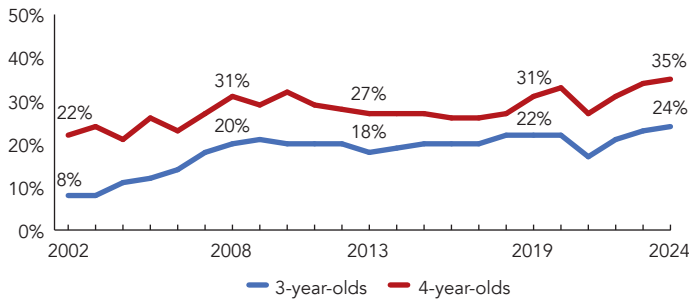
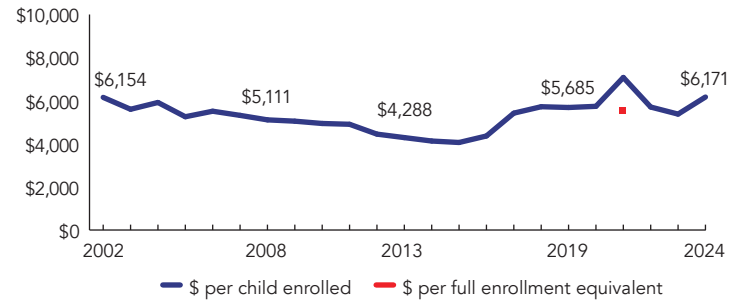


# Illinois

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED  
(2024 DOLLARS)



## OVERVIEW

During the 2023-2024 school year, Illinois preschool enrolled 82,474 children, an increase of 1,293 from the prior year. State spending totaled \$508,924,188, up \$72,353,983 (17%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child equaled \$6,171 in 2023-2024, up \$793 from 2022-2023, adjusted for inflation. Illinois met 8 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

## WHAT'S NEW

Governor JB Pritzker established a universal agency for early childhood, the Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC). Previously, early childhood services were spread across three agencies (the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)), which was challenging for families and providers to navigate and created inconsistencies in services, especially for underserved communities. The new agency will unify these programs under one umbrella, making it easier for families and providers to access the resources on which they rely.

Also in 2024, Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) announced the addition of 5,886 new preschool seats in preschool deserts – areas of the state with too few publicly funded preschool seats – to serve 80% of low-income 3- and 4-year-olds in those areas.

Since FY 2019, ISBE has endeavored, in addition to awarding funds to new or expanding programs, to provide funding to increase quality in programs previously awarded and in good standing. In FY 2024, ISBE awarded an additional approximately \$8.4 million in grants to existing programs to support increases in quality. In particular, ISBE encouraged programs to consider using the funding to boost salaries for early childhood educators in preschool settings outside of school districts to help address pay disparities and ensure highly skilled early childhood educators receive competitive wages.

## BACKGROUND

The Illinois Prekindergarten Program for At-Risk Children was founded in 1985. The Illinois Preschool for All (PFA) initiative began in 2006 with the goal of providing pre-K to all 3- and 4-year-olds by 2012. Starting in 2017, the PFA Expansion Program began when the State was awarded a federal Preschool Development Grant. The Illinois PFA and PFA Expansion programs are now combined to operate in almost all counties. Funding for Preschool for All is awarded on a competitive basis to public schools, private childcare, Head Start, faith-based centers, higher education institutions, and regional offices of education.

Preschool for All programs are required to provide instruction in children's home language if there are 20 or more English Language Learners (ELLs) with the same home language enrolled in a program. All pre-K teachers are required to meet bilingual education certification requirements. Language of instruction is determined locally if there are fewer than 20 ELLs with the same home language, however English as a Second Language and other home language supports may be provided.

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
20	3

RESOURCE RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
26	25

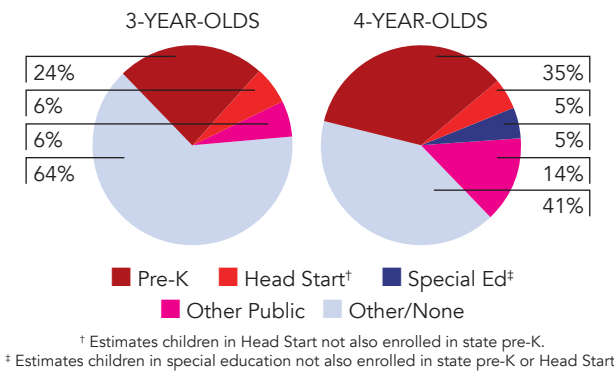
TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
8

ILLINOIS PRESCHOOL FOR ALL AND PRESCHOOL EXPANSION

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment.....	82,474
School districts that offer state program.....	99% (counties)
Income requirement.....	No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation.....	2.5 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule.....	School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....	26,705
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....	15,816
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	0

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	IL PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	Approval process & supports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE, ECE SpEd	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	Educator License	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	120 hours/5 years (teachers); PD plans; Coaching (PFA Expansion)	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	20 (3- & 4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:10 (3- & 4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing, health & more	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	<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 .....	\$508,924,188
Local match required? .....	No
State Head Start spending .....	\$0
State spending per child enrolled .....	\$6,171
All reported spending per child enrolled* .....	\$8,133

\* 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

