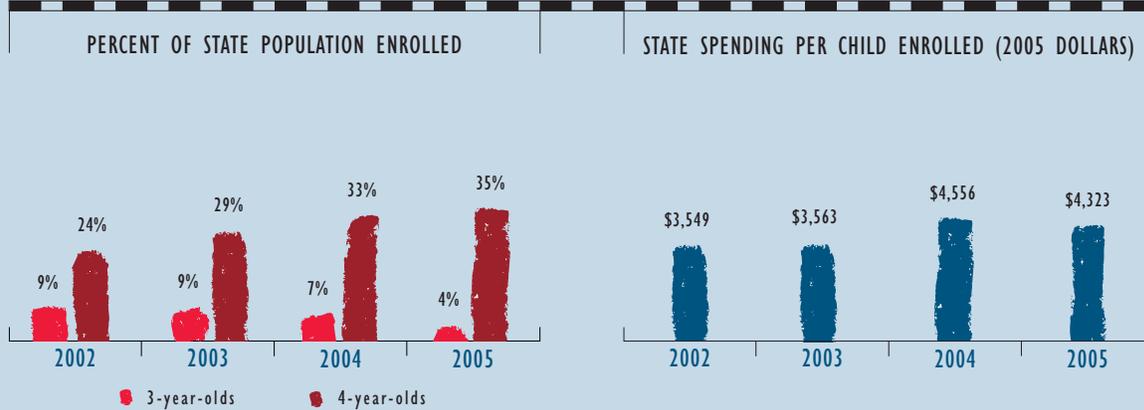


West Virginia



The Public School Early Childhood Education program provided funding for prekindergarten beginning in 1983 when a revision to the state school code allowed preschool programs to be created by local school boards. The state is in the process of expanding access to prekindergarten for all 4-year-olds whose families want them to participate. Legislation requires that universal prekindergarten be made available to all of the state’s 4-year-olds by the 2012–2013 school year. The state will require half of the programs be in collaborative settings with Head Start, child care, or private prekindergarten programs.

West Virginia counties have taken several steps toward the goal of making prekindergarten universally available. Counties must submit an annual plan to the state to outline how they will expand access. Currently, out of 55 counties, 13 counties need only five or fewer classrooms to make prekindergarten universally available, and four counties have already reached this goal. The state will work with counties to ensure that they not only have enough classrooms to meet the need for prekindergarten, but also that all of the classrooms meet the state’s quality standards.

While the state is expanding access to prekindergarten for 4-year-olds, it has decreased and restricted access for 3-year-olds. Under a policy change that went into effect in July 2004, 3-year-olds can now qualify for the state prekindergarten program only if they have special needs. Eligibility criteria for 4-year-olds are determined at the local level, with some counties enrolling children on a first-come/first-served basis or using a lottery system.

In 2004, the state adopted the West Virginia Early Learning Standards Framework, which promotes learning standards across all domains, including social and emotional development, and provides guidelines for assessment.

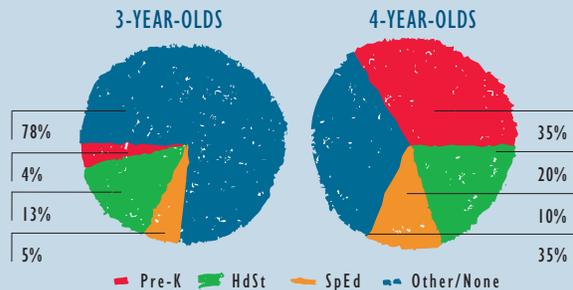
State funding for the prekindergarten program is supplemented by a significant amount of federal Head Start, Title I and IDEA funding.



ACCESS

Total state program enrollment	7,980
School districts that offer state program	100%
Income requirement	None
Hours of operation	Determined locally ¹
Operating schedule	Academic year
Special education enrollment	2,828
Federally funded Head Start enrollment '03-'04	6,559
State-funded Head Start enrollment	0

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



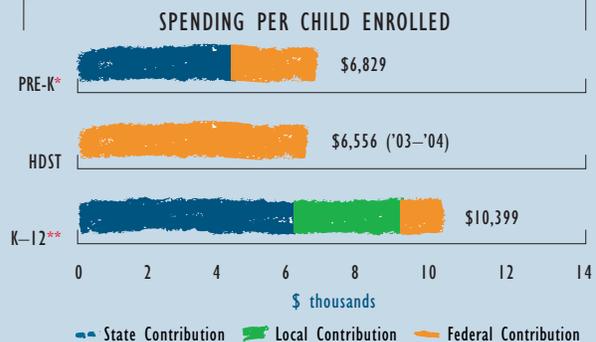
QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?
Early learning standards	Comprehensive ²	Comprehensive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA or AA ³	BA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	See footnotes ⁴	Specializing in Pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	HSD or equivalent	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher in-service	18 clock hours	At least 15 hours/year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size		20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	20		
4-year-olds	20		
Staff-child ratio		1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	1:10 ⁵		
4-year-olds	1:10 ⁵		
Screening/referral and support services	Vision, hearing, health, and dental; and support services ⁶	Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meals	Depend on length of program day ⁷	At least 1/day	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring	Other monitoring	Site visits	<input type="checkbox"/>



RESOURCES

Total state Pre-K spending	\$34,500,000
Local match required?	No
State spending per child enrolled	\$4,323
State spending per 3-year-old	\$193
State spending per 4-year-old	\$1,528



* 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.

- Programs typically operate 2 full days per week or 4 full days with Friday reserved for activities such as home visits and planning. Some counties offer a full-day, full-week program.
- The West Virginia Early Learning Standards Framework (WV ELSF) was adopted in 2004, represents the content standards and objectives (CSOs) for Pre-K, and is a part of the CSOs for Pre-K–grade 12. All Pre-K classrooms are required to use the ELSF. It is cross-referenced to the Head Start Performance Outcomes and the approved curriculum that classrooms are required to use.
- If the classroom is in a community collaborative (supported by two or more funding sources and located in a public school or community-based setting), the teacher may be on permit, provided that the teacher has at least an Associate's degree in an approved field and is working toward certification. New teachers in community collaborative settings may be on permit for up to 5 years. All teachers in public school settings who are not employees of a community collaborative must have a BA.
- Teachers in public school settings that are not collaboratives must be certified in Birth–5, Early Childhood, Preschool Special Needs, or Elementary Education (with a Pre-K/K endorsement). Teachers in community collaborative settings must have a degree in Child Development/Early Childhood or in Occupational Development with an emphasis in Child Development/Early Childhood.
- This policy was effective with the 2003–2004 school year; previously there was no limit on staff-child ratios.
- Support services include two annual parent conferences or home visits, transition to kindergarten activities, and other locally determined services. The parent conference requirement was included in West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2525, which went into effect in February 2003, although many school systems did not institute full compliance with the policy until the 2003–2004 school year.
- Meals must be offered if the program operates for more than 4 hours per day.