Pennsylvania does not currently fund a prekindergarten program, although 30 school districts voluntarily provide educational services to some 4-year-olds through a limited public school program known as Kindergarten for Four-Year-Olds. It is important to emphasize that state law considers this program to be part of elementary school, rather than a separate prekindergarten initiative designed to prepare children for elementary school. As a result, the state regulations that apply to this program are elementary school regulations.

While Pennsylvania does not devote funds specifically for preschool education services, districts that had established a 4-year-old kindergarten program by 1991 are eligible for continued funding based on their 1991 subsidy, with ad-hoc increases that are not directly related to the current number of students or the costs associated with serving them. Districts that were not operating kindergartens for 4-year-olds in 1991 are not eligible for state funding at the present time. It is not possible to estimate the amount spent on the Kindergarten for Four-Year-Olds program. Most districts are funding their programs through local taxes, Title I, and Head Start partnerships.

Through a separate initiative, in 2001–2002 Pennsylvania provided $2,000,000 in state funds to support extended-day child care for Head Start children.

The Kindergarten for Four-Year-Olds program served 2,667 children in 30 of the state’s 501 districts during 2002–2003. In 2003, a new preschool education initiative was proposed that would target $550,000,000 a year for early childhood programs, including full-day kindergarten for all schools in the state’s most disadvantaged districts. A more limited proposal was passed that will make $175,000,000 in block grants available in 2004–2005. Schools can use these funds for a variety of purposes, including prekindergarten and full-day kindergarten.