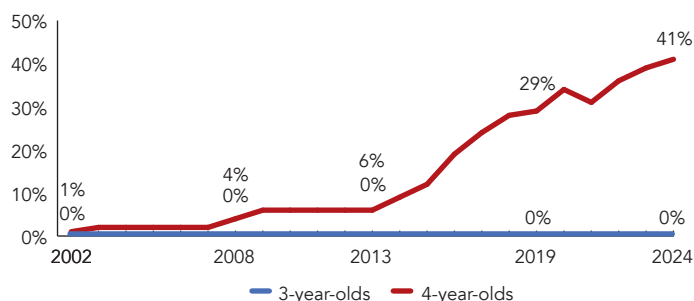
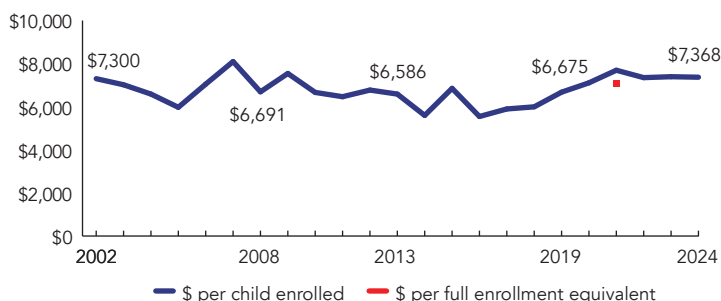


Alabama

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED
(2024 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

During the 2023-2024 school year, Alabama preschool enrolled 24,640 children, an increase of 1,252 from the prior year. State spending totaled \$181,550,866, up \$8,667,284 (5%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child equaled \$7,368 in 2023-2024, down \$24 from 2022-2023, adjusted for inflation. Alabama met 10 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT'S NEW

During the 2023-24 school year, in response to the ongoing teacher shortage, First Class Pre-K expanded the apprenticeship program to increase the number of qualified teachers. Additionally, in January 2023, the Governor directed the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE) to focus on serving children in and around turnaround schools.

For the 2024-25 school year, the ADECE was instructed to reduce the cost burden on families by not allowing programs that receive full grants to charge tuition. The state Education Trust Fund (ETF) budget provided \$2.5 million to replace tuition charges to parents. This has led to a streamlining in the budget process and format at the local level.

BACKGROUND

First Class Pre-K (FCPK) is a grant program administered by the Office of School Readiness within the ADECE, under the Governor's Office. The program funds full-day preschool education for 4-year-old children in every county in a variety of settings, including public schools, private centers, Head Start programs, community organizations, faith-based centers, colleges and universities, and military agencies. Using a multi-pronged approach, the ADECE Office of School Readiness has implemented evidence-based strategies and methods grounded in research to ensure that all children enrolled in FCPK have access to excellent, high-quality early learning classrooms in their communities.

Funding for FCPK is distributed from the Alabama Education Trust Fund Budget through competitive grants at three levels for pre-K programs: (1) Pre-K Excellence Grants (up to \$48,300) are awarded to help programs meet quality standards and are not intended as the primary source of funding; (2) Pre-K Tiered Grants (\$84,804 to \$97,908 per grant) to classrooms serving a certain share of the free and reduced-price lunch eligible child population and are primary sources of pre-K funding; (3) New Classroom Grants (\$120,000 per grant) cover costs of materials, equipment, furnishings, and general operating expenses in new classrooms for one year. Grantees must provide at least a 25% match to the awards locally, which can include sliding-scale fee revenue.

All teachers in FCPK classrooms must center their instructional strategies, classroom environment and activities in accordance with the Alabama First Class Framework. All FCPK classrooms are supported by a coach and monitor to support continuous improvement. Alabama requires each classroom to have a lead teacher with a minimum of a BA/BS in an early childhood-related field. Assistant teachers, required for every classroom, must have a CDA or equivalent. To support the development of a qualified workforce, high school students are encouraged to complete a CDA and can use the FCPK classrooms housed in high schools to satisfy some of the required observation hours. In 2015, the ADECE introduced policies to support salary parity for all pre-K teachers.

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
17	None Served

RESOURCE RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
18	17

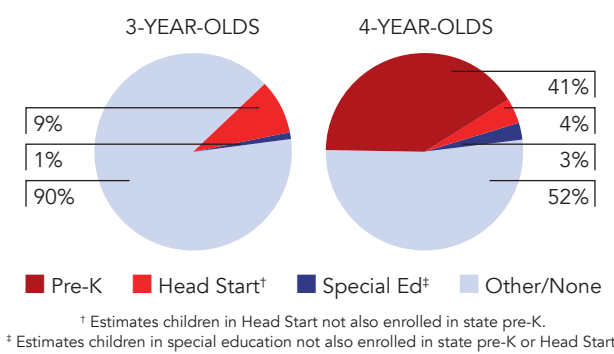
TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
10

ALABAMA FIRST CLASS PRE-K PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	24,640
School districts that offer state program	100% (counties)
Income requirement	No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation	6.5 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule	School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	4,140
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	9,272
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	0

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	AL PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	✓
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	Approval process & supports	✓
Teacher degree	BA	BA	✓
Teacher specialized training	ECE, CD, ECE SpEd	Specializing in pre-K	✓
Assistant teacher degree	CDA or 9 ECE/CD credits	CDA or equivalent	✓
Staff professional development	30 hours/year (teachers); 20 hours/year (assistants); PD plans; Coaching	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching	✓
Maximum class size	20 (4-year-olds)	20 or lower	✓
Staff-child ratio	1:10 (4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	✓
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing, health & more	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	✓
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	✓

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

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RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$181,550,866
Local match required?	Yes
State Head Start spending	\$5,138,672
State spending per child enrolled	\$7,368
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$10,063

* 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

