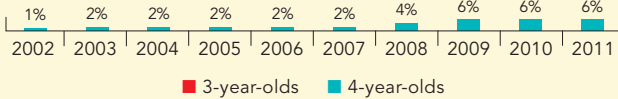
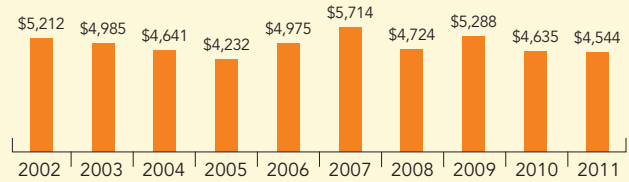


Alabama

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED
(2011 DOLLARS)



Alabama has offered state-funded preschool for 4-year-olds since 2000 through the Alabama Pre-Kindergarten Program, which was renamed First Class: Alabama’s Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program in the 2008-2009 school year. While the only eligibility requirements for the program are meeting the age criteria and being a resident of the state of Alabama, enrollment has remained low due to limited resources. An increase in state-funding during the 2007-2008 school year allowed the program to expand its access and also provide technical assistance and scholarships for teachers working toward completing their degrees. However, the program was flat-funded in the 2010-2011 school year and enrollment remained the same as a consequence.

Program sites are determined through a competitive grant process and can include public schools, private child care centers, Head Start centers, faith-based centers, colleges and universities, community organizations, and military agencies. Grantees must provide a local match of the grant award, which varies by location. These matching funds can include sliding scale parent fees. The state has made progress toward its goal of having at least one classroom per county. In the 2010-2011 school year, classrooms were available in all but three counties.

In the 2005-2006 school year, teacher certification standards were revised to require new hires to have specialized training in early childhood education. Since then, the program has met all 10 of the NIEER quality benchmarks. In the 2008-2009 school year, the program was evaluated for both process quality and program impact/child outcomes. The Office of School Readiness and the state Department of Education’s Special Education Services established an aligned set of standards for pre-K children, which were scheduled to be implemented in the 2011-2012 school year.

Pre-K in Alabama received significant support from the state’s business community in the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years. Business leaders notably recommended funding increases for pre-K to the state Legislature. The Business Council of Alabama and the Alabama School Readiness Alliance are developing policy recommendations for expanding access to high-quality voluntary pre-K.

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
33	None Served

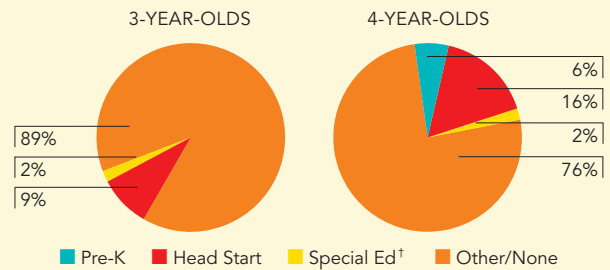
RESOURCES RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
16	17

FIRST CLASS: ALABAMA'S VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment	3,870
School districts that offer state program	96% (counties)
Income requirement.....	None
Hours of operation	6.5 hours/day, 5 days/week
Operating schedule	Academic year
Special education enrollment	3,984
Federally funded Head Start enrollment	15,654
State-funded Head Start enrollment.....	0

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



† This is an estimate of children in special education who are not enrolled in state-funded pre-K or Head Start.

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?
Early learning standards	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	Degree in ECE (public) or CD (nonpublic) ¹	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree.....	CDA	CDA or equivalent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher in-service	30 clock hours	At least 15 hours/year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size		20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	NA		
4-year-olds	20 ²		
Staff-child ratio		1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	NA		
4-year-olds	1:10 ²		
Screening/referral.....	Vision, hearing, health, dental, and support services	Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 support service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meals	Lunch and snack	At least 1/day	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring	Site visits and other monitoring	Site visits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

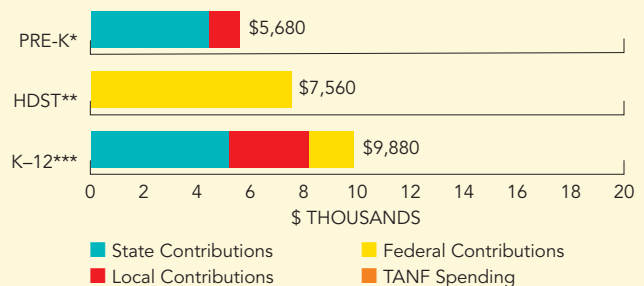
TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET

10

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$17,585,880
Local match required?	Yes, 25% ⁴
State spending per child enrolled	\$4,544
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$5,680

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED



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

** Head Start per-child spending for the 2010-2011 year includes funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

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

Data are for the '10-'11 school year, unless otherwise noted.

¹ Any preschool teachers with degrees in elementary education must obtain the P-3 add-on or complete additional early childhood coursework within three years or by 2012.

² Only Head Start programs may have up to 20 children and a ratio of 1:10; other programs have a maximum class size of 18 and ratio of 1:9, which is preferred for all programs.

³ Support services include annual parent conferences or home visits, parenting support or training, parent involvement activities, health services for children, and transition to kindergarten activities.

⁴ The match may include parent fees based on a sliding scale.