North Carolina

One at Four was established in 2001 to expand prekindergarten opportunities for children at risk. This program has grown rapidly. Enrollment rose from 1,240 children during the 2001–2002 school year to 6,271 during the 2002–2003 year. There are 10,000 slots available during 2003–2004. More at Four is open to 4-year-olds who are eligible to enter kindergarten the following year. In determining which children should receive priority, programs take into account family income (the predominant risk factor), the child’s health status, identified disabilities, parent education, parent employment, family composition, housing stability, English proficiency, and minority status. Starting in 2004–2005, at least 80 percent of participants must come from families at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level. Children who have risk factors and have not previously participated in any early care and education program are given first priority. Programs may be operated by schools, child care centers, or Head Start agencies that have a four- or five-star license—the top quality ratings under the state’s childcare licensing system—or have a three-star license and are working toward four stars. Regardless of the location or provider, quality standards are emphasized.

Although More at Four is the focus of the data reported here, North Carolina also funds Smart Start, a separate initiative that supports local planning and collaboration for comprehensive early childhood services. Smart Start began in 1993 and serves children from birth until they enter kindergarten in each of the state’s counties. The services provided by Smart Start vary and are determined at the county level, in response to local children’s needs. Funds may be used to enhance the quality of child care, provide family support services, improve child health outcomes, or in support of prekindergarten programs.

While funding for More at Four has been increasing—to a total of $34,500,000 in 2002–2003—Smart Start funding was reduced by approximately $20 million in 2002–2003.

### ACCESS

**State Pre-K enrollment**

- 2001–2002: 1,240 children

**State spending per child enrolled**

- 2001–2002: $5,242 per child
- 2002–2003: $6,909 per child

**State spending per 4-year-old**

- 2001–2002: $0

### RESOURCES

**Total state Pre-K spending**

- 2001–2002: $6,500,000
- 2002–2003: $34,500,000

**Local match required?**

- Yes, but amount not specified

**Head Start enrollment**

- 2001–2002: 17,558
- 2002–2003: 0

**Quality standards checklist**

- Accessibility:
  - 7 of 10
- Curriculum standards:
  - 108
- Teacher degree requirement:
  - Specializing in ECC
- Teacher specialized training requirement:
  - Birth–Kindergarten license
- Assistant teacher degree requirement:
  - Meets NCLB regs. (public), CDA (nonpublic)
- Teacher in-service requirement:
  - None
- Maximum class size:
  - 3-year-olds: NA
  - 4-year-olds: 18
- Staff-child ratio:
  - 3-year-olds: NA
  - 4-year-olds: 1:9
- Screen/Referral:
  - Vision, hearing, health
- Family support service requirements:
  - None
- Meal requirements:
  - Lunch and snack

### POLICY

- **Early care requirement:**
  - None
- **Comprehensive:**
  - None
- **Birth–Kindergarten:**
  - None
- **CDA:**
  - None
- **Vision, hearing, health:**
  - None
- **At least 1 service:**
  - None
- **At least 1/day:**
  - None

### QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

**POLICY**

- **Pre-K requirement:**
  - None
- **Kindergarten:**
  - None
- **Does requirement meet benchmark?**
  - Yes

**RESOURCES**

- **Total state Pre-K spending:**
  - 2001–2002: $6,500,000
  - 2002–2003: $34,500,000
- **Local match required?**
  - Yes, but amount not specified
- **State spending per child enrolled:**
  - 2001–2002: $5,242
  - 2002–2003: $6,909
- **State spending per 4-year-old:**
  - 2001–2002: $0

### Notes:

1. More at Four was established in 2001 to expand prekindergarten opportunities for children at risk. This program has grown rapidly. Enrollment rose from 1,240 children during the 2001–2002 school year to 6,271 during the 2002–2003 year. There are 10,000 slots available during 2003–2004. More at Four is open to 4-year-olds who are eligible to enter kindergarten the following year. In determining which children should receive priority, programs take into account family income (the predominant risk factor), the child’s health status, identified disabilities, parent education, parent employment, family composition, housing stability, English proficiency, and minority status. Starting in 2004–2005, at least 80 percent of participants must come from families at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level. Children who have risk factors and have not previously participated in any early care and education program are given first priority. Programs may be operated by schools, child care centers, or Head Start agencies that have a four- or five-star license—the top quality ratings under the state’s childcare licensing system—or have a three-star license and are working toward four stars. Regardless of the location or provider, quality standards are emphasized.

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3. While funding for More at Four has been increasing—to a total of $34,500,000 in 2002–2003—Smart Start funding was reduced by approximately $20 million in 2002–2003.