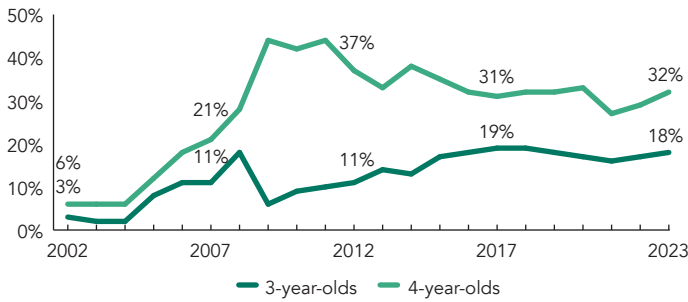
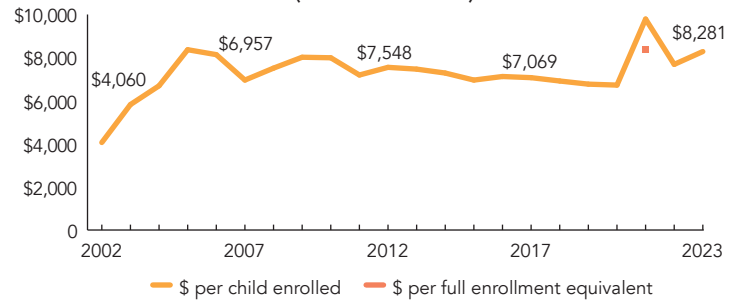


# Arkansas

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2023 DOLLARS)



## OVERVIEW

During the 2022-2023 school year, Arkansas preschool enrolled 19,248 children, an increase of 151 from the prior year. State spending totaled \$106,500,000 and an additional \$7,500,000 in TANF funds and \$45,389,941 in federal recovery funds supported the program, up \$12,635,372 (9%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child (including TANF and federal recovery funds) equaled \$8,281 in 2022-2023, up \$596 from 2021-2022, adjusted for inflation. Arkansas met 8 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

## WHAT'S NEW

Arkansas is in the third year of the Pre-K R.I.S.E. Early Literacy Initiative that provides the LETRS for Early Childhood Educators professional learning to publicly funded preschool educators to deepen their knowledge of foundational literacy instruction. The sharpened focus on early literacy in Arkansas with the LEARNS Act 237 of 2023 supports expanding the focus on Early Childhood Education by providing high quality instructional materials, regional technical assistance, and coaching, as well as professional development that is evidence based and grounded in the science of reading. As a result of the new legislation, Arkansas created the Office of Early Childhood, which unifies the Arkansas early childhood system under the Arkansas Department of Education.

Also, in December 2022, Arkansas was awarded a federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) three-year renewal grant for \$12 million. The state is using the funding to provide additional support for enhancement of infant and toddler care, family engagement and trauma informed care for children ages three to five.

## BACKGROUND

The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program began in 1991 as part of a statewide education reform initiative, with funding (\$10 million) earmarked to serve children birth to 5 years old based on family income, developmental, and/or economic risk factors. In 2003, legislation known as Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (ABCSS) set priorities for funding, supporting 3- and 4-year-olds in households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level. School districts with 75% or more of their students scoring below proficient in literacy and math on the State Assessment, and children in schools designated as "school improvement status" receive prioritized funding.

ABC/ABCSS components intended to ensure quality include: one teacher with at least a bachelor's degree per every three classrooms at a site and teachers with an associate degree in the other two classrooms; teacher assistants/paraprofessionals with a minimum of a CDA or equivalent; low teacher-to-child ratios (1:10); health and development screenings; parent involvement and community engagement; statewide child assessment (Work Sampling); an approved list of curriculum aligned with the 2016 Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards; and classroom quality observations to inform technical assistance; and an evaluation of child outcomes through a longitudinal study.

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
22	6

RESOURCE RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
12	5

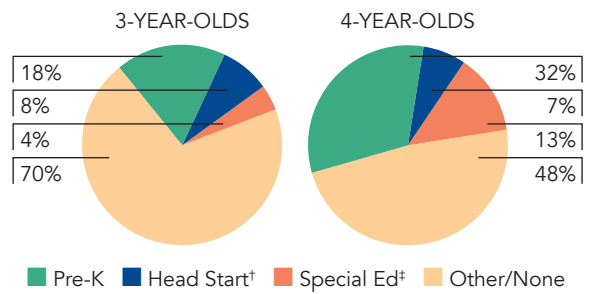
TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
8

# ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE/ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

## ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment .....	19,248
School districts that offer state program .....	99% (counties)
Income requirement .....	200% FPL
Minimum hours of operation .....	7 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule .....	School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....	9,467
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....	5,357
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....	0

## 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	AR PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<b>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	<b>Approval process &amp; supports</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	One BA per 3 classrooms; AA for other 2 classrooms	<b>BA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE, CD, ECE SpEd	<b>Specializing in pre-K</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	CDA	<b>CDA or equivalent</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	30 hours/year; PD plans; Coaching for novice teachers	<b>For teachers &amp; assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	20 (3- & 4-year-olds)	<b>20 or lower</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:10 (3- & 4-year-olds)	<b>1:10 or better</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing, health & more	<b>Vision, hearing &amp; health screenings; &amp; referral</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement	<b>Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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



## RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending .....	\$159,389,941
Local match required? .....	Yes
State Head Start spending .....	\$0
State spending per child enrolled .....	\$8,281
All reported spending per child enrolled* .....	\$13,117

\* 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

