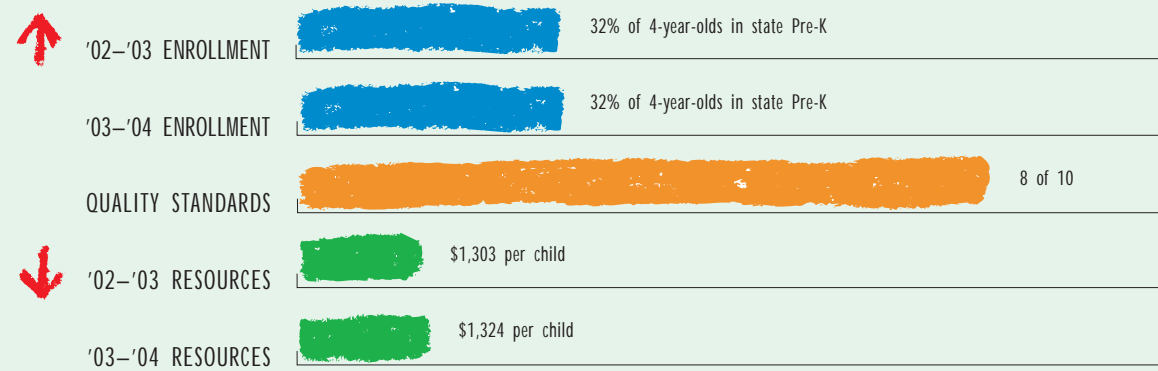


South Carolina



↑ Up from '01-'02 ↓ Down from '01-'02 = No change from '01-'02

South Carolina's Half-Day Child Development Program (4K) was established under the 1984 Education Improvement Act as part of efforts to better prepare the state's 4-year-olds for kindergarten and first grade. Each district is required to provide at least one prekindergarten class, with funding allocated based on the number of kindergarten children eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Most districts offer only half-day classes, but some offer full-school-day classes using state, Title I, or local funds to extend the program day.

Children's eligibility for the prekindergarten program is determined by factors such as the presence of disabilities, parent education level, and socioeconomic status. Local districts determine how many risk factors children must have to qualify for participation. Most children are served in public schools, but some are served in other locations through public-private partnerships. Only schools can receive direct funding, but they may subcontract with other agencies, including Head Start programs, private child care centers, faith-based programs, and family child care homes.

In the spring of 2004, the state began monitoring program quality using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS). Legislation now requires an annual evaluation to be submitted to the Education Oversight Committee, the Governor's Office, and the state Legislature.

As the state has dealt with budget crises, the 4K program has experienced some funding cuts over the past two years, although it has not been cut as deeply as some other state Department of Education programs. In 2003-2004, 17,279 children were enrolled in 4K programs, which received \$22,870,783 in state funding.

Although not the focus of data in this report, the state also has a separate early childhood initiative known as First Steps to School Readiness. This initiative helps support various programs and services to meet the needs of young children and their families through public-private collaborations. First Steps County Partnerships decide how to distribute funds at the local level, with some guidance from the state. These funds can be used to supplement the 4K program by extending services to full-day programs, adding new full-day classes, or serving additional children in half-day classes. In 2002-2003, approximately 320 children were served in 16 First Steps public-private partnership sites.

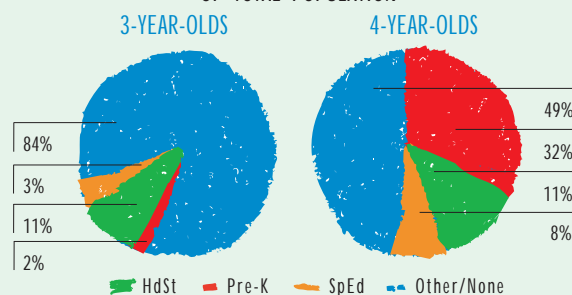
Districts reported over 3,900 children on waiting lists during 2003-2004 as a result of cuts in 4K funding. A collaborative effort is underway to make about 1,000 available slots in Head Start programs accessible to children on school district waiting lists. Some districts are seeking other sources of funding to allow them to continue providing the full range of 4K services without reducing the number of slots available.



ACCESS

Total state program enrollment	17,279
School districts that offer state program	100%
Income requirement	None
Hours of operation	Half-day, full-week ^{1,2}
Operating schedule	Academic year ³
Special education enrollment	5,520
Federally funded Head Start enrollment	11,343
State-funded Head Start enrollment	0

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



QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

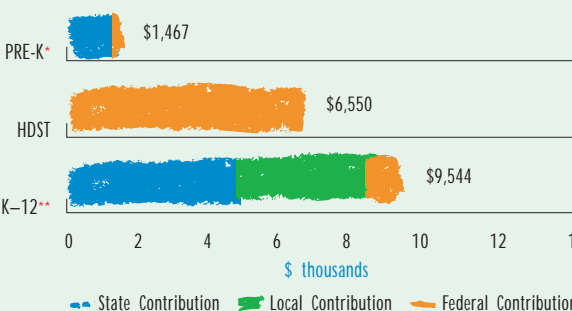
POLICY	STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?
Curriculum standards	Not comprehensive	Comprehensive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree requirement	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training req.	EC certification and licensure	Specializing in Pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree req.	HSD (public), None (nonpublic) ⁴	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher in-service requirement	12 clock hours/year and 6 credit hours/5 years	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 requirements	Vision, hearing, and health	Vision, hearing, and health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Required support services	4 parent conferences and support services ⁵	At least 1 service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meal requirement	1 meal and snack ⁶	At least 1/day	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



RESOURCES

Total state Pre-K spending	\$22,514,278
Local match required?	No
State spending per child enrolled	\$1,303
State spending per 3-year-old	\$25
State spending per 4-year-old	\$421

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED



* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

Data are for the '02-'03 school year, unless otherwise noted.

1 Full-day classes are offered in 18 districts using Title I or local funding, and in 3 districts using state Education Improvement Act funds.
2 Three districts use one day each week for in-home visits with children and families who most need home services.
3 Two districts that serve a total of 80 children operate for the 12-month calendar year.
4 It is recommended that assistant teachers complete an early childhood class within one year of their hiring date.
5 Two parent conferences are required to be held in a setting other than the school. Support services include education services or job training for parents, parenting support or training, parent involvement activities, health services for children (if health problems are found), transportation, and transition to kindergarten activities.
6 At least one meal and one snack are provided to all children. Children enrolled in half-day programs receive either breakfast or lunch plus a snack, and children in full-day programs receive breakfast and lunch plus a snack, as required by the Office of Food Service.