The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (ECC), established in 2005, seeks to improve affordability, quality, and access to preschool education services. Concurrently, the state launched the Universal Pre-kindergarten (UPK) initiative. Eligibility for UPK includes children from age 2 years and 9 months until they reach the locally determined kindergarten eligibility age.

Public schools, private child care centers, family child care, Head Start programs, and faith-based centers are eligible for UPK grants. The programs are required to operate or provide access to full-day, full-year services. In the 2011-2012 school year, grants were available only to previous grantees, and the program was offered in 91 towns. Children are able to participate in UPK programs regardless of income. However, programs must be willing to serve children from families with income levels at or below 85 percent of the state's median income (SMI). During the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years, UPK was evaluated for process quality.

Since 1985, Grant 391 has funded typically developing preschool children to match the number of students with disabilities served in inclusion classrooms. Eligibility includes any child without disabilities and the services are offered in public schools in 76 districts.

Massachusetts has been phasing programs into its Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS). Beginning in the 2010-2011 program year, all UPK grantees were required to participate, and all Head Start sites must participate by the end of 2014. In the 2012-2013 school year, QRIS participation will also be required of any other programs that work with EEC beyond licensing. As part of its developing early education data system, UPK grantees participate and use a portion of their UPK funds to support progress on the QRIS; allow ECC staff to conduct on-site ECERS/FCCERS observations; publish staff information in ECC’s Professional Qualifications Registry; and provide child-level data, with parent consent, using a State Assigned Student Identification. As part of its Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant, Massachusetts will conduct a study to validate this QRIS. In the 2012-2013 year, ECC sought to further align the UPK program with the QRIS, mandating that programs meet a Level 3 in the QRIS to be eligible for renewal, and must also demonstrate that they served “high needs children” as demonstrated through formative assessments and/or screenings.

In the 2010-2011 school year, Massachusetts operated two additional programs using ARRA funds. The Kindergarten Entry Enrichment Program (KEEP) provided five to 12 weeks of programming for 4- and 5-year-olds in the summer immediately before kindergarten entry in public schools and ECC income-eligible contracted providers. A similar program, the Preschool Child Care Enrichment Program (PSCEE) Quality Add-On Initiative funded preschool services for educationally at-risk children from the ECC’s waiting list. These programs ended when ARRA funds expired.

Massachusetts also supplements the federal Head Start program, providing $7.5 million to include an additional 254 slots for eligible children as well as expanding access to before- and after-care services. The state supplemental funding also provides for other quality improvements, including professional development opportunities for staff.

This profile focuses on UPK and Grant 391, which are reported together because both programs have similar requirements and standards.
ACCESS

Total state program enrollment .................................................13,266
School districts that offer .........................................................26% (towns, UPK); state program 25% (school districts, Grant 391)
Income requirement .........................................................85% SMI (UPK); None (Grant 391)1
Hours of operation ..........................................................85% Determined locally2
Operating schedule ..........................................................Determined locally2
Special education enrollment ...............................................9,916
Federal Head Start enrollment, ages 3 & 4 .........................10,404
State-funded Head Start enrollment .................................2283

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY

Early learning standards .........................................................Comprehensive
Teacher degree .................................................................BA (public); None (nonpublic)4
Teacher specialized training ..............................................Specializing in pre-K
Assistant teacher degree .......................................................HSD (public); None (nonpublic)4
Teacher in-service ..............................................................20 clock hours (UPK)
Maximum class size ............................................................20 or lower
Staff-child ratio .................................................................1:10 or better
Screening/referral ...............................................................Vision, hearing, health;
and support services ...........................................................at least 1 support service
Meals .................................................. Depend on length of program day
Monitoring .................................................................Site visits and other monitoring

BENCHMARK

STATE PRE-K

Comprehensive
BA
Specializing in pre-K
20 or lower
1:10 or better
Vision, hearing, health;
and support services
Depend on length of program day
Site visits and other monitoring

TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET

☑ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

MEET BENCHMARK?

☑ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending ..................................................$53,839,63110
Local match required? ...........................................................No
State Head Start spending ....................................................$7,500,000
State spending per child enrolled ............................................$4,058
All reported spending per child enrolled* ................................$4,344

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PRE-K*</th>
<th>HDST**</th>
<th>K-12***</th>
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<tr>
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<td>$4,344</td>
<td>$9,097</td>
<td>$15,826</td>
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1 In the UPK programs, any child may enroll, yet programs are selected to receive UPK funding based on program and child characteristics. The income requirement is for children receiving subsidy money.
2 Hours vary by type of program and setting and are determined locally. UPK grantees are required to offer or provide access to full-day and full-year services. For UPK, full day is 10 or more hours, school day is 5 to 10 hours, and half-day is fewer than 5 hours. For Grant 391, grantees follow the public school calendar which is determined locally.
3 Massachusetts was not able to break its state-funded Head Start enrollment down by single year of age. As a result, this figure is an estimate based on the percentage of federal Head Start enrollees in Massachusetts who were 3 or 4 years old.
4 All teachers must have an Early Childhood Certification. Public school teachers must have a pre-K to grade 2 certification. Nonpublic school teachers must be certified by the Department of Early Education and Care. Teachers must either be 21 years old or have a high school diploma, and must complete a 3-credit college course in child growth and development.
5 Assistant teachers in nonpublic settings must complete a 3-credit child development course and be at least 18 years old. A CDA may be substituted for these requirements.
6 For 391 grants, the ratio can range from 1:7 to 1:10 based upon the number of children with disabilities enrolled in the session.
7 Programs are not required to provide these services directly. However, all LEAs are required to provide screenings and referrals under “child find” and screenings and referrals are available to all children in non LEAs through services in the public schools. Required support services include parent conferences or home visits. Additional support services are determined locally.
8 Programs operating fewer than 4 hours per day must provide snacks, and programs operating between 4 and 9 hours must provide a regularly scheduled meal in addition to a snack. Programs operating more than 9 hours must provide two meals and two snacks.
9 UPK conducts site visits approximately once a year and all sites are visited. Grant 391 programs are all visited within a six-year cycle.
10 Total spending by program was: $12,812,552 for Grant 391 and $53,839,631 for UPK.