Since its inception in July 2006, the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) has focused on quality, access, and affordability of prekindergarten. With the creation of EEC, Massachusetts changed the name of its existing prekindergarten initiative from Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) to Preschool Direct and added the Universal Pre-Kindergarten initiative. The CPC initiative was established by the Massachusetts School Improvement Act of 1985 and by 1996 its focus was on serving 3-and 4-year-old children with working parents. The Preschool Direct program continues to use state funds to expand and coordinate preschool services, distributing funds to local preschool providers that demonstrate compliance with the Early Childhood Program Standards and the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences. Agencies eligible to receive funding include private child care centers, public school prekindergarten programs, Head Start agencies, and family child care homes.

The 2006-2007 school year was the first year of operation for Massachusetts’ Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) initiative, which promotes school readiness and positive outcomes for children. The program was supported by $4.6 million in state funds awarded in grants to 130 private child care centers, public school prekindergarten programs, Head Start agencies, and family child care providers across 63 cities/towns in the state. More than $1 million was distributed as planning grants. Programs that receive UPK funding must operate or provide access to full-day, full-year services, follow specific standards for child assessment, and use the Early Childhood Program Standards and the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences. During the 2007-2008 school year, Massachusetts plans to increase spending on UPK to $7.1 million and will begin an evaluation of the program.

Children ages 2 years, 9 months are eligible to participate in Preschool Direct and UPK until they reach the locally determined kindergarten eligibility age. Preschool Direct serves children from families with incomes up to 100 percent of the state median income (SMI) with a priority for children from families at or below 50 percent of SMI. There is a sliding scale fee for Preschool Direct and most families do pay some tuition. However, children in legal custody of grandparents or other adult guardians, in foster care, who are homeless, or have other risk factors are exempt from these fees. All children are eligible for UPK funding at participating programs, but additional funding is provided for children from families with incomes at or below 85 percent of the state median income.

Massachusetts also supplements federal funding for Head Start as a separate initiative. This profile focuses on Preschool Direct and UPK, which are reported together because both programs have similar requirements and standards.
**ACCESS**

Total state program enrollment ........................................ 17,882
School districts that offer state program ............................. 96% (towns)
Income ............................................. 100% SMI with priority at or below requirement
50% SMI (Preschool Direct); none (UPK) ^1
Hours of operation ........................................ Determined locally ^2
Operating schedule ........................................ Determined locally ^2
Special education enrollment ........................................ 9,405
Federally funded Head Start enrollment ........................... 10,816
State-funded Head Start enrollment ................................. 221

**QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST**

**POLICY**

Early learning standards .............................................. Comprehensive
Teacher degree .............................................. BA (public); None (nonpublic) ^3
Teacher specialized .............................................. EC teacher of students with
training and without disabilities, pre-K ^2 ^3
Assistant teacher degree ...................................... HSD (public); None (nonpublic) ^4
Teacher degree .............................................. BA (public); None (nonpublic) ^3
Teacher in-service ........................................ 20 clock hours
Maximum class size ........................................ 20 or lower
3-year-olds ............................................. 20 ^5
4-year-olds ............................................. 20 ^5
Staff-child ratio ............................................. 1:10 or better
3-year-olds ............................................. 1:10
4-year-olds ............................................. 1:10
Screening/referral ........................................ Vision, hearing, health; and
and support services ........................................ Vision, hearing, health; and
Meals ........................................ Depend on length of program day ^7
Monitoring ........................................ Site visits

**BENCHMARK**

State-funded Head Start spending ................................ $8,500,000
Local match required? .................................................... No
Preschool Direct grants provide funding for children up to 100 percent of SMI
with priority for children at or below 50 percent of SMI.
Programs operate 2.5 to 10 hours per day, 2 to 5 days per week.
Both full-day and full-year programs are determined locally.
Federally funded Head Start programs provide support services to all children,
Income 100% SMI with priority at or below 85 percent SMI;
School districts that offer state program must have or acquire a CDA, AA, BA or NAFCC
accreditation. Nonpublic teachers in Preschool Direct-funded classrooms must
complete a 3-credit college course in child growth and development.
Family child care providers receiving funding through the
Preschool Direct program must have or acquire a CDA, AA, BA or NAFCC
accreditation. Nonpublic teachers in Preschool Direct-funded classrooms must
hold an AA degree by 2010 and a BA by 2017. All classrooms funded through
the UPK quality program must have at least one BA teacher or be accredited by
NAEYC or NAFCC (with CDA substitute for NAFCC accreditation). Public
schools participating in both the UPK and Preschool Direct programs require
teachers to have a BA degree.

**RESOURCES**

Total state pre-K spending ........................................ $65,816,375 ^8
Local match required? .................................................... No
State Head Start spending ........................................ $8,500,000
State spending per child enrolled .............................. $3,681
All reported spending per child enrolled* .............. $3,998

**STATE PRE-K AND HEAD START ENROLLMENT**

**AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION**

3-YEAR-OLDS 4-YEAR-OLDS

80% 10%
5% 8%
6% 7%
9% 75%

Pre-K  Head Start  Special Ed  Other/None

**SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED**

$3,998
$9,133
$15,438

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<td>State Contributions</td>
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1 Preschool Direct grants provide funding for children up to 100 percent of SMI
under certain circumstances, with priority for children at or below 50 percent of SMI.
2 Preschool Direct programs operate 2.5 to 10 hours per day, 2 to 5 days per week.
3 Preschool Direct programs operate 2.5 to 10 hours per day, 2 to 5 days per week, 9 to 12 months per year, depending on families’ needs and preferences.
4 Assistant teachers in nonpublic settings must complete a 3-credit child development course and be at least 18 years old. A CDA may be substituted for these requirements.
5 In addition to the class size requirement, the proportion of children with IEPs
may have an IEP.
6 All LEAs are required to provide screenings under “child find” and evaluations
upon referral for all 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds. Required support services include
two annual parent conferences or home visits, and additional support services
are determined locally.
7 Programs operating fewer than 4 hours per day must provide snacks, and
programs operating between 4 and 9 hours must provide a regularly scheduled
meal in addition to a snack. Programs operating more than 9 hours must provide
two meals and two snacks.
8 This figure includes $4,631,237 in TANF funds.