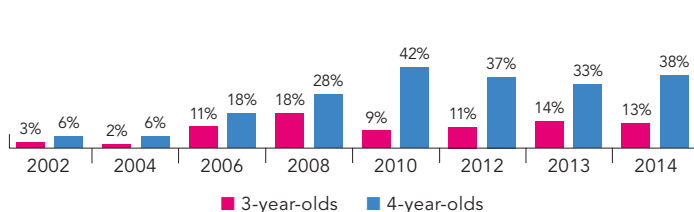
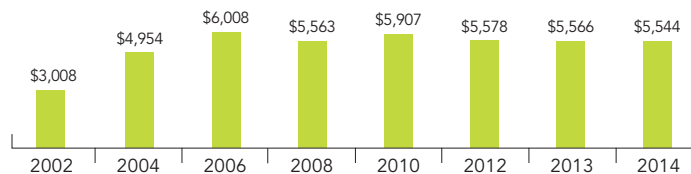


# Arkansas

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED\*



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED\*  
(2014 DOLLARS)



The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) and Arkansas Better Chance for School Success programs were founded as part of a statewide education reform initiative in 1991. It was initially funded only through dedicated sales tax and, between 2001 and 2007, an excise tax on packaged beer provided additional funding. Forty percent of the program's overall financial support must be local contributions (either in-kind or monetary); however the program does receive some federal funding as well.

Children from low-income families from birth to age 5 are eligible for early childhood education services offered by ABC. Children and families with other risk issues may also be eligible, including: developmental delay, foster care, family aggression, low parental education level, having a parent in active overseas military duty, non-English speaking family members, having a teen parent, or low birth weight. Pre-K access through the program is offered in diverse settings, including through Head Start, service cooperatives, public schools, private business, and nonprofit organizations.

For the program's pre-K teachers, the Arkansas Better Chance program offers funding for professional development, such as pursuing college degrees. Act 187 of 2009 became effective in January 2011 and established the Birth through Prekindergarten Teaching Credential. Five institutions have been permitted to offer the credential, allowing an additional professional path for preschool teachers in the ABC program. ABC also assesses both quality outcomes and impact on child outcomes, through an ongoing study that began in the 2005-2006 year.

As additional funds became available in the 2004-2005 program year, the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (ABCSS) was launched. Three- and 4-year-olds in families whose income falls below 200 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for the ABCSS program. Initially, only those districts where at least 75 percent of fourth grade children achieved below "proficient" on state benchmarks exams in math and English and districts (which classified them as being in academic distress or school improvement status) were eligible for ABCSS funding. It has since been expanded to offer services to children in other districts that qualify as well.

This report outlines the ABC and ABCSS programs together as they have related requirements and standards. In 2014, Arkansas was awarded a competitive federal Preschool Development Grant for \$14.9 million.

| ACCESS RANKINGS |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 4-YEAR-OLDS     | 3-YEAR-OLDS |
| 12              | 5           |

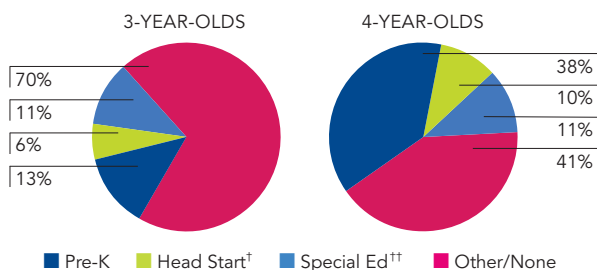
| RESOURCES RANKINGS |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| STATE SPENDING     | ALL REPORTED SPENDING |
| 13                 | 21                    |

# ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE/ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

## ACCESS

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Total state program enrollment .....                       | 20,023 <sup>1</sup>                   |
| School districts that offer state program.....             | 230 out of 237 school districts (97%) |
| Income requirement .....                                   | 200% FPL                              |
| Hours of operation .....                                   | 7 instructional hour/day, 5 days/week |
| Operating schedule .....                                   | Academic year                         |
| Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....           | 8,148                                 |
| Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ..... | 8,355                                 |
| 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   | BENCHMARK   | DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?    |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| Early learning standards .....    | Comprehensive .....   | Comprehensive   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Teacher degree .....              | Degree in ECE or CD <sup>2</sup> .....  | BA  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Teacher specialized training..... | P-4 (public); BA in EC or CD (nonpublic) <sup>2</sup> .....   | Specializing in pre-K                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Assistant teacher degree .....    | CDA .....   | CDA or equivalent                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Teacher in-service .....          | 30 clock hours/year .....   | At least 15 hours/year                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Maximum class size.....           | .....   | 20 or lower   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3-year-olds .....                 | .....20   |   |                                     |
| 4-year-olds .....                 | .....20   |   |                                     |
| Staff-child ratio .....           | .....   | 1:10 or better  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3-year-olds .....                 | .....1:10   |   |                                     |
| 4-year-olds .....                 | .....1:10   |   |                                     |
| Screening/referral....            | Vision; hearing; height/weight/BMI; immunizations; and support services      psychological/behavioral; full physical exam; developmental; and other support services <sup>3</sup> | Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 support service | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Meals.....                        | Breakfast, lunch, and snack .....   | At least 1/day  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Monitoring .....                  | Site visits and other monitoring .....  | Site visits   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET**

9

## RESOURCES

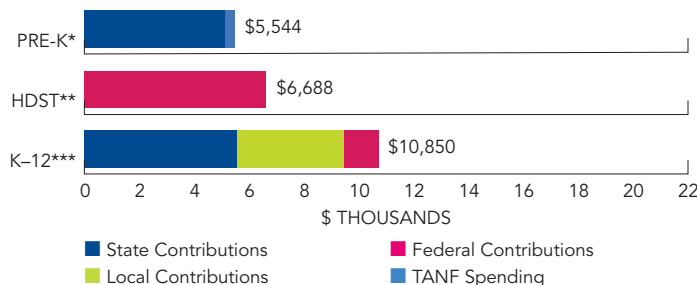
|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| Total state pre-K spending .....               | \$111,000,000 <sup>4</sup> |
| Local match required? .....                    | Yes <sup>5</sup>           |
| State spending per child enrolled .....        | \$5,544 <sup>4</sup>       |
| All reported spending per child enrolled*..... | \$5,544                    |

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

\*\* Head Start per-child spending for the 2013-2014 year includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds served. Past years figured have unintentionally included funds for Early Head Start.

\*\*\* K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures. Data are for the '13-'14 school year, unless otherwise noted.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED



<sup>1</sup> Agencies with ABC funding can serve children from birth to 5 who meet special needs criteria. ABCSS agencies may opt to serve children who are kindergarten-eligible with special needs although a waiver must be obtained.

<sup>2</sup> The lead teacher in a public school must hold a standard Arkansas teacher license with P-4 certification. The lead teacher in a nonpublic-school-based program must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development. For all programs with multiple classrooms at a single location, the teacher of the second classroom shall hold, at a minimum, an associate degree in early childhood education or early childhood development. State policy does allow programs to hire staff under an approved staff qualifications plan, while they are completing coursework to obtain minimum credentialing.

<sup>3</sup> Support services include parent conferences and/or home visits, parenting support or training, parent involvement activities, health services for children, information about nutrition, referral to social services, and transition to kindergarten activities.

<sup>4</sup> These figures include both state and TANF funds.

<sup>5</sup> Programs must provide the 40 percent match in cash or through in-kind services. Funding sources are determined locally.