The Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) initiative was developed as a result of the Massachusetts School Improvement Act of 1985, which established a state-funded public school early childhood program for children at risk. In 1993, the CPC preschool program expanded to coordinate services offered by all early care and education programs within a community, and in 1996, began focusing on services for 3- and 4-year-olds from working families. Families with incomes below 100 percent of the state median income (SMI) are eligible for scholarship funds through the initiative. Once these families are served, the community may then offer services to children from families earning up to 125 percent of SMI, as well as children from families with higher incomes who have other risk factors such as low birth weight or a parent with a disability. Children are eligible from age 2 years, 9 months until they reach the locally determined kindergarten-eligibility age. Preschool programs serving CPC children must agree to be inclusive and serve children with and without disabilities. Most families are required to pay a fee for services, with tuition based on a sliding scale.

Local CPC councils, made up of parents, public school officials, and other community representatives, receive state funds to expand and coordinate preschool services based on community needs and resources. Private and public agencies provide services. Annual proposals must address specific funding priorities, such as increasing the affordability and quality of early childhood programs. To promote teacher quality, CPC programs in settings other than public schools now require newly hired teachers to attain an AA by 2010, and a BA by 2017. Furthermore, the state adopted two documents in April 2003 that define expectations for early childhood programs. All CPC preschool programs are required to demonstrate their use of both the Early Childhood Program Standards and the Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences.

Funding for CPC programs has been cut by nearly one-third since fiscal year 2001. This has limited the quality, quantity, and comprehensiveness of services that communities are able to offer. In 2005, the Department of Early Education and Care was created to coordinate funding streams dedicated to the education and care of Massachusetts’ children, to administer a future universal preschool program, and to guide improvements in the breadth and quality of services offered.

Massachusetts also supplements federal funding for Head Start as a separate initiative. The state provided $6.14 million to enhance quality and provide for 276 additional Head Start slots in 2004–2005.
**QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST**

**RESOURCES**

- Total state Pre-K spending: $68,600,000
- Local match required: No
- State spending per child enrolled: $4,848
- State Head Start spending: $6,140,000
- State spending per 3-year-old: $343
- State spending per 4-year-old: $404

**POLICY**

- Early learning standards: Comprehensive
- Teacher degree: BA (public), CDA or equivalent (nonpublic)
- Teacher specialized training: EC certificate (public), see footnotes (nonpublic)
- Assistant teacher degree: HSD (public), None (nonpublic)
- Teacher in-service: 20 clock hours
- Maximum class size:
  - 3-year-olds: 20
  - 4-year-olds: 20
- Staff-child ratio:
  - 3-year-olds: 1:10
  - 4-year-olds: 1:10
- Screening/referral:
  - Vision, hearing, health, and dental; and support services: Site visits and other monitoring
- Meals: Depend on length of program day
- Monitoring: Site visits and other monitoring

**BENCHMARK**

- Comprehensive
- BA
- Specializing in Pre-K
- CDA or equivalent
- At least 15 hours/year
- 20 or lower
- 1:10 or better

**DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?**

- Yes
- No

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*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 '04–'05 school year, unless otherwise noted.

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1 Programs operate 2.5 to 10 hours per day, 2 to 5 days per week, depending on families' needs and preferences. At least one-third of children served statewide must be served in full-day, full-year programs.
2 Nonpublic school teachers must be certified by the Department of Early Education and Care. Teachers must be either 21 years old or have a high school diploma, and must complete a 3-credit college course in child growth and development. Family child care providers must have or acquire a CDA, AA, BA, or MAEC accreditation. All nonpublic teachers must hold an AA degree by 2010.
3 Assistant teachers in nonpublic settings must complete a child development course within 9 months and be at least 18 years old. A CDA may be substituted for these requirements.
4 Support services include two annual parent conferences or home visits, parenting support or training, parent involvement activities, health services for children, information about nutrition, referral to social services, and transition to kindergarten activities.
5 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.
6 This figure includes $24 million in TANF funds.