As part of Minnesota’s efforts to increase access to early childhood education for children birth to five, the state financially supplements Early Head Start and Head Start. All state-supported Head Start programs are required to follow the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPs), Minnesota’s early learning standards birth to kindergarten entrance. ECIPs guide required training, support, and technical assistance for all program staff. The ECIPs, which are currently being revised, are aligned with the English Language Arts Common Core standards for the early grade, the state’s college and career ready standards. The ECIPs will soon be aligned with the Head Start standards as well.

Minnesota spent $25 million to supplement federally funded Head Start in the state during the 2015-2016 school year. The state served an additional 1,617 three- and four-year-olds in Head Start and additional children under age three in Early Head Start. Local grantees can decide how to allocate funds between Head Start and Early Head Start. The state supplement for Head Start and Early Head Start increased by $5 million for the 2015-2016 school year.

Organizations receiving federal Head Start funding can also receive supplemental funding from the state. Head Start programs are eligible to receive funding directly but they are permitted to subcontract with private child care, family child care, and public schools to provide the program. All programs are required to follow the federal Head Start Performance Standards. Head Start programs are only required to participate in Parent Aware, the state’s QRIS, if the conditions outlined in the performance standards are met. American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) programs do not have to participate. Currently in Minnesota all but two AI/AN programs participate in Parent Aware.

Minnesota has other state-supported early childhood initiatives that are not included in the State of Preschool Yearbook. The Early Learning Scholarships Programs provides scholarships to eligible families in order to increase access to high-quality early childhood programs. Families with children between the ages of three and four as of September 1 are eligible for scholarships and can choose any early childhood program that receives a Three- or Four-Star Parent Aware Rating. During 2015-2016 school year, approximately 11,219 scholarships of up to $7,500 were awarded using an appropriation of $44.13 million.

The School Readiness Program aims to improve children’s kindergarten readiness through preschool education programs and home visits. Individual districts can exercise local control over the services provided, but all programs must meet the following requirements: provision of appropriate screenings and referrals for children as needed, support for parent involvement, use of research-based program content, and collaboration with other local programs. Early childhood services are provided through subcontracts with school districts, community-based organizations, and charter schools.

The Voluntary Pre-kindergarten program began during the 2016-2017 school year, serving approximately 3,330 children in 74 school districts and charter schools. The program was established by Governor Dayton and the 2016 Legislature, and there are plans to expand the program pending legislative approval. The goal of the program is to prepare children for success in school through high-quality early learning programs.
MINNESOTA HEAD START

ACCESS
Total state pre-K enrollment ..........................................................1,617
School districts that offer state program ..............100% (counties/parishes)
Income requirement ..........Per Federal HdSt requirements - 100% FPL
Minimum hours of operation ..........Determined locally
Operating schedule ..........Determined locally
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .................................9,056
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ..................9,643
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .......................1,617

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY | MN PRE-K REQUIREMENT | CURRENT BENCHMARK | MEETS CURRENT BENCHMARK? | NEW BENCHMARK | MEETS NEW BENCHMARK?
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Early learning & development standards | Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive | Comprehensive | ✓ | Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive | ✓
Curriculum supports | Approval process & supports | New in 2015-2016 | — | Approval process & supports | ✓
Teacher degree | AA | BA | BA | BA | ✓
Teacher specialized training | ECE, CD, ECE SpEd | Specializing in pre-K | ✓ | Specializing in pre-K | ✓
Assistant teacher degree | CDA | CDA or equivalent | ✓ | CDA or equivalent | ✓
Staff professional development | 15 hours/year; PD plans | For teachers: At least 15 hours/year | ✓ | For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching | —
Maximum class size | 15 (3-year-olds); 20 (4-year-olds) | 20 or lower | ✓ | 20 or lower | ✓
Staff-child ratio | 2:15 (3-year-olds); 1:10 (4-year-olds) | 1:10 or better | ✓ | 1:10 or better | ✓
Screening & referral | Vision, hearing, health & more; Support services | Vision, hearing, health & at least one support service | ✓ | Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral | ✓
Meals | At least one meal/day | At least one meal/day | ✓ | Discontinued | —
Monitoring/Continuous quality improvement system | Improvement plan; Site visits | Site visits | ✓ | Structured classroom observation; program improvement plan | —

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending ...........................................................$12,813,108
Local match required? .................................................................Yes
State Head Start spending .........................................................$12,813,108
State spending per child enrolled ..............................................$7,924
All reported spending per child enrolled* .........................$7,924

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
** Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.
*** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending ...........................................................$12,813,108
Local match required? .................................................................Yes
State Head Start spending .........................................................$12,813,108
State spending per child enrolled ..............................................$7,924
All reported spending per child enrolled* .........................$7,924

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
** Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.
*** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

Data are for the 2015-2016 school year, unless otherwise noted.