Wisconsin’s state constitution has included a commitment to provide free education for 4-year-olds since it was adopted in 1848. The Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K) program dates back to 1873. This initiative continues today, though there was a suspension of state funding from 1957 to 1984. The 4K program is currently available in about half of Wisconsin’s school districts, which receive 50 percent of the standard state per-pupil funding amount to provide half-day classes for 4-year-olds, or 60 percent if the school also offers parent support. Public schools may offer prekindergarten directly, or contract with Head Start, private child care centers, or family child care homes to provide services. The state has pushed successfully for program expansion in recent years, serving more children in districts with existing programs and opening programs in districts that did not have 4K previously. The growth continues, with 23 new districts implementing 4K in 2006-2007. In recent years, the state has also promoted use of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards in state-funded prekindergarten programs.

Wisconsin offers a separate initiative that provides state funds to all existing federal Head Start grantees in the state, allowing them to serve additional children. These programs follow the federal Head Start Performance Standards and offer comprehensive early education for 3- and 4-year-olds from low-income families or who have disabilities. Many Head Start grantees also work with their local school districts to implement 4K.

In order to document the contributions Wisconsin makes to preschool education through its separate initiatives, we first present summary information reflecting the state’s overall commitment to prekindergarten. Enrollment and state spending for both the 4K and state-financed Head Start 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 4K program, while the final page focuses exclusively on the state-funded Head Start program.
STATE OVERVIEW

Total state program enrollment ...........................................22,395
Total state spending .......................................................$69,612,500
State spending per child enrolled .................................$3,108
State Head Start spending ...........................................$7,212,500
State spending per 3-year-old .................................$38
State spending per 4-year-old ..............................................$976

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

3-YEAR-OLDS

- Pre-K: 85%
- Head Start: 1%
- Special Ed: 9%
- Other/None: 5%

4-YEAR-OLDS

- Pre-K: 32%
- Head Start: 9%
- Special Ed: 8%
- Other/None: 51%

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

- WI PGMS*: $4,590
- HDST: $6,695 (04-05)
- K-12**: $12,789

* 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 ’05–’06 school year, unless otherwise noted.

ACCESS RANKING–4s | ACCESS RANKING–3s | RESOURCES RANKING
---|---|---
7 | 22 | 23
WISCONSIN FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment ........................................... 21,004
School districts that offer state program ........................................... 56%
Income requirement ................................................................. None
Hours of operation ................................................................. Determined locally
Operating schedule ................................................................. Academic year
Special education enrollment ............................................................. 9,214
Federally funded Head Start enrollment ........................................ 12,644
State-funded Head Start enrollment ................................................. 1,196

State Pre-K and Head Start Enrollment as Percentage of Total Population

- 3-Year-Olds
  - 85%
  - 1%
  - 9%
  - 5%
- 4-Year-Olds
  - 31%
  - 1%
  - 9%
  - 8%

Quality Standards Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>State Pre-K Requirement</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Does Requirement Meet Benchmark?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early learning standards</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher degree</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher specialized training</td>
<td>EC-level license</td>
<td>Specializing in pre-K</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant teacher</td>
<td>Teacher asst. license or AA (public), CDA or equivalent degree</td>
<td>1 course in EC (nonpublic)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher in-service</td>
<td>180 clock hours or 6 credit hours/5 years</td>
<td>At least 15 hours/year</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum class size</td>
<td>20 or lower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-child ratio</td>
<td>1:10 or better</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Year-olds</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Year-olds</td>
<td>Determined locally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening/referral</td>
<td>Support services only: Vision, hearing, health; and support services at least 1 support service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals</td>
<td>Depend on length of program day</td>
<td>At least 1/day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>Site visits and other monitoring</td>
<td>Site visits</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESOURCES

Total state Pre-K spending .................................................. $62,400,000
Local match required? Yes, local share of school revenue generated through property tax

State Head Start spending .................................................. $7,212,500
State spending per child enrolled ............................................ $2,971
State spending per 3-year-old .................................................. $0
State spending per 4-year-old .................................................. $922

Spending per Child Enrolled

- 4K* .................................................. $4,552
- HDST .................................................. $6,695 (04-05)
- K-12** .................................................. $12,789

Resources

- 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 '05–'06 school year, unless otherwise noted.

1 Programs must operate for a minimum of 437 hours and 180 days per year. Although districts determine specific weeks and months of operation, most programs operate 2.5 hours per day and 5 days per week. Programs may add 87.5 hours per year for parent outreach.

2 Wisconsin did not break state-funded Head Start enrollment into specific numbers of 3- or 4-year-olds. The total number of 3- and 4-year-olds and the age breakdowns used in the Access pie chart were estimated, using proportions of federal Head Start enrollees in each age category.

3 Wisconsin licensing standards define the early childhood level as applicable to the approximate ages of birth through 8. Licensing at this level requires all teachers to obtain competencies specific to working with preschool-age children.

4 This requirement for assistant teachers in nonpublic settings reflects child care licensing regulations, which also require that assistant teachers be at least 18 years old.

5 Although screening and referral requirements are determined locally, vision, hearing, immunization, and general health screenings are required at kindergarten entrance for all children. Support services include parent involvement activities, health services for children, referral to social services, school counseling, and transportation.

6 Snack and/or lunch may be provided based on the length of the program day and requirements of other community programs.
## ACCESS

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<td>✓</td>
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<td>Teacher degree</td>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher specialized training</td>
<td>Meets CDA requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant teacher degree</td>
<td>Determined locally (public), CDA or equivalent</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher in-service</td>
<td>Amount not specified</td>
<td>At least 15 hours/year</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Vision, hearing, health; at least 1 support service</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals</td>
<td>Lunch and/or breakfast</td>
<td>At least 1/day</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Site visits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET**

6  

## RESOURCES

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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Local match required?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>State Head Start spending</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>State spending per child enrolled</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>$38</td>
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<tr>
<td>State spending per 4-year-old</td>
<td>$54</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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* 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 ’05-’06 school year, unless otherwise noted.

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1 Wisconsin did not break this number into specific numbers of 3- or 4-year-olds. As a result, age breakdowns used in the Access pie chart and Resources section were also estimated, using proportions of federal Head Start enrollees in each age category.

2 As required by federal Head Start Performance Standards, programs must operate a minimum of 3.5 hours per day, 4 days per week, and 32 weeks per year, unless approved as a federal Head Start alternative.

3 This is an estimate of the total number of 3- and 4-year-olds served in state-funded Head Start.

4 School districts that are federal Head Start grantees may require lead teachers to have a BA and appropriate licensure.

5 This requirement for assistant teachers in nonpublic settings reflects child care licensing regulations, which also require that assistant teachers be at least 18 years old. School districts that are federal Head Start grantees may require assistant teachers to have an AA and assistant teacher license.

6 Support services include two annual parent conferences or home visits, education services or job training for parents, parenting support or education, parent involvement activities, health services for parents and children, information about nutrition, referral to social services, transition to kindergarten activities, and others as per federal Head Start Performance Standards.

7 The federal Head Start Performance Standards require that part-day programs provide children with at least one-third of their daily nutritional needs, and full-day programs provide one-half to two-thirds of daily nutritional needs, depending on the length of the program day. All children in morning center-based settings must be given the opportunity to have a nutritious breakfast.

8 The state mandates that all programs follow federal Head Start monitoring requirements. The state itself does not conduct monitoring of these programs.

9 All spending through this initiative is directed toward Head Start programs.