In 1998, the New Jersey Supreme Court mandated that all children in the state's 30 highest poverty districts—known as Abbott districts—be provided with a high-quality preschool education to prepare them for the skills and abilities necessary for success in elementary school. The result of this ruling is that quality preschool programs are offered to all 3- and 4-year-old children in districts where at least 40 percent of the children qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Funds from the Department of Education are used by public schools, Head Start programs, and private child care centers to provide full-day services (6 hours per day). Additional money from the Department of Human Services funds extended-day services. The school districts are responsible for ensuring that individual programs meet the standards set out by the state Supreme Court. These standards include requirements regarding teacher certification, curriculum, class size, facilities, and comprehensive services. The Abbott program now supplies full funding for teacher salaries, providing qualified teachers in private centers with salaries comparable to the public schools. The program was expanded to include one additional district in summer 2004.

In addition to the Abbott prekindergarten initiative, state funds are provided for Non-Abbott Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA), which allow an additional 102 districts to offer half-day preschool mostly to 4-year-olds. Funds through this initiative are available to districts in which 20 to 40 percent of the 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. Districts that receive ECPA funds are also required to provide full-day kindergarten. While primarily used to provide preschool and full-day kindergarten services, some ECPA funds are used for grades 1 to 3.

New Jersey is working toward improving quality in the ECPA districts by aligning standards with the high-quality program standards for the Abbott districts. The development of Abbott and Non-Abbott versions of the Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines provides districts with guidance for implementing state expectations and the enhancement of quality preschool programs. In addition, revisions to state code regulating the ECPA program were presented to the State Board of Education in September 2004.

In 2003-2004, Abbott programs received $365 million in state funds from the Department of Education to serve 37,765 children (supplemented by $134.5 million from the Department of Human Services). ECPA received an estimated $30 million to serve 7,509 children. Also, New Jersey is seeking to expand access to preschool for 4-year-olds through the new Early Launch to Learning Initiative (ELLI). The state has set aside $15 million to potentially serve another 4,000 low-income preschoolers throughout the state in fiscal year 2005.

Although most states have a single state-financed prekindergarten initiative, New Jersey makes significant contributions to prekindergarten through two separate initiatives—the Abbott program and ECPA. As a result, in the first two pages of this profile we present summary information reflecting the state's overall commitment to prekindergarten. Enrollment and state spending for both the Abbott and ECPA 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, while the final page focuses exclusively on the ECPA program.
This total does not include $121 million from the Department of Human Services used to fund extended-day services.

This figure is an estimate of state funds directed to services for preschool-age children.

Teachers who worked in center-based programs before the degree requirement was implemented and have made sufficient progress toward the BA must meet the degree requirement by September 2006.

Support services include education services or job training for parents, transition to kindergarten activities, and other services that are determined locally.

Programs must operate a minimum of 3 hours per day.

While there are no income eligibility criteria for individual children, only districts where 20 to 40 percent of children qualify for free or reduced-price lunch receive funding through this initiative.

While there are no income eligibility criteria for individual children, only districts where at least 40 percent of children qualify for free or reduced-price lunch receive funding through this initiative.

State spending per child enrolled - $9,645
State spending per 3-year-old - $1,349
State spending per 4-year-old - $9,645
State spending per child enrolled - $4,159
State spending per 3-year-old - $1,349
State spending per 4-year-old - $4,159

**K–12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.**

**Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.**

**School districts that offer state program - 364%**

**Income requirement - None**

**Hrs. of operation - 14-day, 10-week**

**Operating schedule - Determined locally**

**Special education enrollment - 927**

**Special education enrollment - 15,484**

State spending per child enrolled - $11,616

State spending per 3-year-old - $1,768

State spending per 4-year-old - $1,768

Local match required? - No

Total state Pre-K spending - $30,000,000

**RESOURCES**

**TOTAL OF 10**

**ACCESS**

School districts that offer state program - 364%

Income requirement - None

Hrs. of operation - 14-day, 10-week

Operating schedule - Determined locally

Special education enrollment - 927

Special education enrollment - 15,484

State spending per child enrolled - $11,616

**QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST**

**POLICY**

Curriculum standards - Comprehensive

Teacher degree requirement - BA

Teacher specialized training requirement - Specializing in Preschool

Anxiety teacher degree requirement - Specializing in Preschool

Teacher in-service requirement - 200 days, hours/year

Minimum days/day - 15

Minimum hours/day - 5

Staff-child ratio - 1:3 or better

Screening/referral requirements - Vision, hearing, health, emotional, and developmental

Required support services - Support services

Mentor requirement - At least 1 mentor

**RESOURCES**

Total state Pre-K spending - $30,000,000

Local match required? - No

State spending per child enrolled - $11,616

State spending per 3-year-old - $1,768

State spending per 4-year-old - $1,768

**ACCESS**

School districts that offer state program - 100%

Income requirement - None

Hrs. of operation - 14-day, 10-week

Operating schedule - Determined locally

Special education enrollment - 927

Special education enrollment - 15,484

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**QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST**

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**NEW JERSEY NON-ABBOTT EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM AID**

**4-YEAR-OLDS**

**ACCESS**

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Income requirement - None

Hrs. of operation - 14-day, 10-week

Operating schedule - Determined locally

Special education enrollment - 927

Special education enrollment - 15,484

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