North Carolina began offering its More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program in 2001. The program is targeted to at-risk 4-year-old children who are served through More at Four in Head Start agencies, private child care centers, and public schools. Nonpublic program settings can receive state funding only if they receive high quality ratings under the state child care licensing system and match the teacher credentialing requirements of public schools, which involve holding a bachelor’s degree and a birth–kindergarten license. Nonpublic settings have up to four years to phase in these high-quality standards.

Children are eligible for More at Four if they come from families with incomes below 75 percent of the state median income or if they have other risk factors including limited English proficiency, educational or developmental delay, a chronic health condition, or an identified disability. Additionally, children of active duty military personnel are eligible for the program. Since the 2005-2006 school year, More at Four programs have been required to follow early learning standards. The North Carolina Office of School Readiness is currently finalizing recommendations for curricula that are aligned with the state’s early learning standards, including providing opportunities to develop behaviors, competencies and knowledge.

More at Four has been funded through the state lottery, which has allowed for rapid expansion. The state added 10,000 slots that became available during the 2007-2008 school year, expanding the program by more than one-third. In the 2008-2009 school year, an additional $30 million will be provided to continue to expand the program for at-risk 4-year-olds, with a significant amount of the money being used to increase per-child spending.

North Carolina also contributed to the advancement of preschool education in the state with the creation of the Smart Start program in 1993. Smart Start supports collaboration and local planning to provide comprehensive early childhood services for children from birth to age 5. The goals of the program are to support early care and education programs, provide family support services, improve child health outcomes, and increase the overall quality of child care. This report focuses only on data from the More at Four program.
**NORTH CAROLINA MORE AT FOUR**

**ACCESS**

Total state program enrollment..................27,788
School districts that offer state program........100% (counties)
Income requirement ..................................80% of children must be
be at or below 75% SMI
Hours of operation ..................................6-6.5 hours/day, 5 days/week
Operating schedule ..................................Academic year
Special education enrollment ..................10,683
Federally funded Head Start enrollment........17,564
State-funded Head Start enrollment ..............0

**TOTAL STATE PRE-K SPENDING**

- $140,635,709
- Local match required? Yes, amount not specified
- State spending per child enrolled ..................$5,061
- All reported spending per child enrolled ............$6,954

**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>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher degree</td>
<td>BA1</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher specialized training</td>
<td>Birth–K license1</td>
<td>Specializing in pre-K</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant teacher degree</td>
<td>CDA or meets NCLB requirements</td>
<td>CDA or equivalent (public), CDA (nonpublic)2</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher in-service</td>
<td>15 clock hours/5 years</td>
<td>At least 15 hours/year</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum class size</td>
<td>20 or lower</td>
<td>1:10 or better</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-child ratio</td>
<td>1:10 or better</td>
<td>1:9</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening/referral</td>
<td>Vision, hearing, health, dental, Vision, hearing, health; and support services</td>
<td>Vision, hearing, health; and support services3 at least 1 support service</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals</td>
<td>Lunch and either breakfast or snack</td>
<td>At least 1/day</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>Site visits and other monitoring</td>
<td>Site visits</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESOURCES**

- Total state pre-K spending ..................$140,635,709
- Local match required? Yes, amount not specified
- State spending per child enrolled ..............$5,061
- All reported spending per child enrolled* ............$6,954

* 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 '07-’08 school year, unless otherwise noted.

1 All lead teachers in a More at Four classroom are required to hold a bachelor’s degree in early childhood education or a related field and a North Carolina Birth-Kindergarten Teacher Licensure. Teachers in nonpublic settings must have a minimum of an associate’s degree and work to obtain a bachelor’s degree and birth–kindergarten license within four years of the program being recognized as a More at Four Program. In some circumstances, exceptions to this timeline may be granted if the provider appears to be working in good faith to reach this level of credential.

2 NCLB generally requires assistant teachers to have a 2-year degree. More at Four requires that assistant teachers who meet NCLB requirements but do not hold a CDA have 6 semester hours of EC coursework or two years experience in an early childhood classroom. An associate’s degree is highly encouraged for assistant teachers in nonpublic settings.

3 Support services include parent involvement activities and transition to kindergarten activities. Programs must also provide information on medical homes and health insurance. Parent conferences and home visits are recommended but are not required.