As a result of a 1998 state Supreme Court ruling, New Jersey’s Abbott program is offered in the state’s 31 highest poverty districts. The goal of this program is to provide high-quality preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds in districts where at least 40 percent of children qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Funds from the Department of Education are provided to Abbott school districts. The districts may serve children in district public schools or contract with private providers and Head Start agencies to provide preschool programs. Additional money from the Department of Human Services is available to fund extended-day services for up to 10 hours per day. School districts are responsible for ensuring that individual programs, regardless of setting, meet the standards set out by the state Supreme Court. Teacher salaries are fully funded through the Abbott program, so that teachers in private centers are paid on the public school salary scale. In addition, annual evaluations are conducted in every district to promote uniform quality for every child.

State funds also support Non-Abbott Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA), which provides half-day preschool primarily to 4-year-olds in 102 additional districts. State funds are provided for districts in which 20 to 40 percent of children qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. The majority of programs are in public schools, but some operate in Head Start or private child care centers. ECPA funds are also used to support full-day kindergarten and improve services for children up to grade 3.

To improve program quality, ECPA districts are aligning their standards with the high-quality program standards used in the Abbott districts. New regulations that reduce class size and require assistant teachers in every ECPA classroom went into effect in September 2005. The development of Abbott and Non-Abbott versions of the Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines has helped districts improve quality and meet state expectations.

A third program, the Early Launch to Learning Initiative (ELLI), began serving children in 2004 as part of an effort to provide access to high-quality preschool for all 4-year-olds by 2010. All districts that serve elementary-aged children are encouraged to apply. The level of funding is based on the number of low-income children to be served. Districts already providing preschool through other funding sources are eligible to apply for funding to cover all income-eligible children if they plan to expand their program. Districts receiving ECPA funds, with the exclusion of Abbott districts, are eligible for funding to increase from half-day to full-day programs.

In order to document the contributions New Jersey makes to prekindergarten through its separate initiatives, we first present summary information reflecting the state’s overall commitment to prekindergarten. Enrollment and state spending for Abbott, ECPA, and ELLI initiatives are taken into account. Next, we present specific details about each initiative in the state. The third page of this profile focuses exclusively on the Abbott program; the fourth page focuses exclusively on the ECPA program; and the final page focuses exclusively on the ELLI program.
STATE OVERVIEW

Total state program enrollment: 46,464
Total state spending: $432,347,956
State spending per child enrolled: $9,305
State spending per 3-year-old: $1,536
State spending per 4-year-old: $2,226

* 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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Total state program enrollment - 7,247
School districts that offer state program - 19%
Income requirement - None
Hours of operation - At least 3 hours/day, 5 days/week
Operating schedule - Academic year
Special education enrollment - 10,509
Federally funded Head Start enrollment '03–'04 - 13,679
State-funded Head Start enrollment - 0

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY | STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT | BENCHMARK | DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?
--- | --- | --- | ---
Early learning standards | Comprehensive | Comprehensive | ✔
Teacher degree | BA | BA | ✔
Teacher specialized training | EC certification | Specializing in Pre-K | ✔
Assistant teacher degree | HSD | CDA or equivalent | No
Teacher in-service | 100 clock hours/5 years | At least 15 hours/year | ✔
Maximum class size | 3-year-olds - 25, 4-year-olds - 25 | 20 or lower | ✔
Staff-child ratio | 3-year-olds - 2:25, 4-year-olds - 2:25 | 1:10 or better | No
Screening/referral | Vision, hearing, health; and support services | Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 service | ✔
Meals | Depend on length of program day | At least 1/day | No
Monitoring | Site visits and other monitoring | Site visits | ✔

RESOURCES

Total state Pre-K spending - $30,000,000
Local match required? - No
State spending per child enrolled - $4,140
State spending per 3-year-old - $8,444 ('03–'04)
State spending per 4-year-old - $12,028

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECPA</th>
<th>HDST</th>
<th>K–12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$4,140</td>
<td>$8,444 ('03–'04)</td>
<td>$12,028</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* ECPA = Early Childhood Professional Assessment

** HDST = Head Start

1 Only districts where 20 to 40% of children qualify for free or reduced-price lunch receive funding through this initiative. All 3- and 4-year-old children within these districts are eligible to participate. However, the program is only open to 3-year-olds once the district has offered half-day kindergarten to all age-eligible children, and either half- or full-day preschool to all 4-year-olds.
2 Support services include education services or job training for parents, parent involvement activities, transition to kindergarten activities, and other locally determined services.
3 Meals are required in full-day programs.
4 This figure is an estimate of state funds directed to services for preschool-age children.
QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY

Early learning standards: Comprehensive
Teacher degree: BA
Teacher specialized training: EC certification
Assistant teacher degree: HSD
Teacher in-service: 100 clock hours/5 years
Maximum class size:
  - 3-year-olds: NA
  - 4-year-olds: 20
Staff-child ratio:
  - 3-year-olds: NA
  - 4-year-olds: 1:10
Screening/referral: Vision, hearing, health, and developmental; and support services
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
Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 service
At least 1/day
Site visits

DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?

Yes

RESOURCES

Total state Pre-K spending: $1,565,412
Local match required?: Yes
State spending per child enrolled: $2,931
State spending per 3-year-old: $0
State spending per 4-year-old: $14

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

- ELLI: $2,931
- HDST: $8,444 ('03–'04)
- K–12: $12,028

Data are for the '04–'05 school year, unless otherwise noted.

1 Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
2 K–12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.
3 Data are for the '04–'05 school year, unless otherwise noted.
4 Special circumstances may be considered beyond income, such as parental health or the number of children in a household under the age of 5.
5 Programs operate either half-day (3 hours, 65 minutes) or full-day (6 hours), and for 5 days per week.
6 Support services include parent involvement activities and transition to kindergarten activities.
7 Full-day programs must offer breakfast and lunch.
8 Special education and local funding or tuition must be used to meet costs beyond DOE funding.