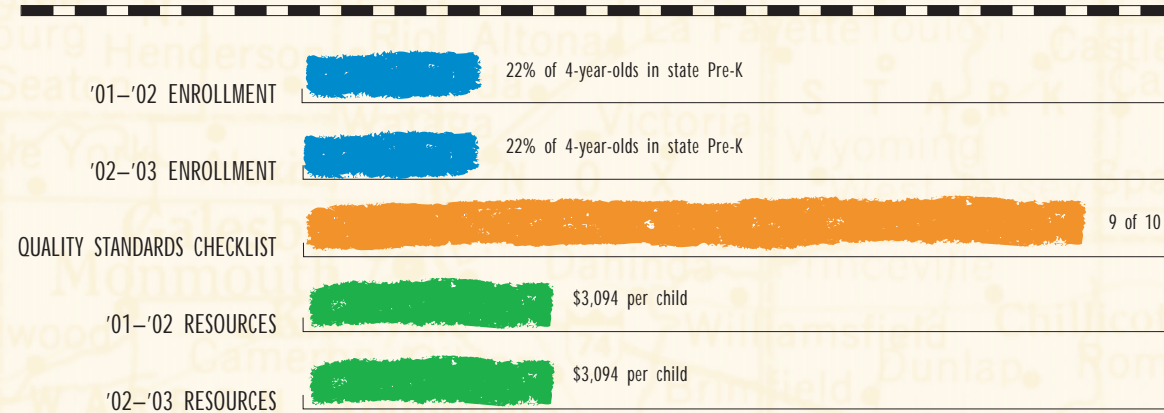


Illinois



Illinois' prekindergarten program was established as a result of education reform legislation in 1985. Since 1985, the appropriation for this program has increased every year except two, when the funding remained level with the previous year. Since 1998 the program has been funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant; through separate components this grant also funds a parent training initiative, as well as prevention efforts for first-time and teenage parents. Eleven percent of the total block grant funds must be used to serve children from birth to age 3, so that the funded initiatives target the most at-risk children early in life.

Until 2003, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) distributed preschool funds on a competitive basis to school districts demonstrating the greatest need through an application process; non-school providers could subcontract through local school districts for such preschool grants. Now child care centers and Head Start programs can also submit direct requests for prekindergarten funding. The program serves at-risk children between the ages of 3 and 5. Children are identified for the program through individual screening and assessment, with specific eligibility criteria and methods for screening established locally based on community needs. Examples of targeted populations include children in poverty and those from households with low parental education. Children who have participated in the program rank on average with their peers in subsequent school achievement.

In order to maintain consistent high quality in the program throughout the state, the prekindergarten program requires all teachers to hold an ISBE Early Childhood Teaching Certificate and to participate in ongoing professional development.

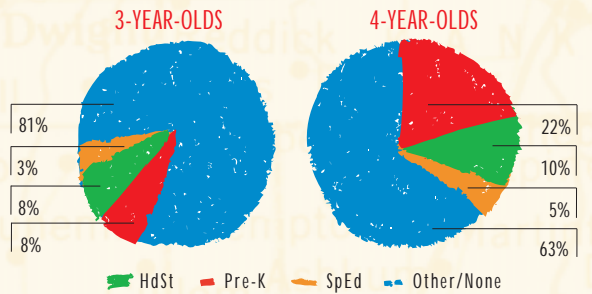
Enrollment and funding for the prekindergarten program were flat during fiscal year 2002–2003, with a total enrollment of 53,000 and a funding level of \$164 million. However, despite the dismal economic climate, the fiscal year 2003–2004 appropriation for the block grant (which funds initiatives other than prekindergarten, as mentioned above) increased by \$29.4 million, bringing the total of all state funds to \$213 million.



ACCESS

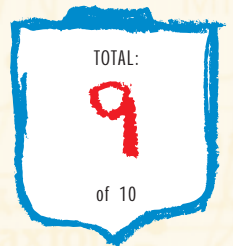
| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Total state program enrollment | 53,000 |
| School districts that offer state program | 77% |
| Income requirement | None |
| Hours of operation | Determined locally ¹ |
| Operating schedule | Academic year |
| Special education enrollment | 15,811 |
| Federally-funded Head Start enrollment | 32,099 |
| State-funded Head Start enrollment | 0 |

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



QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

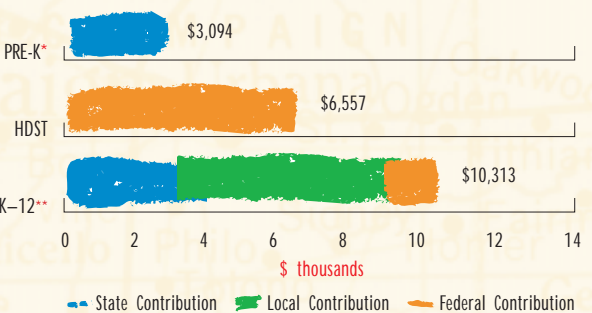
| POLICY | STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT | BENCHMARK | DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK? |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Curriculum standards | Comprehensive | Comprehensive | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Teacher degree requirement | BA | BA | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Teacher specialized training requirement | EC teaching certificate | Specializing in EC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Assistant teacher degree requirement | AA | CDA or equivalent | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Teacher in-service requirement | 120 clock hours/5 years ² | At least 15 hours/year | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Maximum class size | | 20 or lower | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3-year-olds | 20 | | |
| 4-year-olds | 20 | | |
| Staff-child ratio | | 1:10 or better | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3-year-olds | 1:10 | | |
| 4-year-olds | 1:10 | | |
| Screening/referral requirements | Vision, hearing, and health | Vision, hearing, and health | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Family support service requirements | Parent skills education ³ | At least 1 service | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Meal requirements | None | At least 1/day | <input type="checkbox"/> |



RESOURCES

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Total state Pre-K spending | \$164,000,000 ⁴ |
| Local match required? | No |
| State spending per child enrolled | \$3,094 |
| State spending per 3-year-old | \$250 ⁵ |
| State spending per 4-year-old | \$665 ⁵ |

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED



* 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 '01-'02 school year, unless otherwise noted.

¹ Most programs operate on a half-day schedule, 5 days per week.

² The professional development requirement can be met by completing 120 continuing professional development units through any combination of the following approaches: 8 credit hours, 24 continuing education units, or 120 continuing professional development units. Completion of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards process for certification is also an acceptable substitute.

³ Parent involvement is also required as part of the program.

⁴ The full block grant of \$184,000,000 includes services other than prekindergarten.

⁵ Calculations are based on the estimate that 26.6% of enrollees are age 3 and 73.4% are age 4.