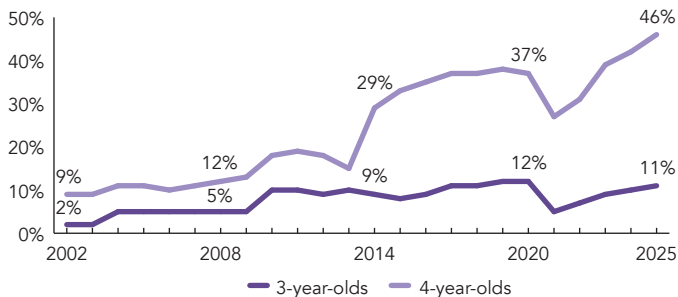
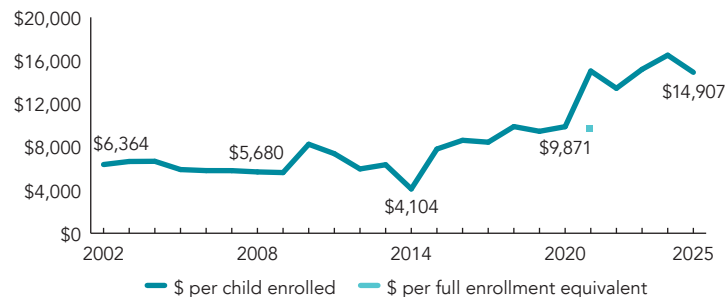


California

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED
(2025 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

During the 2024-2025 school year, California Department of Education's (CDE) two preschool programs, California State Preschool Program (CSPP) and Transitional Kindergarten (TK), together enrolled 278,273 children, an increase of 25,447 from the prior year. State spending for the two programs totaled \$4,148,114,798, down \$21,873,301 (1%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child averaged \$14,907 in 2024-2025, down \$1,587 from 2023-2024, adjusted for inflation. In 2024-2025, state spending per child was \$19,186 for CSPP and \$12,480 for TK. The CSPP met 6 of 10 quality standards benchmarks, and TK met 3 of 10.

WHAT'S NEW

California's FY 2026 budget included a total of \$6.2 billion of early education funding: \$2.9 billion for CSPP and \$3.3 billion for Universal Transitional Kindergarten (UTK). CDE updated the Preschool Learning Foundations by creating the [Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations \(PTKLF\)](#). The updated PTKLF includes a greater emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Beginning July 1, 2025, CSPP contractors are required to implement the PTKLF to guide curriculum and lesson planning.

Beginning January 1, 2024, all CSPP centers and represented family childcare providers received a cost of care plus rate once per month per child for children served who are enrolled in subsidized early learning and care. Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, all CSPP contractors are required to implement the CLASS Second Edition Pre-K-3rd and CLASS Environment.

In 2024-2025, California was in the third year of ramping up its full implementation of universal TK, and the state in the FY 2026 budget will spend \$2.1 billion to support the full implementation of UTK so that all children turning four years old by September 1 of the 2025-26 school year can enroll in TK. An additional \$1.2 billion in the FY 2026 budget supported reducing the average child to teacher ratio from 12 to 10 children per 1 adult in TK classrooms during the 2025-26 school year. The maximum average TK class size remains 24 children.

In 2024-2025, local educational agencies (LEAs) continued to expend the \$500 million in the Universal Prekindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant funds allocated in prior budget years to support planning and implementation costs to expand access to classroom-based prekindergarten programs at LEAs. The expenditure date of these grants has been extended to June 30, 2028.

BACKGROUND

In 2008, the California State Preschool Program Act created the CSPP by consolidating several early childhood initiatives into one funding stream. CSPP provides part- and full-day preschool to 2-, 3-, and 4-year-old children. In addition to meeting eligibility requirements for CSPP (now 100% SMI), families are prioritized for full-day services if they have established at least one of the following: employment/seeking employment, education or vocational training, homelessness, or parental incapacity. CSPP awards funding through a competitive application process to school districts, private and faith-based agencies, Head Start programs, higher education institutions, counties, cities, and tribal organizations. Once deemed eligible, a family is eligible to remain in full-day CSPP for at least 24 months provided the child continues to meet age-eligibility requirements. A family is eligible for part-day CSPP services for the remainder of the current program year and the following program year, provided the child continues to meet age eligibility requirements. Teachers are required to have California Child Development Associate Teacher Permits and can receive grants for professional learning.

California TK began during the 2012-2013 school year when the kindergarten age eligibility shifted from December 2 to September 1. In June 2015, an amendment to state law allowed children turning 5 years old after December 2 to attend TK at the beginning of the school year, at the discretion of the local educational agency. In 2024-2025, TK served children turning five between September 2 and June 2. By the 2025-2026 school year, TK will be available to all 4-year-olds in the state. TK differs from kindergarten by requiring smaller class size, adult to child ratios, and requirements for teachers to have child development/early education and/or experience.

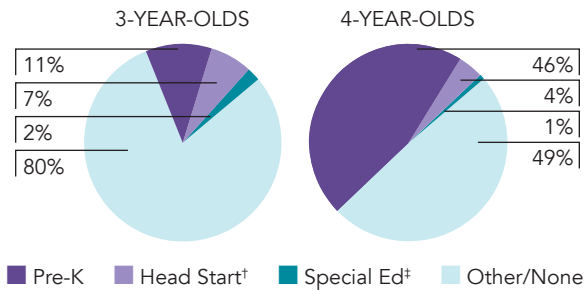
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CALIFORNIA STATE OVERVIEW

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	278,273
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	46,893
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	44,009
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	0

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE

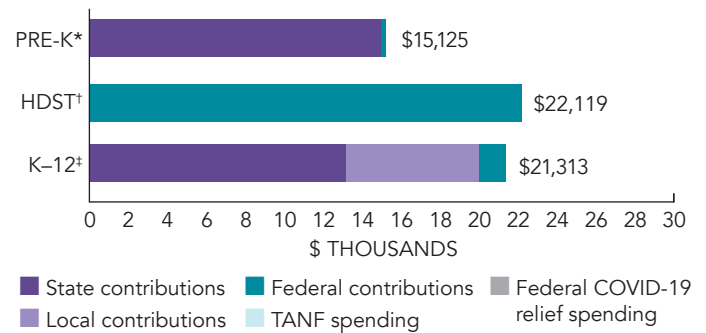


† Some Head Start children may also be counted in state pre-K.
‡ Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$4,148,114,798
State Head Start spending	\$0
State spending per child enrolled	\$14,907
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$15,125

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED



* 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.

ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
14	15	4	5	4.1

Late in 2023-24, the requirement to assess TK children using the English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) was rescinded for all future academic years. The 2025-26 budget includes \$10 million for CDE to select developmentally appropriate screening instruments to measure the extent to which TK multilingual learners will benefit from additional support in English by screening their English language listening and speaking skills.

Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, CSPP- and TK-enrolled children can be served in the same classroom. Classrooms consisting of commingled CSPP and TK children are intended to support student transition, allow school districts and charter schools to braid funding streams, and support the overall quality of the programs by requiring that standards from both programs are met.

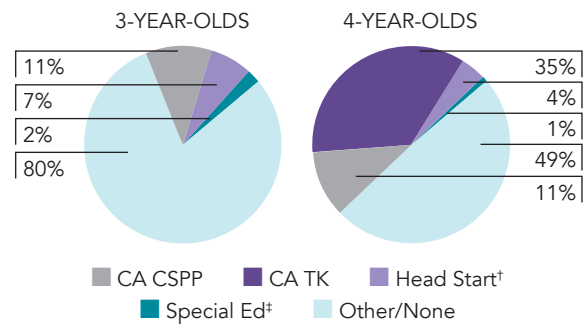
California’s overall support for state-funded preschool is depicted in the first two pages of this state profile. The third page focuses on CSPP and the fourth on TK.

CALIFORNIA STATE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM (CSPP)

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment.....	100,705
School districts that offer state program.....	97% (counties)
Income requirement.....	100% SMI
Minimum hours of operation.....	3 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule.....	Determined locally

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



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

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	CA CSPP 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	California Child Development Associate Teacher Permit	BA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE, CD	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	None	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	105 hours/5 years; PD plans (Determined locally)	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	No limit (3- & 4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:8 (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.

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RESOURCES

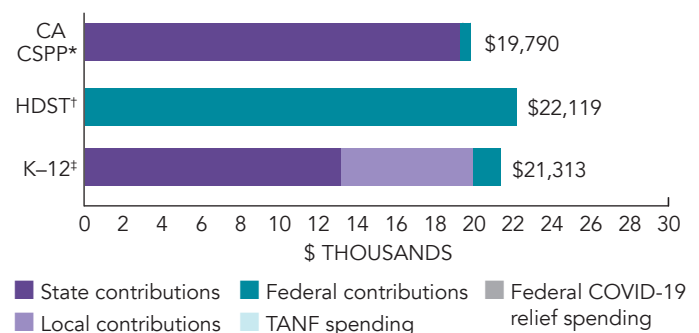
Total state pre-K spending	\$1,932,114,798
Local match required?.....	Yes
State spending per child enrolled	\$19,186
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$19,790

* 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

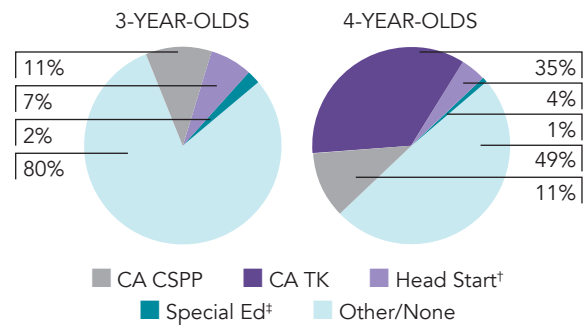


CALIFORNIA TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN (TK) PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment.....	177,568
School districts that offer state program.....	100% (counties)
Income requirement.....	No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation.....	3 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule.....	Determined locally

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



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

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	CA TK 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, CD, Elem. Ed.	Specializing in pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	HSD	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	PD hours based on type of credential/permit & determined locally; PD plans (Determined locally)	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	24 (4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:12 (average, 4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	<input type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing, health & more; Referrals not required	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations only in TK classes comingled with CSPP	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	<input 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	\$2,216,000,000
Local match required?.....	No
State spending per child enrolled	\$12,480
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$12,480

* 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

