

THE STATE OF PRESCHOOL

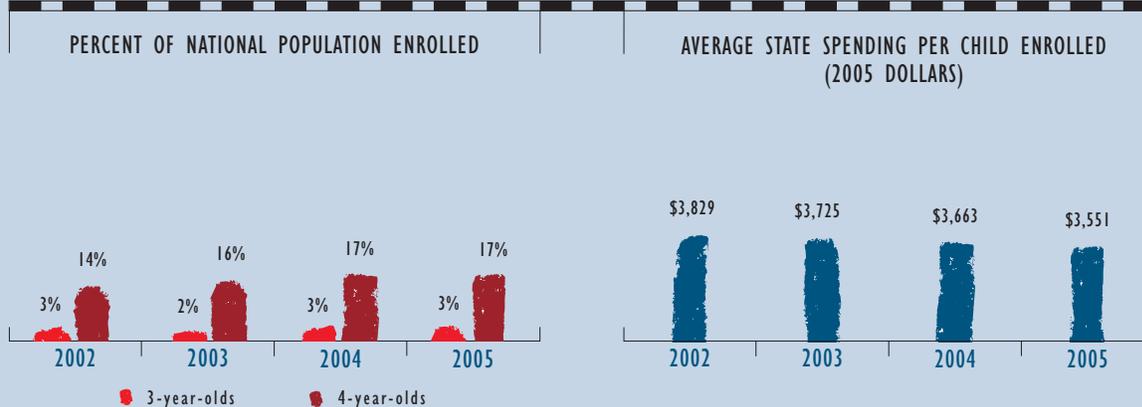
2005 STATE PRESCHOOL YEARBOOK

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United States



This summary profile presents an overview of state-funded prekindergarten data across the United States during the 2004–2005 school year. As on the individual state profiles found on pages 40 to 159 of this report, we emphasize the areas of access to state preschool, quality standards, and spending. This profile, however, focuses on national totals and averages rather than statewide totals and averages.

During the 2004–2005 program year, 38 states offered state-funded prekindergarten. Across those states, there were 48 distinct prekindergarten initiatives, since some states funded multiple initiatives. The 12 states not offering state-funded prekindergarten in 2004–2005 were Alaska, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. Florida has since started a state prekindergarten initiative.

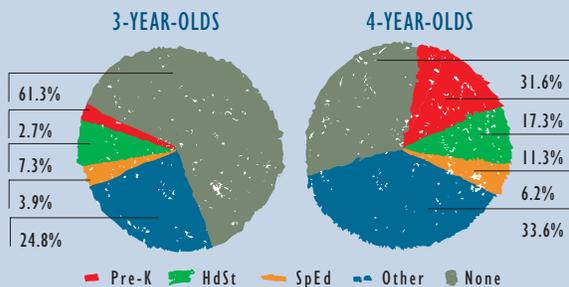
National data show that the percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled in state prekindergarten grew by 3 percent from the 2001–2002 school year to the 2004–2005 school year, with 17 percent of the nation’s 4-year-olds enrolled in 2004–2005. The percentage of 3-year-olds enrolled remained steady during this time period. From fiscal year 2002 to fiscal year 2005, state spending decreased by \$278 per child enrolled, in inflation-adjusted dollars.

A total of 801,902 children were enrolled in state prekindergarten initiatives in 2004–2005. Quality standards varied tremendously across the states, and just half of the state prekindergarten initiatives met the important benchmark of requiring all lead teachers to have a bachelor’s degree. Funding for state prekindergarten was about \$2.8 billion during the 2004–2005 school year. Although some state prekindergarten initiatives also reported financial support from local and federal sources, per-child spending in state prekindergarten was still much less than total state, local, and federal spending in grades K–12.

NATIONAL ACCESS

Total state preschool enrollment	801,902
States that fund preschool	38 states
Income requirement	29 state programs have an income requirement
Hours of operation	9 full-day, 12 half-day, 27 determined locally
Operating schedule	29 academic year, 1 calendar year, 18 determined locally
Special education enrollment	398,942
Federal Head Start enrollment, ages 3 & 4 ('03-'04)	733,414
Total federal Head Start and Early Head Start enrollment, ages 0 to 5 ('03-'04)	896,299
State-funded Head Start enrollment	17,431 ¹

STATE PRE-K AND HEAD START ENROLLMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION



NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST SUMMARY

POLICY

Early learning standards	
Teacher degree	
Teacher specialized training	
Assistant teacher degree	
Teacher in-service	
Maximum class size	
3-year-olds	
4-year-olds	
Staff-child ratio	
3-year-olds	
4-year-olds	
Screening/referral and support services	
Meals	
Monitoring	

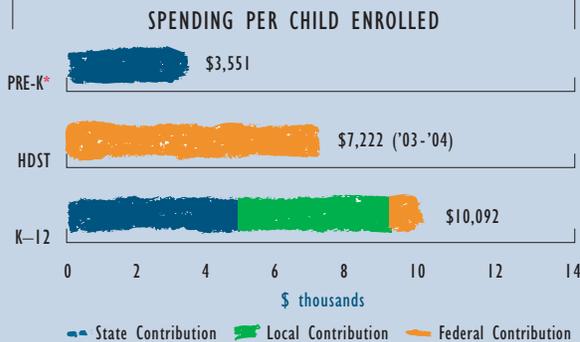
BENCHMARK

OF THE 48 STATE PRE-K INITIATIVES, NUMBER MEETING BENCHMARK

Comprehensive	27
BA	24
Specializing in Pre-K	35
CDA or equivalent	12
At least 15 hours/year	33
20 or lower	35
1:10 or better	37
Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 support service	27
At least 1/day	23
Site visits	30

NATIONAL RESOURCES

Total state preschool spending	\$2,836,737,647
Local match required?	10 state programs require a local match
State spending per child enrolled	\$3,551 ²
State Head Start spending	\$151,521,604
State spending per 3-year-old	\$111 ³
State spending per 4-year-old	\$698 ³



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

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

Data are for the '04-'05 school year, unless otherwise noted.

¹ This figure includes 15,392 children who attended programs that were considered to be state-funded preschool initiatives. These children are also counted in the state-funded preschool enrollment total.

² This figure includes federal TANF funds directed toward preschool at states' discretion.

³ These calculations are based on the total population of 3- and 4-year-olds in the 38 states that funded a preschool initiative.

Executive Summary

THE RISE OF STATE-FUNDED PRESCHOOL: WHAT THE LAST FOUR YEARS TELL US

Like the children it serves, the state-funded preschool movement is young. Fewer than half the state-funded preschool programs reported on in this *Yearbook* existed 20 years ago. By the 2001–2002 school year, when NIEER began tracking state-funded preschool programs, 38 states were funding programs and enrolling nearly 700,000 children. By 2004–2005, those states served more than 800,000 children, surpassing the 40-year-old federal Head Start program in number of 4-year-olds served. This represents an astounding jump of 20 percent in 4-year-olds and an 8 percent increase in 3-year-olds enrolled during those four years. When 2005–2006 is reported, Florida's new program alone is likely to add 100,000 4-year-olds to the total. More growth in state-funded preschool is on the horizon, raising the prospect that in the near future, state prekindergarten enrollment will exceed federal Head Start enrollment at all ages. Despite difficult times for state budgets, state spending on preschool education grew by 7.5 percent even after adjusting for inflation, and neared \$3 billion.

Beyond the broad numbers, however, lie areas of both promise and concern. The South continues to build its lead over the rest of the country in expanding access to state-funded preschool for 4-year-olds. Growth in quality of programs has been slow to develop. No state meets all 10 benchmarks on NIEER's Quality Standards Checklist while six state prekindergarten initiatives achieve nine of the 10. More than half of states with programs still have policies that do not require all teachers to have appropriate qualifications.

On funding issues, we found a checkered history of expansion and contraction among the states. This limits the potential for preschool education to set children on a path to do their best in school and life. The national trend in enrollment was strongly positive from 2001 to 2004. However, funding shortfalls produced enrollment declines in 11 states. Nationally, inflation-adjusted state spending per enrolled child declined by more than 7 percent over four years. In 26 of 38 states with prekindergarten programs, the state's per child expenditure declined in real (inflation-adjusted) dollars. This pattern of expansion and contraction is unfortunate. A stable, highly effective educational system for young children will remain out of reach as long as policymakers find it acceptable to cut preschool education whenever the economy enters a downturn.

Research has shown high-quality preschool dramatically affects later achievement, high school graduation and college attendance, employment and earnings, crime and delinquency, health behaviors like smoking and drug use, even marriage rates. In economic terms, research finds that high-quality preschool pays high returns to the individual, community, state and nation as a whole. Preschool offers important benefits for the nation's economic productivity, cost of government, families and communities. Business leaders cite time and again the need for a well-educated workforce. Today's preschoolers will make up the labor pool as the baby boomers' retirement phase is in full swing and comes to a close. How we educate the nation's children will have important consequences not only for businesses, but also for the country's ability to compete in a global market.

States With No Program 2004–2005

Alaska	New Hampshire
Florida	North Dakota
Idaho	Rhode Island
Indiana	South Dakota
Mississippi	Utah
Montana	Wyoming

Major findings from our study can be grouped into three main categories:

Access

- In 2004–2005, 38 states funded one or more state prekindergarten initiatives. There were 12 states without state-funded prekindergarten, although one of those states, Florida, began a large-scale initiative during the 2005–2006 school year.
- State prekindergarten initiatives served more than 800,000 children during the 2004–2005 school year. This is an increase of about 16 percent, or 110,000 children since we began tracking access during the 2001–2002 school year. Despite this overall pattern of growth, state prekindergarten enrollment actually declined in 11 states.
- State prekindergarten programs continued to focus primarily on 4-year-olds. In 2004–2005, 17 percent of the nation’s 4-year-olds were enrolled, an increase from 14 percent in 2001–2002. Meanwhile, only 3 percent of the nation’s 3-year-olds were enrolled during 2004–2005, roughly the same percentage served in 2001–2002. Some states appear to have reduced enrollment of 3-year-olds in order to increase or maintain the number of 4-year-olds served.
- Oklahoma is the only state that can be said to offer publicly-funded preschool education to virtually all children at age 4. In 2004–2005, more than 90 percent of Oklahoma’s 4-year-olds were enrolled in state prekindergarten, preschool special education, or Head Start programs. Georgia offered the next highest level of access to publicly-funded prekindergarten, with 67 percent of 4-year-olds enrolled in one of these programs.

Quality Standards

- No state met all 10 of NIEER’s quality benchmarks. Six state preschool initiatives—in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Tennessee—each met nine of the 10 benchmarks. However, 21 state initiatives met five or fewer benchmarks. This suggests that states need to develop policies that establish stronger and more uniform quality standards.
- Twenty-two states did not require all state prekindergarten teachers to hold at least a bachelor’s degree. Nine of these states did not require *any* state prekindergarten teachers to have a bachelor’s degree; 10 more exempted at least some teachers outside the public schools; and three had multiple prekindergarten initiatives, at least one of which did not require a BA. As a result, some preschoolers in each of these states have teachers who lack the basic educational credential generally expected of teachers at other grade levels.
- Improvements in the quality of state preschool initiatives have been relatively slow to materialize. Four state programs—in Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, and West Virginia—made policy changes resulting in real improvements to their quality standards by the 2004–2005 program year.
- For the first time, this report examines quality monitoring requirements as a gauge of states’ efforts to ensure that the goals of quality standards are achieved in preschool classrooms. Thirty state prekindergarten initiatives used regular site visits to monitor local programs in 2004–2005.

Resources

- Total state spending for prekindergarten initiatives reached \$2.84 billion in 2004–2005. By comparison, state governments spent about \$240 billion on grades K–12 during the same time period. Spending on preschool education represents slightly more than 1 percent of the total state K–12 budget.
- State prekindergarten spending grew 7.5 percent from 2001–2002 to 2004–2005, after adjusting for inflation. Average state spending per child enrolled was \$3,551 in 2004–2005. States vary tremendously in their per-child spending. The top-ranked state—New Jersey—spent 10 times more per child than Maryland, the lowest-ranked state.
- Although there was modest growth in spending from 2001–2002 to 2004–2005, enrollment growth in state prekindergarten outpaced spending increases. As a result, there was a 7.3 percent *decline* in inflation-adjusted per-child spending over this 4-year period.

Table 1 shows each state’s rankings on access for 4-year-olds, access for 3-year-olds, and resources, as well as the average number of quality benchmarks met in each state.

In many other economically advanced countries, national policy provides a free high-quality preschool education for all children beginning at ages 3 or 4. Not so in the United States. Here preschool education is—like education generally—a combined federal, state, and local responsibility. Unlike children in the K–12 system, preschoolers are not guaranteed any education at all, much less a high-quality education. Indeed, our data reveal that 11 states actually reduced the numbers of preschool children they served in the four years covered by the *Yearbook* series, as many states cut budgets or flat-funded programs despite inflation. Clearly these states do not yet treat prekindergarten as real education that must be delivered in good and bad financial times.

This situation could be remedied at costs that are quite small relative to overall government expenditures. Whether one’s policy preference is to ensure access and quality for children from low-income families or extend the benefits of prekindergarten to all children, these goals can be achieved without much financial effort. Minimal parity with K–12 spending for a half-day program could be achieved for only \$125 million. Adequately funded programs could be delivered to all children from low-income families with \$1.5 to \$3 billion in new state commitments. All children could be well served if states would commit \$8 to \$12 billion. This might not cover all of the costs, but would cover a reasonable state share. Given the importance of children’s early years and the contributions of quality preschool education to children’s future success, it is difficult to justify failure to make such improvements.

Photo: Rutgers-Livingston Day Care Center



TABLE 1: STATE RANKINGS AND QUALITY CHECKLIST SUMS

State	Access for 4-Year-Olds Rank	Access for 3-Year-Olds Rank	Resources Rank	Quality Standards Checklist Sum (Maximum of 10)
Alabama	37	none served	17	9
Arizona	26	none served	32	4
Arkansas	18	5	8	9
California	19	7	20	4
Colorado	20	16	22	4
Connecticut	16	11	4	5
Delaware	24	none served	6	8
Georgia	2	none served	13	8
Hawaii	28	22	15	4
Illinois	11	3	24	9
Iowa	31	15	21	5
Kansas	15	none served	36	3
Kentucky	8	4	31	8
Louisiana	13	none served	11	7.6
Maine	17	none served	34	3
Maryland	6	20	38	7
Massachusetts	23	6	7	6
Michigan	14	none served	18	4
Minnesota	36	17	3	8
Missouri	32	12	33	5
Nebraska	34	18	35	5
Nevada	35	25	26	4
New Jersey	12	1	1	8.5
New Mexico	38	26	28	4
New York	10	27	14	3.8
North Carolina	22	none served	12	9
Ohio	27	13	5	4.9
Oklahoma	1	none served	29	8
Oregon	29	10	2	7
Pennsylvania	30	19	25	2.5
South Carolina	7	23	37	8
Tennessee	33	24	19	9
Texas	3	9	27	4
Vermont	4	2	30	6.7
Virginia	21	none served	16	4
Washington	25	14	9	6
West Virginia	5	8	10	6
Wisconsin	9	21	23	4.1
Alaska	no program	no program	no program	no program
Florida	no program	no program	no program	no program
Idaho	no program	no program	no program	no program
Indiana	no program	no program	no program	no program
Mississippi	no program	no program	no program	no program
Montana	no program	no program	no program	no program
New Hampshire	no program	no program	no program	no program
North Dakota	no program	none served	no program	no program
Rhode Island	no program	no program	no program	no program
South Dakota	no program	no program	no program	no program
Utah	no program	no program	no program	no program
Wyoming	no program	no program	no program	no program

State-Funded Preschool: Strong but Uneven Growth

The State of Preschool: 2005 State Preschool Yearbook is the third in the series of NIEER's annual reference volumes tracking state-funded preschool education programs. Its purpose is to provide a compendium of data on state efforts to offer preschool education as well as analyses of key measures of program progress: access, quality standards and resources. This volume benefits from new data collection efforts enabling us to provide more up-to-date information than in the past. As a result, the 2005 *Yearbook* encompasses the 2004–2005 school year and describes trends over the four years that have elapsed since 2001–2002, the year covered by our first *Yearbook*.

Those four years have seen strong, if uneven, progress in access to preschool programs. The national picture for 2004–2005 looks like this. In 2004–2005, 38 states funded a preschool education program. They served 801,902 children, the vast majority at age 4. Enrollment was up 109,507 children (a 20 percent increase at age 4 and 8 percent increase at age 3) from the 2001–2002 enrollment of 692,395. Of the 38 states with programs, 26 increased their enrollment during this period. Table 2 reports the change in number of children enrolled and the rate of increase (or decrease) in enrollment for each state from 2001–2002 to 2004–2005.

State preschool programs in 2004–2005 served more than 17 percent of the nation's 4-year-olds, making them an even larger provider at this age than the federal Head Start program, which served 11 percent of 4-year-olds. Preschool special education programs served another 6 percent. This brings the percentage of 4-year-olds served in one of these public programs to 35 percent. Comparison with 2001–2002 shows an increase of 4 percentage points. However, since our calculation assumes no overlap in enrollment across the three types of programs, it represents an upper-bound estimate of enrollment.





Beyond the national averages, however, lies a complex picture. One state can truly be said to offer preschool education to virtually all children at age 4—Oklahoma. Over 90 percent of Oklahoma’s 4-year-olds enrolled in a state preschool program (including preschool special education) or Head Start in 2004–2005. Next highest in access is Georgia, where 67 percent of the 4-year-olds attended a public preschool program. Remarkably, six of seven states serving more than 30 percent of their 4-year-olds in state prekindergarten are in what the U.S. Census defines as the South.

Table 3 presents state rankings by the percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled in state-funded preschool, and also shows percentages of children at 3 and 4 who attended a state-funded preschool, Head Start, or preschool special education program.

Few state preschool programs focus on 3-year-olds. As a result, state programs enroll only 3 percent of the population at this age. Head Start, by contrast, enrolls 7 percent of the nation’s 3-year-olds, and another 4 percent are in preschool special education. This yields a maximum of 14 percent enrolled in these programs at age 3, consistent with the percent served in 2001–2002 (assuming no double counting across programs). Trends over time suggest that Head Start has at least slightly shifted its emphasis toward 3-year-olds as state preschool programs have served more children at age 4. Statistical analysis indicates that a 10 percentage-point increase in a state’s preschool enrollment of 4-year-olds is associated with a 2-point increase in the percentage of a state’s Head Start enrollment devoted to 3-year-olds.

TABLE 2: CHANGES IN PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT FROM 2001–2002 TO 2004–2005

STATE	CHANGE IN NUMBER ENROLLED		PERCENT CHANGE IN ENROLLMENT	
	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	3-year-olds	4-year-olds
Alabama	0	216	0.0%	28.6%
Alaska	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Arizona	0	773	0.0%	18.1%
Arkansas	2,076	2,238	220.4%	100.6%
California	13,557	10,318	124.1%	23.2%
Colorado	143	-1,283	19.6%	-15.4%
Connecticut	-492	1,837	-32.1%	41.6%
Delaware	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Florida	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Georgia	0	7,180	0.0%	11.3%
Hawaii	154	-448	NA	-35.9%
Idaho	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Illinois	8,081	6,556	57.3%	16.9%
Indiana	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Iowa	-43	8	-8.4%	0.5%
Kansas	0	3,670	0.0%	164.6%
Kentucky	872	2,899	17.9%	22.6%
Louisiana	0	4,860	0.0%	64.6%
Maine	0	481	0.0%	33.4%
Maryland	-724	4,073	-50.8%	21.9%
Massachusetts	-3,772	-3,066	-40.0%	-32.5%
Michigan	0	-1,615	0.0%	-6.1%
Minnesota	2	-39	0.2%	-3.1%
Mississippi	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Missouri	-774	-751	-30.4%	-20.4%
Montana	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Nebraska	152	279	122.9%	78.3%
Nevada	95	506	85.6%	157.6%
New Hampshire	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
New Jersey	4,421	5,180	34.6%	21.7%
New Mexico	-314	-130	-66.8%	-35.1%
New York	-4,592	4,712	-78.7%	7.4%
North Carolina	0	10,927	0.0%	881.2%
North Dakota	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Ohio	-6,589	-6,280	-67.8%	-45.2%
Oklahoma	0	5,833	0.0%	22.5%
Oregon	82	-278	7.4%	-10.7%
Pennsylvania	1,401	4,647	NA	182.2%
Rhode Island	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
South Carolina	130	1,221	37.1%	7.8%
South Dakota	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Tennessee	-342	642	-40.6%	36.5%
Texas	-4,669	33,206	-23.7%	26.0%
Utah	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Vermont	430	2,194	117.0%	354.0%
Virginia	0	4,429	0.0%	75.3%
Washington	-68	-147	-5.9%	-3.1%
West Virginia	-866	1,993	-49.0%	39.2%
Wisconsin	-79	5,858	-11.5%	43.4%
Wyoming	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
50 states	8,272	112,699	8.0%	20.0%

ACCESS: A PATTERN OF DISPARITIES

Although the national trend in enrollment was strongly positive from 2001 to 2004, this was not the case in every state. In fact, the total number of children served by state preschool programs actually fell in 11 states. The largest declines in enrollment were in Massachusetts and Ohio. New Mexico also had a large decline as a percentage of its preschool enrollment, but this decline may be temporary as the state shifts toward a new program with higher standards.

Some states appear to have cut back on enrollment of 3-year-olds as they increased or maintained the percentage of 4-year-olds. These states include Connecticut, Maryland, New York, Texas and West Virginia. New York actually served fewer children overall in 2004–2005 compared to the preceding two years. Trading one age group for the other is poor public policy. There is no lower age limit on the need to invest in learning and development. Given the high rate of return to investments in early childhood education at every age, logic dictates that when making budget decisions, policy makers should look to other state expenditures with lower rates of return rather than making trade-offs within early childhood care and education budgets.

Of the 12 states that have perennially had no program, only one has launched a new state preschool initiative since our first *Yearbook* was published. In November 2002, Florida voters amended their state constitution to require the provision of a free high-quality preschool education to every 4-year-old whose parents or guardians wished to enroll them. Florida began its new program in the 2005–2006 school year, so it is not formally included in this *Yearbook*. Florida is a relatively large state, and even a 50 percent enrollment rate in the new program could add more than 100,000 children to the national total.



Figure 1 displays enrollment as a percentage of the population across the nation. As noted earlier, Southern states lead the way when it comes to enrollment. The South accounts for seven of the top eight states for enrollment at age 4. Southern states also are leaders in the movement toward full-day kindergarten and other education reforms. Preschool education seems to be part of a Southern state strategy of increased investment in education as a means of increasing state economic competitiveness.

Not every Southern state has been a leader in preschool education. Mississippi stands alone in the region for its lack of a state-funded program. If not for Head Start, Mississippi's young children would be in dire straits. Mississippi has 38 percent of its 4-year-olds enrolled in Head Start. Even without a state program, Mississippi ranks eleventh for enrollment at age 4 and second for enrollment at age 3 in publicly funded preschool education. The large percentage of children in Head Start in Mississippi is partly explained by the high incidence of poverty in that state. However, Mississippi is higher in Head Start enrollment compared to other states even when adjustments for percentage of children in poverty are made. Unfortunately, Head Start funding is not sufficient for it to compensate to the same degree in all states that have limited state prekindergarten programs. For example, two other states—Alabama and Tennessee—remained behind other Southern states in preschool education, but they do not have relatively high Head Start enrollments to pick up any of the slack.

FIGURE 1: PERCENT OF 4-YEAR-OLDS SERVED IN STATE PRE-K

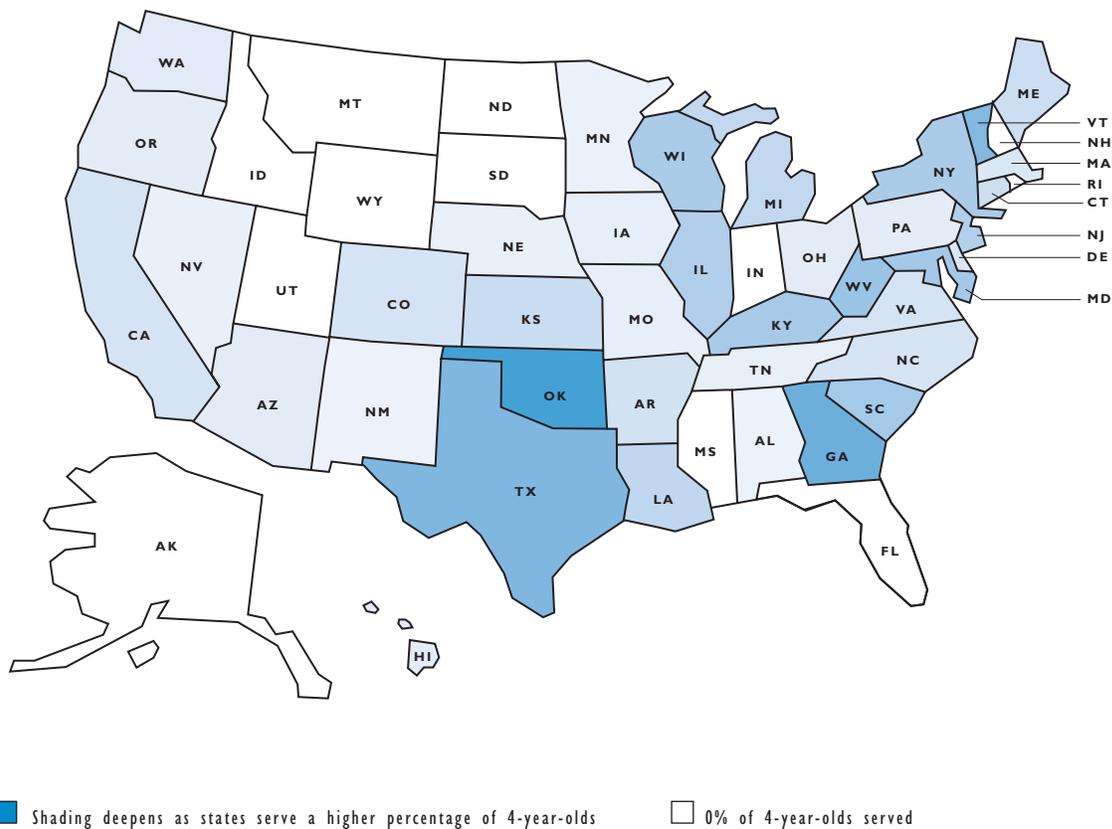
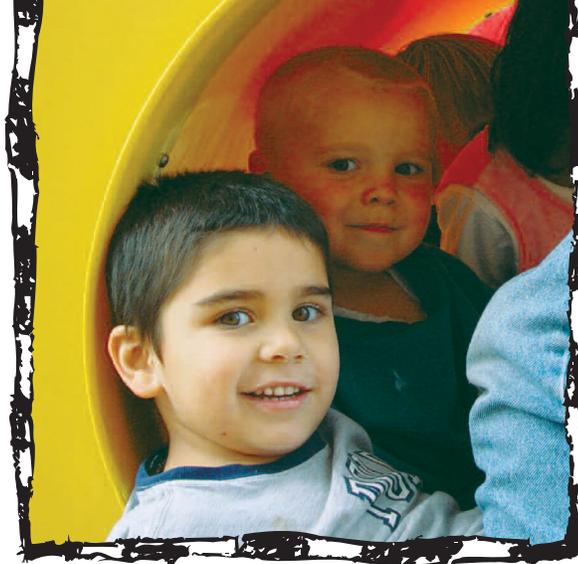


TABLE 3: STATE RANKINGS BY PRE-K ACCESS FOR 4-YEAR-OLDS

Access for 4-Year-Olds Rank	State	Percent Enrolled in State Prekindergarten (2004–2005)			Percent Enrolled in State Prekindergarten, Head Start, or IDEA Preschool Grants Programs (2004–2005)		
		4-year-olds	3-year-olds	Total (3s and 4s)	4-year-olds	3-year-olds	Total (3s and 4s)
1	Oklahoma	68.5%	0.0%	33.6%	92.4%	16.7%	53.8%
2	Georgia	54.6%	0.0%	26.4%	67.4%	10.8%	38.2%
3	Texas	46.0%	4.1%	24.4%	60.2%	13.3%	36.0%
4	Vermont	44.9%	12.7%	28.7%	64.1%	27.0%	45.5%
5	West Virginia	35.3%	4.5%	19.9%	64.6%	22.0%	43.2%
6	Maryland	31.1%	0.9%	15.7%	43.4%	10.4%	26.6%
7	South Carolina	30.4%	0.8%	15.4%	47.6%	13.7%	30.4%
8	Kentucky	29.6%	10.7%	20.1%	62.1%	29.4%	45.6%
9	Wisconsin	28.9%	0.9%	14.8%	47.5%	15.0%	31.2%
10	New York	28.5%	0.5%	14.2%	48.2%	15.3%	31.4%
11	Illinois	26.1%	12.3%	19.0%	44.2%	24.2%	34.0%
12	New Jersey	25.6%	14.9%	20.2%	37.4%	24.2%	30.7%
13	Louisiana	19.8%	0.0%	9.7%	42.9%	17.1%	29.8%
14	Michigan	18.9%	0.0%	9.4%	39.4%	14.3%	26.8%
15	Kansas	16.0%	0.0%	7.9%	34.9%	12.6%	23.7%
16	Connecticut	14.6%	2.4%	8.5%	29.0%	13.4%	21.3%
17	Maine	14.2%	0.0%	7.1%	41.3%	18.8%	30.1%
18	Arkansas	12.2%	8.1%	10.1%	42.9%	26.6%	34.6%
19	California	10.9%	4.6%	7.7%	26.8%	13.2%	19.8%
20	Colorado	10.7%	1.3%	5.9%	24.8%	9.6%	17.0%
21	Virginia	10.6%	0.0%	5.2%	24.2%	7.8%	15.8%
22	North Carolina	10.2%	0.0%	5.0%	25.7%	8.0%	16.7%
23	Massachusetts	8.3%	7.1%	7.7%	23.4%	17.3%	20.3%
24	Delaware	8.3%	0.0%	4.0%	24.2%	10.0%	16.9%
25	Washington	5.9%	1.4%	3.6%	21.0%	9.9%	15.4%
26	Arizona	5.8%	0.0%	2.9%	24.9%	9.7%	17.1%
27	Ohio	5.2%	2.1%	3.6%	22.8%	15.5%	19.1%
28	Hawaii	5.1%	0.9%	2.9%	20.6%	10.7%	15.4%
29	Oregon	5.1%	2.6%	3.8%	21.9%	12.9%	17.4%
30	Pennsylvania	5.0%	1.0%	3.0%	23.1%	12.8%	17.9%
31	Iowa	4.4%	1.3%	2.9%	21.0%	12.5%	16.8%
32	Missouri	4.1%	2.4%	3.2%	23.3%	15.0%	19.1%
33	Tennessee	3.2%	0.6%	1.9%	21.8%	10.3%	16.0%
34	Nebraska	2.8%	1.2%	1.9%	20.6%	13.3%	16.9%
35	Nevada	2.5%	0.6%	1.5%	13.2%	7.0%	10.0%
36	Minnesota	1.9%	1.2%	1.6%	18.2%	11.8%	15.0%
37	Alabama	1.7%	0.0%	0.8%	23.2%	11.6%	17.3%
38	New Mexico	0.9%	0.6%	0.8%	28.6%	14.7%	21.6%
No Program	Alaska	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23.5%	15.0%	19.2%
No Program	Florida	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15.5%	8.7%	12.0%
No Program	Idaho	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	18.5%	8.0%	13.2%
No Program	Indiana	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.0%	10.1%	13.1%
No Program	Mississippi	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	44.3%	27.5%	35.7%
No Program	Montana	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	29.4%	17.7%	23.5%
No Program	New Hampshire	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	7.8%	10.1%
No Program	North Dakota	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	32.1%	20.0%	26.0%
No Program	Rhode Island	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	22.7%	12.2%	17.4%
No Program	South Dakota	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	29.5%	21.1%	25.2%
No Program	Utah	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	14.5%	7.0%	10.7%
No Program	Wyoming	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.8%	21.0%	27.3%
50 State Population		17.3%	2.7%	9.9%	34.8%	13.9%	24.2%

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



QUALITY STANDARDS: ENSURING VALUE

The quality of preschool education determines its educational value. Yet, many preschool programs in the United States are poor or mediocre. State standards are essential to ensure that preschool programs provide quality education. The *Yearbook* compares state quality standards against a research-based checklist of benchmarks. There are 10 benchmarks, each for a different aspect of program quality. While all of the benchmarks are important, they are not of equal importance. It is important to note that these benchmarks refer to state policies and not to actual program quality, which may be better (standards set the minimum that is acceptable, not the best) or worse (standards are not always followed perfectly).

The 2004–2005 quality standards benchmarks have been updated from previous years. Specifically, we have combined the separate screening/referral and support services benchmarks to produce a new benchmark called “required screening/referral and support services.” We then added a new benchmark for state provisions to monitor program quality. An important function of state government is to ensure that data on actual program quality flows back to the state. These data can then be used to support and improve program performance and ensure state standards are met. We provide further details about the benchmarks and changes to the Quality Standards Checklist on pages 32 and 33.

No state met all 10 quality benchmarks for the 2004–2005 program year. Six state preschool initiatives (those in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, North Carolina, and Tennessee, as well as New Jersey’s Abbott program) met nine of the 10 benchmarks. Illinois would have met all the benchmarks except that the state does not require preschool programs to provide a meal. We use the meal requirement as a practical but somewhat imperfect measure of the extent to which programs meet young children’s nutritional needs. Subsidized lunch program participation may address nutritional needs in some programs even when state standards do not require it.

The median number of benchmarks met by state prekindergarten programs in 2004–2005 was six. Table 4 reports the extent to which each state prekindergarten program attained the quality standards benchmarks and the total number of benchmarks met by each program. Pennsylvania’s new Education Accountability Block Grant prekindergarten initiative met only one of the 10 benchmarks—the fewest of any state prekindergarten program. This initiative essentially leaves quality standards to local discretion. A preliminary analysis of quality standards for Florida’s new program raises serious questions about whether it will meet that state’s constitutional requirement for high quality.

TABLE 4: 2004–2005 STATE PRE-K QUALITY STANDARDS

State	Comprehensive	Specialized	Assistant	At least	Maximum	Staff-child	Vision, hearing,	At least	Quality	Quality Standards Checklist Sum
	early learning standards	Teacher has BA	training in Pre-K	teacher has CDA or equiv.	15 hrs/yr in-service	class size ≤ 20	ratio 1:10 or better	health, and one support service	one meal	
Alabama	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Arizona	✓					✓	✓		✓	4
Arkansas	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
California			✓	✓			✓		✓	4
Colorado			✓			✓	✓		✓	4
Connecticut	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓	5
Delaware	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Georgia	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Hawaii			✓	✓				✓	✓	4
Illinois	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	9
Iowa						✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Kansas		✓		✓				✓		3
Kentucky	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		8
Louisiana (8g)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	7
Louisiana (LA4/SP)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Louisiana (NSECD)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	7
Maine		✓		✓	✓					3
Maryland	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			7
Massachusetts	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	6
Michigan			✓	✓		✓	✓			4
Minnesota	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Missouri	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			5
Nebraska		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			5
Nevada		✓	✓	✓					✓	4
New Jersey (Abbott)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
New Jersey (ECPA)	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	6
New Jersey (ELLI)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	8
New Mexico				✓			✓	✓	✓	4
New York (TPK)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	7
New York (UPK)				✓	✓	✓				3
North Carolina		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Ohio (HdSt)			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7
Ohio (Public School)			✓	✓					✓	3
Oklahoma	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	8
Oregon	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	7
Pennsylvania (K4)		✓		✓						2
Pennsylvania (EABG)				✓						1
Pennsylvania (HdSt)			✓			✓	✓	✓		5
South Carolina		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Tennessee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	9
Texas	✓	✓	✓	✓						4
Vermont (ADM)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			7
Vermont (EEI)	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			6
Virginia			✓			✓	✓			4
Washington			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	6
West Virginia	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			6
Wisconsin (4K)	✓	✓	✓	✓						4
Wisconsin (HdSt)	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		6
Totals	27	24	35	12	33	35	37	27	23	30

Note: Alaska, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming are not included because they did not fund state prekindergarten initiatives in 2004–2005. For more details about quality standards and benchmarks, see Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

One worrisome finding in our review of state quality standards is that 22 states did not require all teachers in the preschool programs they fund to have a four-year college degree, which would be required of any teacher in kindergarten or first grade. Nine states did not require any teachers to have a college degree, 10 exempted at least some teachers outside the public schools, and three funded multiple initiatives with at least one program that did not require teachers to have a BA. Of course, this does not mean that all preschool teachers (or all those exempted) did not have college degrees. A 2000–2002 survey of teachers in state preschool programs showed that the percentage of teachers with BA degrees in these states varied substantially. However, it does mean that some children in these states, sometimes most children, do not have a preschool teacher with the basic educational level expected of all other teachers and professionals.

Twenty-seven of the 38 states with prekindergarten initiatives required all teachers to have a specialization in early childhood education. Yet only 16 states required all teachers to have a bachelor's degree. Most states lacked sufficient requirements for their assistant teachers, with just 12 states requiring them to have a CDA or equivalent credential. As in previous years, this was the benchmark least likely to be met by state prekindergarten initiatives. Twenty-three states required at least 15 hours of annual in-service training for all prekindergarten teachers.

Teacher effectiveness depends on knowledge of how young children learn and develop and how they are best taught. When proper teacher preparation is not required, programs increase the risk that teachers will be poorly prepared to teach young children, particularly those children with challenging behaviors and learning problems.

States That Do Not Require Any Preschool Teachers to Hold a BA

Arizona	Hawaii
California	Minnesota
Colorado	Ohio
Delaware	Washington
Georgia	

Also important is providing children with appropriate class sizes to optimize learning. Twenty-six states required all state preschool programs to limit class sizes to 20 or fewer children. Twenty-eight states required staff-child ratios of 1:10 or better. Among the states not meeting these benchmarks, there are still several states that do not limit class size and/or ratio. Many have strong guidelines that are followed by all (or nearly all) programs and function as virtual state standards. This is not always true, however.

Our new benchmark for monitoring was met by 24 states with prekindergarten initiatives. These states regularly monitored local programs through site visits, and all but one of these states conducted additional types of monitoring activities. Such efforts are necessary to ensure that the state quality standards actually produce the desired results in the classroom.

Just over half (21) of the states had comprehensive early learning standards for prekindergarten. Twenty states required all programs to provide vision, hearing, and health screening and referral, as well as additional support services. Finally, 16 states required meals to be available to all participating children.

Due to the changes in our Quality Standards Checklist described above, the numbers of benchmarks met by each state prekindergarten initiative are not precisely comparable to the numbers met in our previous reports. However, program quality is not a static concept, and as states evolve their policies to place a greater emphasis on issues such as monitoring program implementation, it is important that we adapt our checklist accordingly. State policies to ensure that actual quality follows from their standards are undoubtedly important. Still, it is clear from our data that improvements in quality standards since we began the *Yearbook* series have been relatively slow to materialize. When looking at checklist items that have remained constant since our last *Yearbook*, four state prekindergarten initiatives made policy changes by 2004–2005 that improved their quality standards.

POLICY CHANGES IN STATE PRE-K QUALITY



STATE PRE-K INITIATIVE	NEW BENCHMARK MET
Georgia - - - - -	At least 15 hours/year of teacher in-service
Kentucky - - - - -	Teacher degree requirement of a BA
Louisiana NSECD - - - - -	At least 15 hours/year of teacher in-service
West Virginia - - - - -	Staff-child ratio of 1:10 or better
West Virginia - - - - -	Vision, hearing, health screening/referral; and at least 1 support service

RESOURCES: TEST OF COMMITMENT

There is no “right answer,” in dollar terms, to how much a state should spend on public prekindergarten programs. In part, this is because state spending is not the only source of financial support for many state preschool programs. As with K-12 education, there can be a substantial local share and the state-local division of responsibilities varies among states. Also, some costs may be shared with the federal government and even parents when child care and preschool education are combined. Thus, for most state preschool programs, state expenditures do not equal total financial support or cost of the program. Nevertheless, state expenditures to support preschool programs are a key indicator of each state’s commitment to expanding access and ensuring educational adequacy for young children. State spending per child in the prekindergarten program is a key influence on program quality and a measure of state support for equal access to a good preschool education.

Total state spending reached \$2.84 billion in 2004–2005. This reflects an increase in spending of 7.5 percent over four years after adjustments for inflation. To put this figure in perspective, state governments spent about \$240 billion on K–12 education in 2004–2005. That makes state spending on preschool education equal to about 1 percent of the state K–12 budget. In short, state spending on preschool remains quite modest and will continue to be so unless the growth in state commitments to preschool education accelerates. Table 5 reports each state’s total spending and spending per child enrolled. It also shows changes in state spending from 2001–2002 in constant (inflation-adjusted) 2005 dollars.

State spending per child was \$3,551 in 2004–2005. As Table 5 shows, states vary tremendously in their overall financial commitment and in spending per child. Some states spend twice the national average on each child, and the top ranked state spends more than 10 times what the lowest ranked state spends per child. The states with the highest spending levels fully fund their state preschool programs. Those with the lowest spending levels depend on someone else to pay for most of the program. Some variation in costs is due to the choice of states to fund half-day or full-day services. Looking over the numbers, one is still forced to conclude that states with low levels of financial support are likely to jeopardize educational quality and effectiveness. Complete rankings by state spending per child enrolled in preschool are shown in Table 6. For each state these figures are also compared with the state share of K–12 spending.

Photo: Rutgers-Livingston Day Care Center



Unfortunately, state preschool spending per child enrolled has not been improving in recent years. Inflation-adjusted spending per child declined from 2001–2002, by 7.3 percent. In a few states, declines may be justified as they move from a pilot program to full-scale implementation or expand beyond a disadvantaged population to serve children with less intensive needs. However, more often than not, declines in spending per child are due to the failure of state preschool expenditures to keep up with inflation, or even to cuts in the unadjusted dollars available to state preschool programs. There were 11 states with lower budgets for preschool education in 2004–2005 than in 2001–2002, after adjusting for inflation. Six of them spent less per child, even before adjusting for inflation.

Why should policy makers and the public be concerned with state funding per child and the real decline in state funds during recent years? The reason is that inadequate funding limits access, as well as program quality and effectiveness. Poorly funded programs reach fewer children and can be of such limited quality that they put at risk the gains in children's learning and development and the high returns to taxpayers that research has shown are possible. Evidence that funding is a serious limitation is provided by the number of states failing to achieve many of the benchmarks for quality discussed above. It can also be seen in teacher salaries. A 2004 study found the average state preschool teacher salary to be \$32,000, far below the average K–12 teacher salary of \$46,000. Good teachers cannot be hired and retained in prekindergartens at such poor levels of pay.

To put state preschool program expenditures into perspective the *Yearbook* compares them to state expenditures in K–12 education, which averaged \$4,900 per child in 2004–2005. Several factors make this comparison somewhat awkward. State K–12 expenditures include the costs of special education. Preschool programs require smaller classes, more classroom staff, and specialized facilities. Most state preschool programs target disadvantaged children who disproportionately live in school districts with low property values and incomes. Such districts typically receive the vast majority of their education funds from the state—much more than the average state share. Finally, in some states, preschool programs operate outside the public schools and do not have access to local or federal financial support.

States differ dramatically in sharing the costs of education between state and local governments (the federal government provides a very small share of K–12 funding). On average, public K–12 education receives 49 percent of its revenues from state government, 43 percent from local government, and 8 percent from the federal government. However, the state share varies from 30 percent to 86 percent, excluding Hawaii, which does not have local districts.

TABLE 5: STATE PRESCHOOL SPENDING DURING 2004–2005 AND CHANGES FROM 2001–2002

State	2004–2005 PRESCHOOL SPENDING		CHANGE IN SPENDING FROM 2001–2002 TO 2004–2005 (INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)	
	Total state preschool spending	State spending per child	Change in total state spending	Change in spending per child
Alabama	\$3,291,050	\$3,386	\$204,695	-\$697
Alaska	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Arizona	\$11,530,314	\$2,283	\$675,500	-\$255
Arkansas	\$43,891,700	\$4,711	\$36,751,527	\$2,456
California	\$264,429,940	\$3,218	-\$2,115,551	-\$208
Colorado	\$27,107,586	\$3,078	-\$2,871,022	\$95
Connecticut	\$48,619,536	\$6,663	\$4,242,044	-\$793
Delaware	\$4,903,200	\$5,816	\$142,205	\$169
Florida	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Georgia	\$276,000,000	\$3,899	\$12,742,260	-\$240
Hawaii	\$3,329,204	\$3,486	-\$919,867	\$84
Idaho	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Illinois	\$216,496,505	\$2,980	\$34,095,705	-\$462
Indiana	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Iowa	\$6,887,531	\$3,178	-\$1,607,142	-\$482
Kansas	\$9,945,680	\$1,686	\$4,940,780	-\$559
Kentucky	\$51,600,000	\$2,404	\$105,140	-\$683
Louisiana	\$56,133,597	\$4,235	\$21,509,848	-\$370
Maine	\$3,836,002	\$1,997	\$1,389,162	\$298
Maryland	\$16,854,787	\$721	-\$4,568,966	-\$321
Massachusetts	\$68,600,000	\$4,848	-\$38,616,080	-\$520
Michigan	\$83,686,700	\$3,366	-\$10,683,470	-\$198
Minnesota	\$17,100,000	\$6,929	-\$3,336,675	-\$857
Mississippi	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Missouri	\$10,609,869	\$2,254	-\$6,073,131	-\$423
Montana	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Nebraska	\$2,097,000	\$1,963	\$651,140	-\$1,049
Nevada	\$2,896,583	\$2,767	\$1,479,261	-\$514
New Hampshire	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
New Jersey	\$432,347,956	\$9,305	\$138,858,279	\$1,301
New Mexico	\$1,019,900	\$2,576	-\$92,656	\$1,251
New York	\$246,422,978	\$3,548	-\$32,850,442	-\$480
North Carolina	\$49,377,371	\$4,058	\$42,148,071	-\$1,772
North Dakota	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ohio	\$67,868,922	\$6,325	-\$63,759,982	\$747
Oklahoma	\$79,818,197	\$2,517	\$9,939,968	-\$183
Oregon	\$26,700,000	\$7,624	-\$3,996,720	-\$677
Pennsylvania	\$24,546,965	\$2,954	NA	NA
Rhode Island	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
South Carolina	\$23,832,678	\$1,374	-\$2,386,561	-\$265
South Dakota	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Tennessee	\$10,000,000	\$3,333	-\$6,683,000	-\$2,855
Texas	\$478,000,000	\$2,707	\$8,651,600	-\$478
Utah	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Vermont	\$9,040,024	\$2,488	\$7,505,188	\$954
Virginia	\$35,253,935	\$3,420	\$14,375,895	-\$132
Washington	\$26,949,437	\$4,710	-\$1,185,235	-\$26
West Virginia	\$34,500,000	\$4,323	\$10,180,524	\$775
Wisconsin	\$61,212,500	\$3,065	\$5,685,915	-\$847
Wyoming	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
50 States	\$2,836,737,647	\$3,551	\$199,075,172	-\$278

Even so, state K–12 spending per child may serve as a reasonable benchmark for state share of cost in preschool education. We refer to this as the *parity* spending level because it would equalize state spending for younger children with their K–12 peers. There is little reason to expect state support for preschool to be adequate if it falls below the state K–12 expenditure per child for a full day, or half that amount for a half day of preschool education. As Table 7 shows, 13 states with programs fall below this level of spending for preschool education. The national sum required to attain this level of spending at current enrollment is only \$125 million. Thus, it is a problem that is not costly to fix nationally, though the parity funding gap is not evenly distributed across states.

Only seven states require that full-day preschool programs be offered. Four of these states—Arkansas, Louisiana, New Jersey (one program is half-day, the other, full-day), and Tennessee—spend more per preschool child than they spend per K–12 child. Three states (Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina) spend less on preschool education than K–12 parity.

Only three states limit provision of state-funded prekindergarten to half-day programs (Colorado, Maryland, and Michigan). Colorado’s spending exceeds half its K–12 share. In Michigan (where some programs operate two full-days instead of four half-days per week), spending is somewhat less than the state’s K–12 share. Maryland’s preschool spending per child is less than one-fifth of its K–12 parity amount. Preschool spending in Delaware, where programs operate for four hours per day, is just under 75 percent of its K–12 parity amount.

The other 27 states funding preschool programs leave length of program day to local discretion. Thus, the least they might reasonably contribute is half of parity. Ten states do not spend this much per child. However, for full-day programs to be adequately financed, twice that amount is likely to be necessary.



Photo: Rutgers-Livingston Day Care Center

TABLE 6: RANKINGS OF STATE PRE-K RESOURCES PER CHILD ENROLLED

Resources Rank	State	\$ per child enrolled in state Pre-K	State spending per child at K-12 parity	Difference in Pre-K and K-12 spending
1	New Jersey	\$9,305	\$4,607	\$4,698
2	Oregon	\$7,624	\$5,019	\$2,606
3	Minnesota	\$6,929	\$8,090	-\$1,161
4	Connecticut	\$6,663	\$5,220	\$1,443
5	Ohio	\$6,325	\$5,016	\$1,309
6	Delaware	\$5,816	\$7,940	-\$2,123
7	Massachusetts	\$4,848	\$4,789	\$60
8	Arkansas	\$4,711	\$3,757	\$954
9	Washington	\$4,710	\$6,634	-\$1,924
10	West Virginia	\$4,323	\$6,166	-\$1,843
11	Louisiana	\$4,235	\$4,269	-\$34
12	North Carolina	\$4,058	\$4,869	-\$811
13	Georgia	\$3,899	\$4,414	-\$516
14	New York	\$3,548	\$6,575	-\$3,027
15	Hawaii	\$3,486	\$8,411	-\$4,925
16	Virginia	\$3,420	\$4,237	-\$816
17	Alabama	\$3,386	\$4,651	-\$1,265
18	Michigan	\$3,366	\$7,703	-\$4,337
19	Tennessee	\$3,333	\$3,205	\$128
20	California	\$3,218	\$6,204	-\$2,986
21	Iowa	\$3,178	\$4,069	-\$891
22	Colorado	\$3,078	\$4,174	-\$1,096
23	Wisconsin	\$3,065	\$6,312	-\$3,246
24	Illinois	\$2,980	\$3,786	-\$806
25	Pennsylvania	\$2,954	\$4,151	-\$1,197
26	Nevada	\$2,767	\$2,987	-\$221
27	Texas	\$2,707	\$3,228	-\$520
28	New Mexico	\$2,576	\$5,839	-\$3,264
29	Oklahoma	\$2,517	\$3,653	-\$1,136
30	Vermont	\$2,488	\$11,432	-\$8,944
31	Kentucky	\$2,404	\$4,952	-\$2,548
32	Arizona	\$2,283	\$3,437	-\$1,154
33	Missouri	\$2,254	\$2,853	-\$599
34	Maine	\$1,997	\$4,887	-\$2,890
35	Nebraska	\$1,963	\$3,513	-\$1,550
36	Kansas	\$1,686	\$4,468	-\$2,782
37	South Carolina	\$1,374	\$4,513	-\$3,140
38	Maryland	\$721	\$4,029	-\$3,308
No program	Alaska	\$0	\$6,875	NA
No program	Florida	\$0	\$3,773	NA
No program	Idaho	\$0	\$4,320	NA
No program	Indiana	\$0	\$5,273	NA
No program	Mississippi	\$0	\$3,964	NA
No program	Montana	\$0	\$3,971	NA
No program	New Hampshire	\$0	\$5,608	NA
No program	North Dakota	\$0	\$3,141	NA
No program	Rhode Island	\$0	\$4,084	NA
No program	South Dakota	\$0	\$3,025	NA
No program	Utah	\$0	\$3,771	NA
No program	Wyoming	\$0	\$6,059	NA

NA=Not applicable

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

IMPROVING STATE PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS IN THE FUTURE

Our *Yearbook* data provide a basis for estimating the resources required for states to improve both access and quality. Producing such estimates is always risky, as each state has unique circumstances. Moreover, we address only a small part of the larger issue of quality education and care for children from birth to 5. Nevertheless, policy makers contemplating next steps may find it useful to have reasonable models for improving state preschool programs, and reasonable estimates of the costs. Thus, we provide a range of estimates of the costs to increase access and quality in state preschool programs in Tables 7, 8, and 9.

For each state, Table 7 reports current enrollment in state-funded preschool programs and the state funding required at each of three different levels of quality support. The three levels are: maintaining current expenditures per child; achieving half of K–12 parity for 31 states and achieving full K–12 parity for the nine programs in seven states that are required to offer full-day services; and, full K–12 parity for all 38 states with programs in 2004–2005. Full K–12 parity would facilitate longer days in the 27 states that leave length of program day to local discretion. This is important because a half-day schedule can be a barrier to participation for children in families requiring full-day child care, and also because a full-day program can be more educationally effective. Full K–12 parity could also be used to enhance quality where a mix of half- and full-day programs are provided.

The added cost for states to reach half of K–12 parity is minimal, \$125 million. Twenty-five states with preschool programs already exceed this level of funding, and 13 states fall below it. The added cost of full K–12 parity is more substantial. The 38 states supporting programs in 2004–2005 would require an additional \$1.2 billion to reach full K–12 parity. The parity gap is far from evenly distributed, of course. Eight states already met or exceeded this level of spending—Arkansas, Connecticut, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, and Tennessee. These states could be fairly characterized as making the honor roll for adequate state funding per child for preschool education. Two states account for nearly 40 percent of the national funding shortfall at current enrollment levels—California and New York.

Another key issue is whether states are willing to fund adequate enrollment levels. Table 8 reports for each state the estimated minimum enrollment required for the state preschool program to serve all 4-year-old children in low-income families, taking into account Head Start and preschool special education enrollments. For more details about Head Start and preschool special education, the other publicly funded programs included in our estimates, please see pages 28 and 29.

Table 8 also reports the necessary increases in state preschool program enrollment and expenditures at two per child spending levels: current expenditure levels and full K–12 parity. These figures are minimums because we count all children currently enrolled in state preschool programs, Head Start or preschool special education—up to the low-income total—as low-income. This is at best a rough approximation. However, precise state-by-state data are not available on the family incomes of children enrolled in these preschool programs.

The low-income population is defined as children from families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. The need for preschool education does not end abruptly at the poverty line, nor is poverty a permanent condition. Many families' economic circumstances fluctuate with the local economy and the job market, leaving them below the poverty line one month and above it the next. Expanding eligibility to 200 percent of the federal poverty level extends the benefits of preschool education to many children who do not qualify for federal assistance through Head Start. Studies have shown substantial economic returns to investing in preschool education for economically disadvantaged children.

States That Fund Preschool at K-12 Parity			
Arkansas	Louisiana	New Jersey	Oregon
Connecticut	Massachusetts	Ohio	Tennessee

Nationally, expanding preschool access to include all 4-year-olds in low-income families would increase the percentage of children served in state preschool programs at age 4 to nearly 30 percent. Across state preschool, preschool special education, and Head Start over 45 percent of all 4-year-olds (not all of them low-income) would be served. The additional cost to states would be \$1.5 billion at current levels of funding per child and \$3.0 billion at full K-12 parity.

Table 9 reports for each state the likely increase in enrollment if preschool is offered to all 4-year-olds. Research has identified several advantages of preschool for all children, including: learning gains for children regardless of socio-economic status, the cost and difficulties of targeting children from low-income families, benefits to children in poverty from attending preschool programs with higher income peers, avoiding the stigma associated with programs for children in poverty, and improvements in the overall learning environment in later grades when all children have had the benefit of a preschool education. We estimate 95 percent enrollment in public programs, consistent with the experience in Oklahoma and in other countries with truly universal public preschool programs. The enrollment figures for state programs assume that Head Start and preschool special education enrollments at age 4 remain at current levels.

If every state offered all 4-year-olds access to a free preschool education, enrollment nationwide would increase to nearly four times current enrollment. This is estimated to cost states an additional \$8.2 billion at current per-child spending levels and an additional \$12.4 billion at full K-12 parity. While not a trivial sum, even the larger estimate amounts to less than one percent of state government expenditures of all types, and 5 percent of K-12 expenditures, in 2004.

The figures in Table 9 are only “ball park” estimates, and they may not fit specific state circumstances well in all cases. Yet, for most states, a reasonable estimate of the state government costs of quality preschool for all might be found somewhere between the current cost and K-12 parity estimates. These estimates do not represent the full costs of preschool for all to the extent that costs are shared with local governments and others. However, other existing revenues are partially offsetting, including payments for child care that would only have to be “topped up” to ensure that programs can provide a quality education.

The estimates in Tables 7 to 9 reveal that states can make important improvements in preschool program access and quality without breaking their budgets. The state commitments required by sound preschool policy are relatively small, but need to be made. In addition the federal government could do its part by adequately supporting its programs: providing Head Start the funds needed to raise teacher salaries and quality, and increasing support for federally mandated preschool special education. Universal public education at age 4 is now the norm in other economically advanced nations, many of which are not nearly as wealthy as the United States. It is understood by most of the world that spending on young children is a sound investment in economic growth.

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TABLE 7: STATE COST TO IMPROVE QUALITY AT CURRENT ENROLLMENT

State	2004–2005 state Pre-K enrollment	2004–2005 state Pre-K spending at current cost	Cost of quality half-day Pre-K	Cost of quality full-day Pre-K	Added cost at half-day parity	Added cost at full-day parity
Alabama ¹	972	\$3,291,050	\$4,520,810	\$4,520,810	\$1,229,760	\$1,229,760
Alaska	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Arizona	5,050	\$11,530,314	\$8,678,614	\$17,357,228	- - -	\$5,826,914
Arkansas ¹	9,316	\$43,891,700	\$35,000,337	\$35,000,337	- - -	- - -
California	82,172	\$264,429,940	\$254,887,138	\$509,774,277	- - -	\$245,344,337
Colorado	8,808	\$27,107,586	\$18,586,208	\$37,172,416	- - -	\$10,064,830
Connecticut	7,297	\$48,619,536	\$19,046,371	\$38,092,741	- - -	- - -
Delaware	843	\$4,903,200	\$3,346,561	\$6,693,122	- - -	\$1,789,922
Florida	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Georgia ¹	70,793	\$276,000,000	\$312,511,441	\$312,511,441	\$36,511,441	\$36,511,441
Hawaii	955	\$3,329,204	\$4,016,200	\$8,032,400	\$686,996	\$4,703,196
Idaho	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Illinois	72,652	\$216,496,505	\$137,533,051	\$275,066,102	- - -	\$58,569,597
Indiana	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Iowa	2,167	\$6,887,531	\$4,408,898	\$8,817,797	- - -	\$1,930,266
Kansas	5,900	\$9,945,680	\$13,179,409	\$26,358,817	\$3,233,729	\$16,413,137
Kentucky	21,460	\$51,600,000	\$53,136,275	\$106,272,549	\$1,536,275	\$54,672,549
Louisiana ¹	12,379	\$56,133,597	\$52,840,028	\$52,840,028	- - -	- - -
Maine	1,921	\$3,836,002	\$4,693,807	\$9,387,614	\$857,805	\$5,551,612
Maryland	23,380	\$16,854,787	\$47,096,887	\$94,193,774	\$30,242,100	\$77,338,987
Massachusetts	14,150	\$68,600,000	\$33,879,018	\$67,758,037	- - -	- - -
Michigan	24,862	\$83,686,700	\$95,759,809	\$191,519,618	\$12,073,109	\$107,832,918
Minnesota	2,468	\$17,100,000	\$9,983,037	\$19,966,075	- - -	\$2,866,075
Mississippi	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Missouri	4,707	\$10,609,869	\$6,714,267	\$13,428,535	- - -	\$2,818,666
Montana	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Nebraska	1,068	\$2,097,000	\$1,875,960	\$3,751,920	- - -	\$1,654,920
Nevada	1,047	\$2,896,583	\$1,563,821	\$3,127,642	- - -	\$231,059
New Hampshire	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
New Jersey ¹	46,464	\$432,347,956	\$196,136,115	\$214,054,799	- - -	- - -
New Mexico	396	\$1,019,900	\$1,156,125	\$2,312,250	\$136,225	\$1,292,350
New York	69,454	\$246,422,978	\$228,345,052	\$456,690,105	- - -	\$210,267,127
North Carolina ¹	12,167	\$49,377,371	\$59,245,911	\$59,245,911	\$9,868,540	\$9,868,540
North Dakota	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ohio	10,730	\$67,868,922	\$26,908,886	\$53,817,771	- - -	- - -
Oklahoma	31,712	\$79,818,197	\$57,921,968	\$115,843,936	- - -	\$36,025,739
Oregon	3,502	\$26,700,000	\$8,787,710	\$17,575,420	- - -	- - -
Pennsylvania	8,598	\$24,546,965	\$17,843,043	\$35,686,085	- - -	\$11,139,120
Rhode Island	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
South Carolina	17,351	\$23,832,678	\$39,156,240	\$78,312,481	\$15,323,562	\$54,479,803
South Dakota	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tennessee ¹	3,000	\$10,000,000	\$9,615,654	\$9,615,654	- - -	- - -
Texas	176,547	\$478,000,000	\$284,938,842	\$569,877,683	- - -	\$91,877,683
Utah	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vermont	3,634	\$9,040,024	\$20,771,534	\$41,543,067	\$11,731,510	\$32,503,043
Virginia	10,307	\$35,253,935	\$21,834,071	\$43,668,142	- - -	\$8,414,207
Washington	5,722	\$26,949,437	\$18,979,442	\$37,958,885	- - -	\$11,009,448
West Virginia	7,980	\$34,500,000	\$24,603,726	\$49,207,452	- - -	\$14,707,452
Wisconsin	19,971	\$61,212,500	\$63,023,923	\$126,047,845	\$1,811,423	\$64,835,345
Wyoming	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
50 States	801,902	\$2,836,737,647	\$2,202,321,670	\$3,752,691,727	\$125,242,474	\$1,181,361,004

¹ At least one program in these states mandated full-day services during 2004–2005. The full state share of K–12 spending per child was used to calculate spending for these programs in both the half-parity and full-parity estimates.

TABLE 8: STATE COST OF PRESCHOOL FOR LOW-INCOME 4-YEAR-OLDS

State	Low-income enrollment	Change in enrollment	Cost at current spending	Cost at K–12 parity	Added cost at current spending	Added cost at K–12 parity
Alabama	14,949	13,977	\$50,616,089	\$69,529,697	\$47,325,039	\$66,238,647
Alaska ¹	1,203	1,203	\$4,270,812	\$8,267,394	\$4,270,812	\$8,267,394
Arizona	25,048	19,998	\$57,189,217	\$86,090,136	\$45,658,903	\$74,559,822
Arkansas	12,248	2,932	\$57,706,048	\$46,016,243	\$13,814,348	\$2,124,543
California	155,613	73,441	\$500,765,058	\$965,386,693	\$236,335,118	\$700,956,753
Colorado	13,306	4,498	\$40,950,421	\$55,537,066	\$13,842,835	\$28,429,480
Connecticut ²	7,297	0	\$48,619,536	\$38,092,741	\$0	- - -
Delaware	1,737	894	\$10,103,949	\$13,792,413	\$5,200,749	\$8,889,213
Florida ¹	58,426	58,426	\$207,490,683	\$220,437,281	\$207,490,683	\$220,437,281
Georgia ²	70,793	0	\$276,000,000	\$312,511,441	\$0	\$36,511,441
Hawaii	3,674	2,719	\$12,807,779	\$30,901,441	\$9,478,575	\$27,572,237
Idaho ¹	6,601	6,601	\$23,443,405	\$28,514,523	\$23,443,405	\$28,514,523
Illinois ²	72,652	0	\$216,496,505	\$275,066,102	\$0	\$58,569,597
Indiana ¹	20,954	20,954	\$74,413,390	\$110,485,662	\$74,413,390	\$110,485,662
Iowa	8,041	5,874	\$25,557,511	\$32,720,133	\$18,669,980	\$25,832,602
Kansas	7,024	1,124	\$11,839,623	\$31,378,294	\$1,893,943	\$21,432,614
Kentucky ²	21,460	0	\$51,600,000	\$106,272,549	\$0	\$54,672,549
Louisiana	19,957	7,578	\$85,600,066	\$85,186,114	\$29,466,469	\$29,052,517
Maine	2,020	99	\$4,033,074	\$9,869,896	\$197,072	\$6,033,894
Maryland ²	23,380	0	\$16,854,787	\$94,193,774	\$0	\$77,338,987
Massachusetts	16,288	2,138	\$78,963,971	\$77,994,806	\$10,363,971	\$9,394,806
Michigan ²	24,862	0	\$83,686,700	\$191,519,618	\$0	\$107,832,918
Minnesota	6,427	3,959	\$44,528,523	\$51,991,802	\$27,428,523	\$34,891,802
Mississippi ¹	3,140	3,140	\$11,152,034	\$12,447,192	\$11,152,034	\$12,447,192
Missouri	15,321	10,614	\$34,535,074	\$43,709,817	\$23,925,205	\$33,099,948
Montana ¹	2,526	2,526	\$8,971,467	\$10,030,931	\$8,971,467	\$10,030,931
Nebraska	4,235	3,167	\$8,315,327	\$14,877,654	\$6,218,327	\$12,780,654
Nevada	10,745	9,698	\$29,727,266	\$32,098,598	\$26,830,683	\$29,202,015
New Hampshire ¹	1,832	1,832	\$6,507,621	\$10,276,348	\$6,507,621	\$10,276,348
New Jersey ²	46,464	0	\$432,347,956	\$214,054,799	\$0	- - -
New Mexico	8,040	7,644	\$20,707,401	\$46,946,451	\$19,687,501	\$45,926,551
New York ²	69,454	0	\$246,422,978	\$456,690,105	\$0	\$210,267,127
North Carolina	39,842	27,675	\$161,691,954	\$194,007,637	\$112,314,583	\$144,630,266
North Dakota ¹	959	959	\$3,406,330	\$3,012,323	\$3,406,330	\$3,012,323
Ohio	31,517	20,787	\$199,345,025	\$158,077,791	\$131,476,103	\$90,208,869
Oklahoma ²	31,712	0	\$79,818,197	\$115,843,936	\$0	\$36,025,739
Oregon	14,070	10,568	\$107,271,098	\$70,611,783	\$80,571,098	\$43,911,783
Pennsylvania	25,599	17,001	\$75,616,631	\$106,248,307	\$51,069,666	\$81,701,342
Rhode Island ¹	1,384	1,384	\$4,916,512	\$5,654,278	\$4,916,512	\$5,654,278
South Carolina ²	17,351	0	\$23,832,678	\$78,312,481	\$0	\$54,479,803
South Dakota ¹	649	649	\$2,305,317	\$1,963,945	\$2,305,317	\$1,963,945
Tennessee	23,316	20,316	\$77,721,161	\$74,733,983	\$67,721,161	\$64,733,983
Texas ²	176,547	0	\$478,000,000	\$569,877,683	\$0	\$91,877,683
Utah ¹	10,909	10,909	\$38,740,205	\$41,131,321	\$38,740,205	\$41,131,321
Vermont ²	3,634	0	\$9,040,024	\$41,543,067	\$0	\$32,503,043
Virginia	18,869	8,562	\$64,539,798	\$79,943,787	\$29,285,863	\$44,689,852
Washington	22,199	16,477	\$104,552,700	\$147,264,816	\$77,603,263	\$120,315,379
West Virginia ²	7,980	0	\$34,500,000	\$49,207,452	\$0	\$14,707,452
Wisconsin ²	19,971	0	\$61,212,500	\$126,047,845	\$0	\$64,835,345
Wyoming ¹	597	597	\$2,119,158	\$3,615,304	\$2,119,158	\$3,615,304
50 States	1,202,823	400,921	\$4,310,853,564	\$5,649,985,454	\$1,474,115,917	\$3,042,067,759

¹ These states did not fund Pre-K during 2004–2005. Current funding is estimated using the national average for state spending per child in Pre-K.² State Pre-K enrollment during 2004–2005 exceeded estimated low-income enrollment. For these states, figures are based on actual enrollment.

TABLE 9: STATE COST OF PRESCHOOL FOR ALL 4-YEAR-OLDS

State	Universal enrollment	Change in enrollment	Cost at current funding	Cost at K–12 parity	Added cost at current spending	Added cost at K–12 parity
Alabama	43,192	42,220	\$146,241,813	\$200,887,684	\$142,950,763	\$197,596,634
Alaska [†]	6,858	6,858	\$24,354,035	\$47,144,286	\$24,354,035	\$47,144,286
Arizona	65,718	60,668	\$150,048,293	\$225,876,110	\$138,517,979	\$214,345,796
Arkansas	26,473	17,157	\$124,723,671	\$99,457,767	\$80,831,971	\$55,566,067
California	422,379	340,207	\$1,359,219,359	\$2,620,335,146	\$1,094,789,419	\$2,355,905,206
Colorado	53,977	45,169	\$166,119,145	\$225,291,211	\$139,011,559	\$198,183,625
Connecticut	35,631	28,334	\$237,408,093	\$186,005,994	\$188,788,557	\$137,386,458
Delaware	8,069	7,226	\$46,933,553	\$64,066,729	\$42,030,353	\$59,163,529
Florida [†]	168,982	168,982	\$600,108,655	\$637,553,061	\$600,108,655	\$637,553,061
Georgia	106,501	35,708	\$415,214,517	\$470,142,345	\$139,214,517	\$194,142,345
Hawaii	12,579	11,624	\$43,851,682	\$105,801,341	\$40,522,478	\$102,472,137
Idaho [†]	15,528	15,528	\$55,145,005	\$67,073,597	\$55,145,005	\$67,073,597
Illinois	156,242	83,590	\$465,588,162	\$591,545,442	\$249,091,657	\$375,048,937
Indiana [†]	69,031	69,031	\$245,150,524	\$363,988,494	\$245,150,524	\$363,988,494
Iowa	28,216	26,049	\$89,681,632	\$114,815,366	\$82,794,101	\$107,927,835
Kansas	28,009	22,109	\$47,215,379	\$125,133,882	\$37,269,699	\$115,188,202
Kentucky	38,932	17,472	\$93,610,464	\$192,795,012	\$42,010,464	\$141,195,012
Louisiana	44,980	32,601	\$192,931,175	\$191,998,181	\$136,797,578	\$135,864,584
Maine	9,176	7,255	\$18,323,909	\$44,842,985	\$14,487,907	\$41,006,983
Maryland	60,971	37,591	\$43,954,444	\$245,641,489	\$27,099,657	\$228,786,702
Massachusetts	66,668	52,518	\$323,211,193	\$319,244,255	\$254,611,193	\$250,644,255
Michigan	97,891	73,029	\$329,505,833	\$754,084,357	\$245,819,133	\$670,397,657
Minnesota	51,486	49,018	\$356,728,239	\$416,518,288	\$339,628,239	\$399,418,288
Mississippi [†]	20,572	20,572	\$73,057,752	\$81,542,419	\$73,057,752	\$81,542,419
Missouri	56,408	51,701	\$127,147,126	\$160,925,604	\$116,537,257	\$150,315,735
Montana [†]	6,737	6,737	\$23,923,536	\$26,748,728	\$23,923,536	\$26,748,728
Nebraska	18,040	16,972	\$35,420,819	\$63,374,377	\$33,323,819	\$61,277,377
Nevada	28,610	27,563	\$79,152,434	\$85,466,391	\$76,255,851	\$82,569,808
New Hampshire [†]	12,090	12,090	\$42,936,306	\$67,801,802	\$42,936,306	\$67,801,802
New Jersey	111,692	65,228	\$462,404,880	\$514,553,533	\$30,056,924	\$82,205,577
New Mexico	17,666	17,270	\$45,499,007	\$103,152,341	\$44,479,107	\$102,132,441
New York	181,370	111,916	\$643,501,744	\$1,192,587,158	\$397,078,766	\$946,164,180
North Carolina	94,515	82,348	\$383,569,030	\$460,228,970	\$334,191,659	\$410,851,599
North Dakota [†]	4,342	4,342	\$15,418,548	\$13,635,102	\$15,418,548	\$13,635,102
Ohio	116,358	105,628	\$735,982,481	\$583,609,340	\$668,113,559	\$515,740,418
Oklahoma	32,909	1,197	\$82,830,634	\$120,216,029	\$3,012,437	\$40,397,832
Oregon	36,946	33,444	\$281,682,634	\$185,419,124	\$254,982,634	\$158,719,124
Pennsylvania	111,309	102,711	\$328,795,978	\$461,988,523	\$304,249,013	\$437,441,558
Rhode Island [†]	8,865	8,865	\$31,481,880	\$36,206,013	\$31,481,880	\$36,206,013
South Carolina	43,685	26,334	\$60,004,496	\$197,170,496	\$36,171,818	\$173,337,818
South Dakota [†]	6,530	6,530	\$23,191,031	\$19,756,889	\$23,191,031	\$19,756,889
Tennessee	57,842	54,842	\$192,805,495	\$185,395,102	\$182,805,495	\$175,395,102
Texas	297,723	121,176	\$806,082,776	\$961,022,145	\$328,082,776	\$483,022,145
Utah [†]	35,829	35,829	\$127,238,991	\$135,092,412	\$127,238,991	\$135,092,412
Vermont	5,550	1,916	\$13,806,433	\$63,446,907	\$4,766,409	\$54,406,883
Virginia	79,146	68,839	\$270,710,570	\$335,322,214	\$235,456,635	\$300,068,279
Washington	63,788	58,066	\$300,428,292	\$423,159,967	\$273,478,855	\$396,210,530
West Virginia	14,070	6,090	\$60,829,060	\$86,760,668	\$26,329,060	\$52,260,668
Wisconsin	51,774	31,803	\$158,691,315	\$326,774,732	\$97,478,815	\$265,562,232
Wyoming [†]	3,581	3,581	\$12,718,131	\$21,697,252	\$12,718,131	\$21,697,252
50 States	3,135,435	2,333,534	\$10,994,580,153	\$15,223,297,262	\$8,157,842,507	\$12,386,559,616

[†] These states did not fund Pre-K during 2004–2005. Current funding is estimated using the national average for state spending per child in Pre-K.

HEAD START

Although our report focuses on state-funded preschool programs, we cannot ignore Head Start. The federal government's major contribution to preschool education funding in 2004–2005 was the \$6.8 billion it spent on the federal Head Start program. Head Start targets preschool education and other services to young children in families in poverty, and in 2003–2004 served 11 percent of the nation's 4-year-olds and 7 percent of the nation's 3-year-olds. This is less than half of the children who qualify, as 21 percent of children under 5 are in poverty in the United States. Head Start has never been funded at the level required to serve all, or even most, of the eligible population. That is one reason that states fund targeted programs of their own. Nevertheless, Head Start is the safety net for the education of young children in poverty, and it assures some stable availability for children in poverty even where states have no program of their own. Together with state programs, substantial progress has been made, but Head Start is essentially on its own in serving 3-year-olds, except in a handful of states.

The federal Head Start program provided \$7,222 per child, and programs obtain additional funding (20 percent) locally from cash or in-kind contributions of resources (e.g., donated facilities). Federal funding for Head Start is not directly comparable to state preschool funding for several reasons. One is that Head Start provides a highly disadvantaged population with a more comprehensive set of services than most states offer. Another is that Head Start is an entirely federal program, not a joint state-local program relying heavily on local revenue as with many state preschool programs. (Even so, the comparison does raise questions about the adequacy of state funding, especially when local revenue does not supplement state funds.) Even at its current level of funding, Head Start teacher salaries are quite low and teachers are not required to have a four-year degree. We estimate that at least \$20,000 per teacher would be required to make Head Start salaries comparable to K–12 teacher salaries. Additional funding of \$1,400 per child would cover the salaries and benefits for fully qualified Head Start teachers without reallocating funds from other parts of the Head Start mission. This amounts to about \$1.3 billion for the nation as a whole.

Photo: Rutgers-Livingston Day Care Center



PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION

States provide preschool education to all 3- and 4-year olds identified as having a disability under federal law and with some federal financial support. States at their discretion may serve children with developmental delays that fall short of constituting a disability. The percentage of young children served under the auspices of special education is far from uniform across the states, as shown in Table 10. This variation most likely reflects differences in state policies rather than differences in the true prevalence of disabilities among states.

State policies on preschool special education may vary for many reasons, but efforts to access state and federal funds for more children provide one potential reason. When children with developmental delays are included in preschool special education, preschool programs can access a greater share of federal and state special education funds for young children who are at risk of disabilities and later school failure. In four states, preschool special education exceeds twice the national average—Wyoming, Maine, Arkansas and Kentucky. In Wyoming, the preschool special education program might function as a state preschool program for at-risk children. In Kentucky, preschool special education may coordinate with the regular state preschool programs and, thus, help support a larger percentage of children who are enrolled in those programs than is the case in many other states.

Federal financial support for preschool special education has steadily declined for over a decade and now amounts to less than \$600 per child enrolled. This contrasts with an estimated cost of preschool special education of over \$14,500 per child (1999–2000 cost, adjusted to 2005 dollars). With 398,942 children enrolled in 2004–2005, preschool special education is estimated to have cost \$5.8 billion, of which the federal government paid only \$240 million through preschool aid. There is some overlap between this cost and the cost of regular preschool education, but the vast majority is the cost of special education alone. Assuming states cover half the cost, then they spend as much on preschool special education as on regular state-funded preschool programs that serve twice as many children.

TABLE 10: PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION ENROLLMENT 2004–2005

State	3-YEAR-OLDS		4-YEAR-OLDS		3- AND 4-YEAR-OLDS	
	Number enrolled	Percent of state population	Number enrolled	Percent of state population	Number enrolled	Percent of state population
Alabama	1,414	2.3%	2,599	4.4%	4,013	3.4%
Alaska	434	4.3%	739	7.7%	1,173	6.0%
Arizona	3,156	3.5%	4,884	5.6%	8,040	4.5%
Arkansas	3,040	8.1%	4,867	13.3%	7,907	10.7%
California	14,105	2.7%	22,795	4.5%	36,900	3.6%
Colorado	2,456	3.6%	3,784	5.8%	6,240	4.6%
Connecticut	2,086	4.9%	2,793	6.5%	4,879	5.7%
Delaware	424	3.9%	685	6.7%	1,109	5.3%
Florida	7,093	3.2%	11,697	5.5%	18,790	4.3%
Georgia	3,417	2.5%	6,739	5.2%	10,156	3.8%
Hawaii	629	3.6%	824	5.3%	1,453	4.4%
Idaho	926	4.5%	1,361	6.7%	2,287	5.6%
Illinois	7,517	4.2%	12,144	7.0%	19,661	5.5%
Indiana	4,498	5.1%	6,244	7.1%	10,742	6.1%
Iowa	1,386	3.9%	2,035	5.7%	3,421	4.8%
Kansas	2,061	5.5%	3,279	8.9%	5,340	7.2%
Kentucky	4,388	8.2%	8,122	15.3%	12,510	11.7%
Louisiana	2,112	3.3%	3,999	6.4%	6,111	4.8%
Maine	1,288	9.6%	1,926	14.3%	3,214	11.9%
Maryland	2,947	3.9%	4,183	5.7%	7,130	4.8%
Massachusetts	3,613	4.5%	5,194	6.8%	8,807	5.6%
Michigan	5,504	4.2%	7,909	6.0%	13,413	5.1%
Minnesota	2,944	4.5%	4,491	7.0%	7,435	5.7%
Mississippi	1,184	2.8%	2,678	6.6%	3,862	4.7%
Missouri	3,044	4.1%	5,354	7.4%	8,398	5.7%
Montana	340	3.3%	639	6.2%	979	4.7%
Nebraska	1,172	4.9%	1,639	7.1%	2,811	6.0%
Nevada	1,059	3.1%	1,892	5.6%	2,951	4.3%
New Hampshire	674	4.5%	978	6.7%	1,652	5.6%
New Jersey	4,518	3.9%	5,991	5.3%	10,509	4.6%
New Mexico	1,422	5.3%	2,376	9.1%	3,798	7.2%
New York	18,805	7.5%	23,691	9.9%	42,496	8.7%
North Carolina	3,322	2.7%	6,984	5.9%	10,306	4.2%
North Dakota	298	4.3%	533	7.7%	831	6.0%
Ohio	4,709	3.2%	7,271	5.0%	11,980	4.1%
Oklahoma	1,426	3.0%	2,734	5.9%	4,160	4.4%
Oregon	2,004	4.4%	2,920	6.4%	4,924	5.4%
Pennsylvania	6,489	4.5%	9,464	6.6%	15,953	5.6%
Rhode Island	637	5.1%	993	8.1%	1,630	6.6%
South Carolina	1,698	3.0%	3,756	6.8%	5,454	4.8%
South Dakota	594	5.9%	924	9.3%	1,518	7.6%
Tennessee	2,198	2.8%	3,714	4.9%	5,912	3.9%
Texas	8,618	2.3%	13,564	3.9%	22,182	3.1%
Utah	1,848	4.0%	2,604	5.9%	4,452	4.9%
Vermont	440	7.0%	518	8.3%	958	7.6%
Virginia	3,651	3.6%	5,908	6.1%	9,559	4.8%
Washington	2,862	3.6%	4,470	5.7%	7,332	4.7%
West Virginia	924	4.6%	1,904	9.5%	2,828	7.0%
Wisconsin	3,657	5.4%	5,573	8.3%	9,230	6.9%
Wyoming	632	10.7%	914	15.6%	1,546	13.1%
50 States	155,663	3.8%	243,279	6.2%	398,942	5.0%

WHAT QUALIFIES AS A STATE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM?

Our *Yearbook* focuses on state-funded preschool initiatives as defined by the following criteria:

- The initiative is funded, controlled, and directed by the state.
- The initiative serves children of prekindergarten age, usually 3 and/or 4. Although initiatives in some states serve broader age ranges, programs that serve only infants and toddlers are excluded.
- Early childhood education is the primary focus of the initiative. This does not exclude programs that offer parent education but does exclude programs that mainly focus on parent education.
- The initiative offers a group learning experience to children at least two days per week.
- State-funded preschool education initiatives must be distinct from the state's system for subsidized child care. However, preschool initiatives may be coordinated and integrated with the subsidy system for child care.
- The initiative is not primarily designed to serve children with disabilities but may include 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. State supplements to fund quality improvements, extended days, or other program enhancements and that expand enrollment minimally are not considered equivalent to a state preschool program.

While ideally this report would identify all prekindergarten funding streams at the state, local, and federal levels, there are a number of limitations on the data that make this extremely difficult to do. For example, prekindergarten is only one of several types of educational 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 the extent to which they are spent on prekindergarten. Another challenge involves tracking total state spending for child care, using a variety of available sources, such as CCDF dollars, TANF funds, and any state funding above and beyond the required matches for federal funds. Also, 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 prekindergarten initiatives, it is nearly impossible to determine what proportion of the funds are spent this way.

Age Groupings Used in this Report

Children considered to be 3 years old during the 2004–2005 school year are those who were eligible to enter kindergarten two years later, during the 2006–2007 school year. Children considered to be 4 years old during the 2004–2005 school year were eligible to enter kindergarten one year later, during the 2005–2006 school year. Children considered to be 5 years old during the 2004–2005 school year were already eligible for kindergarten at the beginning of the 2004–2005 program year.