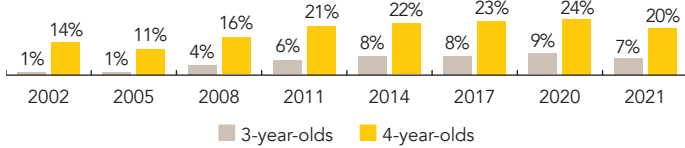
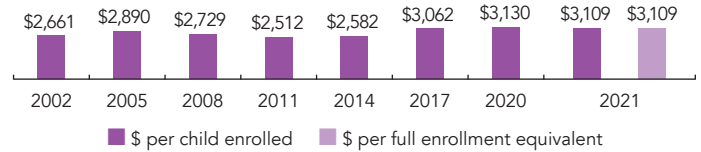


Colorado

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2021 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

During the 2020-2021 school year, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued, Colorado preschool enrolled 18,188 children, a decrease of 4,748 children from the prior year. State funding totaled \$56,553,132 down \$15,230,251 (21%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child equaled \$3,109 in 2020-2021, down \$20 from 2019-2020, adjusted for inflation. Colorado met 4 of 10 quality standards benchmarks. Funding for the program is capped by the legislature to serve 29,360 half day positions.

WHAT'S NEW

Fall 2020 began with a mix of in-person and remote instruction but most programs were physically open by the end of the 2020-2021 school year. In November 2020, the voters of Colorado passed Proposition EE which raises taxes on cigarettes and tobacco products, and levies a new tax on nicotine products. The vast majority of the revenue will fund universal preschool starting in Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Beginning in Fall 2023, all 4-year-olds will be eligible for a 10 hour per week universal preschool program. Further details of universal preschool will be determined through legislative action by the Colorado General Assembly in the 2022 session.

The 2021 Colorado Legislature passed HB21-1304 which creates the Department of Early Childhood as a new, cabinet-level state agency in July 2022. The Department's proposed vision, mission, values, and guiding principles were established based on stakeholder input, and communicated in the Department of Early Childhood's transition plan submitted to the Governor's Office and the Legislature at the end of 2021. The new Department is expected to administer the Colorado Preschool Program and universal preschool effective July 2023.

BACKGROUND

The Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) launched in 1988 for 3- and 4-year-olds who needed language development support — in hopes of lowering school dropout rates and reducing dependence on public assistance. In 1992, CPP became a permanent program and expanded eligibility to young children lacking overall school readiness due to family risk factors, as defined by statute, including eligibility for free or reduced-price meals, being a dual language learner, being in foster care, having a family history of abuse or neglect, homelessness, parental substance abuse, or having a teen parent, as well as locally determined risk factors. Four-year-olds must meet at least one risk factor to enroll in CPP, while 3-year-olds are required to meet a minimum of three risk factors. Three districts also serve a limited number of children under the age of 3 using a waiver that is no longer statutorily available. The data in this report only pertains to children aged 3 and up.

In the 2020-2021 school year, 98% of the state's 179 school districts offered CPP. CPP positions and Early Childhood At-Risk Enhancement (ECARE) positions serve pre-K students. Two half-day positions can be combined to create full-day opportunities for pre-K children with very high needs. Schools may provide pre-K service by subcontracting with private childcare centers, Head Start, or other community-based or public agencies. Districts reapply annually to implement the Colorado Preschool Program. During instances of program expansion, districts are competitively awarded additional funding to serve additional children based on exemplary implementation, with priority given to districts not currently participating in CPP.

CPP funding is determined by the Colorado school finance formula, with preschoolers receiving half the amount for students in grades 1 through 12, and significant funds included in the financing formula from local school tax revenues. Funds are distributed directly to school districts, each receiving a base allocation from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) of half-day positions to serve eligible children. CPP providers are encouraged to use additional funding sources, such as federal Head Start money, tuition, or local funds, to extend the program day, supplement services, or provide wraparound care.

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
26	13

RESOURCE RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
39	31

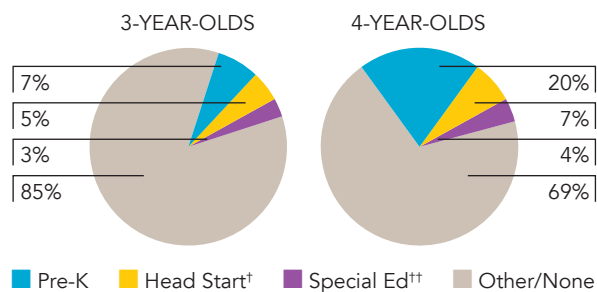
TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4

COLORADO PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	18,188
School districts that offer state program	98%
Income requirement	185% FPL
Minimum hours of operation	2.5 hours/day
Operating schedule	School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	7,107
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	7,593
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	CO 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	Approval process & supports	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	Early Childhood Teacher Qualification	BA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	Early Childhood Teacher Qualification	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	None	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	15 hours/year	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	16 (3- & 4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:8 (3- & 4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	None	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations (above QRIS Level 2); Data used for program improvement	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$56,553,132
Local match required?	Yes
State Head Start spending	\$0
State spending per child enrolled	\$3,109
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$5,445

* 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

