since 1848 Wisconsin’s constitution has included a commitment to a free education for all children ages 4 to 20. The state began funding Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (or 4K) in 1873, and a few districts have maintained services for more than a century despite a suspension in state aid between 1957 and 1984. Schools receive 50 percent of the per pupil state aid reimbursement for this part-day program, but may receive 60 percent if they offer parent outreach and support. Funds flow through the schools, but a recent effort by the state’s department of education is encouraging schools to partner and subcontract with local Head Start and child care centers. These efforts support a goal of implementing a blended, comprehensive early care and education system for Wisconsin that promotes community approaches to serving young children.


Through a separate initiative, Wisconsin also supplements federal funds for Head Start. Programs funded through this initiative follow the federal Head Start Program Performance Standards. In fiscal year 2002, supplemental state funding for Head Start was $7,425,000 and provided an additional 1,449 slots. Approximately half of this money was provided directly by the state, while the remainder was transferred from TANF funds.

Although most states have a single state-financed prekindergarten initiative, Wisconsin makes significant contributions to prekindergarten through these two separate initiatives—4K and the state-funded Head Start model. As a result, we present summary information about the state’s overall commitment to prekindergarten by taking enrollment and state spending for both initiatives into account. Next, we present specific details about each initiative in the state. The first two pages of this profile reflect Wisconsin’s commitment to prekindergarten through both the 4K and state-financed Head Start programs. The next page focuses exclusively on the 4K program, while the final page focuses exclusively on the state-funded Head Start program.
**Wisconsin Four-Year-Old Kindergarten**

**ACCESS**

- State-funded Head Start enrollment - 1,449, 1%
- Federally-funded Head Start enrollment - 12,067, 9%
- Special Education enrollment - 8,362, 65%
- Other/None enrollment - 8%

**State Pre-K**
- WI Head Start
- Federal Head Start
- State-funded Pre-K
- Federal-funded Pre-K
- Special Education
- Other/None

**POLICY**

- Curriculum requirements - None
- Teacher degree requirement - CDA
- Teacher specialized training requirement - None
- Assistant teacher degree requirement - None
- Staff-child ratio
- Maximum class size
- Teacher specialized training requirement - Meets CDA requirements
- Staff-child ratio

**QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST**

- Curriculum standards - None
- Teacher degree requirement - CDA
- Teacher specialized training requirement - Meets CDA requirements
- Staff-child ratio

**RESOURCES**

- State Pre-K spending - $9,955
- Local match required? - Not reported
- State Head Start spending - $7,425,000
- Total state Pre-K spending - $42,500,000

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**Wisconsin State-Funded Head Start Model**

**ACCESS**

- State-funded Head Start enrollment - 1,449
- Federally-funded Head Start enrollment - 12,067
- Special Education enrollment - 8,362
- Other/None enrollment - 8%

**RESOURCES**

- State Pre-K spending - $6,645,000
- Local match required? - Not reported
- State Head Start spending - $7,425,000
- Total state Pre-K spending - $42,500,000

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**Quality Standards Checklist**

- Curriculum requirements - None
- Teacher degree requirement - CDA
- Teacher specialized training requirement - Meets CDA requirements
- Assistant teacher degree requirement - Determined locally
- Staff-child ratio
- Maximum class size
- Teacher specialized training requirement - Meets CDA requirements
- Staff-child ratio

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**State-funded Head Start enrollment**

- State-funded Pre-K enrollment - 1,449
- Federally-funded Pre-K enrollment - 12,067
- Special Education enrollment - 8,362
- Other/None enrollment - 8%

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**State-funded Head Start enrollment as percentage of total population**

- 3-year-olds: 3%
- 4-year-olds: 3%