In 1989, Iowa began offering the comprehensive Shared Visions prekindergarten initiative. Shared Visions serves 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds in full- or part-day programs. Funds are distributed through a competitive grant process to public schools as well as Head Start and private agencies. Agencies that receive state funding may then choose to subcontract with public schools, Head Start, private agencies, or faith-based centers to offer services. Family income is the primary risk factor used to determine eligibility, and at least 80 percent of children in each classroom must be eligible to receive free lunch. Up to 20 percent of children in a classroom may be enrolled based on secondary eligibility requirements, including risk factors such as low birth weight, developmental delay, homelessness, or having a parent who has a substance abuse problem or is incarcerated. The services in Shared Visions classrooms are tailored to meet local needs—for example, each grantee determines operating schedules and how sliding payment scales will be used for children from over-income families. Beginning with the 2006-2007 program year, grantees were encouraged to use the new Iowa Early Learning Standards in their classrooms.

Historically from 1995 until 2007, funding for the Shared Visions initiative was flat, leading to service cuts or shorter program days for some grantees. Grantees have also needed to increase their use of local funds beyond the required 20 percent local match. However, Iowa deepened its commitment to state-funded preschool for fiscal year 2008. State funding levels for Shared Visions increased for the first time in more than a decade. Also, the state started an additional initiative for 4-year-olds known as the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program.
**IOWA SHARED VISIONS**

**ACCESS**

- Total state program enrollment: 2,293
- School districts that offer state program: 10% ¹
- Income requirement: 80% of children must be below 130% FPL
- Hours of operation: Determined locally ²
- Operating schedule: Determined locally ²
- Special education enrollment: 3,436
- Federally funded Head Start enrollment: 6,485
- State-funded Head Start enrollment: 0

**QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
<th>STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT</th>
<th>BENCHMARK</th>
<th>DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early learning standards</td>
<td>Comprehensive³</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher degree</td>
<td>BA (public), HSD (nonpublic)</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>EC teaching endorsement (public), ⁴</td>
<td>Specializing in pre-K</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized training</td>
<td>None (nonpublic)</td>
<td>CDA or equivalent</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant teacher degree</td>
<td>HSD (public and nonpublic)</td>
<td>None (nonpublic) ⁵</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher in-service</td>
<td>6 credit hours/5 years (public); None (nonpublic) ⁵</td>
<td>At least 15 hours/year</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Maximum class size
  - 3-year-olds: 20 or lower
  - 4-year-olds: 20
- Staff-child ratio
  - 3-year-olds: 1:10 or better
  - 4-year-olds: 1:8
- Screening/referral and support services
  - Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 support service
- Meals
  - Lunch and snack ⁷: At least 1/day
- Monitoring
  - Other monitoring ⁸: Site visits

**RESOURCES**

- Total state pre-K spending: $6,800,000
- Local match required: Yes, 20% of total grant amount ⁹
- State spending per child enrolled: $2,966
- All reported spending per child enrolled*: $8,966

**SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED**

- PRE-K*: $8,966
- HDST: $7,778
- K-12**: $9,479

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¹ In addition, 36 Shared Visions programs are offered by Head Start grantees, and 14 are offered in child care centers.
² Programs operate an average of 4 hours per day, 4.5 days per week, and generally operate during the academic year.
³ The Iowa Early Learning Standards were finalized in November 2005, and were in use at the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year.
⁴ Required endorsements cover children from birth to age 5 or from birth to age 8.
⁵ Teachers employed in school district programs must renew their license every 5 years, including 6 credit hours of training. There is no specific requirement for the amount of in-service training for the remaining grantees, although most do provide at least 15 clock hours per year.
⁶ Although Shared Visions does not have specific requirements for screening and referral, applicants are required to address the types of screening and referral that will be provided. All Shared Visions programs provide screening and referral for vision, hearing, and health. The number of required parent conferences is not specified in state regulations. Additional support services include parenting support or training, parent involvement activities, health services for children, information about nutrition, and referral to social services.
⁷ Applicants for Shared Visions funding are required through their grant applications to address meals and meet the requirements of NAECY accreditation. The specific meals offered depend on the hours of operation, but are required by NAECY criteria.
⁸ Monitoring information is collected through periodic program evaluation by an outside agency.
⁹ While the local match requirement is 20 percent, local contributions have exceeded the required amount in recent years.