The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program started in 1991 as part of a state initiative supported by a dedicated sales tax for the Educational Excellence Trust Fund. Since 2001, the program has been funded in part by 80 percent of the money raised through an excise tax on package beer. In addition, localities are required to provide matching funds equal to 40 percent of total funding. While the majority of programs operate in public schools, the state also provides direct funding to Head Start agencies, private child care centers, universities, education cooperatives, community mental health centers, and developmental disability centers. Children from birth to age 5 are eligible to participate if they are from low-income families or at risk due to abuse or neglect, low birth weight, limited English proficiency, or other circumstances.

A recent ABC task force recommendation identified core quality components, established a clear unit rate per child, and specified that children in center-based programs should receive at least 7.5 hours of services per day. The model also brought teacher and aide salaries in line with compensation for these positions in public schools.

With $8,972,517 in state funds for center-based ABC programs, 862 3-year-olds and 2,224 4-year-olds were enrolled during the 2003–2004 school year. As part of a broader education reform measure that was adopted in response to a school finance equity ruling, Arkansas recently passed legislation that will greatly expand the availability of prekindergarten. Starting in 2004–2005, the state will provide $40 million in new funds. Districts that have at least 75 percent of their children scoring below proficient levels in literacy and math on the State Benchmark exams and children in schools that have been designated as being in school improvement status will receive priority for funding.

**K–12 Expenditures** include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures. K–12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

**State Contribution** is $7,163 per 4-year-old and $70 per 3-year-old. Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.

**Total State Pre-K Spending** is $9,250,285. A recent ABC task force recommendation identified core quality components, established a clear unit rate per child, and specified that children in center-based programs should receive at least 7.5 hours of services per day. The model also brought teacher and aide salaries in line with compensation for these positions in public schools.

**School Improvement Status** will receive priority for funding. Starting in 2004–2005, the state will provide $40 million in new funds. Districts that have at least 75 percent of their children scoring below proficient levels in literacy and math on the State Benchmark exams and children in schools that have been designated as being in school improvement status will receive priority for funding.

**Operating Schedule** is full-day, full-week. At least 1 service is required. **Staff-child Ratio** is 1:10 or better. **Screening/referral requirements** are vision, hearing, and health. **Required support services** are at least 1 parent conference per year. **Assistant teacher degree requirement** is CDA. **Teacher specialized training requirement** is P–4 teacher license. **Teacher degree requirement** is BA. **Curriculum standards** are comprehensive. **Income requirement** is 156% FPL. **School districts that offer state program** are 63%. **State-funded Head Start enrollment** is 0. **Federally funded Head Start enrollment** is 10,283. **Operating schedule** is full-day, full-week. **At least 1 service** is required. **Staff-child Ratio** is 1:10 or better. **Screening/referral requirements** are vision, hearing, and health. **Required support services** are at least 1 parent conference per year. **Assistant teacher degree requirement** is CDA. **Teacher specialized training requirement** is P–4 teacher license. **Teacher degree requirement** is BA. **Curriculum standards** are comprehensive. **Income requirement** is 156% FPL. **School districts that offer state program** are 63%.

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