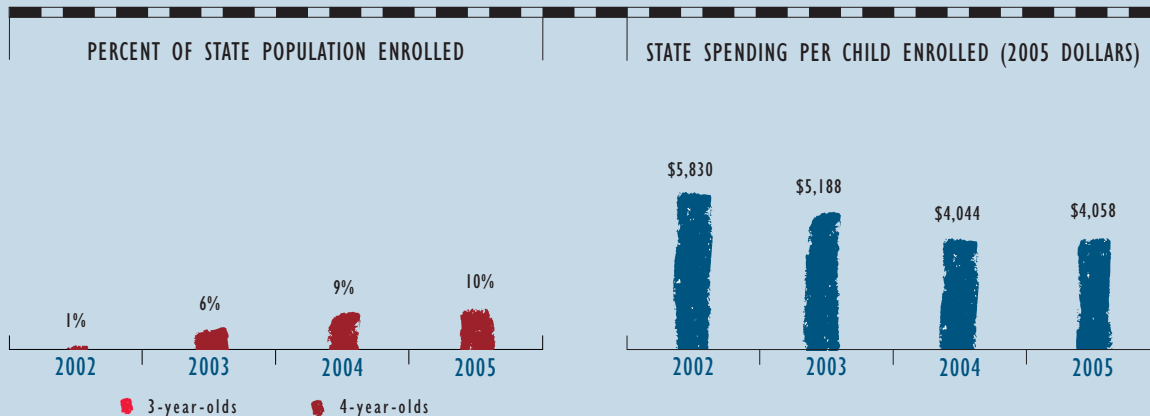


North Carolina



More at Four is a rapidly growing prekindergarten program that began providing services for at-risk 4-year-olds in 2001. As of the 2004–2005 school year, all programs were required to use new income criteria for determining eligibility. Under this new policy, at least 80 percent of participants are required to come from families with incomes at or below 75 percent of the state median income. The remaining 20 percent of children served may be from families with incomes up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level if one of the following risk factors is present: an identified disability, a chronic health condition, limited English proficiency, or an educational or developmental need.

More at Four programs are operated through public school districts, child care centers, and Head Start agencies. However, nonpublic providers are eligible only if they have a four- or five-star license—the top quality ratings under North Carolina’s child care licensing system—or if they currently have three stars and are working toward four. State-level consultants provide support to local contractors as needed, and conduct annual site visits and records review for all programs. In addition, the More at Four program is evaluated annually using assessments of both program quality and child developmental outcomes. All More at Four teachers, regardless of setting, must have a bachelor’s degree with a Birth–K license. However, providers in the private sector are given 4 years to phase in the degree and licensure requirement after being recognized as a More at Four program.

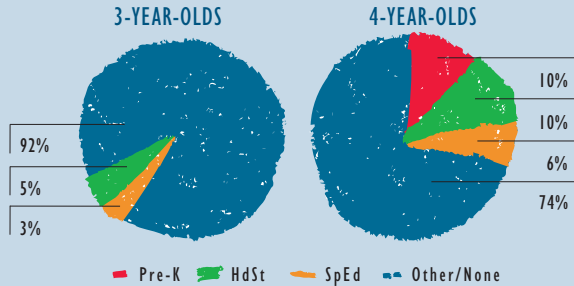
A separate state-funded initiative, known as Smart Start, was established in 1993. Smart Start supports local planning and collaboration to provide comprehensive early childhood services. Smart Start serves children from birth to age 5 and provides funds that are used, depending on local needs, to increase child care quality, improve child health outcomes, provide family support services, or support prekindergarten programs. Funding for Smart Start remained level in 2004–2005 at about \$190.7 million after having declined in previous years. Data in this report focus only on the More at Four program.



ACCESS

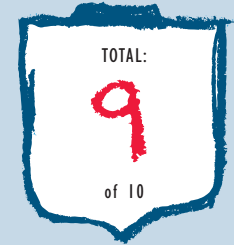
Total state program enrollment	12,167
School districts that offer state program	100% (counties)
Income requirement	80% of children must be at or below 75% SMI ¹
Hours of operation	6 hours/day, 5 days/week
Operating schedule	Academic year
Special education enrollment	10,306
Federally funded Head Start enrollment '03-'04	17,936
State-funded Head Start enrollment	0

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



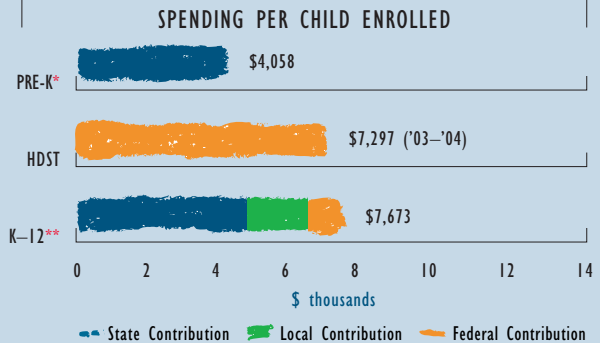
QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?
Early learning standards	None ²	Comprehensive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA ³	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	Birth-K license or Pre-K add-on ⁴	Specializing in Pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	CDA or meets NCLB regs. (public); CDA (nonpublic) ⁵	CDA or equivalent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher in-service	150 clock hours/5 years or 15 credit hours/5 years ⁴	At least 15 hours/year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size		20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	NA		
4-year-olds	18		
Staff-child ratio		1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	NA		
4-year-olds	1:9		
Screening/referral and support services	Vision, hearing, health, and dental; and support services ⁶	Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meals	Lunch and either breakfast or snack	At least 1/day	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring	Site visits	Site visits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



RESOURCES

Total state Pre-K spending	\$49,377,371
Local match required?	Yes; amount not specified
State spending per child enrolled	\$4,058
State spending per 3-year-old	\$0
State spending per 4-year-old	\$415



* 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.

- During 2003-2004, local programs chose from two models to determine eligibility. The income cut-off was 250% of the federal poverty level under Model I, and 75% of the state median income (SMI) under Model II. As of 2004-2005, all programs must use Model II to determine eligibility. Though income is now considered the primary risk factor, children who do not meet the income criteria may still be served if they are deemed at risk due to other factors.
- In 2005, the state adopted Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers and Strategies for Guiding Their Success. The standards are specific to preschool children and address all NEGP domains. All programs will be required to follow these standards beginning in 2005.
- Providers are given 4 years to phase in the degree requirement after being recognized as a *More at Four* program.
- All licensed teachers have a continuing education requirement to renew their licenses every 5 years. Teachers must either hold or be working toward a Birth-K license at a minimum rate of 6 semester hours per year.
- NCLB generally requires assistant teachers to have a 2-year degree. *More at Four* requires assistant teachers who meet NCLB requirements but do not hold a CDA to have 6 semester hours of EC coursework or 2 years experience in an early childhood classroom. An AA is strongly encouraged.
- Support services include parent involvement activities and transition to kindergarten activities. Parent conferences and home visits are recommended, but are not required.