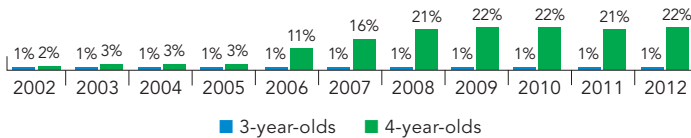


Tennessee

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2012 DOLLARS)



In 1998 Tennessee’s Early Childhood Education (ECE) Pilot Project began operating in 30 classrooms established through a competitive grant program for public schools, Head Start agencies, private child care agencies, public housing authorities, and institutions of higher education. The Tennessee Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) program was launched as a result of the Voluntary Pre-K for Tennessee Act of 2005, adding 300 new classrooms to the existing ECE Pilot Project. By the 2011-2012 school year, a total of 18,609 children were served in 934 classrooms throughout the state with every district offering at least one classroom.

The Tennessee Department of Education restructured in 2011 creating the Division of Special Populations (DSP). The Office of Early Learning (OEL) is located within DSP and is responsible for VPK, oversight of Family Resource Centers and the School Administered Child Care Program, and the Head Start State Collaboration Office. The OEL is responsible for technical assistance, program administration, monitoring, oversight, training, and data collection for VPK. This office is also responsible for coordinating and collaboration with local school systems, community providers, and intra-state agencies to gather best practices and information in support of early childhood education.

State-funded VPK grants are only available to public schools through a competitive process, though these schools may subcontract with Head Start agencies, private child care agencies, public housing authorities, institutions of higher education, and any three-star rated community-based or private child-serving agency where lead teachers are licensed in early childhood education. Contracted programs must operate within the jurisdiction of the school district.

Tennessee uses a three-tier prioritization system to determine eligibility. Top priority is given to tier one 4-year-olds whose family income qualifies them to receive free or reduced-priced lunch as well as children who are homeless or in foster care. Children who have an IEP, have a history of abuse or neglect, are English Language Learners, or are in state custody may enroll as the second tier of eligibility if space is available. Any remaining spots may then be offered to children who qualify for third tier enrollment based on locally determined risk factors, including low parent education level, single-parent families, teen parents, or a parent on active military duty. VPK only serves 4-year-olds, although at-risk 3-year-olds may be enrolled in pilot programs.

VPK has relied on funding from multiple sources since its inception, including general education revenue and, in the past, lottery revenue and federal TANF funds. In the 2011-2012 school year, the VPK program received a \$950,000 increase over the 2010-2011 level. The additional funds were allocated to the existing classrooms to support increases for teachers’ retirement and health care costs. Funds used to provide the required local match include federal Head Start, Title I, Even Start, and IDEA and may include in-kind contributions for facilities, staffing, and operational costs. There have been no additional funds for classroom expansion since the 2008-2009 school year.

Program quality is monitored by state personnel and consultants annually through on-site visits and review of submitted reports including use of classroom quality assessments with program level outcomes incorporated into a program plan of action for continuous improvement. During the 2011-2012 school year, the Peabody Research Institute at Vanderbilt University was involved in the fourth year of a five-year, external evaluation on the effectiveness of the VPK program.

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
19	23

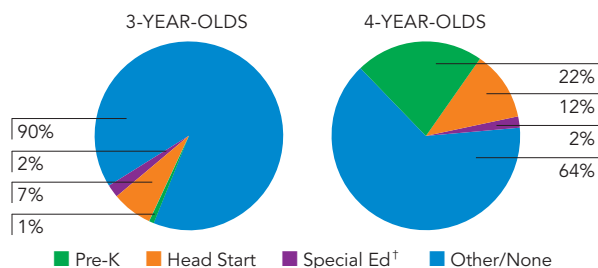
RESOURCES RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
13	17

TENNESSEE VOLUNTARY PRE-K

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment	18,609
School districts that offer state program	100%
Income requirement	185% FPL ¹
Hours of operation	5.5 hours/day, 5 days/week ²
Operating schedule	Academic year
Special education enrollment	6,861
Federal Head Start enrollment, ages 3 & 4	15,692
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	Teaching license and EC endorsement ³	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	CDA (ECE pilot); HSD + pre-K experience (VPK) ⁴	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher in-service	18 clock hours ⁵	At least 15 hours/year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	16 ⁶		
4-year-olds	20 ⁶		
Staff-child ratio	1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	1:8		
4-year-olds	1:10		
Screening/referral.....	Vision, hearing, health, developmental; and support services	Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 support service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meals	Lunch and either breakfast or snack	At least 1/day	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring	Site visits and other monitoring	Site visits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET

9

RESOURCES

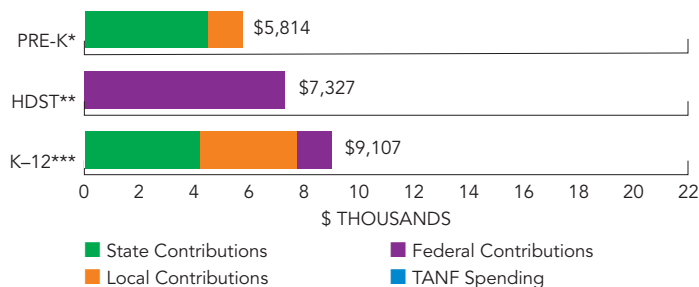
Total state pre-K spending	\$84,254,767
Local match required?	Yes ⁸
State spending per child enrolled	\$4,528
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$5,814

* 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 2011-2012 year includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds served. Past years' figures have unintentionally included funds for Early Head Start.

*** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures. Data are for the '11-'12 school year, unless otherwise noted.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED



¹ Once all available students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch are enrolled, LEAs are permitted to enroll children whose families do not meet this income criterion.

² Naptime cannot be counted in the 5.5 hour minimum.

³ Permissible types of endorsements include those in: Pre-K-Grade 3, Pre-K-4, Pre-K-K, Pre-K-1 Special Education, and Pre-K-3 Special Education. The pre-K-4 certification and Special Education Pre-K-1 are no longer issued, but are still accepted for pre-K teachers in public and nonpublic settings.

⁴ The LEA is required to hire an assistant teacher with a CDA or AA if one is available. If not, the LEA may hire one with a high school diploma and relevant experience working with ECE programs and the assistant must demonstrate progress toward completion of a CDA.

⁵ All lead teachers working in public schools must meet the state requirement of 30 hours of in-service per year. The 18 hours required in early childhood for preschool teachers may count toward this total. For assistant teachers, 18 clock hours are required the first year of employment and 12 clock hours are required in the following years.

⁶ In mixed-age groups, a maximum of eight 3-year-olds can be in the class with 12 4-year-olds. If there are nine or more 3-year-olds, the classroom capacity is 16 students.

⁷ Dental screening and referrals are locally determined. Support services include parent conferences or home visits, parenting support or training, parent involvement activities, referral for social services, and transition to kindergarten activities. Some other comprehensive services are required, but specific services are determined locally.

⁸ The state Basic Education Plan (BEP) funding formula determines the state share and the amount of the local match for the classroom component based on each county's tax base.