The Missouri Preschool Program (MPP) began serving 3- and 4-year-olds in early childhood settings in 1998. The MPP is operated in public schools, private child-care centers, and nonprofit agencies. In 2014-2015, MPP was offered in 29.6% of districts in the state, and 95% of children were enrolled in programs that were operated by a public school. All preschool programs are required to work with their local Parents as Teachers (PAT) program, which provides parent education, including family visits and group connections, and health and development screenings. In addition, PAT also provides referrals to services that may be beneficial to the family, based on need or request.

State-funded MPP contracts for all providers are eligible for renewal for a limit of five years; after this period, contracts are made available to other grantees. A competitive grant process determines where MPP funds are awarded, though programs serving children with special needs and those from low-income families are given priority. Programs use sliding payment scales, based on criteria including eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch.

For the second year in a row, enrollment in and funding of MPP has increased. The total budget for 2014-2015 was $13.6 million, 82.8% of which came from the State's Tobacco Settlement Fund and the remaining dollars from the state's general revenue. In 2014-2015, 4,259 children attended MPP, an increase of 9.9% from the previous year.

In 2012-2013, the minimum number of required hours for professional development was reduced from 22 hours to 12 hours annually, no longer meeting NIEER's quality standard benchmark of at least 15 hours. It was returned to 22 hours in 2014-2015, regaining the benchmark. Additional required professional development hours for first-year teachers and teacher assistants beyond the state’s minimum include at least 30 hours of training on curriculum and the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), the child assessment instrument required to be used by new and renewal programs. Effective 2014-2015, site visits are conducted for all MPP programs on a regular basis throughout the year, as well as on-site consultation hours. The number of hours ranged from 14 to 20 annually, based on a program’s need. In 2015-2016, ECERS-3 is going to be piloted for professional development and planning.

For a program to receive state funding, regardless of setting, all teachers hired after July 1, 2005, are required to have a bachelor’s degree with specialization in Early Childhood, which has been met by all teachers and programs since the 2010-2011 school year. The MPP teachers in a public school setting must receive a teaching contract that places them on the same salary schedule as the district’s K-12 teachers. MPP teachers’ salaries in nonpublic school settings must be commensurate with those of other professionals in similar positions.

State policy does not regulate DLL/ELL services for MPP children; however, a home language survey is sent home at the beginning of the year, translators or bilingual staff are available if some children do not speak English, summer language programs are available, and PD or coaching is provided for teachers. DLL children are assessed in their home language and evaluated at the end of pre-K or beginning of kindergarten and may be de/reclassified as DLL.
MISSOURI PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment ........................................ 4,259
School districts that offer state program ...................... 30% (school districts)
Income requirement .................................................... No income requirement
Hours of operation ......................................................... 3.5-6.5 hours/day
Operating schedule ....................................................... Determined locally
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .......... 9,624
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .... 13,733
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ........ 0

PRE-K* $3,211
HDST** $8,047
K-12*** $12,209

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending .............................................. $13,677,763
Local match required? .......................................................... No
State spending per child enrolled ........................................ $3,211
All reported spending per child enrolled*...................... $3,211

* 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 2014-2015 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 ’14-’15 school year, unless otherwise noted.

1 Part-day programs are required to provide one meal or one snack. School-day programs are required to provide one meal and two snacks or two meals and one snack.
2 Site visits are not conducted for all programs on a regular basis and are performed as needed, based on a review of submitted on-site consultation reports or concerns raised from partner agencies.