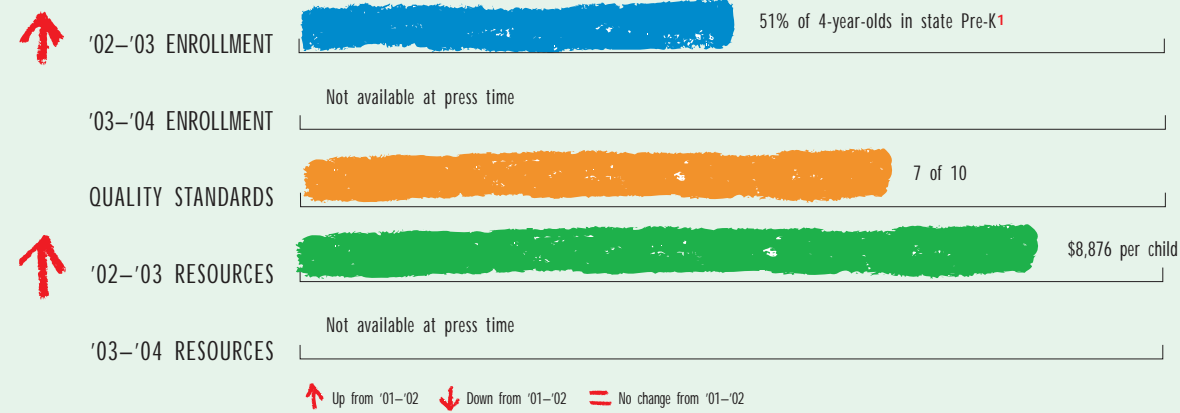


District of Columbia



The District of Columbia has funded prekindergarten since the 1960s. Most city schools offer the Public School Preschool program, though they are not required to do so. Funding is provided through the school funding formula with allocations made on a per pupil basis. All 4-year-olds are eligible for the program, although participation is limited by space and funds.

In addition to the preschool program, the District of Columbia Public School System (DCPS) also operates federally funded Head Start programs. These programs follow all federal Head Start Program Performance Standards and provide services for 3- and 4-year-old children from families with incomes below the federal poverty level. The program is available in communities that have large populations of low-income families who may benefit from the comprehensive services offered by Head Start.

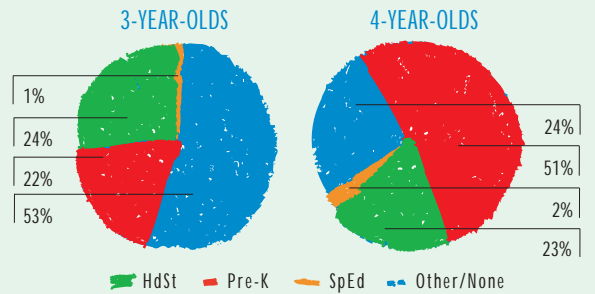
In recent years, the DCPS prekindergarten program has experienced budget cuts, resulting in teacher layoffs, reduced funding for supplies and field trips, and schools being unable to accommodate all children whose families wish them to attend. However, there have also been some positive developments. The DCPS has reestablished an office for early childhood education and is collaborating with city agencies to align early childhood practice and policy. New instructional materials have been adopted for reading, math, social studies, and science in all prekindergarten classrooms. Additionally, citywide standards for all programs serving 4-year-olds are being developed, with the Creative Curriculum used to structure the preschool environment and The Letter People used to structure content. Finally, the Child Plus data management system is now applied to both preschool and Head Start.

Although this profile provides detailed information about access to prekindergarten programs within the District of Columbia in the same way as the state profiles, because it is a city the District is not ranked among the states according to resources or enrollment. Further complicating attempts to compare the District to states is the fact that the DCPS functions as both a state and a local education agency.

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment	4,281 ²
School districts that offer state program	71% ³
Income requirement	None ⁴
Hours of operation	Full-day, full-week
Operating schedule	Academic year
Special education enrollment	188
Federally funded Head Start enrollment	2,753 ⁵
State-funded Head Start enrollment	0

STATE PRE-K AND HEAD START ENROLLMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION¹



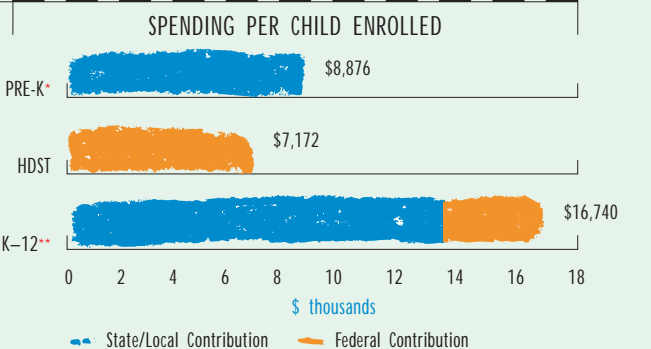
QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?
Curriculum standards	Not comprehensive	Comprehensive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree requirement	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training req.	Training and certification in EC (Pre-K-3)	Specializing in Pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree requirement	HSD	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher in-service requirement	6 clock hours/year or 6 credit hours/5 years	At least 15 hours/year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size		20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	15		
4-year-olds	20		
Staff-child ratio		1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	2:15		
4-year-olds	1:10		
Screening/referral requirements	None ⁶	Vision, hearing, and health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Required support services	4 parent conferences and support services ⁷	At least 1 service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meal requirement	Breakfast and lunch	At least 1/day	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



RESOURCES

Total state Pre-K spending	\$38,000,000 ⁸
Local match required?	No ⁹
State spending per child enrolled	\$8,876
State spending per 3-year-old	\$1,952
State spending per 4-year-old	4,512



^{*} Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
^{**} K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

Data are for the '02-'03 school year, unless otherwise noted.

- The increase in the percentage of 4-year-olds served in the District of Columbia's program is due to a declining population of 4-year-olds in the city rather than to an increase in the program's enrollment.
- This enrollment count includes 1,782 children enrolled in the federally funded Head Start program operated by the DCPS system.
- Programs are offered in all P-6 and P-8 schools, and in 104 out of 146 total schools in the District.
- DCPS-operated Head Start programs follow guidelines for federal Head Start.
- Some duplication may exist in the enrollment counts for city preschool and federal Head Start.
- Children in DCPS-operated Head Start programs receive screenings and referrals as required by Head Start.
- Support services include parent involvement activities, transition to kindergarten activities, and other locally determined services.
- This spending figure includes \$10 million in federal Head Start funds for DCPS-operated Head Start programs.
- Head Start programs require a 20% match.