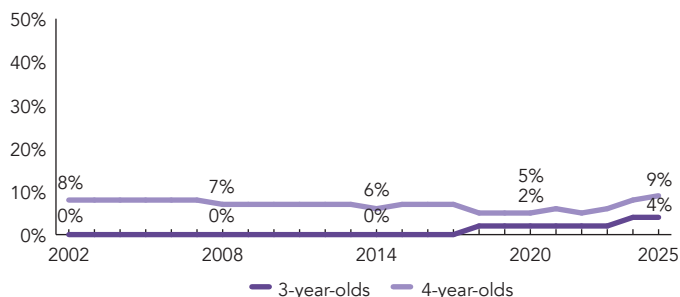
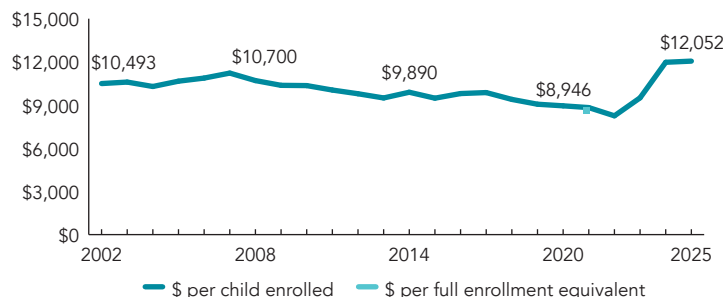


# Delaware

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2025 DOLLARS)



## OVERVIEW

During the 2024-2025 school year, Delaware preschool enrolled 1,418 children, an increase of 180 from the prior year. State spending totaled \$17,090,424, up \$2,269,696 (15%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child averaged \$12,052 in 2024-2025, up \$81 from 2023-2024, adjusted for inflation. Full-day preschool seats are funded at \$14,500 and half-day seats are funded at \$7,250. Delaware met 9 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

## WHAT'S NEW

The State Funded Early Care and Education Programs (SFECEP) blend the Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP) and the Redding Consortium funding streams, both of which are state funding streams. Delaware's new Governor and Secretary of Education are supporting state-funded preschool by deeming it as the model and foundation for building a comprehensive, universal preschool program for all children and families.

A new round of PDG B-5 Systems Building Grants were awarded in December 2025 to support states in building systems and strengthening their ECE programs that expand parental choice in a mixed-delivery system, improve system efficiency and collaboration, and raise the overall quality of programs. Delaware received \$11,312,524 in this latest round to use in 2026.

## BACKGROUND

The Delaware Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP) began in 1994, providing comprehensive early learning services for 4-year-olds eligible for the federal Head Start program. Eligibility expanded to 3-year-olds in 2017-2018.

Originally modeled after the federal Head Start program, SFECEP requires participating programs to follow a statewide policies and procedures manual with required standards. Per these standards, ten percent of enrollment slots are reserved for children with disabilities. Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, children were eligible for SFECEP if they had a family income up 200% of the federal poverty level.

SFECEP awards are available to private and public child care programs, such as for-profit child care, Head Start agencies, public schools, community-based organizations, family child care, and faith-based centers through an RFP process. Contracts for funded SFECEP seats are determined based on Community Needs Assessment Data. In addition to preschool, SFECEP funded 295 seats for infants and toddlers during the 2024-2025 program year.

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
42	24

RESOURCE RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
8	11

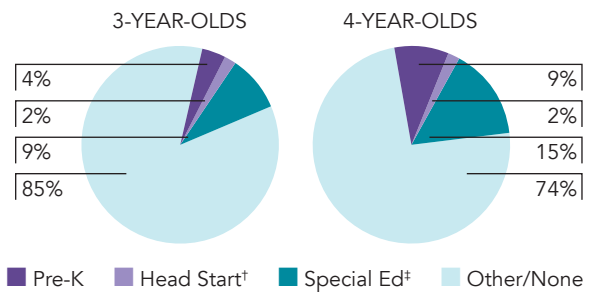
TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
9

# DELAWARE STATE FUNDED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS (SFECEP)

## ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment.....	1,418
School districts that offer state program.....	38%
Income requirement.....	200% FPL
Minimum hours of operation.....	3.5 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule.....	170 days/year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	2,809
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	473
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	0

## PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



† Estimates children in Head Start not also enrolled in state pre-K.  
‡ Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

## QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	DE PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<b>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	<b>Approval process &amp; supports</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA (public); At least AA with 50% BA (nonpublic)	<b>BA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE, CD, ECE SpEd	<b>Specializing in pre-K</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	Working towards CDA or equivalent	<b>CDA or equivalent</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	90 hours/5 years (public teachers); 18 hours/year (nonpublic teachers & assistants); 15 hours/year (public assistants); PD plans; Coaching	<b>For teachers &amp; assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; Coaching</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	17 (3-year-olds); 20 (4-year-olds)	<b>20 or lower</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	2:17 (3-year-olds); 1:10 (4-year-olds)	<b>1:10 or better</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing, health & more	<b>Vision, hearing &amp; health screenings; &amp; referral</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement	<b>Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

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## RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending.....	\$17,090,424
Local match required?.....	No
State Head Start spending.....	\$0
State spending per child enrolled.....	\$12,052
All reported spending per child enrolled*.....	\$12,052

\* 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

