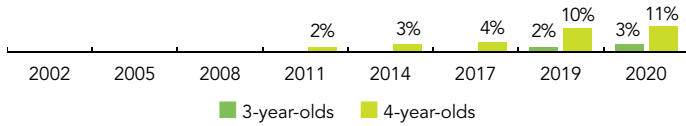
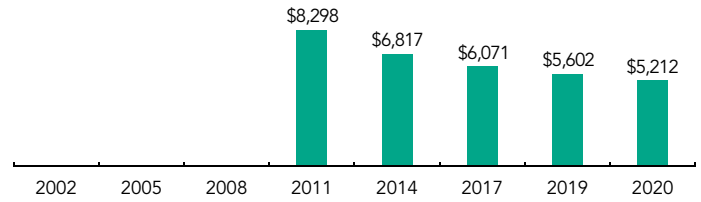


Alaska

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2020 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

Alaska state-funded preschool enrolled 1,404 children in 2019-2020, an increase of 100 children from the prior year. State funding totaled \$7,317,829 remaining approximately the same, adjusted for inflation, as last year. State spending per child equaled \$5,212 in 2019-2020, down \$390 from 2018-2019, adjusted for inflation. Alaska met 3 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT'S NEW

On March 20, 2020 all state-funded preschool programs closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The state did not require programs to provide remote instruction; this decision was made at the local level. Although the state did not set requirements for remote learning, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) developed a webpage with virtual resources for preschool programs and a virtual seminar was held in April to highlight some of these resources. There was a mix of in-person and remote instruction when the 2020-2021 school year began.

BACKGROUND

Since the 1980s, Alaska has supplemented federal funding for Head Start programs in an effort to enhance school readiness and professional development and expand opportunities for children and families. During the 2017-2018 program year, the state provided \$6.8 million to support Head Start programs in Alaska. In 2009-2010, the state launched the Alaska Pre-Kindergarten pilot program for school districts, now known as the Alaska Pre-Elementary program. During the 2019-2020 school year, the program was open to preschool-age children in 25 of the 54 school districts statewide though funding was available to all districts on a competitive basis. The financial support is part of an effort to develop program quality through school readiness activities and professional improvement. The funds also offer admission to additional children and families whenever possible.

Public school classrooms have the option of partnering with federal Head Start and blending funding. In those classrooms, programs must follow requirements for both Alaska Pre-Elementary and federal Head Start.

In 2015, the state changed the way competitive grants are offered to include two types of grantees. Districts new to the program may apply for a 3-year pre-elementary development grant geared toward strategic planning to begin implementing or supporting existing Pre-Elementary goals. Previously funded grantees may apply for three-year renewal grants to support the program while the districts worked towards sustainability of the program once the state grant funding ends. Development grants are geared toward strategic planning to begin implementing or support existing Pre-Elementary goals until they can be switched to renewal grants.

Budget reductions have continued to be a challenge, as inconsistent funding has affected program implementation and quality. Alaska receives no federal funding for the Pre-Elementary program, though some districts utilize Title IA or Title IC funding for preschool. Funding for the Alaska Pre-Elementary program goes directly to school districts or Head Start agencies. Participating programs may subcontract with public schools, Head Start programs, or private agencies.

The Teaching Strategies assessment was piloted by the state during the 2011-2012 school year. State policy requires all Pre-Elementary grantee programs to use this tool multiple times throughout the year. In addition to classroom quality observations, Education Northwest is in the process of conducting a formal assessment of the programs using the 3-year Developmental grants.

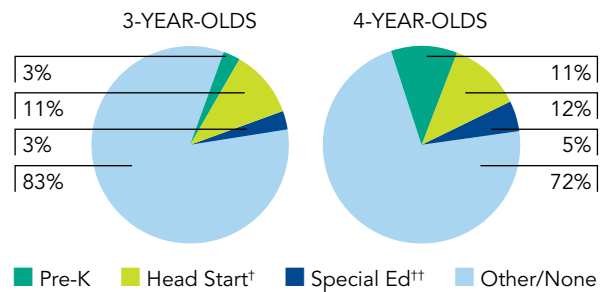
ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
36	23	21	32	3

ALASKA PRE-ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	1,404
School districts that offer state program	46%
Income requirement	No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation	Determined locally
Operating schedule	Determined locally
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	1,358
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	2,367
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	60

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



† Some Head Start children may also be counted in state pre-K.
 †† Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	AK PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	Approval process & supports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	Alaska Teaching Certificate; ECE (Head Start)	Specializing in pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	HSD; CDA (Head Start)	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	PD hours, PD plans & Coaching per Head Start Standards if partnering with Head Start	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	Determined locally	20 or lower	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	Determined locally	1:10 or better	<input type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	None	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations determined locally	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

3

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$7,317,829
Local match required?	No
State Head Start spending	\$6,853,000
State spending per child enrolled	\$5,212
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$5,212

* 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.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

