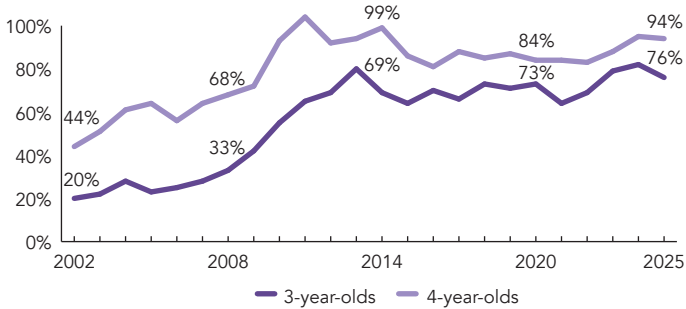
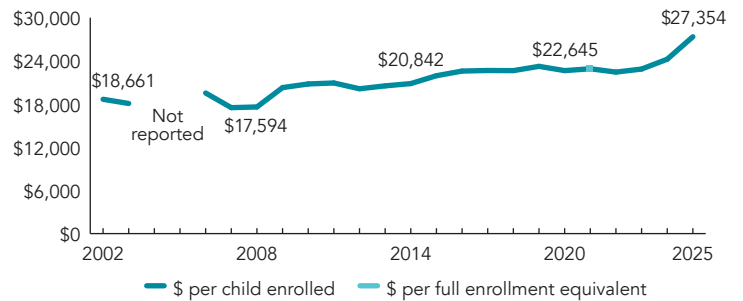


District of Columbia

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2025 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

During the 2024-2025 school year, the District of Columbia preschool enrolled 13,040 children, a slight decrease of 179 from the prior year. Spending totaled \$356,697,970, up \$36,444,483 (11%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. Spending per child equaled \$27,354 in 2024-2025, up \$3,127 from 2023-2024, adjusted for inflation. The District of Columbia met 4 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT'S NEW

Despite navigating an unprecedented period of fiscal challenges due to Congressional budget actions and reductions to the federal workforce, the District of Columbia continues to prioritize the needs of young children. In addition to investing over \$350 million in the Universal Pre-K Program, the District continues to invest in the [Early Childhood Educator Pay Equity Fund](#). This initiative increases wages of educators in licensed child development facilities.

BACKGROUND

Among the first in the nation to invest in early education, the District has offered pre-K since the 1960s. The District began to bolster its investment in pre-K significantly through the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion (PKEEP) Amendment Act of 2008 (Pre-K Act). The Pre-K Act provides public, quality, universally accessible pre-K via a mixed-delivery system in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Public Charter Schools (PCS), and publicly-funded Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that participate in PKEEP. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) oversees the District's Universal Pre-K Program, including programs in DCPS and CBOs. PCSs are authorized and monitored by the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB). Additionally, the District's Head Start and Early Head Start grantees serve thousands of children and their families; all District Head Start grantees also participate in the universal pre-K system, but may also serve children not eligible for public pre-K.

Pre-K programs operate a minimum of 6.5 hours per day, five days a week, 180 instructional days per year. Given the high availability and participation, this program can be considered universal. Funding for public pre-K programs is based on the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula.

Program quality is measured using the CLASS Pre-K, which informs a school rating that is included on each school's DC School Report Card. The PCSB also uses CLASS Pre-K in its Performance Management Framework, which provides all PCS with an annual score. For CBOs, CLASS Pre-K assessments are used for Capital Quality, the District's QRIS. In the 2024-2025 school year, CLASS observations were conducted in 977 pre-K classrooms. CLASS scores continued to show strong results in the Emotional Support and Classroom Organization domains, and more opportunity for growth in the Instructional Support domain. CLASS scores across all domains remain higher since the 2017-2018 school year, demonstrating a trend of improvement over time. While domain-level average CLASS scores varied across the pre-K sector, DCPS, PCS, PKEEP CBOs, and Child Development Facilities all had programs that were providing high-quality early learning experiences for children.

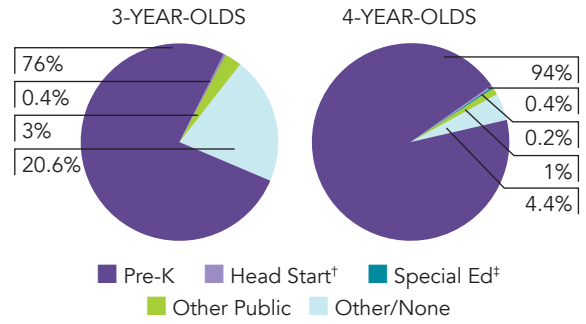
ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
1	1	1	1	4

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSAL PRE-K

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	13,040
School districts that offer state program	100% (wards)
Income requirement	No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation	6.5 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule	School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	1,797
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	376
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	DC PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	Approval process & supports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA (DCPS & CBO); Determined locally (PCS)	BA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE, CD, Elem. Ed., (DCPS); ECE or related field (CBO); Determined locally (PCS)	Specializing in pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	AA or Paraprofessional Certification (DCPS); AA (CBO); Determined locally (PCS)	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	57 hours/year (DCPS); 21 hours/year (CBO); PD plans (Head Start teachers & CBO teachers & assistants); Coaching (DCPS)	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	DCPS & CBO only: 16 (3-year-olds); 20 (4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	DCPS & CBO only: 1:8 (3-year-olds); 1:10 (4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	<input 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.

4

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$356,697,970
Local match required?	No
State Head Start spending	\$0
State spending per child enrolled	\$27,354
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$27,354

* 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

