The state of New Jersey funds three preschool programs. The largest and most intensive of the programs, formerly known as the Abbott Preschool Program, served 43,177 children in 35 school districts during the 2014-2015 school year. The New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) provides funding to eligible districts to provide the program to all resident 3- and 4-year-olds who choose to enroll. Private child-care centers or Head Start programs that meet state standards may contract with districts to deliver services. Abbott districts also receive supplemental child care subsidy funds from the state Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide extended-day and extended-year services to eligible families. Changes in DHS eligibility requirements, however, have reduced the number of programs offering wraparound options, resulting in fewer children receiving wraparound services. When the school funding formula went into effect in 2008-2009, a “hold harmless” article was put in place, which requires that former Abbott districts receive no less in preschool aid from the DOE than they did in the 2008-2009 school year.

The Non-Abbott Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA) program is required only in districts where 20 to 40% of children meet the criteria for free or reduced-price lunch services. Enrollment in ECPA programs continues to decline, despite increased financial support for the third consecutive year; however, several former ECPA districts in the 2015-2016 school year will be participating in the federal Preschool Expansion Grant. Enrollment changes in these districts over the course of the next four years are expected, with additional children and/or movement from half- to full-day programs.

The third program, formerly known as the Early Launch to Learning Initiative (ELLI), was established in 2004, as part of New Jersey’s efforts to offer access to high-quality prekindergarten education to all of the state’s low-income 4-year-olds. Initially, all Non-Abbott districts were eligible to apply for funds; however, new districts have been unable to apply in recent years due to limited funds. During the 2014-2015 school year, 24 districts offered the ELLI program to 631 children, an increase compared to the previous year. Funding for the ELLI program has remained the same since the 2008-2009 school year.

In 2013, New Jersey was one of five states funded in the third round of the federal Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge, and was awarded $44.3 million over four years. In 2014, New Jersey was awarded a competitive federal Preschool Development Grant for $17.5 million annually for four years, subject to federal appropriations.

New Jersey’s funding formula for preschool includes funding for services to children who are considered to be dual language learners. Data on home languages of children enrolled in all three programs are included in the state preschool database on home language, ethnicity, and migrant status. In order to best serve DLL children and families in the state, both teachers and program administrators are required to possess qualifications for working with DLL children and families.

New Jersey requires salary parity for teachers and teacher assistants in contracted center-based programs, and that preschool teachers are paid on the same salary schedule as K-3 teachers for both lead and assistant teachers in the preschool programs. They are also given the same amount of planning and professional development time as K-3 teachers. Additional supports for lead and assistant teachers are locally determined.

In order to present the contributions New Jersey makes to preschool education throughout its three separate programs, summary information reflecting the state’s overall commitment to preschool is first presented, where enrollment and state spending for the former Abbott, ECPA, and ELLI programs are combined to demonstrate a comprehensive state profile. Next, we present specific details about each initiative in the state. The third page of this profile focuses exclusively on the former Abbott program, the fourth page on the former ECPA program, and the final page on the former ELLI program.
STATE OVERVIEW

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment ....................................................51,033
Total state spending ..........................................................$619,992,300
State spending per child enrolled ..............................................$12,149
All reported spending per child enrolled*.................................$12,149

* 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.

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

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

** RESOURCES RANKINGS**

POLICIES TO SUPPORT

DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS WORKFORCE

ACCESS RANKINGS

4-YEAR-OLDS 3-YEAR-OLDS

19 5

RESOURCES RANKINGS

STATE SPENDING ALL-REPORTED SPENDING

2 2

POLICIES TO SUPPORT

+ ✓/-
NEW JERSEY FORMER ABBOTT PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

ACCESS
Total state program enrollment ....................................................43,177
School districts that offer state program ..................................6% (school districts)
Income requirement .................................................................No income requirement
Hours of operation .................................................................6 hours/day, 5 days/week
Operating schedule ...............................................................School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ............................11,482
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ............13,258
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....................0

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY | STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT | BENCHMARK | DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?
--- | --- | --- | ---
Early learning standards .........................................................Comprehensive | Comprehensive | Yes
Teacher degree ................................................................................BA | BA | Yes
Teacher specialized training ..................................................P-3 certificate; K–5 certificate; Teachers of Students with Disabilities; Nursery school; Teacher of the Deaf or Hard of Hearing; Handicapped; or Blind/Partially Sighted | Specializing in pre-K | Yes
Assistant teacher degree .........................................................HSD | CDA or equivalent | No
Teacher in-service ......................................................................100 clock hours/5 years | At least 15 hours/year | Yes
Maximum class size .................................................................20 or lower
3-year-olds ................................................................................15
4-year-olds ................................................................................15
Staff-child ratio ........................................................................1:10 or better
3-year-olds ................................................................................2:15
4-year-olds ................................................................................2:15
Screening/referral .................................................................Vision; hearing; height/weight/BMI; Immunizations; dental; developmental; and support services | Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 support service and support services | Yes
Meals ......................................................................................Breakfast; lunch; snack | At least 1/day | Yes
Monitoring ................................................................................Site visits and other monitoring | Site visits | Yes

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending ..................................................$575,383,000
Local match required? ..............................................................No
State spending per child enrolled ..............................................$13,326
All reported spending per child enrolled* .................................$13,326

* 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 The program is offered in poor urban districts initially identified by the NJ Supreme Court in 1990 as having 40% of children who qualify for free or reduced price lunch, and four additional districts designated since by the legislature. All 3- and 4-year-old children within those districts are eligible to participate.
NEW JERSEY NON-ABBOTT EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM AID (ECPA)

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment .................................................. 7,225
School districts that offer state program ........................................ 16% (school districts)
Income requirement ............................................................. No income requirement
Hours of operation ................................................................. 2.5 to 6 hours/day, 5 days/week
Operating schedule ............................................................... School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ............................ 11,482
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .......... 13,258
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .............. 0

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY

Early learning standards .................................................. Comprehensive
Teacher degree ................................................................. BA
Teacher specialized training .............................................. P-3 certificate; K-5 certificate; Teacher of Students with Disabilities; Nursery school; Teacher of the Deaf or Hard of Hearing; Handicapped; or Blind/Partially Sighted
Assistant teacher degree .................................................. HSO
Teacher in-service ........................................................... 100 clock hours/5 years
Maximum class size .......................................................... 20 or lower
3-year-olds .......................................................................... 18
4-year-olds .......................................................................... 18
Staff-child ratio ................................................................. 1:10 or better
3-year-olds .......................................................................... 1:9
4-year-olds .......................................................................... 1:9
Screening/referral .............................................................. Vision; hearing; height/weight/BMI; immunizations; dental; developmental; and support services
Meals .................................................................................. Depends on length of program day
Monitoring ........................................................................... Site visits and other monitoring

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending ................................................... $42,329,000
Local match required? .......................................................... No
State spending per child enrolled ......................................... $5,859
All reported spending per child enrolled* ......................... $5,859

* 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 Only districts where 20-40% of children qualify for free or reduced-price lunch receive funding through this initiative. All 3- and 4-year-old children within those districts are eligible to participate.
2 Breakfast, lunch, and snack are required for at-risk students in school- and extended-day programs.

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NEW JERSEY FORMER EARLY LAUNCH TO LEARNING INITIATIVE

ACCESS
Total state program enrollment .....................................................631
School districts that offer state program ..................4% (school districts)
Income requirement .............................................................185% FPL
Hours of operation ...............................................................2.5 to 6 hours/day, 5 days/week
Operating schedule ..........................................................School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ..........11,482
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ..........13,258
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .............0

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending ......................................................$2,280,300
Local match required? .............................................................Yes
State spending per child enrolled ..............................................$3,614
All reported spending per child enrolled*.........................$3,614

* 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 Breakfast, lunch, and snack are required for at-risk students in school- and extended-day programs.

TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET

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

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY
Early learning standards ..................................................Comprehensive
Teacher degree .................................................................BA
Teacher specialized training ...........................................P-3 certificate; K-5 certificate;
Teacher of Students with Disabilities;
Nursery school; Teacher of the Deaf or
Hard of Hearing; Handicapped;
or Blind/Partially Sighted
Assistant teacher degree ....................................................HSD
Teacher in-service ......................................................100 clock hours/5 years
Maximum class size .......................................................20 or lower
Staff-child ratio ..............................................................1:10 or better
Screening/referral ..................................................Vision; hearing; height/weight/BMI;
and support services immunizations; dental; developmental;
and support services at least 1 support service
Meals .................................................................Depends on length of program day
Monitoring ..............................................................Site visits and other monitoring

BENCHMARK
Comprehensive BA Specializing in pre-K CDA or equivalent

DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?

- ✔
- ❌

TOTAL BENEFITS SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

ELLI*
HDST**
K-12***

$3,614
$9,270
$21,515

$ THOUSANDS

State Contributions
Federal Contributions
Local Contributions
TANF Spending

1 Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.