West Virginia

West Virginia has provided funding for prekindergarten since 1983, when a revision of the state school code allowed preschool programs to be created by local school boards. The state’s financial contribution to the Public School Early Childhood Education program is supplemented by significant federal Title I and IDEA funds. This program currently serves both 3- and 4-year-olds. In 2002–2003, various models were used across the state to determine eligibility for the Public School Early Childhood Education program. In many counties, all children were eligible as long as they met the age requirements and lived in participating districts. In a smaller subset of counties, eligibility was based on at-risk status, using criteria such as family income levels.

The state is focused on increasing accessibility to all families desiring preschool for their 4-year-olds. Recent legislation requires that universal prekindergarten be made available for all of West Virginia’s 4-year-olds by the 2012–2013 school year, and that 50% of the programs be in collaborative settings with Head Start, child care, or private prekindergarten programs. However, effective July 2004, access for 3-year-olds is limited to those who have Individualized Education Plans for special needs.

The recently adopted West Virginia Early Learning Standards Framework promotes learning standards across all domains, including social and emotional development, and provides guidelines for assessment.

With state funding of $36,000,000, the Public School Early Childhood Education program enrolled 7,924 children during the 2003–2004 school year.

ACCESS

Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

RESOURCES