change in 4-year-olds	
STATE	Number	% served	Number	% served	Number	% served	Number	% served
Alabama	0	0.0%	18,150	30.1%	0	0.0%	-1,533	-2.5%
Alaska	116	1.2%	520	4.9%	-165	-1.5%	-603	-5.9%
Arizona	1,358	1.6%	-2,456	-3.5%	-354	-0.4%	-1,066	-1.1%
Arkansas	4,937	13.0%	8,197	20.8%	-772	-1.6%	-2,363	-6.0%
California	10,520	2.3%	88,025	19.0%	-34,794	-7.1%	-49,832	-9.3%
Colorado	4,027	5.9%	5,111	5.8%	-1,641	-2.3%	-3,107	-4.3%
Connecticut	1,585	5.2%	1,226	5.6%	-2,305	-6.1%	-2,343	-5.9%
Delaware	169	1.5%	-182	-2.1%	-94	-0.8%	79	0.6%
District of Columbia	4,471	44.0%	4,209	39.5%	-839	-9.0%	-136	-0.5%
Florida	0	0.0%	136,142	57.7%	0	0.0%	-30,584	-14.0%
Georgia	0	0.0%	2,941	-4.1%	0	0.0%	-13,774	-9.9%
Hawaii	0	0.0%	391	2.2%	0	0.0%	-287	-1.7%
Idaho	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Illinois	10,742	8.7%	2,719	5.8%	-9,472	-5.6%	-9,059	-5.5%
Indiana	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Iowa	605	1.5%	22,141	54.9%	-323	-0.7%	-3,038	-7.0%
Kansas	5,037	13.6%	12,881	33.5%	3,641	9.9%	3,738	9.7%
Kentucky	-1,626	-3.3%	-1,127	-2.8%	-2,912	-5.2%	-5,039	-9.0%
Louisiana	100	0.2%	9,844	16.3%	100	0.2%	-3,092	-5.1%
Maine	0	0.0%	2,973	23.7%	0	0.0%	-1,473	-10.8%
Maryland	817	1.1%	4,466	5.7%	-215	-0.2%	-7,829	-10.4%
Massachusetts	6,037	9.9%	14,843	22.1%	3,447	5.0%	2,661	3.9%
Michigan	0	0.0%	9,316	11.7%	0	0.0%	-1,575	-1.2%
Minnesota*	-421	-0.7%	6,473	8.8%	-142	-0.2%	157	0.2%
Mississippi	0	0.0%	2,727	7.3%	0	0.0%	-337	-0.8%
Missouri*	-1,523	-2.1%	1,664	2.2%	-127	-0.2%	-291	-0.4%
Montana	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Nebraska	3,902	14.7%	7,898	29.5%	-294	-0.9%	-1,034	-3.1%
Nevada	-111	-0.4%	1,648	4.0%	0	0.0%	-1,101	-2.8%
New Hampshire	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
New Jersey	3,675	4.6%	6,554	8.4%	-5,799	-5.3%	-2,719	-2.7%
New Mexico	1,378	5.8%	8,170	32.5%	278	1.4%	-1,957	-7.0%
New York	7,362	3.6%	38,901	21.3%	2,474	1.2%	-7,016	-2.3%
North Carolina	0	0.0%	22,478	17.8%	0	0.0%	-7,341	-6.0%
North Dakota	0	0.0%	1,354	12.4%	0	0.0%	119	1.2%
Ohio	-7,283	-4.7%	-1,264	0.0%	644	0.5%	-3,462	-2.4%
Oklahoma	1,623	3.2%	8,577	8.7%	-1,216	-2.2%	-2,761	-5.6%
Oregon	2,184	4.8%	2,747	5.6%	-293	-0.4%	-438	-0.8%
Pennsylvania*	11,380	8.1%	24,036	17.0%	-3,678	-2.4%	-5,460	-3.6%
Rhode Island	0	0.0%	1,848	16.4%	0	0.0%	428	3.7%
South Carolina	-312	-0.6%	5,411	5.4%	-219	-0.4%	-7,622	-12.2%
South Dakota	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Tennessee	-200	-0.3%	13,201	15.6%	434	0.5%	-3,298	-4.0%
Texas	6,684	0.4%	42,213	1.4%	-10,672	-2.4%	-41,473	-9.9%
Utah	517	1.1%	1,566	3.1%	-2	0.0%	-137	-0.2%
Vermont	1,409	25.0%	2,805	48.4%	-1,694	-28.3%	-1,197	-19.4%
Virginia	822	0.8%	11,356	10.2%	822	0.8%	-1,925	-2.0%
Washington	4,418	4.6%	5,075	4.4%	233	0.3%	1,194	1.2%
West Virginia	-753	-3.2%	5,455	31.5%	-217	-1.0%	-2,851	-12.4%
Wisconsin	-646	-0.9%	24,339	36.4%	-360	-0.5%	-8,608	-12.1%
Wyoming	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
United States	**83,000**	**2.1%**	**585,563**	**14.2%**	**-66,526**	**-1.6%**	**-229,384**	**-5.5%**
Guam	0	0.0%	50	1.6%	0	0.0%	-21	-0.6%

* At least one program in these states did not break down total enrollment figures into specific numbers of 3- and 4-year-olds served. As a result, the figures in the table are estimates.

TABLE 4: 2020-2021 ENROLLMENT OF 3- AND 4-YEAR-OLDS IN STATE PRESCHOOL, PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION, AND FEDERAL AND STATE HEAD START

	PRE-K + PRE-K SPECIAL EDUCATION				PRE-K + PRE-K SPECIAL EDUCATION + HEAD START††			
	3-year-olds		4-year-olds		3-year-olds		4-year-olds	
STATE	Number enrolled	% of state population	Number enrolled	% of state population	Number enrolled	% of state population	Number enrolled	% of state population
Alabama†	801	1.4%	20,014	33.2%	6,104	10.3%	24,187	40.2%
Alaska*	374	3.7%	1,076	10.2%	1,346	13.4%	2,386	22.7%
Arizona	3,584	4.1%	6,082	6.8%	9,071	10.4%	14,514	16.3%
Arkansas	6,653	17.7%	12,884	33.2%	9,515	25.3%	15,948	41.1%
California	30,233	6.4%	141,790	29.4%	62,150	13.1%	178,342	37.0%
Colorado	6,617	10.0%	16,420	24.2%	9,730	14.7%	20,900	30.8%
Connecticut†	4,916	13.4%	8,036	21.5%	6,773	18.5%	9,959	26.6%
Delaware	888	8.0%	1,606	14.1%	1,535	13.9%	2,471	21.7%
District of Columbia†	5,596	64.0%	7,547	87.3%	5,899	67.5%	7,621	88.2%
Florida*	4,868	2.1%	136,142	57.7%	19,344	8.4%	153,922	65.2%
Georgia†	1,824	1.4%	68,317	50.6%	11,503	8.7%	73,644	54.6%
Hawaii	551	3.3%	1,217	6.9%	1,461	8.6%	2,528	14.4%
Idaho	514	2.2%	1,041	4.3%	1,772	7.5%	2,871	11.7%
Illinois†	25,023	16.9%	45,667	29.9%	33,379	22.6%	55,088	36.1%
Indiana	3,267	3.9%	4,950	5.8%	7,875	9.4%	11,134	12.9%
Iowa†	1,731	4.4%	24,424	60.8%	3,865	9.8%	26,919	67.0%
Kansas	5,633	15.2%	15,111	39.4%	7,947	21.4%	17,613	45.9%
Kentucky†	3,246	6.0%	11,690	21.1%	8,496	15.6%	17,382	31.3%
Louisiana*	475	0.8%	18,475	29.9%	9,622	16.0%	26,311	42.6%
Maine†	599	4.7%	4,995	37.8%	1,475	11.5%	5,585	42.3%
Maryland*,†	5,328	7.4%	25,199	34.1%	8,050	11.1%	28,994	39.2%
Massachusetts*	15,469	21.7%	24,275	33.7%	19,827	27.8%	29,276	40.6%
Michigan†	3,255	2.9%	35,793	30.8%	13,939	12.2%	43,453	37.4%
Minnesota**	2,944	4.2%	12,662	17.5%	7,052	9.9%	17,614	24.3%
Mississippi†	397	1.1%	3,950	10.6%	7,512	20.6%	13,986	37.6%
Missouri†	3,269	4.4%	9,596	12.7%	8,446	11.4%	14,444	19.2%
Montana	55	0.4%	241	1.9%	1,323	10.7%	2,427	18.9%
Nebraska†	4,026	15.3%	8,254	31.0%	4,921	18.7%	9,319	35.0%
Nevada†	1,105	2.9%	4,153	10.7%	2,102	5.6%	5,289	13.7%
New Hampshire	725	5.6%	1,186	8.9%	1,225	9.5%	1,833	13.8%
New Jersey	20,988	20.2%	37,637	35.6%	25,605	24.6%	44,338	41.9%
New Mexico†	2,800	11.6%	8,944	35.5%	5,506	22.8%	12,527	49.7%
New York†	21,901	9.9%	114,763	51.3%	35,927	16.2%	128,491	57.5%
North Carolina†	1,865	1.5%	27,196	21.7%	8,601	7.0%	33,052	26.4%
North Dakota	309	2.8%	1,479	13.5%	1,148	10.6%	2,766	25.3%
Ohio	6,175	4.5%	18,542	13.1%	18,012	13.0%	33,690	23.8%
Oklahoma	1,623	3.2%	34,456	64.3%	8,084	15.7%	39,527	73.8%
Oregon	4,835	10.6%	7,697	16.3%	7,725	17.0%	11,223	23.7%
Pennsylvania*,†	18,642	13.3%	36,110	25.3%	27,449	19.7%	49,556	34.7%
Rhode Island†	502	4.7%	2,496	22.2%	1,334	12.4%	3,337	29.7%
South Carolina	1,219	2.1%	21,061	34.8%	6,385	10.8%	25,770	42.6%
South Dakota	302	2.5%	672	5.4%	1,889	15.4%	2,589	21.0%
Tennessee†	2,234	2.7%	18,039	21.6%	8,804	10.8%	21,490	25.7%
Texas*	30,415	7.6%	175,683	42.1%	56,701	14.1%	204,247	48.9%
Utah*,†	2,541	5.2%	4,871	9.6%	4,775	9.7%	7,523	14.8%
Vermont	1,988	33.8%	3,688	61.4%	2,393	40.7%	4,144	69.0%
Virginia	3,428	3.4%	21,129	20.2%	8,176	8.1%	27,535	26.4%
Washington	7,641	8.3%	13,549	14.2%	12,239	13.2%	18,844	19.8%
West Virginia†	1,015	5.4%	10,540	55.7%	2,719	14.6%	12,055	63.7%
Wisconsin	1,359	2.0%	37,894	55.7%	7,518	11.3%	43,426	63.8%
Wyoming	635	9.2%	941	12.7%	1,190	17.2%	1,629	21.9%
United States	**276,382**	**7.0%**	**1,270,180**	**31.6%**	**545,441**	**13.91%**	**1,563,719**	**38.9%**
Guam	15	0.5%	67	2.1%	222	7.1%	394	12.7%

* These states serve special education children in their state pre-K programs but were not able to provide the number of children for at least one of their programs. Estimates were used based on the average percent of special education students in state pre-K across all programs and enrollment numbers for each program.

** Minnesota serves special education children in their state-funded Head Start pre-K programs but were not able to provide the number of children. Estimates were used based on the percent of children with IEPs in Head Start in the state as reported by the PIR.

† At least one program in these states was able to report the number of children enrolled in state pre-K and Head Start. This information was used to estimate an unduplicated count of Head Start enrollment.

†† Totals can overestimate public enrollment in state pre-K, pre-K special education, and Head Start as some or all of Head Start children may be served in a state's pre-K program and many states could not report this information.

For details about how these figures were calculated see the Methodology section and the Roadmap to the State Profile Pages.

TABLE 5: 2020-2021 STATE PRESCHOOL QUALITY STANDARDS

STATE/ PROGRAM	Early learning & development standards	Curriculum supports	Teacher has BA	Specialized training in pre-K	Assistant teacher has CDA or equiv.	Staff professional development	Class size 20 or lower	Staff-child ratio 1:10 or better	Vision, hearing, & health screening & referral	Continuous quality improvement system	**Quality standards checklist sum 2020-2021**
Alabama	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	10
Alaska	✔		✔								2
Arizona	✔	✔								✔	3
Arkansas	✔	✔		✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	8
California CSPP	✔	✔		✔				✔	✔	✔	6
California TK	✔	✔	✔								3
Colorado	✔			✔			✔	✔			4
Connecticut CDCC	✔	✔		✔			✔	✔			5
Connecticut SRP	✔	✔		✔			✔	✔			5
Connecticut Smart Start	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔			6
Delaware	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	9
District of Columbia	✔	✔							✔	✔	4
Florida	✔						✔				2
Georgia	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	8
Hawaii EOEL	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	10
Hawaii SPCSC	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	9
Illinois	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔	8
Iowa Shared Visions	✔	✔		✔			✔	✔	✔		6
Iowa SWVPP	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	✔		7
Kansas	✔	✔	✔				✔	✔			5
Kentucky	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔	8
Louisiana 8(g)	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔		✔	7
Louisiana LA 4	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔	8
Louisiana NSECD	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	9
Maine	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	9
Maryland	✔	✔	✔	✔				✔	✔	✔	7
Massachusetts UPK	✔	✔		✔			✔	✔			5
Massachusetts Chapter 70	✔	✔	✔	✔					✔	✔	6
Michigan GSRP	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	10
Michigan DK			✔								1
Minnesota HdSt	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	9
Minnesota VPK	✔	✔					✔	✔	✔		5
Mississippi	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	10
Missouri Preschool		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	9
Missouri FF			✔	✔	✔			✔			4
Nebraska	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔		✔	7
Nevada	✔	✔		✔			✔	✔			5
New Jersey Abbott	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔	8
New Jersey ECPA	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔	8
New Jersey ELLI	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔	8
New Mexico	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	9
New York	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	✔		7
North Carolina	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔	8
North Dakota	✔		✔								2
Ohio	✔	✔		✔					✔	✔	5
Oklahoma	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	9
Oregon Pre-K	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		8
Oregon Preschool Promise	✔	✔		✔			✔	✔			5
Pennsylvania RTL	✔	✔		✔			✔	✔			5
Pennsylvania HSSAP	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		8
Pennsylvania K4 & SBPK	✔	✔							✔		3
Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts	✔	✔	✔	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔	8
Rhode Island	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	10
South Carolina	✔	✔		✔		✔	✔	✔		✔	7
Tennessee	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	9
Texas	✔		✔	✔					✔		4
Utah							✔	✔		✔	3
Vermont	✔	✔		✔			✔	✔	✔	✔	7
Virginia	✔	✔		✔			✔	✔		✔	6
Washington ECEAP	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	9
Washington TK	✔	✔	✔			✔			✔	✔	6
West Virginia	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	9
Wisconsin		✔	✔	✔							3
TOTAL	**58**	**55**	**36**	**51**	**19**	**18**	**47**	**49**	**41**	**39**	
Guam	✔	✔		✔			✔	✔	✔		6

TABLE 6: PRE-K RESOURCES PER CHILD ENROLLED BY STATE

STATE	Resource rank based on state spending	State $ per full enrollment equivalent*	State $ per child enrolled in preschool	Total state preschool spending in 2020-2021	Change in total state spending from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021 Adjusted dollars	State reported non-state funds	All reported $ per full enrollment equivalent*
District of Columbia	1	$19,228	$19,228	$248,483,087	-$12,241,541	No	$19,228
New Jersey	2	$15,777	$18,643	$874,274,717	$78,127,692	No	$15,777
Hawaii	3	$12,976	$22,534	$8,810,954	$1,972,601	No	$12,976
Oregon	4	$12,788	$16,530	$148,685,903	$50,595,148	No	$12,788
Washington**	5	$9,703	$9,703	$150,445,678	$15,765,539	Yes	$9,938
Nevada	6	$9,331	$9,331	$18,372,239	-$1,730,791	No	$9,331
Connecticut	7	$8,445	$12,982	$125,484,984	-$2,853,888	No	$8,445
California	8	$8,109	$12,531	$1,968,721,367	-$17,290,675	Yes	$8,116
Rhode Island	9	$7,792	$7,792	$14,399,362	$335,333	Yes	$9,504
New Mexico	10	$7,681	$8,923	$92,687,760	$2,531,057	No	$7,681
Maryland	11	$7,414	$9,794	$245,475,145	$84,402,003	Yes	$11,920
Arkansas	12	$7,301	$8,511	$147,456,799	$31,315,917	Yes	$10,748
Delaware	13	$7,277	$7,409	$6,149,300	-$115,482	No	$7,277
West Virginia	14	$7,197	$9,096	$108,979,846	$10,349,422	Yes	$10,032
Pennsylvania	15	$7,089	$7,846	$318,254,011	-$21,914,574	No	$7,089
New York	16	$7,052	$7,052	$815,134,186	-$34,775,824	No	$7,052
Michigan	17	$6,958	$9,017	$322,744,998	$68,457,593	No	$6,958
Alabama	18	$6,233	$6,738	$127,398,077	$2,293,314	Yes	$8,999
North Carolina	19	$6,149	$7,816	$185,390,794	$15,940,600	Yes	$8,468
Vermont	20	$6,081	$7,925	$52,259,825	-$2,545,100	Yes	$6,761
Minnesota	21	$5,978	$5,978	$48,640,552	-$4,069,608	Yes	$6,891
Kansas	22	$5,147	$5,147	$103,699,531	$76,582,095	No	$5,147
Virginia	23	$4,929	$4,929	$89,005,681	$11,834,461	Yes	$8,314
Illinois	24	$4,848	$6,200	$412,983,822	-$7,962,616	Yes	$6,604
Oklahoma	25	$4,643	$4,643	$178,522,508	-$21,917,036	Yes	$10,215
Kentucky	26	$4,520	$6,707	$103,447,862	-$3,578,168	Yes	$7,955
Georgia	27	$4,500	$5,432	$361,514,563	-$22,597,007	No	$4,500
Louisiana	28	$4,471	$5,237	$91,455,439	-$3,125,823	No	$4,471
Tennessee	29	$4,460	$5,279	$82,351,190	-$1,546,528	Yes	$5,734
Alaska	30	$4,369	$4,369	$2,778,966	-$4,676,289	No	$4,369
Texas****	31	$4,311	$5,514	$1,027,555,916	$39,452,343	Yes	$4,524
Maine	32	$4,180	$5,619	$25,728,271	$1,392,128	Yes	$8,644
Ohio	33	$4,000	$4,000	$60,208,000	-$12,614,371	No	$4,000
Arizona	34	$3,993	$3,993	$14,496,361	-$5,089,184	No	$3,993
Missouri	35	$3,845	$3,845	$24,822,472	$2,354,062	No	$3,845
Iowa***	36	$3,765	$3,834	$91,763,127	-$3,972,127	Yes	$3,791
Wisconsin	37	$3,539	$3,539	$148,612,432	-$33,748,772	Yes	$6,781
South Carolina	38	$3,386	$4,613	$98,216,712	$10,639,856	Yes	$3,657
Colorado	39	$3,109	$3,109	$56,553,132	-$15,230,251	Yes	$5,445
Mississippi	40	$2,520	$2,831	$7,721,258	$895,926	Yes	$6,955
Florida	41	$2,222	$2,222	$302,505,878	-$105,288,934	No	$2,222
Nebraska	42	$1,996	$2,238	$28,658,207	$145,685	Yes	$8,914
Massachusetts	43	$1,512	$1,857	$77,035,148	$24,970,672	Yes	$5,222
Utah	44	$832	$902	$1,878,272	-$5,192,059	Yes	$3,250
North Dakota	45	$420	$420	$568,110	-$94,768	No	$420
Idaho	No Program	$0	$0	$0	$0	NA	$0
Indiana	No Program	$0	$0	$0	$0	NA	$0
Montana	No Program	$0	$0	$0	$0	NA	$0
New Hampshire	No Program	$0	$0	$0	$0	NA	$0
South Dakota	No Program	$0	$0	$0	$0	NA	$0
Wyoming	No Program	$0	$0	$0	$0	NA	$0
50 states + DC		**$5,867**	**$7,011**	**$9,420,332,443**	**$186,182,029**	**Yes**	**$6,804**
Guam		$6,169	$8,760	$437,987	$45,315	No	$6,169

For details about how these figures were calculated, see the Methodology section and Roadmap to the State Profile Pages. State spending data includes federal pandemic relief as well as federal TANF dollars used for preschool.

* Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment declined in nearly all states. To better estimate what spending per child would have been if programs were fully enrolled, we estimated spending per full enrollment equivalent.

** Washington TK could not break out the state and local spending from the total amount reported. Therefore, the portions of total spending attributable to state, local, and federal sources were estimated based on K–12 spending.

*** 1,164 children with instructional IEPs were served in Iowa's SWVPP program but were funded by sources not reported by the state. Similar to prior years, these children were removed from the per-child spending calculations.

**** Texas could not break out local, federal, and pandemic relief funding from "all-reported" spending. Therefore, these amounts were estimated based on available information.

WHAT QUALIFIES AS A STATE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM?

NIEER's *State Preschool Yearbook* series focuses on state-funded preschool education programs meeting the following criteria:

- The program is funded, controlled, and directed by the state.
- The program serves children of preschool age, usually 3 and/or 4 years old. Although programs in some states serve broader age ranges, programs that serve only infants and toddlers are excluded. The program must reach at least one percent of the 3- or 4-year-old population in the state to be included.
- Early childhood education is the primary focus of the program. This does not exclude programs that offer parent education but does exclude programs that mainly focus on parent education. Programs that focus on parent work status or programs where child eligibility is tied to work status are also excluded.
- The program offers a group learning experience to children at least two days per week.
- State-funded preschool education programs must be distinct from the state's system for subsidized child care. However, preschool programs may be *coordinated* and *integrated* with the subsidy system for child care.
- The program is *not* primarily designed to serve children with disabilities, but services may be offered to children with disabilities.
- State supplements to the federal Head Start program are considered to constitute de facto state preschool programs if they substantially expand the number of children served, and if the state assumes some administrative responsibility for the program. State supplements to fund quality improvements, extended days, or other program enhancements, or to fund expanded enrollment only minimally, are not considered equivalent to a state preschool program.

While ideally this report would identify all preschool education funding streams at the federal, state, and local levels, there are a number of limitations of the data that make this extremely difficult to do. For example, preschool is only one of several types of education programs toward which local districts can target their Title I funds. Many states do not track how Title I funds are used at the local level, and therefore do not know the extent to which they are spent on preschool education. Another challenge involves tracking total state spending for child care, using a variety of available sources, such as Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) dollars, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds, and any state funding above and beyond the required matches for federal funds. Although some of these child care funds may be used for high quality, educational, center-based programs for 3- and 4-year-olds that closely resemble programs supported by state-funded preschool education initiatives, it is nearly impossible to determine what proportion of child care funds are spent this way.

AGE GROUPINGS USED IN THIS REPORT

- Children considered to be 3 years old during the 2020-2021 school year are those who will be eligible to enter kindergarten two years later, during the 2022-2023 school year.
- Children considered to be 4 years old during the 2020-2021 school year were eligible to enter kindergarten one year later, during the 2021-2022 school year.
- Children considered to be 5 years old during the 2020-2021 school year were already eligible for kindergarten at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year.

Roadmap to the State Profile Pages

How to interpret data on the individual state profiles

For each state with a preschool education program, we include one page with a description of the state's program, followed by a page with data on the program's key features, focusing on access, quality, and resources.

The first page for each state begins with two sets of bar graphs. The first set shows percentages of the state's 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds enrolled in the state preschool program. The second set shows the state's spending per child enrolled in the state preschool program. Both sets of bar graphs depict changes in state preschool over time, from fiscal year 2002 (which corresponds to the 2001-2002 school year) through fiscal year 2021 (which corresponds to the 2020-2021 school year). Due to space constraints, not all years can be included. Instead, data is included for the school years ending in 2002, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2020, and 2021. Most of the data used for comparison purposes come from NIEER's previous Yearbooks, although spending figures are adjusted for inflation and represent 2021 dollars. In addition, there are some exceptions in cases where states revised data or reported data differently. The percent of children enrolled is calculated using Census estimates of 3- and 4-year-old children in each state. New for the 2020-2021 Yearbook and in response to the impact of COVID-19 on preschool enrollment, there is an additional bar on the spending per child bar graph which shows the state pre-K spending per the estimated full enrollment equivalent. This is an estimate of what spending per child would have been if the program was fully enrolled.

Following the bar graphs is a brief narrative providing information on the main features of the state's program(s). This includes an overview of preschool enrollment, spending and quality; any new developments; details such as the program's history, the types of settings in which state-funded preschool can be offered, and eligibility criteria. In many cases, the narrative also describes unique or particularly interesting aspects of the state's program(s) that may not be highlighted elsewhere in the report, as well as expected changes for the 2021-2022 school year. This year we also included information about the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on state preschool. Some descriptive information in the narratives was originally based on information found in the reports Seeds of Success from the Children's Defense Fund and Quality Counts 2002 from Education Week.

For the 44 states with preschool programs and the District of Columbia, the bottom of the first page of each state profile presents four numbers showing the state's ranking on the following measures:

- The percentage of the state's 4-year-old population enrolled in the state's preschool program (Access Rankings – 4-Year-Olds)
- The percentage of the state's 3-year-old population enrolled in the state's preschool program (Access Rankings – 3-Year-Olds)
- State expenditures per child enrolled in the program (Resources Rankings – State Spending)
- All reported expenditures per child enrolled in the program, including local and federal spending as well as state spending (Resources Rankings – All Reported Spending).

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on state pre-K enrollment, the two spending rankings are based on the estimate of spending per full enrollment equivalent (FEE). Federal COVID-19 relief funding used for preschool is also included in the State expenditure per child calculation this year.

The All Reported Spending ranking often provides a more complete picture of preschool spending in states using local and federal funding sources than the State Spending ranking alone. Because states vary in their ability to report spending from these other sources, however, this ranking is imperfect and sometimes underestimates total spending.

The bottom of the first page of each state profile (including Guam) also presents a box indicating the total number of quality standards benchmarks met.

California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington each have more than one distinct preschool education initiative. Therefore, information is presented slightly differently for these states and is explained on their individual profiles.

State profile pages are also given for the six states that did not fund preschool education programs in the 2020-2021 school year. For these states, the table of quality standards is omitted. These profiles do report enrollment data for special education and federally funded Head Start, however. In addition, data on per-child spending for K–12 education and federal Head Start are included. State-funded Head Start spending and enrollment are also provided for no-program states. Profile pages are also included for five U.S. territories that do not offer "state-funded" preschool (American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands). For these five territories, a narrative is provided, as is information about Head Start and special education.

The following sections provide an overview of information contained in the data tables on the state profile pages and explain why these elements are important. Data in the tables are for the 2020-2021 school year except where noted.

ACCESS

The Access data table begins with the total state preschool enrollment, which is the number of children of all ages enrolled at a specific point in time. Following that is the percentage of school districts (or other local education authorities, such as counties or parishes) providing state-funded preschool programs. This information shows the extent of the initiative's geographic coverage. Next, the table shows what, if any, income requirement is used in determining eligibility for the program.

Data on the minimum hours of operation (hours per day and days per week) and operating schedule (academic or full calendar year) are shown as additional measures of access because working parents may find it difficult to get their children to and from programs that operate only a few hours a day or week. The amount of time children participate in a preschool program also matters for other reasons, such as influencing the program's effects on children's development and learning.

The Access data table also shows enrollment of 3- and 4-year-old children in two federally funded programs: preschool special education and Head Start. The Head Start enrollment total includes children in the American Indian/Alaskan Native and Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs where applicable. The final item in the table reports how many children ages 3 and 4 years old are participating in Head Start through state supplemental funds.

Two Access pie charts illustrate the percentages of the state's 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in the state-funded preschool program(s), special education, and Head Start. The remaining children are categorized as enrolled in "Other/None." These children may be enrolled in another type of private or publicly funded program (e.g., state-subsidized child care) or may not be attending a center-based program at all. We calculated an unduplicated count for special education enrollment in order to more accurately represent the percentage of children served in the state. The special education percentage in the pie chart represents children who are in special education but not enrolled in Head Start or state preschool programs. We also calculated an unduplicated count for Head Start enrollment in order to avoid double counting Head Start children enrolled in state-funded preschool. For the states that were able to report this information, the Head Start percentage does not include children also enrolled in state-funded preschool.

QUALITY

State policies in critical areas related to quality are shown in the Quality Standards Checklist table. For each policy area, states receive a checkmark when their policy meets or exceeds the related benchmark standard. The first column in the Quality Standards Checklist table lists the policy that is being evaluated. The second column presents information about each state program's requirements regarding each policy. The third column lists the benchmark for each policy — that is, the rigor of the state requirement needed to meet the benchmark. The fourth column depicts whether the state preschool program's requirements met the benchmark. A box at the bottom of the fourth column displays the total number of benchmarks met by the state program.

The Quality Standards Checklist represents a set of minimum criteria, established by state policy, needed to ensure the effectiveness of preschool education programs, especially when serving children who are at-risk for school failure. Although the checklist is not intended to be an exhaustive inventory of all the features of a high-quality program, each of these research-based standards is essential for setting the groundwork for high-quality experiences for children. Meeting all 10 standards does not necessarily guarantee that a program is of high quality, but no state's prekindergarten policies should be considered fully satisfactory unless all 10 benchmarks are met. Although programs may routinely engage in practices meeting criteria for quality standards, credit is given only when the practices are explicitly required in state policy.

Judgment inevitably plays a role in setting specific benchmarks based on evidence, as research rarely is completely definitive. We have given more weight to the risk of losing substantial benefits by setting benchmarks too low than to the risk of unnecessarily raising costs by setting benchmarks too high, because research has found the benefits of high-quality programs to be substantially greater than the costs. In other words, there is more to lose when programs are weak or ineffective. Nevertheless, the original benchmarks were still conceived as minimum standards. The current benchmarks raise the bar somewhat.

Based on advances in research during more than a decade and a half since establishing the original quality standards benchmarks, we have created the current set, which debuted in the 2016 *Yearbook*. These shift the focus somewhat from policies regarding classroom structure toward policies that shape classroom processes associated with positive child developmental outcomes.[1] Specifically, the current benchmarks introduce one new quality standards benchmark and make substantial changes or enhancements to three others. Below, we explain each benchmark, along with the evidence and reasoning behind it.

We also describe the criteria used to assess whether state policies meet each benchmark:

Benchmark 1. Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS). A state's ELDS specify a program's goals. Clear and appropriate expectations for learning and development across multiple domains are an essential starting place for quality.[2] States should have comprehensive ELDS covering all areas identified as fundamental by the National Education Goals Panel[3] — children's physical well-being and motor development, social/emotional development, approaches toward learning, language development, and cognition and general knowledge. Neglecting any of these development domains could weaken both short- and long-term effectiveness.[4]

To meet the benchmark, ELDS should be comprehensive and specific to preschool-aged children and vertically aligned with state standards for younger and older children so that children's experiences at each stage build on what has gone before.[5] ELDS also should be aligned with any required child assessments, and sensitive to children's diverse cultural and language backgrounds.[6] Finally, the state must provide some support for those charged with implementing the ELDS so they understand them, such as professional development and additional resources.

Benchmark 2. Curriculum supports. A strong curriculum that is well-implemented increases support for learning and development broadly, and includes specificity regarding key domains of language, literacy, mathematics, and social-emotional development.[7] To meet the benchmark for curriculum support, states must provide guidance or an approval process for selecting curricula, and support for curriculum implementation, such as training or ongoing technical assistance to facilitate adequate implementation of the curriculum.

Benchmark 3. Teacher degree. To meet the benchmark, state policy must require lead teachers in every classroom to have at least a bachelor's degree. This follows recommendations from multiple studies by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Science recommending that preschool teachers have a BA with specialized knowledge and training in early childhood education.[8] Their conclusions are supported by an analysis of what teachers are expected to know and do in order to be highly effective. Also, a comprehensive review finds that teachers with higher educational levels generally provide higher quality educational environments for young children.[9]

Much of the research has approached the question of teacher degree requirements incorrectly by assuming that teacher qualifications and other program features act independently, are unconstrained by regulation, and are independent of unmeasured contexts that affect outcomes.[10] When multiple program features are interdependent, benchmarking is a more appropriate approach for identifying the features associated with success.[13] We found no examples of programs that have produced large persistent gains in achievement without well-qualified teachers.

It also follows that teacher qualifications should not be expected to have an effect in isolation. Compensation must be adequate to attract and retain strong teachers, regardless of qualifications requirements.[14] We have not made this part of the benchmark due to the difficulty of ascertaining exactly what "adequate compensation" is for each state — but that does not lessen its importance.

Benchmark 4. Teacher specialized training. Institute of Medicine/National Research Council reports have also emphasized that preschool lead teachers should have specialized preparation that includes knowledge of learning, development, and pedagogy specific to preschool-age children.[15] To meet the benchmark, policy must require specialized training in early childhood education and/or child development. We recognize that early childhood teacher preparation programs are variable. States may wish to consider supports to improve programs offered by their state institutions of higher education and alignment with the state ELDS.[16]

Benchmark 5. Assistant teacher degree. All members of a teaching team benefit from preservice preparation. The Child Development Associate (CDA) credential was developed as the entry-level qualification for the field.[17] Other certifications or coursework can provide similar preparation. There has been limited research specific to the qualifications of assistant teachers, but evidence indicates that assistant teacher qualifications are associated with teaching quality. To meet the benchmark, policy must require that assistant teachers hold a CDA or have equivalent preparation based on coursework.[12]

Benchmark 6. Staff professional development. To meet this benchmark both teachers and assistant teachers must be required to have at least 15 hours of annual in-service training. In addition, some professional development must be provided through coaching or similar ongoing classroom-embedded support. Lead and assistant teachers are also required to have annual written individualized professional development plans. Research indicates regular professional learning, including coaching, supports teaching practices related to high-quality experiences for children.[16] Individualized professional development focused on helping teachers improve in their own classrooms has been found more effective than traditional workshops and general professional development.[17] Good teachers actively engage in learning and regular professional development, and there is some evidence for a 15-hour threshold.[18]

Benchmarks 7 and 8. Maximum class size (20) and staff-child ratio (1:10). These two benchmarks are addressed together as they are highly linked in policy and practice. To meet benchmark 7, class size should be limited to at most 20 children. To meet benchmark 8, classes should be permitted to have no more than 10 children per classroom teaching staff member. Small class size and corresponding teacher-child ratios characterize the most effective programs, even though many studies find weak or no association between these features and effectiveness.[19] Yet, it seems clear that smaller classes and fewer children per teacher enable teachers to interact with each child more frequently, to work with smaller groups, and offer each child more individualized attention, which results in better outcomes. The smaller the class, the easier it is for a teacher to develop a good understanding of each child's interests, needs, and capabilities.

What may be the best designed large-scale randomized trial of class size for young children to date found substantive and lasting impacts on achievement and educational success for smaller class sizes in kindergarten.[20] Subsequent efforts to reproduce these results through policy changes elsewhere have been far less successful. Again, we note that key policies regarding program features are not independent of other policies, context, and implementation.

A staff-child ratio of 1:10 is lower than in programs found to have the largest persistent effects, but it is generally accepted by professional opinion. A recent meta-analysis suggests an even lower threshold, below 1 to 7.5 (class size of 15), would be better, and that finding is consistent with experimental evidence for kindergarten.[21] On the other hand, at least one program has produced large short-term gains with a maximum class size of 22 and 1:11 staff to child ratio, just outside the benchmarks.[22]

Benchmark 9. Screenings and referrals. To meet the benchmark, policies should require that preschool programs ensure children receive vision and hearing screenings and at least one additional health screening; as well as referrals when needed.[23] This benchmark recognizes that children's overall well-being and educational success involve not only cognitive development but also physical and mental health.[24] This quality standards benchmark no longer assesses provision of support services. Nearly all state-funded pre-K programs have some requirement for parent engagement and support, and we could not set an evidence-based benchmark that differentiated among them based on effectiveness.

Benchmark 10. This benchmark focuses on state requirements regarding a Continuous Quality Improvement System (CQIS). This reflects a shift in focus from compliance to state support for continuous improvement. An effective CQIS operates at local and state levels to ensure that information is gathered regularly on processes and outcomes, and that this information is used to guide program improvement. To meet this benchmark, policy must at a minimum require that (1) data on classroom quality is systematically collected, and (2) local programs and the state both use information from the CQIS to help improve policy or practice. The use of a cycle of planning, observation, and feedback has characterized highly effective programs.[25]

The original Quality Standards Checklist required that programs should provide at least one meal per day. While nutritious meals are important, this requirement has been removed from the Checklist because whether a program met the requirement was largely determined by whether the program operated for a half day or full school day.

RESOURCES

The table in the Resources section provides the following information: total state spending for the state preschool program; whether a local match, monetary or in-kind, is required; amount of state Head Start spending; state spending per child enrolled in the program; and all reported (local, state, and federal) spending per child enrolled in the program. These measures show various views of the resources dedicated to state preschool programs, which allows for a more complete picture of a state's commitment to preschool education. For example, a state's total spending may appear low, but may prove to be high relative to the number of children enrolled. On the other hand, a state with a high total funding level may have a low per-pupil spending level if it enrolls a large number of children. In some states, local communities contribute substantial additional funds to state preschool education by using local funding sources or by leveraging federal funding sources. In such cases, the figure that includes all reported spending is the best gauge of the level of available resources, to the extent that information about local and locally allocated federal spending is available.

The bar chart in the Resources section compares per-child spending in state-funded preschool programs to federal Head Start and K–12 per-child spending. Head Start per-child spending for the 2020-2021 year includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds served. Past years' figures have unintentionally included funds for Early Head Start, which made per-child amounts seem artificially higher (although this has been corrected for the past several years). Different colors indicate the different funding sources (local, state, and federal). Separate colors are used to indicate any TANF funds or federal COVID-19 relief funds that a state directs toward its preschool initiative. While TANF and COVID-19 relief funds are federal dollars, it is the state's decision to devote these funds to preschool education, as opposed to other purposes. Data on the amounts of local and federal preschool funds are included in the bar chart when available.

REFERENCES

[1] Minervino, J. (2014) *Lessons from research and the classroom: Implementing high-quality pre-k that makes a difference for young children*. Seattle, WA: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Weiland, C. (2016). Launching preschool 2.0: A roadmap to high-quality public programs at scale. *Behavioral Sciences & Policy, 2*(1). 37-46. Yoshikawa, H., Weiland, C., Brooks-Gunn, J., Burchinal, M., Espinosa, L. M., Gormley, Jr., W. T., Ludwig, J., & et al. (2013). *Investing in our future: The evidence base on preschool education*. Ann Arbor, MI: Society for Research in Child Development.

[2] Bornfreund, L. A., McCann, C., Williams, C., & Guernsey, L. (2014). *Beyond subprime learning: Accelerating progress in early education*. Washington, DC: New America Foundation. Bowman, B. T., Donovan, M. S., & Burns, M. S. (Eds.). (2001). Eager to learn: Educating our preschoolers. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

[3] National Education Goals Panel (1991). *The Goal 1 Technical Planning Subgroup report on school readiness*. Washington, DC: Author. National Association for the Education of Young Children (2009).

[4] Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (Eds.). (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

[5] Kauerz, K., & Coffman, J. (2013). *Framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating preK-3rd grade approaches*. Seattle: University of Washington, College of Education. Minervino (2014). Tout, K., Halle, T., Daily, S., Albertson-Junkans, L., & Moodie, S. (2013). *The research base for a birth through age eight state policy framework*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Early Success and Child Trends.

[6] Espinosa, L. M. (2010). *Getting it right for young children from diverse backgrounds: Applying research to improve practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

[7] Burchinal, M. (2018). Measuring Early Care and Education Quality. *Child Development Perspectives, 12*(1), 3-9. Clements, D. H., & Sarama, J. (2008). Experimental evaluation of the effects of a research-based preschool mathematics curriculum. *American Educational Research Journal, 45*, 443-494. Frede, E.C. (1998). Preschool program quality in programs for children in poverty. In Barnett, W.S., Boocock, S.S. (Eds.), Early care and education for children in poverty (pp. 77–98). Albany, NY: SUNY Press. Minervino (2014). Phillips, D.A., Lipsey, M.W., Dodge, K.A., Haskins, R., Bassok, D., Burchinal, M.R.,…Weiland, C. (2017). Puzzling it out: The current state of scientific knowledge on pre-kindergarten effects, a consensus statement. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. Downloaded July 24, 2017 from https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/consensus-statement_ final.pdf. Weiland (2016). Yoshikawa et al. (2013).

[8] Bowman et al. (2001). Institute of Medicine and National Research Council (2015). *Transforming the workforce for children, youth through age 8*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press.

[9] Manning, M., Garvis, S., Fleming, C., & Wong, G. T. (2017). The Relationship between Teacher Qualification and the Quality of the Early Childhood Care and Learning Environment: A Systematic Review. *Campbell collaboration*. Downloaded August 15, 2017 from https://www.campbellcollaboration.org/library/teacher-qualification-and-quality-of-early-childhood-care-and-learning.html

[10] Bogard, K., Traylor, F., & Takanishi, R. (2008). Teacher education and PK outcomes: Are we asking the right questions?. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 23*(1), 1-6. Falenchuk, O., Perlman, M., McMullen, E., Fletcher, B., & Shah, P. S. (2017). Education of staff in preschool aged classrooms in child care centers and child outcomes: A meta-analysis and systematic review. PloS one, 12(8), e0183673. Lin, Y. C., & Magnuson, K. A. (2018). Classroom quality and children's academic skills in child care centers: Understanding the role of teacher qualifications. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 42*, 215-227.

[11] Bassok, D., Fitzpatrick, M., Greenberg, E., & Loeb, S. (2016). Within- and between-sector quality differences in early childhood education and care. *Child Development, 87*(5), 1627-1645.

[12] King, E. K., Johnson, A. V., Cassidy, D. J., Wang, Y. C., Lower, J. K., & Kintner-Duffy, V. L. (2016). Preschool teachers' financial well-being and work time supports: Associations with children's emotional expressions and behaviors in classrooms. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 44*(6), 545-553. Whitebook, M., Phillips, D., & Howes, C. (2014). Worthy work, STILL unlivable wages: The early childhood workforce 25 years after the National Child Care Staffing Study. *Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment*.

[13] Institute of Medicine and National Research Council (2015). Also: Bowman et al. (2001). Fukkink, R. G., & Lont, A. (2007). Does training matter? A meta-analysis and review of caregiver training studies. *Early childhood research quarterly, 22*(3), 294-311.

[14] Early, D. M., & Winton, P. J. (2001). Preparing the workforce: Early childhood teacher preparation at 2-and 4-year institutions of higher education. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 16*(3), 285-306. Whitebook, M., & Ryan, S. (2011). Degrees in Context: Asking the Right Questions about Preparing Skilled and Effective Teachers of Young Children. Preschool Policy Brief. Issue 22. New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research.

[15] Bowman et al. (2001). Institute of Medicine and National Research Council (2015). Han, J., & Neuharth-Pritchett, S. (2010). Beliefs about classroom practices and teachers' education level: An examination of developmentally appropriate and inappropriate beliefs in early childhood classrooms. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 31*(4), 307-321. Heisner, M. J., & Lederberg, A. R. (2011). The impact of Child Development Associate training on the beliefs and practices of preschool teachers. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 26*(2), 227-236. Kagan, S. L., & Cohen, N. E. (1997). *Not by chance: Creating an early care and education system for America's children [Abridged report]*. New Haven, CT: Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy, Yale University.

[16] Biancarosa, G., Bryk, A. S., & Dexter, E. R. (2010). Assessing the value-added effects of literacy collaborative professional development on student learning. *The Elementary School Journal, 111*(1), 7-34. Clements, D. H., & Sarama, J. (2008). Experimental evaluation of the effects of a research-based preschool mathematics curriculum. *American Educational Research Journal, 45*, 443-494. Hawley, W. & Valli, L. (1999). The essentials of effective professional development: A new consensus in L. Darling-Hammond & G. Sykes (Eds.). *Teaching as the Learning Profession. Handbook of Policy and Practice*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco. Institute of Medicine and National Research Council (2015). Minervino (2014). Phillips et al. (2017). Pianta et al. (2009). Weber, R. & Trauten, M. (2008). *A review of the research literature: Effective investments in child care and early education profession*. Oregon State University, Family Policy Program, Oregon Childcare Research Partnership. Whitebook, M., & Bellm, D. (2013). *Supporting teachers as learners: A guide for mentors and coaches in early care and education*. Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers. Weiland (2016). Yoshikawa et al. (2013).

[17] Pianta, R., Downer, J., & Hamre, B. (2016). Quality in early education classrooms: Definitions, gaps, and systems. *Future of Children, 26,* 119-137. Weiland (2016). Yoshikawa et al. (2013).

[18] Bowman et al. (2001). Frede (1998). Egert, F., Fukkink, R. G., & Eckhardt, A. G. (2018). Impact of In-Service Professional Development Programs for Early Childhood Teachers on Quality Ratings and Child Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 0034654317751918. Frede (1998). Kraft, M. A., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2016). The effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement: A meta-analysis of the causal evidence. *Review of Educational Research*. Landry, S. H., Anthony, J. L., Swank, P. R., & Monseque-Bailey, P. (2009). Effectiveness of comprehensive professional development for teachers of at-risk preschoolers. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 101*(2), 448. Rudd, L. C., Lambert, M. C., Satterwhite, M., & Smith, C. H. (2009). Professional development + coaching = enhanced teaching: Increasing usage of math mediated language in preschool classrooms. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 37*(1), 63-69. Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips (1989) found that teachers receiving more than 15 hours of training were more appropriate, positive, and engaged with children in their teaching practices.

[19] Bowman et al. (2001). National Association for the Education of Young Children (2005). *NAEYC early childhood program standards and accreditation criteria*. Washington, DC: Author. NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (1999). Child outcomes when child care center classes meet recommended standards for quality. *American Journal of Public Health, 89,* 1072-1077. Perlman, M., Falenchuk, O., Fletcher, B., McMullen, E., Beyene, J., & Shah, P. S. (2016). A systematic review and meta-analysis of a measure of staff/child interaction quality (the classroom assessment scoring system) in early childhood education and care settings and child outcomes. PloS One, 11(12), e0167660. Reynolds, A. J., Hayakawa, M., Ou, S. R., Mondi, C. F., Englund, M. M., Candee, A. J., & Smerillo, N. E. (2017). Scaling and sustaining effective early childhood programs through school–family–university collaboration. *Child Development, 88*(5), 1453-1465.

[20] Nye, B., Hedges, L. V., & Konstantopoulos, S. (1999). The long-term effects of small classes: A five-year follow-up of the Tennessee class size experiment. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 21*(2), 127-142.

[21] Evidence suggesting value to lower thresholds comes from Bowne, J., Magnuson, K. A., Schindler, H. S, Duncan, G. J., & Yoshikawa, H. (2017). A meta-analysis of class sizes and ratios in early childhood education programs: Are thresholds of quality associated with greater impacts on cognitive, achievement, and socioemotional outcomes? *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis. 39*(3), 407-428.

[22] Weiland, C., & Yoshikawa, H. (2013). Impacts of a prekindergarten program on children's mathematics, language, literacy, executive function, and emotional skills. *Child Development, 84*(6), 2112-2130.

[23] For some children, preschool provides the first opportunity to detect vision, hearing, and health problems that may impair a child's learning and development. This opportunity should not be missed. Meisels, S. J., & Atkins-Burnett, S. (2000). The elements of early childhood assessment. In J. P. Shonkoff & S. J. Meisels (Eds.). *Handbook of early childhood intervention* (pp. 231-257). New York: Cambridge University Press. Tout et al. (2013).

[24] Blair (2002). School readiness: Integrating cognition and emotion in a neurobiological conceptualization of children's functioning at school entry. *American Psychologist, 57*, 111-127. Janus, M., & Duku, E. (2010). The school entry gap: Socioeconomic, family, and health factors associated with children's school readiness to learn. *Early Education and Development, 18,* 375-403.

[25] Barnett, W. S., Frede, E. C. (2017). Long-term effects of a system of high-quality universal preschool education in the United States. In Blossfeld, H.-P., Kulic, N., Skopek, J., Triventi, M. (Eds.), Childcare, early education and social inequality: An international perspective (pp. 152–172). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar. Bowman et al. (2001). Derrick-Mills, T., Sandstrom, H., Pettijohn, S., Fyffe, S., & Koulish, J. (2014). *Data use for continuous quality improvement: What the Head Start field can learn from other disciplines, a literature review and conceptual framework (OPRE Report 2014-77)*. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Egert et al. (2018). Institute of Medicine and National Research Council (2015). Minervino (2014). Weiland (2016).

Guide to State Profiles

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment ..... Number of children of all ages in state pre-K program

School districts that offer state program ..... Percentage of school districts in state where program is offered

Income requirement ..... Maximum family income for program eligibility

Minimum hours of operation ..... Minimum hours per day and days per week program operates

Operating schedule ..... Annual schedule of operation (school/academic year or full calendar year)

Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ..... Number of 3- and 4-year-olds served by the Preschool Grants Program of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ..... Number of slots for 3- and 4-year-olds in Head Start funded with federal money

State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ..... Number of slots for 3- and 4-year-olds in Head Start funded with state money

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY — STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT

Early learning & development standards ..... Comprehensive, aligned with state infant & toddler and K–3 or college & career ready standards, aligned with child assessments, supported, and culturally sensitive

Curriculum supports ..... Approval process for selecting curricula and supports in place for curriculum implementation

Teacher degree ..... Lead teacher must have a BA, at minimum

Teacher specialized training ..... Lead teacher must have specialized training in a pre-K area

Assistant teacher degree ..... Assistant teacher must have a CDA or equivalent, at minimum

Staff professional development ..... Teacher and assistant teacher must receive at least 15 hours/year of in-service professional development and training, individualized annual professional development plans, and coaching

Maximum class size ..... Maximum number of children per classroom must be 20 or fewer

Staff-child ratio ..... Lowest acceptable ratio of staff to children in classroom (e.g., maximum number of students per teacher) must be 1:10 or better

Screening & referral ..... Screenings and referrals for vision, hearing, and health must be required

Continuous quality improvement system ..... Systematic structured observations of classroom quality and information collected is used for classroom/program improvement at the state and local levels

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending ..... Total state funds spent on state pre-K program

Local match required? ..... Whether state requires local providers to match state monetary contributions to program

State Head Start spending ..... Total state funds spent to supplement Head Start program

State spending per child enrolled ..... Amount of state funds spent per child participating in pre-K program

All reported spending per child enrolled ..... Amount of all reported funds (local, state, and federal) spent per child participating in pre-K program

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Associate of Arts
ACF	Administration for Children and Families
AEPS	Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System for Infants and Children
ARP	American Rescue Plan
ASQ-3/ ASQ-SE	Ages & Stages Questionnaires, Third Edition/Ages & Stages Questionnaires - Social Emotional
B–	Denotes that the age range covered by a teaching license begins at birth (e.g., B–3 = birth–grade 3)
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BMI	Body Mass Index
BS	Bachelor of Science
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CARES	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCDF	Child Care and Development Fund
CD	Child Development
CDA	Child Development Associate credential
CLASS	Classroom Assessment Scoring System
COR	HighScope Child Observation Record
CQIS	Continuous Quality Improvement System
CRRSA	Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act
DIAL	Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning
DIBELS	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills
DLL	Dual Language Learner
DOE	Department of Education
DRA	Developmental Reading Assessment
DRDP	Desired Results Developmental Profile
DSC	Developing Skills Checklist
EC	Early Childhood
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECERS-3	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Third Edition
ECERS-R	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised
ECSE/ ECE Sp Ed	Early Childhood Special Education
Ed.D	Doctor of Education Degree
Ed.S	Educational Specialist Degree
EE	Elementary Education
ELDS	Early Learning and Development Standards
ELL	English Language Learner
ELLCO	Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation
ELS	Early Learning Standards
ESSER	Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund
EPSDT	Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment
ERS	Environmental Rating Scale
ESL	English as a Second Language
FCCERS	Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale
FEE	Full enrollment equivalent
FPL	Federal Poverty Level
FRPL	Free or reduced-price lunch
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
FY	Fiscal Year
GED	General Equivalency Diploma
GEERS	Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund
HdSt	Head Start
HSD	High School Diploma
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan
IOM	Institute of Medicine
ITERS	Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale
K	Kindergarten
KEA/KRA	Kindergarten Entry Assessment/Kindergarten Readiness Assessment
KIDS	Kindergarten Individual Development Survey
LEA	Local Education Agency
MA	Master of Arts
myIGDis	My Individual Growth and Development Indicators
N–	Denotes that the age range covered by a teaching license begins at nursery (e.g., N–3 = nursery–grade 3)
NA	Not Applicable
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
PALS	Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening
P–	Denotes that the age range covered by a teaching license begins at preschool (e.g., P–4 = preschool–grade 4)
PEG	Preschool Expansion Grant
PD	Professional Development
PDG	Preschool Development Grant
PDG B–5	Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five
PIR	Program Information Report (Head Start)
PPVT	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
Pre-K	Prekindergarten
QRIS	Quality Rating and Improvement System
RTT	Race to the Top
RTT-ELC	Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge
SEA	State Education Agency
SMI	State Median Income
SpEd	Special Education
TANF	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
T.E.A.C.H.	Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project)
TS GOLD	Teaching Strategies GOLD
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WSS	Work Sampling System