In 1980, Oklahoma established a pilot preschool education program, the Early Childhood Four-Year-Old Program, aiming to eventually serve all 4-year-olds. In 1990 the program received statewide funding, but the state limited prekindergarten funding to only 4-year-olds eligible for Head Start, although districts could provide the program to other children using local funds or tuition. In 1998, Oklahoma offered free, voluntary access to state-funded preschool for all of its 4-year-olds, becoming the second state in the nation to do so.

Enrollment in the Early Childhood Four-Year-Old Program has steadily increased over the years with 99 percent of school districts now choosing to offer the program. Starting with the 2003-2004 school year, Oklahoma has ranked first in the nation every year for the percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled. In addition, greater proportions of 4-year-olds are now attending full-day programs.

Public school districts receive funding for the Early Childhood Four-Year-Old Program directly through the state’s school finance formula. Districts are reimbursed at the district’s per-pupil rate, with specific funding amounts or weights based on whether prekindergarten is offered for a half or full day. While districts receive funding directly, they may subcontract by placing a public school teacher with another type of provider, including Head Start programs, child care centers, and other community-based programs. During the 2007-2008 school year, more than 4,100 children were enrolled in collaboration programs. Children enrolled in these collaboration programs are considered public school enrollees and therefore receive the same services as children served at public schools.

Recently, the Early Childhood Four-Year-Old Program formed partnerships between public schools and child care facilities that receive the highest rating in the state’s quality rating system for child care (three stars). Oklahoma anticipates that more three-star facilities will participate as more incentives are expected to be offered.

Through a separate initiative, Oklahoma also supplements the federal Head Start program to expand services and enrollment, offer family services, and develop early intervention strategies. Head Start programs received $2,905,602 in state funds in fiscal year 2008.

In addition, Oklahoma established the Pilot Early Childhood Program during the 2006-2007 school year. This program is available to at-risk children from birth through age 3. The program is funded by public and private funds to provide a year-round program. Enrollment in the pilot program continues to expand each year, with 219 3-year-olds served in the 2007-2008 school year.
OKLAHOMA EARLY CHILDHOOD FOUR-YEAR-OLD PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment ........................................... 35,231
School districts that offer state program ......................... 99%
Income requirement ................................................ None
Hours of operation .................................................... 2.5 hours/day (part-day) or 6 hours/day (full-day); 5 days/week
Operating schedule .................................................... Academic year
Special education enrollment ........................................ 3,771
Federally funded Head Start enrollment ....................... 15,022
State-funded Head Start enrollment .............................. 0

POLICY STATE PRE-K BENCHMARK DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?

Early learning standards ............................................. Comprehensive ........... Comprehensive ✓
Teacher degree .......................................................... BA/BS ............... BA ✓
Teacher specialized training ............................... EC certification for birth–3 ........ Specializing in pre-K ✓
Assistant teacher degree ......................................... See footnotes1 ........ CDA or equivalent ✓
Teacher in-service .................................................. 75 clock hours/5years .... At least 15 hours/year ✓
Maximum class size ..................................................... 20 or lower
3-year-olds ............................................................... NA
4-year-olds ............................................................... 20
Staff-child ratio ......................................................... 1:10 or better
3-year-olds ............................................................... NA
4-year-olds ............................................................... 1:10
Screening/referral ...................................................... Vision, hearing, health; and Vision, hearing, health; and; and support services developmental; and support services4 at least 1 support service ✓
Meals ................................................................. At least 1 meal5 ............. At least 1/day ✓
Monitoring ...................................................... Site visits and other monitoring Site visits ✓

RESOURCE

Total state pre-K spending .............................................. $139,735,129
Local match required? ................................................ No
State Head Start spending ......................................... $2,905,602
State spending per child enrolled ............................... $3,966
All reported spending per child enrolled* ................. $7,484

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

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

3-YEAR-OLDS 4-YEAR-OLDS

Pre-K 71%
Head Start 16%
Special Ed† 1%
Other/None 12%

3-YEAR-OLDS 4-YEAR-OLDS

Pre-K 85%
Head Start 1%
Special Ed† 14%
Other/None 14%

† This number represents children in special education who are not enrolled in state-funded pre-K or Head Start.

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending .............................................. $139,735,129 *
Local match required? ................................................ No
State Head Start spending ......................................... $2,905,602
State spending per child enrolled ............................... $3,966
All reported spending per child enrolled* ................. $7,484

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

State Contributions .............................................. Federal Contributions
Local Contributions ............................................. TANF Spending

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Spending Per Child Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-K*</td>
<td>$7,484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDST</td>
<td>$6,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K–12**</td>
<td>$8,478</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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.

† This number represents children in special education who are not enrolled in state-funded pre-K or Head Start.

1 Providers may choose from either of two program options: a half-day program with 2.5 instructional hours daily, a full-day program with 6 instructional hours daily, or a combination of both options. All programs operate 5 days per week.
2 State Head Start funds are used to expand services, offer family services, develop early intervention strategies, and expand enrollment, although it is unknown how many additional slots are funded.
3 Assistant teachers must meet federal requirements to be highly qualified under NCLB. They must have an AA, or 48 credit hours of college coursework, or pass one of two state-approved tests that do not have specific educational requirements. One test is the Oklahoma General Education Test (an exam required for pre-K–12 public school teachers) and the other is a national test for para-professional status.
4 Dental services are determined locally. Support services include two parent conferences or home visits annually, parent involvement activities, health services for children, information about nutrition, referral to social services, and transition to kindergarten activities. Programs must also offer or make referrals for other services including mental health services, and all other typical public school program services (such as early intervention, transition programs or literacy coaches).

5 At least one meal is provided through the Federal Child Nutrition Program, but specific meals depend on the length of the program. This federal program does not provide snacks for students, so snacks are determined locally.

6 State spending was calculated on a percentage of the total program spending amount provided.