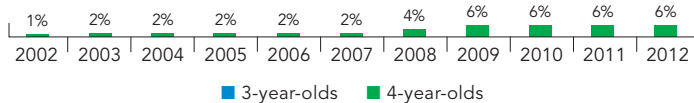


Alabama

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2012 DOLLARS)



Since 2000, the Alabama Pre-Kindergarten Program has offered state-funded preschool education to the state’s 4-year-olds. The only eligibility requirements for the program are being a resident of the state of Alabama and meeting the age criteria, but enrollment has remained low due to limited resources. For the 2007-2008 school year, an increase in state funding allowed the program to expand its access as well as provide technical assistance and scholarships for teachers working toward completing their degrees. The following year, the program was renamed First Class: Alabama’s Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program. After flat funding and no growth in access for several years, enrollment and appropriations increased slightly for the 2011-2012 school year. The state has made progress toward its goal of having at least one pre-K classroom per county with classrooms available in 94 percent of counties as of the 2011-2012 school year.

Through a competitive grant process, program sites are determined with grant amounts varying by location. First Class classroom locations include colleges and universities, community organizations, faith-based centers, Head Start programs, military agencies, private child cares, and public schools. Grantees must provide a local match of the grant award, and sliding scale parent fees can be included in the matching funds.

Teacher certification standards were revised during the 2005-2006 program year to require that newly hired pre-K educators have specialized training in early childhood education. With this requirement, the program met all 10 of the NIEER quality benchmarks for the first time and continues to do so. 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 are being implemented during the 2012-2013 school year. For the 2012-2013 school year, significant changes in guidelines and assessments are underway, which will simplify paperwork requirements. Programs will begin using the GOLD tool for formative assessments.

Since the 2009-2010 school year, pre-K in Alabama received significant support from the state’s business community. For instance, business leaders recommended funding increases for preschool education to the state Legislature. In addition, the Business Council of Alabama and the Alabama School Readiness Alliance formed a task force, which developed policy recommendations for expanding access to high-quality prekindergarten throughout the state.

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

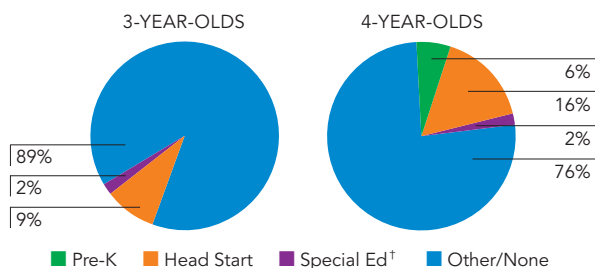
RESOURCES RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
12	12

FIRST CLASS: ALABAMA'S VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment	3,906
School districts that offer state program	94% (counties)
Income requirement.....	None
Hours of operation	6.5 hours/day, 5 days/week
Operating schedule	Academic year
Special education enrollment	3,935
Federal Head Start enrollment, ages 3 & 4	15,032
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	ECE P-3 (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

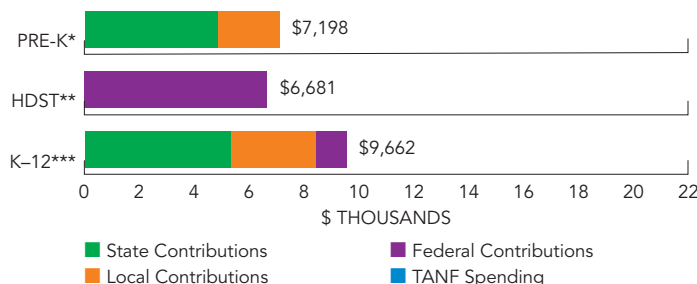
10

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$19,086,953 ⁴
Local match required?	Yes, 25% ⁵
State spending per child enrolled	\$4,887
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$7,198

* 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 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. Some public school settings choose to hire non-certified lead teachers if those teachers have a bachelor's degree in child development.
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.

³ Support services include parent conferences or home visits, parenting support or training, parent involvement activities, health services for children, and transition to kindergarten activities.
⁴ State funding includes the allocated amount for fiscal year 2012 as well as funds carried over from the previous fiscal year.
⁵ The match may include parent fees based on a sliding scale.