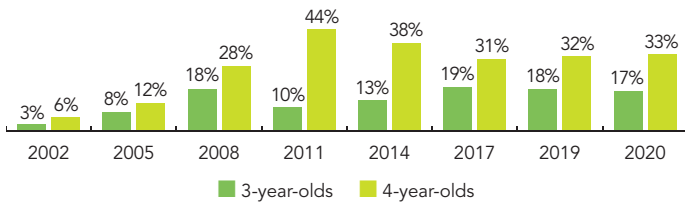
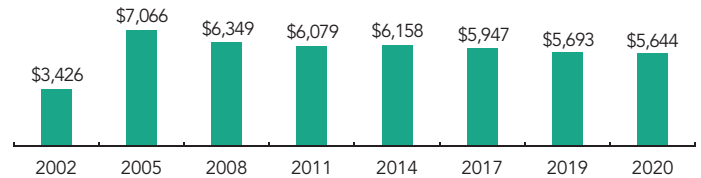


Arkansas

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2020 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

Arkansas preschool enrolled 20,197 children in 2019-2020, an increase of 11 children from the prior year. State funding totaled \$106,500,000 with an additional \$7,500,000 in TANF funds to support the programs, down \$925,894 (1%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child (including TANF funds) equaled \$5,644 in 2019-2020, down \$49 from 2018-2019, adjusted for inflation. Arkansas met 8 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT'S NEW

The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program transitioned to the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) during the 2019-2020 school year. As a result, ABC is better positioned to provide resources and supports that benefit early childhood programs across the state to ensure children are well positioned for success in kindergarten. This partnership has led to the alignment of early literacy professional development (PD) with the Arkansas R.I.S.E. Initiative (Reading Initiative for Student Excellence). The newly branded Pre-K R.I.S.E. will sharpen the focus of early literacy PD and strengthen instruction in the area of emergent literacy, create community collaboration and build a culture of reading for early childhood education in Arkansas.

ABC Center-Based programs have transitioned to the revised Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (ECERS-3). Selected ABC programs are piloting the LearnERS: Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Coaching Framework. This innovative program combines professional development and quality improvement that connects early childhood staff with best teaching practices.

On March 16, 2020 all state-funded preschool programs in public schools pivoted to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Programs not located in public schools remained open for on-site learning to provide early childhood services for the community and locally determined transitions to remote learning occurred based on the guidance of the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Education, and the situation experienced at the individual location. All programs were required to provide remote instruction during pivots to remote learning. The State partnered with Arkansas PBS to provide Alternate Methods of Instruction (AMI) Learning Guides associated with PBS educational programming to support remote learning and revised safety policies for in-person classrooms. All ABC programs offered onsite instruction beginning in Fall 2020.

BACKGROUND

The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program began in 1991 as part of a statewide education reform initiative, with funding (\$10 million) earmarked to serve children birth to 5 years old based on family income, developmental, and/or economic risk factors. In 2003, legislation known as Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (ABCSS) set priorities for funding, supporting 3- and 4-year olds in households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level. School districts with 75% or more of their students scoring below proficient in literacy and math on the State Benchmark exams (statewide assessment), and children in schools designated as "school improvement status" received funding priority.

ABC/ABCSS components intended to ensure quality include: teachers with at least a bachelor's degree and an associate's degree beyond the first classroom at a site; teacher assistants/paraprofessionals with a minimum of a CDA or equivalent; low child-to-teacher ratios (1:10); health and development screenings; parent involvement and community engagement; statewide evaluation (Work Sampling); an approved list of curriculum aligned with the 2016 Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards; and classroom quality observations to inform technical assistance; and an evaluation of child outcomes through a longitudinal study.

Arkansas provides additional pathways for those working with young children to gain advanced knowledge and skill, such as Birth through Kindergarten Licensure and a Birth through Pre-kindergarten Teaching Credential. These pathways prepare teachers to work with all children, birth through age five, including children with special needs.

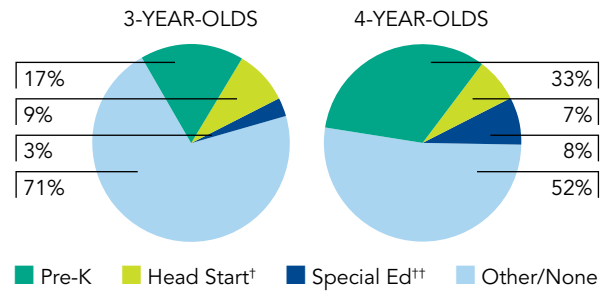
ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
19	5	19	10	8

ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE/ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment.....	20,197
School districts that offer state program.....	99% (counties)
Income requirement.....	200% FPL
Minimum hours of operation.....	7 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule.....	School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	7,989
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	6,398
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	0

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC 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.

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	AR PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	Approval process & supports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA; AA beyond first classroom at site	BA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE, CD, ECE SpEd	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	CDA	CDA or equivalent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	30 hours/year; PD plans (public teachers only)	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	20 (3- & 4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:10 (3- & 4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing, health & more	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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



RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending.....	\$114,000,000
Local match required?.....	Yes
State Head Start spending.....	\$0
State spending per child enrolled.....	\$5,644
All reported spending per child enrolled*.....	\$9,026

* 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.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

