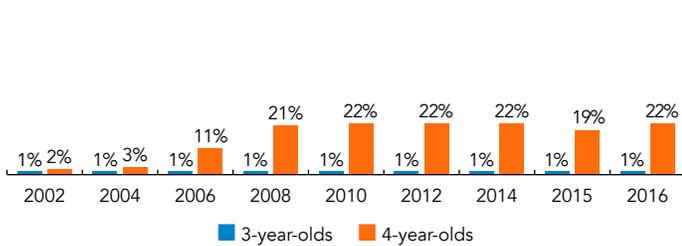
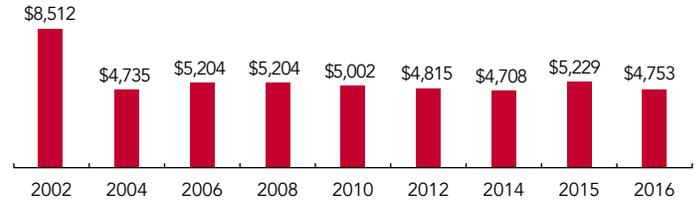


# Tennessee

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2016 DOLLARS)



Building upon the 1998 Early Childhood Education Pilot Project, Tennessee Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) was launched in 2005. Since 2012, almost every district has offered at least one full-day VPK classroom where low-income, homeless, or children in foster care receive priority for enrollment. The second tier for priority includes students with an IEP and English Language Learners. VPK enrollment leveled off between 2008 and 2015 but in 2016 approximately 18,116 at-risk children were served, an increase of almost 2,000 children from the previous school year.

The Tennessee State Department of Education, Division of Early Learning and Literacy has administrative authority over VPK. Only local education agencies are eligible to apply for state-funded VPK grants through a competitive process. Districts may, however, contract with private child care agencies, Head Start agencies, institutions of higher education, public housing authorities, and any three-star QRIS rated program in a community-based or private child-serving agency. Programs contracted to provide VPK services must operate within the jurisdiction of the school district.

Since its inception, VPK has relied on numerous funding sources, including general education revenue and, in the past, lottery revenue and federal TANF funds. State funds for the VPK program have been mostly level since the 2014 school year. Federal Head Start, IDEA, Title I, and other funds are used to provide the required 25% local match. Districts have used the same funding, \$117,490 per classroom, to operate VPK for the past three years. In 2014, Tennessee was awarded a competitive federal Preschool Development Grant for \$17.5 million, to expand pre-K enrollment in Nashville and Shelby County. PDG funds supported 1,648 children in new slots and 3,010 in improved slots in VPK classrooms. There were additional children served through PDG funds in other programs, however the exact number is unknown.

During the 2014-2015 school year, the Peabody Research Institute (PRI) at Vanderbilt University was involved in the fifth year of an ongoing external evaluation on the effectiveness of the VPK program. The study reported statistically significant cognitive and social-emotional gains for VPK participants during the pre-K year and a significant reduction in kindergarten retention for participants. However, the gains appeared to gradually dissipate and turned significantly negative in some subtests (favoring the controls), by third grade. PRI reports that the quality of pre-K programs across the state is inconsistent, and in some cases below expectations, based on ECERS classroom observations. ECERS data collected by PRI on a statewide sample shows the average ECERS score is about 4 with the Activities subscale at 3 (on a 7-point scale). Only a very small fraction of classrooms scored 5 or higher (the threshold for a rating of "good") overall. PRI has received additional funding to continue to follow a portion of the children through their 7th grade year (2018-2019).

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
26	26

RESOURCE RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
22	19

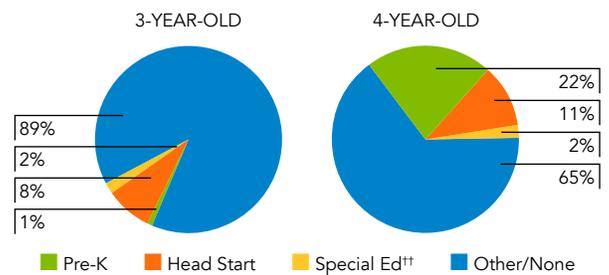
TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET	
CURRENT STANDARDS	NEW STANDARDS
9	5

## TENNESSEE VOLUNTARY PRE-K

### ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment.....	18,116
School districts that offer state program .....	96%
Income requirement .....	185% FPL
Minimum hours of operation.....	5.5 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule.....	School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....	6,679
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....	15,234
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	0

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



† 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	STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT	CURRENT BENCHMARK	MEETS CURRENT BENCHMARK?	NEW BENCHMARK	MEETS NEW BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned with other state standards, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process	New in 2015-2016	—	Approval process & supports	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE, CD, ECE SpEd	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	Other <sup>5</sup>	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	18 hours/year (teachers); 12 hours/year (assistants) <sup>6</sup>	For teachers: At least 15 hours/year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	16 (3-year-olds); 20 (4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:8 (3-year-olds); 1:10 (4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing, health & more; Support services	Vision, hearing, health & at least one support service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meals	Breakfast, lunch, snack	At least one meal/day	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discontinued	—
Monitoring/Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations in new classrooms only (more than once/year)	Site visits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Structured classroom observation; program improvement plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<b>9</b>		
					<b>5</b>

### RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending .....	\$86,097,664
Local match required? .....	Yes
State Head Start spending .....	\$0
State spending per child enrolled .....	\$4,753
All reported spending per child enrolled* .....	\$7,037

\* 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

