The New York state Legislature created the Experimental Prekindergarten (EPK) program in 1966, shortly after the federal Head Start program was established. The initiative, now referred to as the Targeted Prekindergarten (TPK) program, supports a half-day preschool program that also provides social services, a meal and snack, and family involvement opportunities. The TPK program serves 4-year-olds living in 96 districts, and at least 80 percent of enrollees must come from economically disadvantaged families. All programs are operated by public schools. Teachers are required to have a Master’s degree (unless they had a Bachelor’s degree prior to 1978) as well as certification in Nursery–Grade 6 or, if certified after February 2004, Birth–Grade 2. State funding for TPK reached $54 million in fiscal year 1995, but the program subsequently experienced flat or reduced funding until a funding increase to $54.3 million in fiscal year 2004.

The Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) program, a second state-funded prekindergarten initiative, was established in 1997 with the aim of making prekindergarten accessible to all 4-year-olds in the state. Priority was initially given to economically disadvantaged children with the intention to gradually increase access so that by 2002 the program would be available to all 4-year-olds whose families wanted to participate. However, since UPK funding has remained level in recent years, planned program expansion has not occurred, and the program currently reaches only about 25 percent of the state’s 4-year-olds. Districts are required to offer enrollment based on a random lottery system so that children are equitably selected to fill available slots.

UPK funds flow through public schools, but at least 10 percent of funds are required to be used in subcontracts with Head Start, private child care providers, or other community-based organizations. In practice, more than half of UPK funds are subcontracted to these agencies. All public school teachers in the UPK program must meet the same degree and certification requirements that apply to teachers in the TPK program. A legislative amendment requires teachers in community-based programs to be supervised by an on-site certified teacher effective with the 2005–2006 school year. Beginning in September 2006, teachers in community-based UPK programs will be required to have the same credentials as teachers in public schools.

In order to document the contributions New York makes to prekindergarten through its two separate initiatives, we first present summary information reflecting the state’s overall commitment to prekindergarten. Enrollment and state spending for both the TPK and UPK 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 UPK program, while the final page focuses exclusively on the TPK program.
STATE OVERVIEW

Total state program enrollment - 69,454
Total state spending - $246,422,978
State spending per child enrolled - $3,548
State spending per 3-year-old - $17
State spending per 4-year-old - $1,013

* 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.
NEW YORK UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment - 55,461
School districts that offer state program - 29%
Income requirement - None
Hours of operation - Determined locally
Operating schedule - Academic year
Special education enrollment - 42,496
Federally funded Head Start enrollment '03–'04 - 41,628
State-funded Head Start enrollment - 0

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY
Early learning standards - Not comprehensive
Teacher degree - BA prior to 1978, MA after (public); 9 credits toward CDA (nonpublic)
Teacher specialized training - Certification in Birth–Grade 2 (public), 9 credits toward CDA (nonpublic)
Assistant teacher degree - Level 1 certification (public), HSD (nonpublic)
Teacher in-service - 175 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 - 1:9 or 3:20
Screening/referral
and support services - Support services only
Meals - Depend on length of program day
Monitoring - Other monitoring

BENCHMARK
Comprehensive
BA
Specializing in Pre-K
CDA or equivalent
At least 15 hours/year
At least 1/day
1:10 or better
Vision, hearing, health;
and at least 1 service
Site visits

RESOURCES

Total state Pre-K spending - $198,063,061
Local match required? - No
State spending per child enrolled - $3,571
State spending per 3-year-old - $0
State spending per 4-year-old - $828

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

PRE-K: $3,571
HDST: $8,724 ('03–'04)
K–12: $14,515

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1 Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
2 For the 2003–2004 program year, 79% of UPK teachers were reported to be state certified. In February 2004, the required certification changed from a certificate in Pre-K-6 or N-6.
3 Beginning in September 2004, teachers in community-based UPK programs will be required to have the same credentials as teachers in public schools. When this requirement goes into effect, the UPK program will meet the NIEER benchmarks for teacher degree and teacher specialized training requirements.
4 Level 1 certification requires a high school diploma or equivalent and passing of the Assessment of Teaching Assistant Skills Test. This requirement went into effect in February 2004.
5 Physical exams must have been conducted by a pediatrician within the previous year, and districts must conduct screenings for new entrants. Support services include parent involvement activities, referral to social services, and transition to kindergarten activities. The number of required annual parent conferences or home visits is determined locally.

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

- Total state program enrollment: 13,993
- School districts that offer state program: 14%
- Income requirement: Economically disadvantaged
- Hours of operation: Determined locally
- Operating schedule: Academic year
- Special education enrollment: 41,628
- Federally funded Head Start enrollment: 31,628
- State-funded Head Start enrollment: 0

**RESOURCES**

- Total state Pre-K spending: $48,359,917
- Local match required: at least 11%
- State spending per child enrolled: $3,456
- State spending per 3-year-old: $17
- State spending per 4-year-old: $184

**QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST**

**POLICY**

- Early learning standards: Not comprehensive
- Teacher degree: BA prior to 1978, MA after
- Teacher specialized training: Certification in Birth–Grade 2
- Assistant teacher degree: Level 1 certification
- Teacher in-service: 175 clock hours/5 years
- Maximum class size:
  - 3-year-olds: 20
  - 4-year-olds: 20
- Staff-child ratio:
  - 3-year-olds: 1:9 or 3:20
  - 4-year-olds: 1:9 or 3:20
- Screening/referral and support services: Support services only
- Meals: 1 meal and snack
- 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: ✔

**TOTAL: 7 of 10**

**NEW YORK TARGETED PREKINDERGARTEN**

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

- 3-YEAR-OLDS
  - 1%
  - 7%
- 4-YEAR-OLDS
  - 7%
  - 5%

**SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED**

- PRE-K: $3,836
- HDST: $8,724 (’03–’04)
- K–12*: $14,515

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1. Economically disadvantaged children are those from families eligible for some form of assistance such as TANF, free or reduced-price lunch, food stamps, Medicaid, or unemployment or disability compensation.
2. Programs are required to provide a minimum of 12 hours per week and at least 4 days per week during the academic year. The length of the program day is determined locally, and programs may operate 5 days per week. Typically, programs operate 2.5 hours per day and 5 days per week.
3. In January 2005, the required certification changed from a certificate in Pre-K-6 or N-6.
4. Level 1 certification requires a high school diploma or equivalent and passing of the Assessment of Teaching Assistant Skills Test. This requirement went into effect in February 2004.
5. Support services include parenting support or training, parent involvement activities, locally determined health services for children, transition to kindergarten activities, and other services to meet family needs. The number of required annual parent conferences or home visits is determined locally.