



# The State of Preschool 2025

STATE PRESCHOOL YEARBOOK

The National Institute for Early Education Research



## THE STATE OF PRESCHOOL 2025

### STATE PRESCHOOL YEARBOOK

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# Executive Summary



State support for preschool education hit record highs in enrollment, quality, and funding in the 2024-2025 school year, although the pace of growth slowed from the prior year. As in the past, some states advanced more than others. This year brings to the forefront for the first time one state that excels at both access and quality standards: Georgia.

The 23rd *State of Preschool* report finds that Georgia—already a leader in preschool for 4-year-olds—invested an additional \$97.6 million including funds for quality improvements to become the first state with a universal program that meets all 10 of NIEER’s research-based benchmarks for quality. Georgia reached this pinnacle by lowering class sizes from 22 to 20 and improving teacher-to-child ratios from 1:11 to 1:10. Notably, some of Georgia’s new investment went toward increasing teacher salaries to ensure pay parity with K–12 and to increase access to summer transition programs.

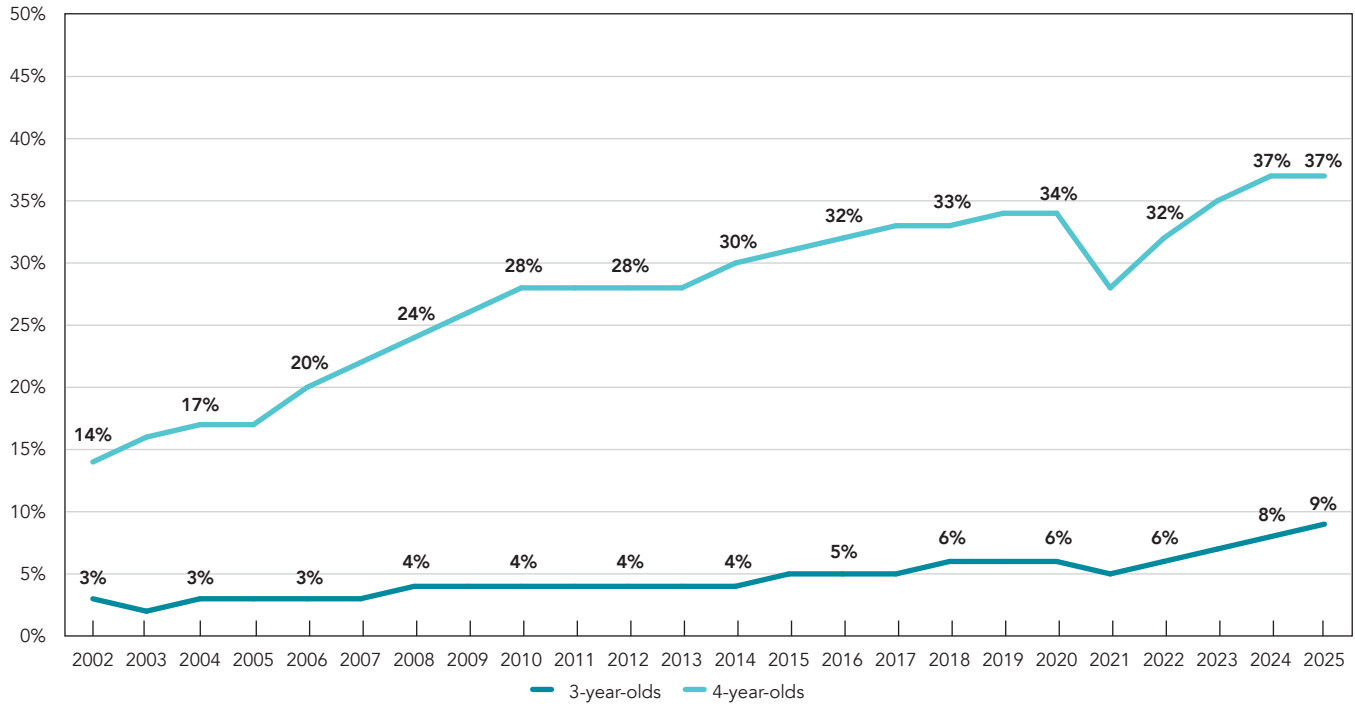
In 2024-2025, new preschool spending records were largely propelled by several states that aggressively increased enrollment and spending without raising quality standards. California, Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota, and Missouri contributed the most to increased enrollment, adding more than 52,000 new seats. Michigan and New Jersey each increased preschool spending by more than \$100 million (adjusted for inflation) as both states moved toward preschool for all.

Despite this overall progress, not every state moved forward. Some states even lost ground. If providing high-quality preschool education to all 3- and 4-year-olds were a race, some states are nearing the finish line, others have stumbled and fallen behind, and a few have yet to leave the starting line.

## HISTORIC AND EMERGING PRESCHOOL LEADERS

Nationally, enrollment reached nearly 1.8 million children during the 2024-2025 school year, including 37% of 4-year-olds and 9% of 3-year-olds. California enrolled more than one-quarter of a million children and Texas came close, while Florida and New York each enrolled more than 150,000 children. Forty-six percent of all children enrolled in state-funded preschool were in these four states.

**FIGURE 1: PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN STATE-FUNDED PRESCHOOL**

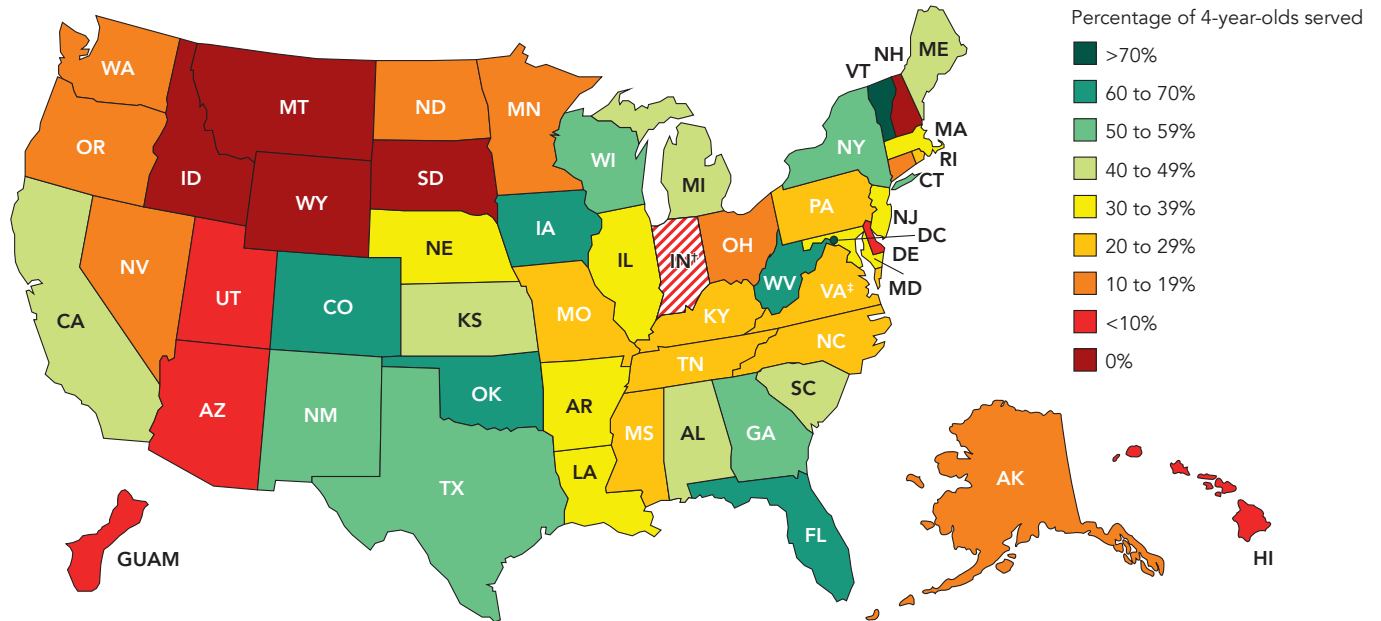


Twelve states enrolled more than 50% of their 4-year-olds in state-funded preschool programs, led by the District of Columbia, which enrolled 94% of 4-year-olds. Other states surpassing half of 4-year-olds include Vermont (72%), Colorado (70%), West Virginia (66%), Oklahoma (65%), Iowa (65%), Florida (63%), Wisconsin (59%), New York (56%), Georgia (53%), New Mexico (53%), and Texas (52%). Missouri had the largest year-over-year increase in the percentage of 4-year-olds served, increasing from 10 to 22% of 4-year-olds.

Enrollment at age 3 continued to lag behind enrollment at age 4, and it increased by only 8,000 children nationally. The District of Columbia served 76% of 3-year-olds while Vermont served 56%, far ahead of the next best state. Five other states (Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, New Mexico, and New Jersey) enrolled more than one-fifth of 3-year-olds, more than double the national average of 9%. Illinois, New Jersey, and New Mexico stand out as three states working toward preschool for all for 3-year-olds as well as 4-year-olds.

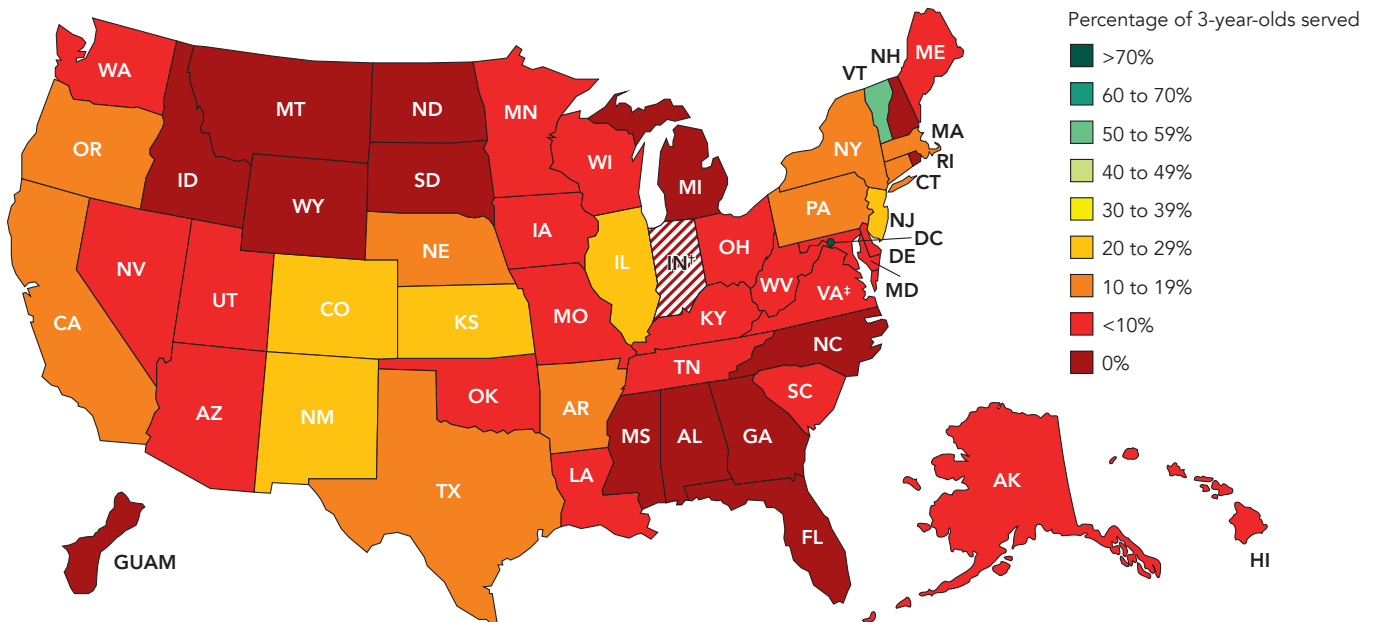
Preschool enrollment increased nationally by 44,000 children from the prior year. The numbers and the percentages of 3- and 4-year-olds served all increased, though these increases were much smaller than the prior year. California alone accounted for most of the increased enrollment, adding more than 25,000 children, driven by expansion of the state’s Transitional Kindergarten program. Missouri served nearly 10,000 more preschoolers across its two state-funded preschool programs, and enrollment in Michigan increased by more than 6,800 children as they removed their income eligibility requirements and moved toward preschool for all. Five states increased enrollment of 4-year-olds by five percentage points or more, including California and Michigan which are both working toward universal preschool for 4-year-olds. Minnesota, Missouri, and Rhode Island were also on this list of states with notable increases in the percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled.

**FIGURE 2: DISPARITIES IN 4-YEAR-OLD PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT CONTINUE TO GROW AS SOME STATES MOVE AHEAD**



† Indiana's state-funded ECE program does not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program because it has a parent work or education requirement for eligibility.  
 ‡ Only VPI enrollment is shown on the map. Virginia enrolled 28% of 4-year-olds across VPI, Mixed Delivery, and CCSP.

**FIGURE 3: PRESCHOOL ACCESS FOR 3-YEAR-OLDS REMAINS LOW ALMOST EVERYWHERE, LAGGING BEHIND 4-YEAR-OLD ACCESS**



† Indiana's state-funded ECE program does not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program because it has a parent work or education requirement for eligibility.  
 ‡ Only VPI enrollment is shown on the map. Virginia enrolled 11% of 3-year-olds across VPI, Mixed Delivery, and CCSP.

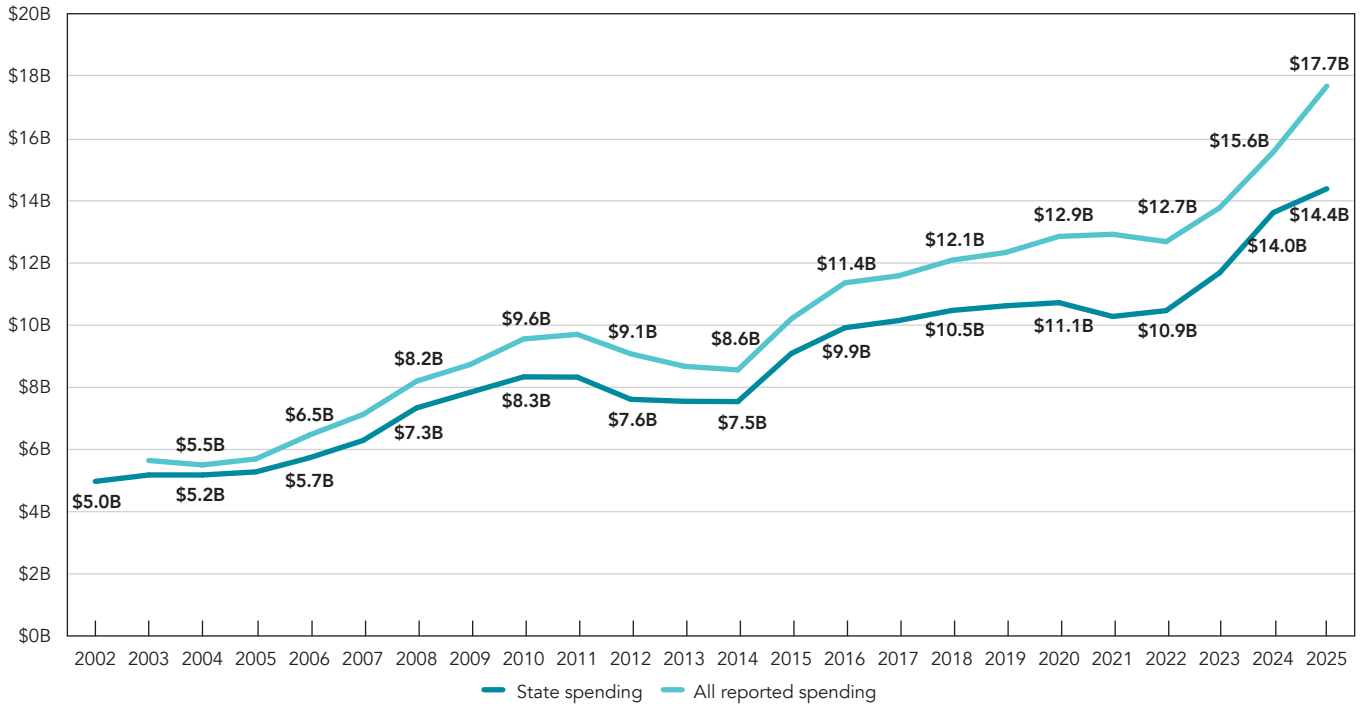


States spent nearly \$14.4 billion on preschool during the 2024-2025 school year. Including federal and local dollars, total spending was nearly \$17.7 billion. Three of the most populous states spent more than \$1 billion each on preschool: California spent \$4.1 billion, New Jersey spent \$1.2 billion, and New York spent \$1 billion. Together, these three states account for 45% of all state preschool spending. Texas adds almost another \$1 billion. The smallest of these states, New Jersey, stands among this top group because of its high level of state funding per child and relatively high enrollment of 3-year-olds.

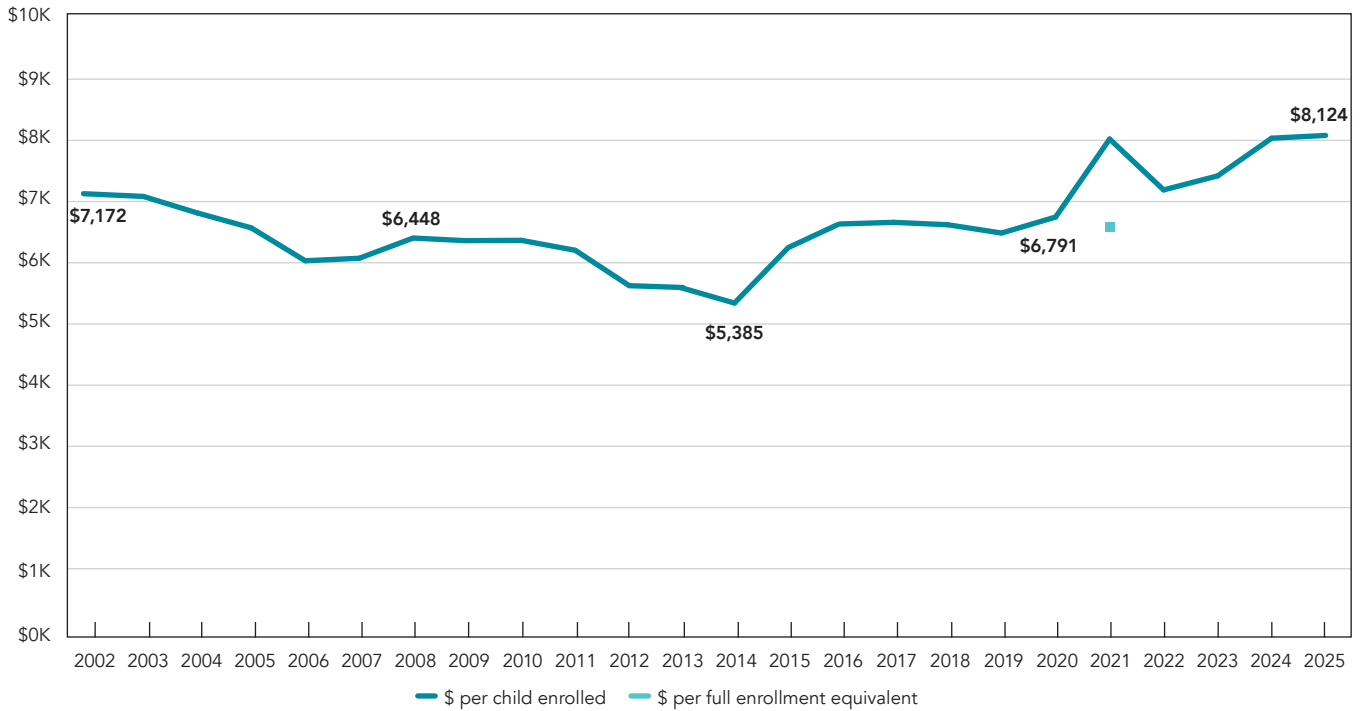
Preschool spending increased by \$434 million (3%), adjusted for inflation, since 2023-2024. Twenty-eight states increased spending, adjusted for inflation. Two states, Michigan and New Jersey, each increased preschool spending (adjusted for inflation) by more than \$100 million. Georgia increased preschool investments by \$72 million in constant 2024 dollars (i.e., after adjusting prior year spending upward for inflation) to reduce class sizes, improve teacher-to-child ratios, and improve lead and assistant teacher compensation.

On average, states spent \$8,124 per child enrolled in preschool (\$9,988 including federal and local funds). The District of Columbia, New Jersey, and Oregon provided more than \$15,000 in state funding per child enrolled in preschool. Six other states invested more than \$10,000 per child (California, Connecticut, Delaware, Michigan, New Mexico, and Washington). Taking into account state, federal, and local funding that states can report were used to support state-funded preschool, two additional states spent more than \$15,000 per child (California and New York) and 11 additional states spent more than \$10,000 per child (Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Nebraska, New York, Oklahoma, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia). Twenty-eight states increased state spending per child, adjusted for inflation.

**FIGURE 4: PRESCHOOL SPENDING INCREASED BUT STATE INVESTMENTS SLOWED (2025 DOLLARS)**

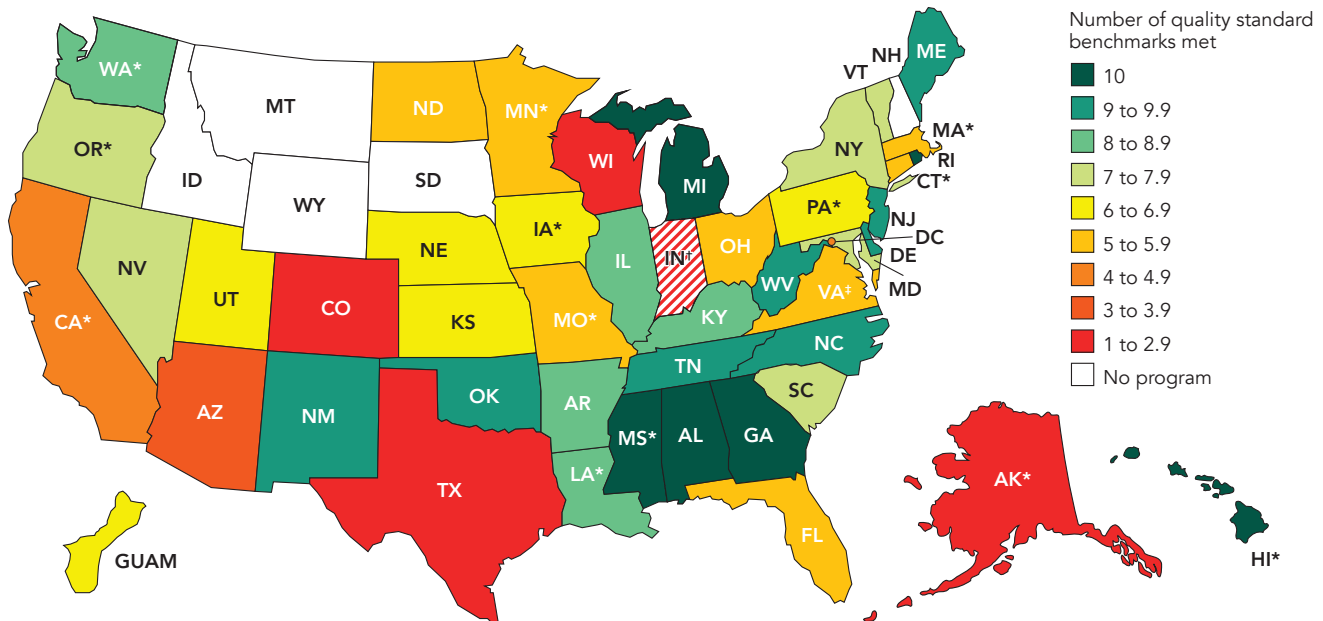


**FIGURE 5: AVERAGE STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2025 DOLLARS)**



In 2024-2025, a record six states met all 10 of NIEER’s quality standards benchmarks: Alabama, Georgia, Hawaii, Michigan, Mississippi, and Rhode Island. Georgia joined this esteemed list this year after they lowered class sizes from 22 to 20 and improved teacher-to-child ratios from 1:11 to 1:10. These six states provide a range of examples for other states aiming to improve preschool quality standards.

**FIGURE 6: GEORGIA NOW MEETS ALL 10 BENCHMARKS BUT LITTLE PROGRESS MADE TO IMPROVE QUALITY STANDARDS ELSEWHERE**



\* For states with more than one state-funded preschool program, the weighted average number of quality standards met is shown on the map.  
 † Indiana’s state-funded ECE program does not meet NIEER’s definition of a state-funded preschool program because it has a parent work or education requirement for eligibility.  
 ‡ Only VPI’s benchmarks are included on the map. Virginia would meet an average of 3.4 benchmarks if VPI, Mixed Delivery, and CCSP were all included.

### STATES THAT FELL BEHIND

Not all states moved forward. Twenty states enrolled fewer preschoolers in 2024-2025 than the prior year. Enrollment decreased by more than 1,000 children in six states (Arizona, Florida, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin). Some enrollment declines could be explained by declining populations of 3- and 4-year-olds. However, the percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled, which accounts for population, declined in 21 states. Wisconsin had the largest decline in the percentage of 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool, serving 4 percentage points fewer 4-year-olds than the prior year. New York’s decline is surprising given New York City’s preschool for all initiative which might have been expected to move the state ahead.

Seventeen states spent less on preschool in 2024-2025 than they did in 2023-2024, when adjusted for inflation. Texas spent \$84.5 million less than the prior year. The states with the largest percentage decline in preschool spending were Alaska, Arizona, Kentucky, Nebraska, and North Carolina.

Very low levels of funding per child enrolled are a concern because inadequate resources make it difficult if not impossible to provide a high-quality early education. Eight states invested less than \$4,000 per child (Florida, Iowa, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, South Carolina, Utah, and Wisconsin). As local and federal funding can be substantial, states with very low spending from all reported sources are especially noteworthy, like Florida (\$2,963). While Nebraska has low state spending per child, substantial local and federal funding support their program, raising spending per child to almost \$12,000.

### STATES STILL AT THE STARTING LINE

Six states continue not to fund a state-funded preschool program meeting NIEER’s definition: Idaho, Indiana, Montana, New Hampshire, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Indiana’s On My Way Pre-K is similar to a state funded preschool program but has a parental work or school requirement, so it is profiled in this report but not included in rankings. Montana and Wyoming both have early childhood programs that provide services similar to those of a state-funded preschool program.



## WHAT'S NEW: THE DETAILS

### RESOURCES

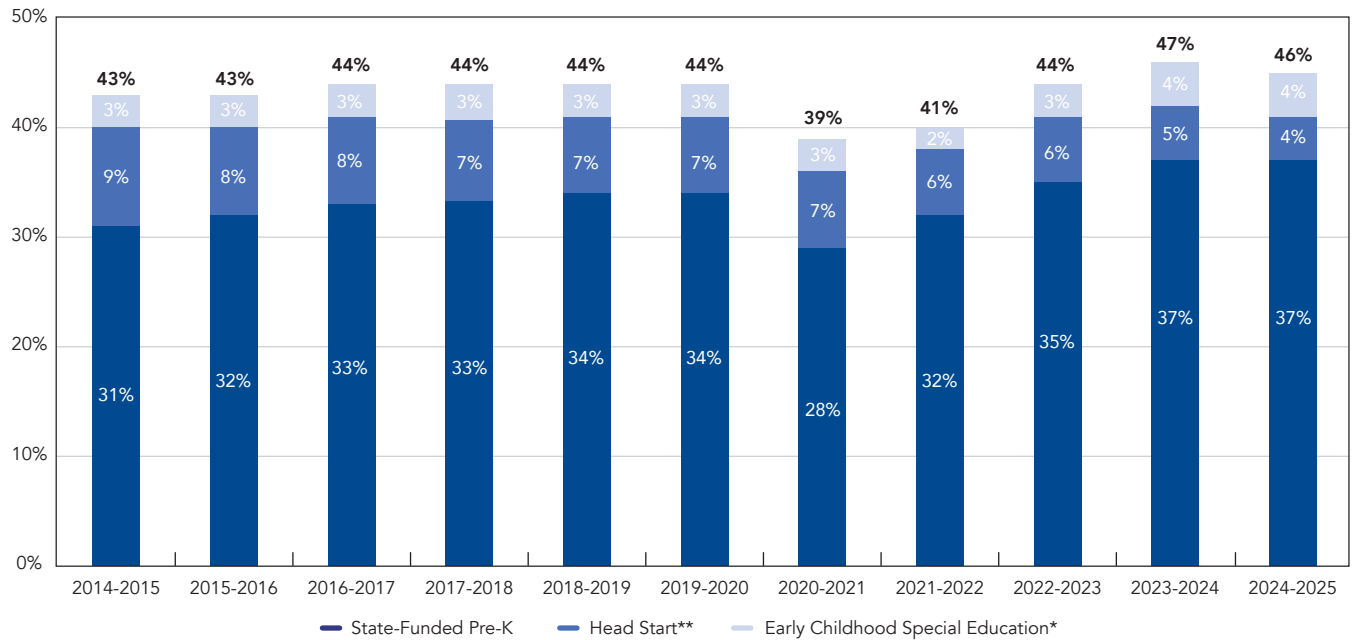
- Total state spending for preschool programs reached another all-time high of nearly \$14.4 billion across 44 states and the District of Columbia\*. Six states still did not fund a preschool program meeting NIEER's definition in 2024-2025.
- States reported spending only \$28 million in federal COVID-19 relief funding on preschool, about 10% of the amount used last year.
- Including COVID-19 relief dollars, spending on state-funded preschool increased by \$434 million (3%), adjusted for inflation from 2023-2024. While spending on preschool continued to increase, the increase was much smaller than the prior year.
- Average state spending per child enrolled was \$8,124. Adjusted for inflation, this is a \$45 per child increase from 2023-2024. Last year's increase was 16 times as large.
- All-reported spending, which includes local and federal dollars to the extent states can report them, was \$17.7 billion, an inflation-adjusted increase of more than \$2 billion (14%) from 2023-2024. All reported spending per child was \$9,988, an inflation-adjusted increase of \$975 from 2023-2024, reflecting a relatively large increase in reported non-state funding.

### ENROLLMENT

- States enrolled almost 1.8 million children in state-funded preschool, including 1.42 million four-year-olds and 315,293 three-year-olds. This amounts to 9% of 3-year-olds and 37% of 4-year-olds enrolled.
- While the numbers and percentages of 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds enrolled all increased, growth in preschool enrollment slowed drastically from the prior year. Enrollment in state-funded preschool increased by just 44,000 children between 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, much less than last year.
- Total preschool enrollment increased in 25 states between 2023-2024 and 2024-2025, but decreased in 20 states.
- In 20 states, the number of preschoolers enrolled was lower in 2024-2025 than before the pandemic.
- Across all major public programs—state-funded preschool, preschool special education, and the federal Head Start program—46% of 4-year-olds and 17% of 3-year-olds were served. Almost 29,000 fewer 3- and 4-year-olds were served across these programs in 2024-2025 than the prior year. This decline is driven by reduced federal Head Start enrollment at ages 3 and 4, which remains below pre-pandemic levels.

\* Consistent with U.S. government statistical practices, the District of Columbia will be referred to as a "state" throughout this report. Hence, we report 45 "states" providing state-funded preschool.

**FIGURE 7: ENROLLMENT OF 4-YEAR-OLDS IN STATE-FUNDED PRE-K, HEAD START, & EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION**



\* Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.  
 \*\* Estimates children in Head Start not also in state pre-K though some children may be counted twice.

### QUALITY STANDARDS

- Georgia improved from meeting 8 of NIEER’s quality standards benchmarks in 2023-2024 to meeting all 10 in 2024-2025 after lowering class sizes and improving staff to child ratios.
- Alabama, Georgia, Hawaii, Michigan, Mississippi, and Rhode Island are the only six states—a record high number—to meet all 10 of NIEER’s quality standards benchmarks for state preschool quality standards.
- Twenty state-funded preschool programs met five or fewer of the quality standards benchmarks, including three of the four largest programs (California TK, Florida, and Texas). Forty-six percent of children in state-funded preschool were in a program meeting half or fewer of the quality standards benchmarks. Only 21% of children were in programs meeting 9 or 10 benchmarks.

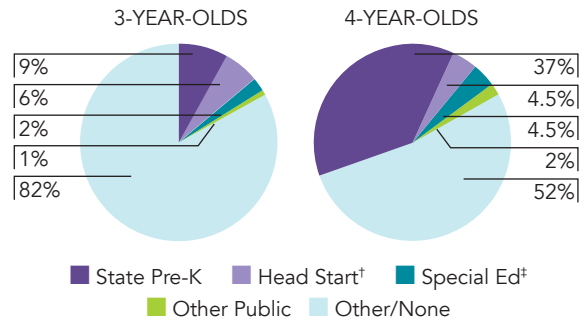
### IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

- Indiana’s On My Way Pre-K program is included in the Yearbook again. Although it does not meet NIEER’s definition of a state-funded preschool program because of its parental work or school requirement, it does provide early education to 4-year-olds. The program is described on the state’s profile page but is not included in national numbers or rankings.
- Virginia’s Mixed Delivery program introduced a parental work or school requirement and therefore no longer meets NIEER’s definition of a state-funded preschool program. Virginia’s Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) is included in the Yearbook for the first time but also has a parental work or school requirement and does not meet NIEER’s definition of a state-funded preschool program. These two programs are described in profile pages but are not included in national totals or Virginia’s rankings. However, we do include a page showing what Virginia’s rankings would be if those two programs were included.

## NATIONAL ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment, all ages..... 1,795,147  
 State-funded preschool programs.....63 programs  
 in 44 states and DC<sup>1</sup>  
 Income requirement ..... 32 state programs have an  
 income requirement  
 Minimum hours of operation..... 29 part-day; 16 school-day;  
 6 extended-day; 12 determined locally<sup>2</sup>  
 Operating schedule..... 1 full calendar year; 41 school/  
 academic year; 21 determined locally  
 Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....529,007  
 Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ..... 459,043<sup>3</sup>  
 State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4..... 15,666<sup>4</sup>

## PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN ECE



<sup>†</sup> Some Head Start children may also be counted in state pre-K.  
<sup>‡</sup> Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST SUMMARY

POLICY	BENCHMARK	OF THE 63 STATE-FUNDED PRE-K INITIATIVES, NUMBER MEETING BENCHMARK
Early learning & development standards	<b>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</b>	<b>62</b>
Curriculum supports	<b>Approval process &amp; supports</b>	<b>53</b>
Teacher degree	<b>BA</b>	<b>30</b>
Teacher specialized training	<b>Specializing in pre-K</b>	<b>47</b>
Assistant teacher degree	<b>CDA or equivalent</b>	<b>21</b>
Staff professional development	<b>For teachers &amp; assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; Coaching</b>	<b>21</b>
Maximum class size	<b>20 or lower</b>	<b>50</b>
Staff-child ratio	<b>1:10 or better</b>	<b>51</b>
Screening & referral	<b>Vision, hearing &amp; health screenings; &amp; referral</b>	<b>43</b>
Continuous quality improvement system	<b>Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement</b>	<b>40</b>

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

## NATIONAL RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending ..... \$14,387,269,279<sup>5</sup>  
 Local match required? ..... 12  
 State Head Start spending ..... \$373,110,395<sup>6</sup>  
 State spending per child enrolled ..... \$8,124<sup>5</sup>  
 All reported spending per child enrolled\* ..... \$9,988

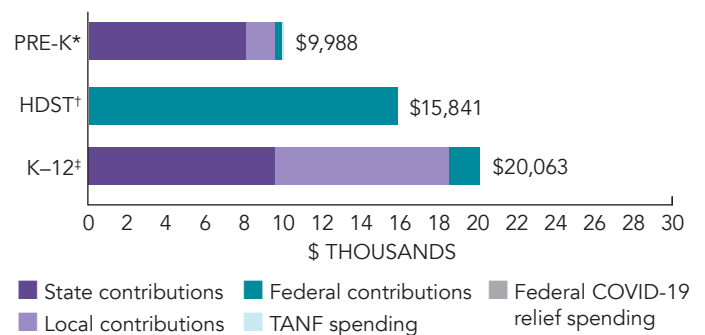
\* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.

<sup>†</sup> Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.

<sup>‡</sup> K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the District of Columbia is included like a state, resulting in a list of 45 states for rankings. Indiana's state-funded early childhood education program and Virginia's Mixed Delivery and CCSP are similar to state-funded preschool in other states. However, because they have a parent work or education requirement for eligibility, the programs do not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program. Information on these programs is included in the report but not in national totals or rankings. In 2015-2016, Guam began offering a "state"-funded pre-K program but is not included in totals or rankings in this report.  
<sup>2</sup> NIEER's definitions of hours of operation are as follows: part-day programs serve children for fewer than 4 hours per day; school-day programs serve children at least 4 hours per day but fewer than 6.5 hours per day; and extended-day programs serve children for 6.5 or more hours per day. Some programs offer multiple hours of operation but only the minimum one is listed here.  
<sup>3</sup> The enrollment figures for federal Head Start include children in the program in all 50 states, D.C., and the U.S. territories, as well as enrollment in the Migrant & Seasonal and American Indian/Native Alaskan programs. These numbers do not include children funded by state match.  
<sup>4</sup> This figure is based on the Head Start enrollment supported by state match as reported in the survey by states. This figure includes 14,853 children who attended programs that were considered to be state-funded preschool programs and are also included in the state-funded preschool enrollment total.  
<sup>5</sup> This figure includes federal TANF funds and federal COVID-19 relief funds directed toward preschool at states' discretion.  
<sup>6</sup> This figure includes \$238,481,629 also included in the total state pre-K spending. This also includes some funding for state supplements to Early Head Start where states could not separate Head Start and Early Head Start funding.

## SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED



**TABLE 1: STATE RANKINGS AND QUALITY CHECKLIST SUMS**

STATE	Access for 4-year-olds rank	Access for 3-year-olds rank	Resources rank based on state spending	Resources rank based on all reported spending	Quality standards checklist sum (maximum of 10)
Alabama	18	None Served	18	17	10
Alaska	39	36	20	30	2.3
Arizona	45	30	14	25	3
Arkansas	24	8	26	19	8
California	14	15	4	5	4.1
Colorado	3	5	29	37	2
Connecticut	37	12	9	20	5.1
Delaware	42	24	8	11	9
District of Columbia	1	1	1	1	4
Florida	7	None Served	44	45	5
Georgia	10	None Served	19	29	10
Hawaii	43	25	16	28	10*
Illinois	20	4	22	24	8
Iowa	6	21	40	43	6
Kansas	16	6	36	40	6
Kentucky	28	19	33	8	8
Louisiana	22	33	31	38	8.8
Maine	13	34	24	16	9
Maryland	19	18	17	15	7
Massachusetts	25	10	43	34	5.2
Michigan	17	None Served	6	9	10*
Minnesota <sup>†</sup>	35	35	25	35	5.2
Mississippi	29	None Served	35	22	10
Missouri	30	28	42	44	5.1
Nebraska	23	11	45	13	6
Nevada	41	29	12	23	7
New Jersey	21	3	2	2	9
New Mexico	11	7	5	7	9
New York	9	9	21	4	7*
North Carolina	32	None Served	27	26	9*
North Dakota	40	None Served	23	32	5
Ohio	38	23	32	39	5
Oklahoma	5	27	30	10	9
Oregon	36	14	3	3	7.7
Pennsylvania <sup>†</sup>	27	13	15	27	6.6*
Rhode Island	26	None Served	10	21	10
South Carolina	15	22	38	42	7
Tennessee	33	31	34	33	9
Texas	12	16	37	41	2
Utah	44	32	39	36	6
Vermont	2	2	11	12	7
Virginia**	31	26	28	18	5
Washington	34	17	7	6	8.0
West Virginia	4	20	13	14	9
Wisconsin	8	37	41	31	1
Indiana***	Work requirement	Work requirement	Work requirement	Work requirement	2
Idaho	No program	No program	No program	No program	No program
Montana	No program	No program	No program	No program	No program
New Hampshire	No program	No program	No program	No program	No program
South Dakota	No program	No program	No program	No program	No program
Wyoming	No program	No program	No program	No program	No program

<sup>†</sup> At least one program in these states did not break down total enrollment figures into specific numbers of 3- and 4-year-olds served. As a result, enrollment by single year of age was estimated.

\* Indicates that while a policy meets the benchmark, at least one benchmark in the program is not being fully implemented.

\*\* Rankings and benchmarks reflect VPI only. Virginia's two other early childhood education programs (Mixed-Delivery and CCSP) have a parent work or education requirement for eligibility and do not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program.

\*\*\* Indiana's state-funded early childhood education program is similar to state-funded preschool in other states. However, because it has a parent work or education requirement for eligibility, the program does not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program. Indiana program information is reported here but not in national totals or rankings.

**TABLE 2: STATE PRESCHOOL ACCESS BY STATE**

ACCESS FOR 4-YEAR-OLDS RANK	STATE	PERCENT OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN STATE PREKINDERGARTEN (2024-2025)			NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN STATE PREKINDERGARTEN (2024-2025)		
		4-year-olds	3-year-olds	Total (3s and 4s)	4-year-olds	3-year-olds	Total (3s and 4s)
1	District of Columbia	94%	76%	85%	7,056	5,963	13,019
2	Vermont	72%	56%	65%	4,131	2,998	7,129
3	Colorado	70%	24%	47%	43,398	14,709	58,107
4	West Virginia	66%	7%	37%	11,904	1,279	13,183
5	Oklahoma	65%	3%	35%	32,794	1,370	34,164
6	Iowa	65%	6%	36%	25,065	2,337	27,402
7	Florida	63%	0%	32%	149,100	0	149,100
8	Wisconsin	59%	0.04%	30%	38,397	23	38,420
9	New York	56%	17%	37%	118,427	34,577	153,004
10	Georgia	53%	0%	27%	69,314	0	69,314
11	New Mexico	53%	22%	38%	11,633	4,796	16,429
12	Texas	52%	11%	32%	204,754	43,729	248,483
13	Maine	47%	1%	25%	6,116	80	6,196
14	California	46%	11%	29%	198,998	46,352	245,350
15	South Carolina	45%	6%	26%	26,940	3,549	30,489
16	Kansas	45%	22%	34%	16,116	7,745	23,861
17	Michigan	43%	0%	22%	47,981	0	47,981
18	Alabama	40%	0%	20%	24,238	0	24,238
19	Maryland	38%	8%	24%	27,947	5,799	33,746
20	Illinois	35%	26%	31%	49,026	34,562	83,588
21	New Jersey	35%	27%	31%	37,692	27,673	65,365
22	Louisiana	35%	1%	18%	19,403	481	19,884
23	Nebraska	34%	16%	25%	8,560	4,034	12,594
24	Arkansas	33%	19%	26%	12,197	6,723	18,920
25	Massachusetts	30%	16%	23%	21,038	11,182	32,220
26	Rhode Island	26%	0%	13%	2,864	0	2,864
27	Pennsylvania	26%	14%	20%	36,377	18,348	54,726
28	Kentucky	26%	8%	17%	14,030	4,072	18,102
29	Mississippi	23%	0%	11%	8,076	0	8,076
30	Missouri	22%	3%	13%	16,367	1,814	18,181
31	Virginia	22%	3%	12%	21,596	2,829	24,425
32	North Carolina	21%	0%	11%	26,707	0	26,707
33	Tennessee	20%	1%	11%	16,627	874	17,501
34	Washington	19%	9%	14%	16,282	7,256	23,538
35	Minnesota	18%	0.5%	9%	12,304	311	12,615
36	Oregon	17%	13%	15%	7,200	5,137	12,337
37	Connecticut	16%	14%	15%	5,862	5,312	11,174
38	Ohio	13%	5%	9%	17,432	6,162	23,594
39	Alaska	11%	0.2%	6%	1,053	22	1,075
40	North Dakota	11%	0%	5%	1,076	0	1,076
41	Nevada	10%	2%	6%	3,670	618	4,288
42	Delaware	9%	4%	6%	999	419	1,418
43	Hawaii	7%	4%	5%	1,060	577	1,637
44	Utah	2%	1%	2%	1,189	464	1,653
45	Arizona	2%	1%	2%	1,674	1,117	2,791
	<b>50 states + DC*</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>1,424,670</b>	<b>315,293</b>	<b>1,739,963</b>
Work requirement <sup>†</sup>	Indiana	7%	0%	4%	6,018	0	6,018
Work requirement <sup>†</sup>	Virginia MD & CCSP	7%	8%	7%	6,788	7,344	14,132
	Guam	2%	0%	1%	52	0	52
No program	Idaho	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0
No program	Montana	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0
No program	New Hampshire	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0
No program	South Dakota	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0
No program	Wyoming	0%	0%	0%	0	0	0

\* Nationwide, an additional 55,184 children of other ages were enrolled in state prekindergarten, for a total of 1,795,147 children.

<sup>†</sup> Indiana's state-funded early childhood education program and Virginia's Mixed Delivery and CCSP are similar to state-funded preschool in other states. However, because they have a parent work or education requirement for eligibility, the programs do not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program. Information on these programs is reported here but not in national totals or rankings.

For details about how these figures were calculated, see the Methodology section and Roadmap to the State Profile Pages.

**TABLE 3A: CHANGE IN PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT OF 3-YEAR-OLDS OVER TIME**

STATE	2001-2002 TO 2024-2025		2019-2020 TO 2024-2025		2023-2024 TO 2024-2025	
	Number	% served	Number	% served	Number	% served
Alabama	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Alaska	22	0%	-259	-2%	-323	-3%
Arizona	1,117	1%	-595	-1%	-1,253	-2%
Arkansas	5,781	16%	72	2%	-204	0%
California	35,428	9%	-9,886	0%	3,496	1%
Colorado	13,979	22%	8,311	14%	5,571	9%
Connecticut	3,777	11%	-113	0%	-273	-1%
Delaware	419	4%	156	2%	21	0%
District of Columbia	4,838	56%	-472	3%	-152	-6%
Florida	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Georgia	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Hawaii	577	4%	577	4%	298	2%
Idaho	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Illinois	20,464	18%	250	4%	994	2%
Indiana**	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Iowa	1,826	5%	898	3%	35	0%
Kansas	7,745	22%	6,349	19%	192	1%
Kentucky	-800	-2%	-2,086	-3%	-55	0%
Louisiana	481	1%	481	1%	132	0%
Maine	80	1%	80	1%	80	1%
Maryland	4,391	6%	3,359	5%	572	1%
Massachusetts	1,750	4%	-840	0%	-411	0%
Michigan	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Minnesota*	-504	-1%	-225	0%	-56	0%
Mississippi	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Missouri	-732	-1%	664	1%	649	1%
Montana	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Nebraska	3,910	16%	-286	0%	2	0%
Nevada	507	1%	618	2%	163	0%
New Hampshire	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
New Jersey	14,888	15%	5,414	5%	2,360	3%
New Mexico	4,326	20%	3,226	16%	249	1%
New York	28,742	15%	23,854	12%	-5,410	-2%
North Carolina	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
North Dakota	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Ohio	-3,552	-2%	4,375	3%	-1,764	-1%
Oklahoma	1,370	3%	-1,469	-3%	-1,640	-3%
Oregon	4,028	10%	1,551	5%	19	0%
Pennsylvania*	18,348	14%	3,289	3%	843	1%
Rhode Island	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
South Carolina	3,199	5%	3,292	6%	3,414	6%
South Dakota	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Tennessee	32	0%	666	1%	17	0%
Texas	23,988	5%	6,632	2%	1,139	0%
Utah	464	1%	-55	0%	-257	-1%
Vermont	2,629	51%	-474	-2%	-277	-1%
Virginia***	2,829	3%	2,829	3%	-437	0%
Washington	6,107	7%	1,922	3%	396	1%
West Virginia	-489	-1%	47	1%	-32	0%
Wisconsin	-665	-1%	-379	-1%	-38	0%
Wyoming	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>United States</b>	<b>211,300</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>61,773</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>8,060</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
Guam	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

\* At least one program in these states did not break down total enrollment figures into specific numbers of 3- and 4-year-olds served. As a result, the figures in the table are estimates.

\*\* Indiana's state-funded early childhood education program is similar to state-funded preschool in other states. However, because it has a parent work or education requirement for eligibility, the program does not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program. Indiana program information is reported here but not in national totals or rankings.

\*\*\* 2024-2025 enrollment numbers reflect VPI only. Virginia's two other early childhood education programs (Mixed-Delivery and CCSP) have a parent work or education requirement for eligibility and do not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program.

**TABLE 3B: CHANGE IN PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT OF 4-YEAR-OLDS OVER TIME**

STATE	2001-2002 TO 2024-2025		2019-2020 TO 2024-2025		2023-2024 TO 2024-2025	
	Number	% served	Number	% served	Number	% served
Alabama	23,482	39%	3,799	6%	-402	-1%
Alaska	1,053	11%	-71	1%	113	1%
Arizona	-2,603	-4%	-1,213	-1%	-1,539	-2%
Arkansas	9,973	27%	-587	0%	120	1%
California	154,464	38%	16,607	9%	19,007	5%
Colorado	35,078	56%	26,860	46%	-81	-1%
Connecticut	1,445	6%	-2,124	-5%	918	2%
Delaware	156	1%	417	4%	159	1%
District of Columbia	4,045	50%	-300	10%	-22	-1%
Florida	149,100	63%	-17,626	-8%	-2,349	-2%
Georgia	5,701	0%	-11,014	-6%	-2,212	-2%
Hawaii	-189	-1%	382	3%	326	2%
Idaho	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Illinois	10,124	13%	-1,654	2%	252	0%
Indiana**	6,018	7%	2,501	3%	-1,930	-2%
Iowa	23,509	61%	-1,670	-1%	-541	-2%
Kansas	13,886	39%	4,743	15%	-84	0%
Kentucky	1,213	2%	-2,699	-4%	-821	-2%
Louisiana	11,884	23%	-1,052	1%	237	1%
Maine	4,676	38%	230	3%	22	1%
Maryland	9,573	13%	-2,722	-3%	446	0%
Massachusetts	11,606	18%	-576	0%	24	-1%
Michigan	21,504	24%	10,613	11%	6,861	6%
Minnesota*	11,034	16%	4,718	7%	4,803	7%
Mississippi	8,076	23%	5,012	15%	931	3%
Missouri	12,681	18%	10,726	15%	8,838	12%
Montana	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Nebraska	8,204	32%	-728	-1%	-108	-1%
Nevada	3,349	9%	600	2%	519	2%
New Hampshire	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
New Jersey	13,811	14%	4,538	3%	1,137	0%
New Mexico	11,263	51%	1,136	12%	85	2%
New York	54,928	31%	9,011	8%	-542	0%
North Carolina	25,467	20%	-4,352	-3%	-597	-1%
North Dakota	1,076	11%	-159	-1%	180	2%
Ohio	3,547	4%	1,349	1%	-2,786	-2%
Oklahoma	6,915	10%	-4,423	-4%	-555	-1%
Oregon	4,611	11%	1,426	5%	14	0%
Pennsylvania*	33,827	24%	4,331	4%	925	0%
Rhode Island	2,864	26%	1,444	14%	500	5%
South Carolina	11,290	16%	-1,743	-2%	-50	-1%
South Dakota	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Tennessee	14,869	17%	-1,630	-2%	-149	0%
Texas	77,171	12%	-6,515	1%	-122	-1%
Utah	1,189	2%	-514	-1%	-101	0%
Vermont	3,511	64%	-491	-4%	-257	-3%
Virginia***	15,718	15%	2,437	3%	-131	0%
Washington	11,497	13%	7,616	9%	1,452	1%
West Virginia	6,819	42%	-1,487	-2%	-160	-1%
Wisconsin	24,893	40%	-8,054	-9%	-2,384	-4%
Wyoming	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>United States</b>	<b>858,290</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>44,592</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>31,876</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
Guam	52	2%	-19	0%	2	0%

\* At least one program in these states did not break down total enrollment figures into specific numbers of 3- and 4-year-olds served. As a result, the figures in the table are estimates.

\*\* Indiana's state-funded early childhood education program is similar to state-funded preschool in other states. However, because it has a parent work or education requirement for eligibility, the program does not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program. Indiana program information is reported here but not in national totals or rankings.

\*\*\* 2024-2025 enrollment numbers reflect VPI only. Virginia's two other early childhood education programs (Mixed-Delivery and CCSP) have a parent work or education requirement for eligibility and do not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program.

**TABLE 4: 2024-2025 ENROLLMENT OF 3- AND 4-YEAR-OLDS IN STATE PRESCHOOL, PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION, AND FEDERAL AND STATE HEAD START**

STATE	PRE-K + PRE-K SPECIAL EDUCATION				PRE-K + PRE-K SPECIAL EDUCATION + HEAD START <sup>††</sup>			
	3-year-olds		4-year-olds		3-year-olds		4-year-olds	
	Number enrolled	% of state population	Number enrolled	% of state population	Number enrolled	% of state population	Number enrolled	% of state population
Alabama <sup>†</sup>	902	2%	25,928	43%	5,137	9%	28,525	47%
Alaska*	302	3%	1,408	15%	1,241	14%	2,431	26%
Arizona	3,972	5%	6,794	8%	8,219	10%	12,891	16%
Arkansas	8,468	24%	17,822	48%	10,386	29%	19,375	53%
California	55,222	13%	203,406	47%	81,814	20%	220,823	51%
Colorado <sup>†</sup>	14,709	24%	43,398	70%	16,722	27%	44,192	71%
Connecticut <sup>†</sup>	7,594	21%	9,349	25%	9,445	26%	11,101	30%
Delaware	1,352	13%	2,620	23%	1,565	14%	2,880	26%
District of Columbia <sup>†</sup>	5,963	76%	7,073	94%	5,996	77%	7,105	95%
Florida <sup>†</sup>	5,794	3%	158,878	67%	19,792	9%	165,038	70%
Georgia <sup>†</sup>	2,677	2%	73,382	56%	10,971	9%	76,728	59%
Hawaii	1,094	7%	2,129	13%	1,857	12%	3,111	20%
Idaho	635	3%	1,353	6%	1,533	7%	2,610	11%
Illinois <sup>†</sup>	34,562	26%	56,117	40%	42,301	32%	63,446	45%
Indiana <sup>***</sup>	3,690	5%	13,275	16%	7,494	9%	17,376	21%
Iowa <sup>†</sup>	2,402	7%	25,836	67%	4,426	12%	27,952	72%
Kansas	7,745	22%	17,154	48%	9,705	28%	19,531	54%
Kentucky <sup>†</sup>	4,072	8%	15,562	29%	9,044	17%	19,964	37%
Louisiana*	1,146	2%	24,645	44%	8,666	15%	29,364	52%
Maine <sup>†</sup>	538	5%	6,406	50%	1,343	11%	6,397	50%
Maryland <sup>*,†</sup>	8,354	12%	30,855	42%	11,070	16%	32,401	44%
Massachusetts <sup>†</sup>	11,182	16%	21,243	30%	15,009	22%	24,555	35%
Michigan <sup>†</sup>	2,484	2%	47,981	43%	11,667	11%	50,842	46%
Minnesota*	3,446	5%	19,901	29%	7,049	11%	23,445	34%
Mississippi <sup>†</sup>	348	1%	9,492	27%	5,754	16%	16,097	46%
Missouri*	4,579	7%	22,090	30%	9,533	14%	25,932	35%
Montana	33	0.3%	363	3%	1,226	11%	1,840	16%
Nebraska <sup>†</sup>	4,034	16%	8,678	34%	4,764	19%	9,333	37%
Nevada <sup>†</sup>	2,183	6%	6,915	19%	3,225	9%	7,571	21%
New Hampshire	962	8%	1,275	10%	1,354	11%	1,754	14%
New Jersey <sup>†</sup>	34,002	33%	47,455	44%	37,264	36%	47,484	44%
New Mexico <sup>†</sup>	5,756	27%	12,018	55%	8,107	38%	14,369	65%
New York <sup>†</sup>	44,953	22%	125,577	59%	55,238	27%	133,346	63%
North Carolina <sup>†</sup>	2,736	2%	32,908	26%	8,251	7%	36,925	30%
North Dakota <sup>†</sup>	317	3%	1,967	19%	1,006	10%	2,879	28%
Ohio	10,537	8%	29,195	21%	20,655	16%	40,228	29%
Oklahoma	1,370	3%	33,638	67%	6,660	14%	36,615	73%
Oregon	5,919	15%	10,277	24%	8,164	20%	12,294	29%
Pennsylvania <sup>*,†</sup>	23,537	18%	52,430	38%	32,334	24%	62,515	45%
Rhode Island <sup>†</sup>	599	6%	3,892	36%	1,329	13%	4,262	39%
South Carolina	3,549	6%	26,940	45%	8,391	14%	29,908	50%
South Dakota	328	3%	946	8%	1,586	14%	3,559	30%
Tennessee <sup>†</sup>	2,593	3%	21,011	25%	7,681	9%	25,212	30%
Texas <sup>†</sup>	47,513	12%	212,998	54%	64,290	16%	220,291	55%
Utah*	2,397	5%	5,232	11%	4,067	9%	7,537	16%
Vermont	2,998	56%	4,131	72%	3,233	61%	4,500	79%
Virginia <sup>†,***</sup>	12,269	13%	32,279	32%	16,458	17%	37,115	37%
Washington	9,249	11%	20,175	23%	12,708	15%	24,171	28%
West Virginia <sup>†</sup>	1,279	7%	11,904	66%	2,940	17%	12,141	67%
Wisconsin	1,794	3%	39,529	61%	6,941	11%	43,112	66%
Wyoming	436	7%	1,139	18%	952	15%	1,665	26%
<b>United States</b>	<b>407,232</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>1,600,182</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>629,219</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>1,767,954</b>	<b>46%</b>
Guam	29	1%	111	4%	210	7%	464	15%

\* These states serve special education children in their state pre-K programs but were not able to provide the number of children for at least one of their programs. Estimates were used based on the average percent of special education students in state pre-K across all programs and enrollment numbers for each program or the percentage of children with an IEP in Head Start as reported in the PIR (MN Head Start only).

\*\* Indiana's state-funded early childhood education program is similar to state-funded preschool in other states. However, because it has a parent work or education requirement for eligibility, the program does not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program. Indiana's program information is reported here but not in national totals or rankings.

\*\*\* Virginia's enrollment includes VPI, Mixed Delivery, and CCSP to show a more comprehensive picture of children in the state enrolled in publicly funded early childhood education programs.

<sup>†</sup> At least one program in the state was able to report the number of children enrolled in state pre-K & Head Start. This information was used to estimate an unduplicated count of Head Start enrollment.

<sup>††</sup> Totals can overestimate public enrollment in state pre-K, pre-K special education, and Head Start as some or all of Head Start children may be served in a state's pre-K program and many states could not report this information.

For details about how these figures were calculated, see the Methodology section and the Roadmap to the State Profile Pages.

**TABLE 5: 2024-2025 STATE PRESCHOOL QUALITY STANDARDS**

STATE/ PROGRAM	Early learning & development standards	Curriculum supports	Teacher has BA	Specialized training in pre-K	Assistant teacher has CDA or equiv.	Staff professional development	Class size 20 or lower	Staff-child ratio 1:10 or better	Vision, hearing, & health screening & referral	Continuous quality improvement system	Quality standards checklist sum 2024-2025
Alabama	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Alaska Pre-Elementary	✓										1
Alaska EEP	✓						✓	✓			3
Alaska 0.5 ADM	✓						✓	✓			3
Arizona	✓	✓								✓	3
Arkansas	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	8
California CSPP	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	6
California TK	✓	✓	✓								3
Colorado	✓	✓									2
Connecticut CDCC	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓			5
Connecticut SR	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓			5
Connecticut Smart Start	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			6
Delaware	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
District of Columbia	✓	✓							✓	✓	4
Florida	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Georgia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Hawaii EOEL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Hawaii SPCS	✓	✓	✓*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10*
Illinois	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Iowa Shared Visions	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		6
Iowa SWVPP	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			6
Kansas	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		6
Kentucky	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Louisiana 8(g)	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	7
Louisiana LA 4	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Louisiana NSECD	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Maine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Maryland	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		7
Massachusetts CPPI	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓	7
Massachusetts Chapter 70	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			5
Michigan	✓	✓	✓*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10*
Minnesota HdSt	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Minnesota VPK/SRP	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓		5
Mississippi ELC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Mississippi SIP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
Missouri Foundation Form.	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓			4
Missouri QPK	✓				✓		✓	✓		✓	6
Nebraska	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			6
Nevada	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	7
New Jersey	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
New Mexico	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
New York	✓	✓	✓*	✓			✓	✓	✓		7*
North Carolina	✓	✓	✓*	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	9*
North Dakota	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓		5
Ohio	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	5
Oklahoma	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Oregon OPK	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Oregon Preschool Promise	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓	6
Pennsylvania RTL	✓			✓			✓	✓			4
Pennsylvania HSSAP	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		8
Pennsylvania K4 & SBPK	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓		3
Pennsylvania PKC	✓	✓	✓*	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	8*
Rhode Island	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
South Carolina	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7
Tennessee	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Texas	✓								✓		2
Utah	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓	6
Vermont	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	7
Virginia VPI	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	5
Washington ECEAP	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Washington TK	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	6
West Virginia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	9
Wisconsin			✓								1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>40</b>	
Indiana**	✓	✓									2
Virginia Mixed Delivery**	✓	✓						✓		✓	4
Virginia CCSP**	✓	✓						✓		✓	3
Guam	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		6

\* Indicates that while the policy meets the benchmark, it is not being fully implemented.

\*\* Indiana's state-funded early childhood education program and Virginia's Mixed Delivery and CCSP are similar to state-funded preschool in other states. However, because they have a parent work or education requirement for eligibility, they do not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program. Information on these programs is reported here but not in national totals or rankings.

Note: A pink checkmark indicates that the benchmark is newly met due to a policy change.

**TABLE 6: STATE PRE-K RESOURCES 2024-2025**

STATE	Resource rank based on state spending	State \$ per child enrolled in preschool	Change in total state per child spending from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025 Adjusted dollars	Total state preschool spending in 2024-2025	Change in total state spending from 2023-2024 to 2024-2025 Adjusted dollars
District of Columbia	1	\$27,354	\$3,127	\$356,697,970	\$36,444,483
New Jersey	2	\$18,848	\$604	\$1,231,974,000	\$103,290,612
Oregon	3	\$17,072	-\$1,912	\$216,587,540	-\$22,543,317
California	4	\$14,907	-\$1,587	\$4,148,114,798	-\$21,873,301
New Mexico	5	\$13,761	\$289	\$226,084,608	\$9,246,573
Michigan	6	\$13,604	\$606	\$652,720,000	\$118,264,216
Washington	7	\$13,484	\$438	\$329,963,994	\$45,399,141
Delaware	8	\$12,052	\$81	\$17,090,424	\$2,269,696
Connecticut	9	\$10,464	\$1,099	\$133,143,028	\$17,646,563
Rhode Island	10	\$9,858	\$193	\$28,232,929	\$5,385,882
Vermont	11	\$9,591	\$799	\$73,025,082	-\$133,489
Nevada	12	\$9,226	-\$657	\$39,560,895	\$3,923,860
West Virginia	13	\$8,810	\$760	\$120,466,591	\$8,862,817
Arizona	14	\$8,723	\$603	\$26,875,278	-\$24,464,419
Pennsylvania	15	\$8,474	-\$17	\$479,719,969	\$11,175,084
Hawaii	16	\$8,109	\$573	\$13,273,747	\$5,542,752
Maryland	17	\$7,933	\$1,662	\$269,734,230	\$62,963,083
Alabama	18	\$7,651	\$146	\$185,448,382	\$528,976
Georgia	19	\$7,630	\$1,111	\$538,431,295	\$72,157,626
Alaska	20	\$7,150	\$86	\$8,158,561	-\$1,145,285
New York	21	\$6,719	\$317	\$1,028,061,297	\$10,409,156
Illinois	22	\$6,641	\$356	\$555,609,751	\$37,242,858
North Dakota	23	\$6,510	\$279	\$7,005,089	\$1,421,869
Maine	24	\$6,363	-\$92	\$41,012,213	-\$49,661
Minnesota	25	\$6,283	-\$712	\$79,260,540	\$24,220,975
Arkansas	26	\$6,278	\$497	\$127,617,130	\$10,203,845
North Carolina	27	\$6,254	-\$995	\$167,027,011	-\$30,896,434
Virginia	28	\$6,120	-\$113	\$149,480,336	-\$6,300,712
Colorado	29	\$5,817	-\$11	\$338,023,799	\$31,380,217
Oklahoma	30	\$5,749	\$521	\$207,632,498	\$6,584,399
Louisiana	31	\$5,584	-\$198	\$111,023,907	-\$1,796,638
Ohio	32	\$5,110	\$781	\$120,573,483	-\$1,257,827
Kentucky	33	\$5,080	-\$634	\$95,692,076	-\$17,082,605
Tennessee	34	\$4,886	-\$107	\$85,505,733	-\$2,535,487
Mississippi	35	\$4,832	\$299	\$39,022,295	\$6,638,190
Kansas	36	\$4,815	\$169	\$119,446,934	\$6,836,219
Texas**	37	\$4,395	-\$373	\$996,609,407	-\$84,504,056
South Carolina	38	\$3,947	-\$387	\$120,727,185	\$2,957,556
Utah	39	\$3,917	\$529	\$6,474,481	-\$338,229
Iowa*	40	\$3,885	\$80	\$97,813,323	-\$585,985
Wisconsin***	41	\$3,882	\$0	\$165,861,752	-\$6,549,371
Missouri	42	\$3,095	-\$1,839	\$56,524,225	\$13,124,189
Massachusetts	43	\$3,046	\$140	\$105,715,076	\$3,562,184
Florida	44	\$2,946	\$56	\$443,714,085	\$1,860,701
Nebraska	45	\$2,008	-\$258	\$26,532,334	-\$3,448,914
<b>50 states + DC</b>		<b>\$8,124</b>	<b>\$45</b>	<b>\$14,387,269,279</b>	<b>\$434,037,994</b>
Indiana†	Work Requirement	\$601	-\$9,608	\$3,616,054	-\$77,527,198
Virginia MD & CCSP†	Work Requirement	\$8,877		\$125,456,530	
Guam		\$9,410	-\$77	\$489,340	\$14,987
Idaho	No Program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Montana	No Program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
New Hampshire	No Program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
South Dakota	No Program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Wyoming	No Program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

\* 2,446 children with instructional IEPs were served in Iowa's SWVPP program but were funded by sources not reported by the state. Similar to prior years, these children were removed from the per-child spending calculations.

\*\* Texas includes 21,742 Non-ADA eligible children in their enrollment total. These children are removed from state funding per child calculations.

\*\*\* Wisconsin could not report pre-K spending for 2023-2024 or 2024-2025. Spending is estimated based on 2022-2023 reported spending.

† Indiana's state-funded early childhood education program and Virginia's Mixed Delivery and CCSP are similar to state-funded preschool in other states. However, because they have a parent work or education requirement for eligibility, they do not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program. Information on these programs is reported here but not in national totals or rankings. For details about how these figures were calculated, see the Methodology section and Roadmap to the State Profile Pages.

**TABLE 7: ALL-REPORTED PRE-K RESOURCES 2024-2025**

STATE	Resource rank based on all-reported spending	All-reported \$ per child enrolled in preschool	State reported non-state funds	State \$ per child enrolled in preschool	Local \$ per child enrolled in preschool	Federal \$ per child enrolled in preschool	Total all-reported preschool spending
District of Columbia	1	\$27,354	No	\$27,354	\$0	\$0	\$356,697,970
New Jersey	2	\$18,848	No	\$18,848	\$0	\$0	\$1,231,974,000
Oregon	3	\$17,072	No	\$17,072	\$0	\$0	\$216,587,540
New York	4	\$16,940	Yes	\$6,719	\$8,748	\$1,473	\$2,591,883,353
California	5	\$15,125	Yes	\$14,907	\$6	\$213	\$4,208,957,132
Washington	6	\$13,875	Yes	\$13,484	\$387	\$4	\$339,537,052
New Mexico	7	\$13,761	No	\$13,761	\$0	\$0	\$226,084,608
Kentucky	8	\$13,685	Yes	\$5,080	\$4,963	\$3,642	\$257,788,886
Michigan	9	\$13,604	No	\$13,604	\$0	\$0	\$652,720,000
Oklahoma	10	\$12,433	Yes	\$5,749	\$5,227	\$1,457	\$449,016,421
Delaware	11	\$12,052	No	\$12,052	\$0	\$0	\$17,090,424
Vermont	12	\$11,937	Yes	\$9,591	\$514	\$1,832	\$90,889,523
Nebraska	13	\$11,926	Yes	\$2,008	\$3,993	\$5,925	\$157,568,259
West Virginia	14	\$11,918	Yes	\$8,810	\$46	\$3,061	\$162,961,998
Maryland	15	\$11,899	Yes	\$7,933	\$3,966	\$0	\$404,601,350
Maine	16	\$10,752	Yes	\$6,363	\$4,334	\$55	\$69,298,384
Alabama	17	\$10,741	Yes	\$7,651	\$3,090	\$0	\$260,343,048
Virginia	18	\$10,656	Yes	\$6,120	\$3,640	\$896	\$260,272,406
Arkansas	19	\$10,637	Yes	\$6,278	\$3,479	\$880	\$216,214,079
Connecticut	20	\$10,464	No	\$10,464	\$0	\$0	\$133,143,028
Rhode Island	21	\$9,933	Yes	\$9,858	\$0	\$75	\$28,448,058
Mississippi	22	\$9,470	Yes	\$4,832	\$3,797	\$841	\$76,477,116
Nevada	23	\$9,226	No	\$9,226	\$0	\$0	\$39,560,895
Illinois	24	\$9,179	Yes	\$6,641	\$2,538	\$0	\$767,965,483
Arizona	25	\$8,723	No	\$8,723	\$0	\$0	\$26,875,278
North Carolina	26	\$8,722	Yes	\$6,254	\$710	\$1,758	\$232,940,748
Pennsylvania	27	\$8,474	No	\$8,474	\$0	\$0	\$479,719,969
Hawaii	28	\$8,219	Yes	\$8,109	\$110	\$0	\$13,453,747
Georgia	29	\$7,630	No	\$7,630	\$0	\$0	\$538,431,295
Alaska	30	\$7,177	Yes	\$7,150	\$0	\$26	\$8,188,561
Wisconsin***	31	\$7,047	Yes	\$3,882	\$3,165	\$0	\$301,061,330
North Dakota	32	\$6,510	No	\$6,510	\$0	\$0	\$7,005,089
Tennessee	33	\$6,509	Yes	\$4,886	\$1,623	\$0	\$113,911,200
Massachusetts	34	\$6,410	Yes	\$3,046	\$2,669	\$695	\$222,470,448
Minnesota	35	\$6,283	No	\$6,283	\$0	\$0	\$79,260,540
Utah	36	\$6,134	Yes	\$3,917	\$0	\$2,217	\$10,139,286
Colorado	37	\$5,817	No	\$5,817	\$0	\$0	\$338,023,799
Louisiana	38	\$5,584	No	\$5,584	\$0	\$0	\$111,023,907
Ohio	39	\$5,110	No	\$5,110	\$0	\$0	\$120,573,483
Kansas	40	\$4,815	No	\$4,815	\$0	\$0	\$119,446,934
Texas**	41	\$4,480	Yes	\$4,395	\$0	\$85	\$1,015,817,221
South Carolina	42	\$4,211	Yes	\$3,947	\$0	\$264	\$128,789,930
Iowa*	43	\$4,084	Yes	\$3,885	\$199	\$0	\$102,827,175
Missouri	44	\$3,095	No	\$3,095	\$0	\$0	\$56,524,225
Florida	45	\$2,963	Yes	\$2,946	\$0	\$17	\$446,309,578
<b>50 states + DC</b>		<b>\$9,988</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>\$8,124</b>	<b>\$1,474</b>	<b>\$391</b>	<b>\$17,688,874,755</b>
Indiana†	Work Requirement	\$8,762	Yes	\$601	\$0	\$8,161	\$52,731,271
Virginia MD & CCSP†	Work Requirement	\$12,678	Yes	\$8,877	\$0	\$1,671	\$179,158,494
Guam		\$9,410	No	\$9,410	\$0	\$0	\$489,340
Idaho	No program	\$0	NA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Montana	No program	\$0	NA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
New Hampshire	No program	\$0	NA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
South Dakota	No program	\$0	NA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Wyoming	No program	\$0	NA	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

\* 2,446 children with instructional IEPs were served in Iowa's SWVPP program but were funded by sources not reported by the state. Similar to prior years, these children were removed from the per-child spending calculations.

\*\* Texas includes 21,742 Non-ADA eligible children in their enrollment total. These children are removed from state funding per child calculations.

\*\*\* Wisconsin could not report pre-K spending for 2023-2024 or 2024-2025. Spending is estimated based on 2022-2023 reported spending.

† Indiana's state-funded early childhood education program and Virginia's Mixed Delivery and CCSP are similar to state-funded preschool in other states. However, because they have a parent work or education requirement for eligibility, they do not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program. Information on these programs is reported here but not in national totals or rankings. For details about how these figures were calculated, see the Methodology section and Roadmap to the State Profile Pages.

## WHAT QUALIFIES AS A STATE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM?

NIEER's *State of Preschool Yearbook* series focuses on state-funded preschool education programs meeting the following criteria:

- The program is funded, controlled, and directed by the state.
- The program serves children of preschool age, usually three and/or four years old. Although programs in some states serve broader age ranges, programs that serve only infants and toddlers are excluded. The program must reach at least one percent of the 3- or 4-year-old population in the state to be included.
- Early childhood education is the primary focus of the program. This does not exclude programs that offer parent education but does exclude programs that mainly focus on parent education. Programs that focus on parent work status or programs where child eligibility is tied to work status are also excluded.
- The program offers a group learning experience to children at least two days per week.
- State-funded preschool education programs must be distinct from the state's system for subsidized child care. However, preschool programs may be *coordinated* and *integrated* with the subsidy system for child care.
- The program is *not* primarily designed to serve children with disabilities, but services may be offered to children with disabilities.
- State supplements to the federal Head Start program are considered to constitute de facto state preschool programs if they substantially expand the number of children served and if the state assumes some administrative responsibility for the program. State supplements to fund quality improvements, extended days, or other program enhancements, or to fund expanded enrollment only minimally, are not considered equivalent to a state preschool program.

While ideally this report would identify all preschool education funding streams at the federal, state, and local levels, there are a number of limitations of the data that make this extremely difficult to do. For example, preschool is only one of several types of education programs toward which local districts can target their Title I funds. Many states do not track how Title I funds are used at the local level, and therefore do not know the extent to which they are spent on preschool education. Another challenge involves tracking total state spending for child care, using a variety of available sources, such as Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) dollars, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds, and any state funding above and beyond the required matches for federal funds. Although some of these child care funds may be used for high quality, educational, center-based programs for 3- and 4-year-olds that closely resemble programs supported by state-funded preschool education initiatives, it is nearly impossible to determine what proportion of child care funds are spent this way.

### AGE GROUPINGS USED IN THIS REPORT

- Children considered to be three years old during the 2024-2025 school year are those who will be eligible to enter kindergarten two years later, during the 2026-2027 school year.
- Children considered to be four years old during the 2024-2025 school year were eligible to enter kindergarten one year later, during the 2025-2026 school year.
- Children considered to be five years old during the 2024-2025 school year were already eligible for kindergarten at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.

# Roadmap to the State Profile Pages



## *How to interpret data on the individual state profiles*

For each state with a preschool education program, we include one page with a description of the state's program, followed by a page with data on the program's key features, focusing on access, quality, and resources.

The first page for each state begins with two sets of line graphs. The first set shows percentages of the state's 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds enrolled in state-funded preschool in the state. The second set shows the state's spending per child enrolled in state-funded preschool. Both sets of line graphs depict changes in state preschool over time, from fiscal year 2002 (which corresponds to the 2001-2002 school year) through fiscal year 2025 (which corresponds to the 2024-2025 school year). Most of the data used for comparison purposes come from NIEER's previous Yearbooks, although spending figures are adjusted for inflation and represent 2025 dollars. In addition, there are some exceptions in cases where states revised data or reported data differently. The percent of children enrolled is calculated using Census estimates of 3- and 4-year-old children in each state. For the 2020-2021 school year, in response to the impact of COVID-19 on preschool enrollment, there is an aqua dot on the spending per child line graph which shows the state pre-K spending per the estimated full enrollment equivalent. This is an estimate of what spending per child would have been if the program was fully enrolled. This was not done again in subsequent years.

Following the line graphs is a brief narrative providing information on the main features of the state's program(s). This includes an overview of preschool enrollment, spending and quality; any new developments; details such as the program's history, the types of settings in which state-funded preschool can be offered, and eligibility criteria. In many cases, the narrative also describes unique or particularly interesting aspects of the state's program(s) that may not be highlighted elsewhere in the report, as well as expected changes for the 2025-2026 school year. Some descriptive information in the narratives was originally based on information found in the reports *Seeds of Success* from the Children's Defense Fund and *Quality Counts 2002* from Education Week.

For the 44 states with preschool programs and the District of Columbia, the bottom of the first page of each state profile presents four numbers showing the state's ranking on the following measures:

- The percentage of the state's 4-year-old population enrolled in the state's preschool program (Access Rankings – 4-Year-Olds)
- The percentage of the state's 3-year-old population enrolled in the state's preschool program (Access Rankings – 3-Year-Olds)
- State expenditures per child enrolled in the program (Resources Rankings – State Spending)
- All reported expenditures per child enrolled in the program, including local and federal spending as well as state spending (Resources Rankings – All Reported Spending).

Federal COVID-19 relief funding used for preschool is also included in the State expenditure per child calculation again this year.

The All Reported Spending ranking often provides a more complete picture of preschool spending in states using local and federal funding sources than the State Spending ranking alone. Because states vary in their ability to report spending from these other sources, however, this ranking is imperfect and sometimes underestimates total spending.

Indiana's preschool program has a parent work or education requirement for eligibility and therefore does not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program. Information on the program is included in this report but not in national totals or rankings.

Virginia's Mixed Delivery Program and Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) also have a parent work or school requirement and therefore do not meet NIEER's definition of a state-funded preschool program. These two programs are not included in Virginia's rankings or national averages. However, the third page in Virginia's profile reflects what the state's rankings would be if these two programs were included.

The bottom of the first page of each state profile (including Guam and Indiana) also presents a box indicating the total number of quality standards benchmarks met.

Alaska, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington each have more than one distinct preschool education initiative. Therefore, information is presented slightly differently for these states and is explained on their individual profiles.

State profile pages are also given for the five states that did not fund preschool education programs in the 2024-2025 school year. For these states, the table of quality standards is omitted. These profiles do report enrollment data for special education and federally funded Head Start, however. In addition, data on per-child spending for K-12 education and federal Head Start are included. Profile pages are also included for U.S. territories that do not offer "state-funded" preschool (American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands). For these five territories, a narrative is provided, as is information about Head Start and special education.

The following sections provide an overview of information contained in the data tables on the state profile pages and explain why these elements are important. Data in the tables are for the 2024-2025 school year except where otherwise noted.

## ACCESS

The Access data table begins with the total state preschool enrollment, which is the number of children of all ages enrolled at a specific point in time. Following that is the percentage of school districts (or other local education authorities, such as counties or parishes) providing state-funded preschool programs. This information shows the extent of the initiative's geographic coverage. Next, the table shows what, if any, income requirement is used in determining eligibility for the program.

Data on the minimum hours of operation (hours per day and days per week) and operating schedule (academic or full calendar year) are shown as additional measures of access because working parents may find it difficult to get their children to and from programs that operate only a few hours a day or week. The amount of time children participate in a preschool program also matters for other reasons, such as influencing the program's effects on children's development and learning.

The Access data table also shows enrollment of 3- and 4-year-old children in two federally funded programs: preschool special education and Head Start. Beginning in 2022-2023, the special education enrollment total includes only children in school- or center-based settings and also includes 5-year-olds not yet in kindergarten. The Head Start enrollment total includes children in the American Indian/Alaskan Native and Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs where applicable. The final item in the table reports how many children ages three and four years old are participating in Head Start through state supplemental funds.

Two Access pie charts illustrate the percentages of the state's 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in the state-funded preschool program(s), special education, Head Start, and Other Public ECE programs. The remaining children are categorized as enrolled in "Other/None." These children may be enrolled in another type of private or publicly funded program (e.g., state-subsidized child care) or may not be attending a center-based program at all. "Other public" was new for 2021-2022 and includes children enrolled in locally, city, or district-funded preschool programs (outside of state-funded preschool). In some states it also includes early childhood education programs that are similar to a state-funded preschool program but do not meet NIEER's definition of a preschool program. We calculated an unduplicated count for special education enrollment in order to more accurately represent the percentage of children served in the state. The special education percentage in the pie chart represents children who are in school- or center-based special education but not enrolled in Head Start or state preschool programs. We also calculated an unduplicated count for Head Start enrollment in order to avoid double counting Head Start children enrolled in state-funded preschool. For the states that were able to report this information, the Head Start percentage does not include children also enrolled in state-funded preschool.

## QUALITY

State policies in critical areas related to quality are shown in the Quality Standards Checklist table. For each policy area, states receive a checkmark when their policy meets or exceeds the related benchmark standard. The first column in the Quality Standards Checklist table lists the policy that is being evaluated. The second column presents information about each state program's requirements regarding each policy. The third column lists the benchmark for each policy—that is, the rigor of the state requirement needed to meet the benchmark. The fourth column depicts whether the state preschool program's requirements met the benchmark. A box at the bottom of the fourth column displays the total number of benchmarks met by the state program. Starting in the 2021-2022 report, an "\*\*\*" indicates that in practice a program did not meet a benchmark even though a policy was in place. For example, a program that required a bachelor's degree for lead teachers but allowed waivers resulting in a substantial portion of lead teachers not having at least a bachelor's degree received an "\*\*\*" next to the check mark and the total number of benchmarks met.

The Quality Standards Checklist represents a set of minimum criteria, established by state policy, needed to ensure the effectiveness of preschool education programs, especially when serving children who are at-risk for school failure. Although the checklist is not intended to be an exhaustive inventory of all the features of a high quality program, each of these research-based standards is essential for setting the groundwork for high quality experiences for children. Meeting all 10 standards does not necessarily guarantee that a program is of high quality, but no state's prekindergarten policies should be considered fully satisfactory unless all 10 benchmarks are met. Although programs may routinely engage in practices meeting criteria for quality standards, credit is given only when the practices are explicitly required in state policy.

Judgment inevitably plays a role in setting specific benchmarks based on evidence, as research rarely is completely definitive. We have given more weight to the risk of losing substantial benefits by setting benchmarks too low than to the risk of unnecessarily raising costs by setting benchmarks too high, because research has found the benefits of high quality programs to be substantially greater than the costs. In other words, there is more to lose when programs are weak or ineffective. Nevertheless, the original benchmarks were still conceived as minimum standards. The current benchmarks raise the bar somewhat.

Based on advances in research during more than a decade and a half since establishing the original quality standards benchmarks, we have created the current set, which debuted in the 2016 Yearbook. These shifted the focus somewhat from policies regarding classroom structure toward policies that shape classroom processes associated with positive child developmental outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, the current benchmarks introduced one new quality standards benchmark and made substantial changes or enhancements to three others. Below, we explain each benchmark, along with the evidence and reasoning behind it.

We also describe the criteria used to assess whether state policies meet each benchmark:

**Benchmark 1. Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS).** A state's ELDS specify a program's goals. Clear and appropriate expectations for learning and development across multiple domains are an essential starting place for quality.<sup>2</sup> States should have comprehensive ELDS covering all areas identified as fundamental by the National Education Goals Panel<sup>3</sup> — children's physical well-being and motor development, social/emotional development, approaches toward learning, language development, and cognition and general knowledge. Neglecting any of these developmental domains could weaken both short- and long-term effectiveness.<sup>4</sup>

To meet the benchmark, ELDS should be comprehensive and specific to preschool-aged children and vertically aligned with state standards for younger and older children so that children's experiences at each stage build on what has gone before.<sup>5</sup> ELDS also should be aligned with any required child assessments, and sensitive to children's diverse cultural and language backgrounds.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the state must provide some support for those charged with implementing the ELDS so they understand them, such as professional development and additional resources.

**Benchmark 2. Curriculum supports.** A strong curriculum that is well-implemented increases support for learning and development broadly, and includes specificity regarding key domains of language, literacy, mathematics, and social-emotional development.<sup>7</sup> To meet the benchmark for curriculum support, states must provide guidance or an approval process for selecting curricula, and support for curriculum implementation, such as training or ongoing technical assistance to facilitate adequate implementation of the curriculum.

**Benchmark 3. Teacher degree.** To meet the benchmark, state policy must require lead teachers in every classroom to have at least a bachelor's degree. This follows recommendations from multiple studies by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Science that preschool teachers have a bachelor's degree with specialized knowledge and training in early childhood education.<sup>8</sup> Their conclusions are supported by an analysis of what teachers are expected to know and do in order to be highly effective. Also, a comprehensive review finds that teachers with higher educational levels generally provide higher quality educational environments for young children.<sup>9</sup>

Much of the research has approached the question of teacher degree requirements incorrectly by assuming that teacher qualifications and other program features act independently, are unconstrained by regulation, and are independent of unmeasured contexts that affect outcomes.<sup>10</sup> When multiple program features are interdependent, benchmarking is a more appropriate approach for identifying the features associated with success.<sup>11</sup> We found no examples of programs that have produced large persistent gains in achievement without well-qualified teachers.

It also follows that teacher qualifications should not be expected to have an effect in isolation. Compensation must be adequate to attract and retain strong teachers, regardless of qualifications requirements.<sup>12</sup> We have not made this part of the benchmark due to the difficulty of ascertaining exactly what "adequate compensation" is for each state, but that does not lessen its importance.

**Benchmark 4. Teacher specialized training.** IOM/NRC reports have also emphasized that preschool lead teachers should have specialized preparation that includes knowledge of learning, development, and pedagogy specific to preschool-age children.<sup>13</sup> To meet the benchmark, policy must require specialized training in early childhood education and/or child development. We recognize that early childhood teacher preparation programs are variable. States may wish to consider supports to improve programs offered by their state institutions of higher education and alignment with the state ELDS.<sup>14</sup>

**Benchmark 5. Assistant teacher degree.** All members of a teaching team benefit from preservice preparation. The Child Development Associate (CDA) credential was developed as the entry-level qualification for the field.<sup>15</sup> Other certifications or coursework can provide similar preparation. There has been limited research specific to the qualifications of assistant teachers, but evidence indicates that assistant teacher qualifications are associated with teaching quality. To meet the benchmark, policy must require that assistant teachers hold a CDA or have equivalent preparation based on coursework.



**Benchmark 6. Staff professional development.** To meet this benchmark both teachers and assistant teachers must be required to have at least 15 hours of annual in-service training. In addition, some professional development must be provided through coaching or similar ongoing classroom-embedded support. Lead and assistant teachers are also required to have annual written individualized professional development plans. Research indicates regular professional learning, including coaching, supports teaching practices related to high quality experiences for children.<sup>16</sup> Individualized professional development focused on helping teachers improve in their own classrooms has been found more effective than traditional workshops and general professional development.<sup>17</sup> Good teachers actively engage in learning and regular professional development, and there is some evidence for a 15-hour threshold.<sup>18</sup>

**Benchmarks 7 and 8. Maximum class size (20) and staff-child ratio (1:10).** These two benchmarks are addressed together as they are highly linked in policy and practice. To meet benchmark 7, class size should be limited to at most 20 children. To meet benchmark 8, classes should be permitted to have no more than 10 children per classroom teaching staff member. Small class size and corresponding teacher-child ratios characterize the most effective programs, even though many studies find weak or no association between these features and effectiveness.<sup>19</sup> Yet, it seems clear that smaller classes and fewer children per teacher enable teachers to interact with each child more frequently, to work with smaller groups, and offer each child more individualized attention, which results in better outcomes. The smaller the class, the easier it is for a teacher to develop a good understanding of each child's interests, needs, and capabilities.

What may be the best designed large-scale randomized trial of class size for young children to date found substantive and lasting impacts on achievement and educational success for smaller class sizes in kindergarten.<sup>20</sup> Subsequent efforts to reproduce these results through policy changes elsewhere have been far less successful. Again, we note that key policies regarding program features are not independent of other policies, context, and implementation.

A staff-child ratio of 1:10 is lower than in programs found to have the largest persistent effects, but it is generally accepted by professional opinion. A recent meta-analysis suggests an even lower threshold, below 1 to 7.5 (class size of 15), would be better, and that finding is consistent with experimental evidence for kindergarten.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, at least one program has produced large short-term gains with a maximum class size of 22 and 1:11 staff to child ratio, just outside the benchmarks.<sup>22</sup>

**Benchmark 9. Screenings and referrals.** To meet the benchmark, policies should require that preschool programs ensure children receive vision and hearing screenings and at least one additional health screening; as well as referrals when needed.<sup>23</sup> This benchmark recognizes that children's overall well-being and educational success involve not only cognitive development but also physical and mental health.<sup>24</sup> This quality standards benchmark no longer assesses provision of support services. Nearly all state-funded pre-K programs have some requirement for parent engagement and support, and we could not set an evidence-based benchmark that differentiated among them based on effectiveness.

**Benchmark 10. Continuous Quality Improvement System.** This benchmark focuses on state requirements regarding a Continuous Quality Improvement System (CQIS). This reflects a shift in focus from compliance to state support for continuous improvement. An effective CQIS operates at local and state levels to ensure that information is gathered regularly on processes and outcomes, and that this information is used to guide program improvement. To meet this benchmark, policy must at a minimum require that (1) data on classroom quality is systematically collected, and (2) local programs and the state both use information from the CQIS to help improve policy or practice. The use of a cycle of planning, observation, and feedback has characterized highly effective programs.<sup>25</sup>



The original Quality Standards Checklist required that programs should provide at least one meal per day. While nutritious meals are important, this requirement has been removed from the Checklist because whether a program met the requirement was largely determined by whether the program operated for a half day or full school day.

## RESOURCES

The table in the Resources section provides the following information: total state spending for the state preschool program (which includes TANF and COVID-19 relief funding); whether a local match, monetary or in-kind, is required; amount of state Head Start spending; state spending per child enrolled in the program; and all reported (local, state, and federal) spending per child enrolled in the program. These measures show various views of the resources dedicated to state preschool programs, which allows for a more complete picture of a state's commitment to preschool education. For example, a state's total spending may appear low, but may prove to be high relative to the number of children enrolled. On the other hand, a state with a high total funding level may have a low per-pupil spending level if it enrolls a large number of children. In some states, local communities contribute substantial additional funds to state preschool education by using local funding sources or by leveraging federal funding sources. In such cases, the figure that includes all reported spending is the best gauge of the level of available resources, to the extent that information about local and locally allocated federal spending is available.

The bar chart in the Resources section compares per-child spending in state-funded preschool programs to federal Head Start and K–12 per-child spending. Head Start per-child spending for the 2024-2025 year includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds served. Past years' figures have unintentionally included funds for Early Head Start, which made per-child amounts seem artificially higher (although this has been corrected for the past several years). Different colors indicate the different funding sources (local, state, and federal). Separate colors are used to indicate any TANF funds or federal COVID-19 relief funds that a state directs toward its preschool initiative. While TANF and COVID-19 relief funds are federal dollars, it is the state's decision to devote these funds to preschool education, as opposed to other purposes. Therefore, TANF and COVID-19 relief funds are including in the "State" funding amount. Data on the amounts of local and federal preschool funds are included in the bar chart when available.

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# Guide to State Profiles

## ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment.....	Number of children of all ages in state pre-K program
School districts that offer state program .....	Percentage of school districts in state where program is offered
Income requirement .....	Maximum family income for program eligibility
Minimum hours of operation.....	Minimum hours per day and days per week program operates
Operating schedule.....	Annual schedule of operation (school/academic year or full calendar year)
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	Number of 3- and 4-year-olds served by the Preschool Grants Program of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in School- or Center-Based Settings
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....	Number of slots for 3- and 4-year-olds in Head Start funded with federal money
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	Number of slots for 3- and 4-year-olds in Head Start funded with state money

## QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

### POLICY

### STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT

Early learning & development standards .....	Comprehensive, aligned with state infant & toddler and K–3 or college & career ready standards, aligned with child assessments, supported, and culturally sensitive
Curriculum supports.....	Approval process for selecting curricula and supports in place for curriculum implementation
Teacher degree.....	Lead teacher must have a BA, at minimum
Teacher specialized training .....	Lead teacher must have specialized training in a pre-K area
Assistant teacher degree.....	Assistant teacher must have a CDA or equivalent, at minimum
Staff professional development.....	Teacher and assistant teacher must receive at least 15 hours/year of in-service professional development and training, individualized annual professional development plans, and coaching
Maximum class size .....	Maximum number of children per classroom must be 20 or fewer
Staff-child ratio .....	Lowest acceptable ratio of staff to children in classroom (e.g., maximum number of students per teacher) must be 1:10 or better
Screening & referral.....	Screenings and referrals for vision, hearing, and health must be required
Continuous quality improvement system .....	Systematic structured observations of classroom quality and information collected is used for classroom/program improvement at the state and local levels

## RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending .....	Total state funds spent on state pre-K program
Local match required?.....	Whether state requires local providers to match state monetary contributions to program
State Head Start spending .....	Total state funds spent to supplement Head Start program
State spending per child enrolled .....	Amount of state funds spent per child participating in pre-K program
All reported spending per child enrolled .....	Amount of all reported funds (local, state, and federal) spent per child participating in pre-K program

## GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Associate of Arts	FEE	Full enrollment equivalent
ACF	Administration for Children and Families	FPL	Federal Poverty Level
AEPS	Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System for Infants and Children	FRPL	Free or reduced-price lunch
ARP/ARPA	American Rescue Plan/American Rescue Plan Act	FTE	Full-time Equivalent
ASQ-3/ ASQ-SE	Ages & Stages Questionnaires, Third Edition/Ages & Stages Questionnaires - Social Emotional	FY	Fiscal Year
B–	Denotes that the age range covered by a teaching license begins at birth (e.g., B–3 = birth–grade 3)	GED	General Equivalency Diploma
BA	Bachelor of Arts	GEERS	Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund
BMI	Body Mass Index	HdSt	Head Start
BS	Bachelor of Science	HSD	High School Diploma
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program	IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
CARES	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act	IEP	Individualized Education Plan
CBO	Community-Based Organization	IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan
CCDF	Child Care and Development Fund	IOM	Institute of Medicine
CD	Child Development	ITERS	Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale
CDA	Child Development Associate credential	K	Kindergarten
CLASS	Classroom Assessment Scoring System	KEA/KRA	Kindergarten Entry Assessment/Kindergarten Readiness Assessment
COR	HighScope Child Observation Record	LEA	Local Education Agency
CQIS	Continuous Quality Improvement System	MA	Master of Arts
CRRSA	Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act	N–	Denotes that the age range covered by a teaching license begins at nursery (e.g., N–3 = nursery–grade 3)
DIAL	Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning	NA	Not Applicable
DIBELS	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills	NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
DLL	Dual Language Learner	NCLB	No Child Left Behind
DOE	Department of Education	ONBL	Outdoor/Nature-based Learning
DRDP	Desired Results Developmental Profile	PALS	Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening
EC	Early Childhood	P–	Denotes that the age range covered by a teaching license begins at preschool (e.g., P–4 = preschool–grade 4)
ECE	Early Childhood Education	PD	Professional Development
ECERS-3	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Third Edition	PDG	Preschool Development Grant
ECERS-R	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised	PDG B–5	Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five
ECSE/ ECE Sp Ed	Early Childhood Special Education	PIR	Program Information Report (Head Start)
Ed.D.	Doctor of Education Degree	PPVT	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
Ed.S.	Educational Specialist Degree	Pre-K	Prekindergarten
EE	Elementary Education	QRIS	Quality Rating and Improvement System
ELDS	Early Learning and Development Standards	SEA	State Education Agency
ELL	English Language Learner	SMI	State Median Income
ELLCO	Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation	SpEd	Special Education
ELS	Early Learning Standards	TANF	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
ESSER	Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund	T.E.A.C.H.	Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project)
ERS	Environmental Rating Scale	TPOT	Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool
ESL	English as a Second Language	TS GOLD	Teaching Strategies GOLD
FCC	Family Child Care	USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
FCCERS	Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale	WSS	Work Sampling System