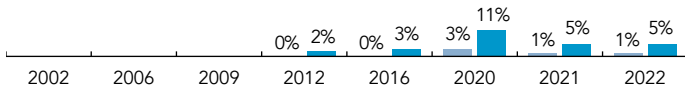
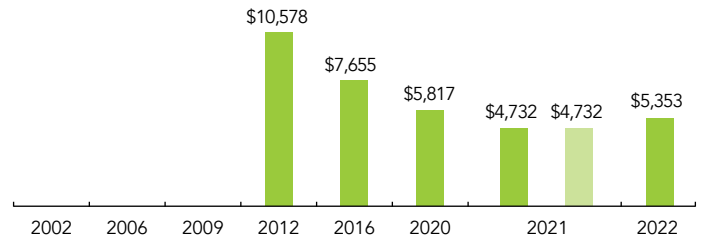


Alaska

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2022 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

During the 2021-2022 school year, Alaska preschool enrolled 605 children, a decrease of 31 from the prior year. State spending totaled \$3,238,823, up \$229,181 (8%), adjusted for inflation since last year. State spending per child equaled \$5,353 in 2021-2022, up \$621 from 2020-2021, adjusted for inflation. Alaska met 2 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT'S NEW

In May 2022, the Alaska State Legislature passed the Alaska Reads Act which will provide more consistent and stable funding of early childhood programs starting on July 1, 2023. The Alaska Reads Act includes a total of \$3 million in grant money that will be available to districts to develop preschool programs or to expand and improve upon existing programs. Programs can apply for a portion of the \$3 million, to be spent over the course of three years. Districts that receive this competitive grant must work towards meeting the Alaska Early Education Program Standards, which include components that meet Head Start Standards and other high-quality federal standards. Once a district has adopted the Standards (and it is confirmed by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development), the district can claim their 4- and 5-year-old students as part of their Average Daily Membership (the state funding formula) at a rate of .5, starting the following fall.

Additionally, in December 2022, the Alaska Department of Health was awarded a federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) 3-year renewal grant for \$8 million. Funds are planned to be used to update the Statewide Early Childhood Needs Assessment and Statewide Early Childhood Strategic Plan.

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 2021-2022 program year, the state provided \$6.85 million to support Head Start and Early 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.

In 2015, the state changed the way competitive grants were 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 could apply for three-year renewal grants to support the program while the districts worked towards sustainability of the program once the state grant funding ended. Development grants were geared toward strategic planning to begin implementing or support existing Pre-Elementary goals until they could be switched to renewal grants.

Starting in the 2020-2021 school year, the department posted a request for applications for a three-year Pre-Elementary Grant. Any school district was eligible to apply for this competitive grant. Seventeen districts were awarded a Pre-Elementary Grant. The 2021-2022 school year was the second year of a three-year grant. 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.

Budget reductions have continued to be a challenge, as insecure funding has affected program implementation and quality. Funding for the Alaska Pre-Elementary program goes directly to school districts. Participating programs may subcontract with public schools, Head Start programs, or private agencies.

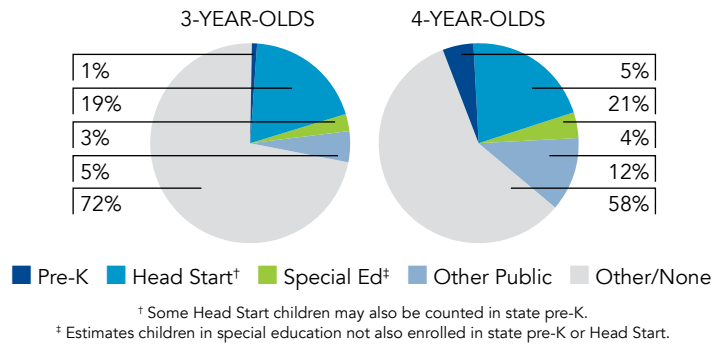
ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
41	30	25	33	2

ALASKA PRE-ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	605
School districts that offer state program	31%
Income requirement	No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation	Determined locally
Operating schedule	Determined locally
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	944
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	2,258
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	1,712

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



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	Approval process & supports	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	Alaska Teaching Certificate	Specializing in pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	HSD	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	6 credit hours/5 years (teachers only); PD plans (some teachers & assistants)	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 are required, but are 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.

* Indicates that while policy meets the benchmark, it is not being implemented fully.

2

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$3,238,823
Local match required?	No
State Head Start spending	\$6,853,000
State spending per child enrolled	\$5,353
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$5,403

* 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

