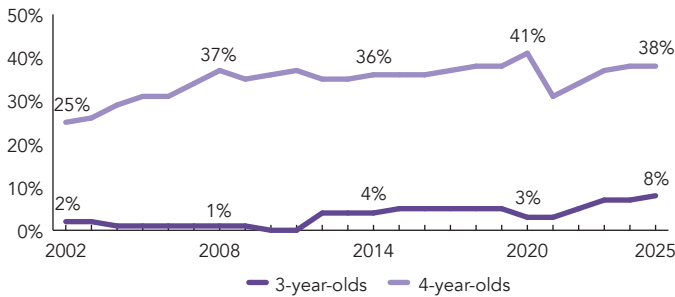
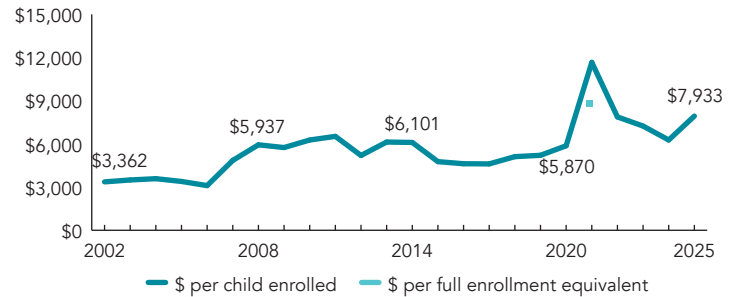


Maryland

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2025 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

During the 2024–2025 school year, Maryland preschool enrolled 34,003 children, an increase of 1,031 from the prior year. State spending totaled \$269,734,230, up \$62,963,083 (30%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child equaled \$7,933 in 2024–2025, up \$1,662 from 2023–2024, adjusted for inflation. Maryland met 7 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT'S NEW

Maryland continued implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) issuing ongoing guidance to support expansion and quality improvement, including a goal that at least 50% of new pre-K slots be delivered by private providers by 2028–29. The phase-out of federal COVID-relief funding increased pressure on local budgets that indirectly support pre-K expansion.

Legislative and budget actions in 2024–2025 focused on workforce stability, financing, and system design. HB 1441 established an experience-based pathway for lead teachers, created an Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder for eligible private providers, authorized facilities leasing funds, and required a model memorandum of understanding to support school–provider partnerships. Maryland increased the pre-K per-pupil amount in FY 2026, while preserving Blueprint-related pre-K funding after the General Assembly rejected proposed slowdowns. MSDE also continued Pre-K Expansion Grants, launched a Pre-K Systems Analysis Workgroup to assess the mixed-delivery system, implemented a licensed outdoor, nature-based preschool pilot, and moved toward a statewide \$60,000 minimum teacher salary effective July 1, 2026.

A new round of PDG B–5 Systems Building Grants were awarded 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. Maryland received \$14,751,000 to conduct a statewide needs assessment, unify workforce pathways through a Career Lattice, launch a centralized Pre-K enrollment portal, enhance family search tools, expand program availability through Shared Service Hubs, and integrate evidence-based instructional tools, and modernize operational systems with features like background check portability, an improved licensing portal, and user-centered design.

BACKGROUND

Maryland created the Extended Elementary Education Program (EEEP) in 1980 as a pilot preschool program in Baltimore City and Prince George's County. The Maryland Prekindergarten Program was started in 2002, giving local boards of education until 2007 to provide pre-K in public schools to all 4-year-olds from families with incomes at or below 185% FPL. Maryland enacted the Prekindergarten Expansion Act in 2014, adding \$4.3 million per year to increase access to full-day public pre-K for 4-year-olds from families with household incomes up to 300% FPL.

Funding for the Maryland Prekindergarten Program is provided through a school funding formula and is based on the K–12 per pupil amount, to support eligible children attending half-day programs. Division of Early Childhood staff monitor pre-K programs funded through the Prekindergarten Expansion Grants annually, using a self-developed checklist. Prekindergarten Expansion Grantees are required to participate in Maryland EXCELS, the state's QRIS, and are able to access targeted technical assistance. Maryland also has "Judy Centers" located in Title 1 schools that work collaboratively with elementary schools and community-based providers to offer comprehensive, year-round early learning services for children birth to age five.

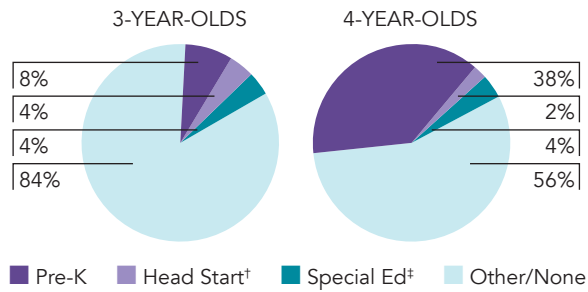
ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
19	18	17	15	7

MARYLAND PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	34,003
School districts that offer state program	100%
Income requirement	185% FPL (part-day); 300% FPL (full-day)
Minimum hours of operation	2.5 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule	School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	11,529
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	4,644
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	MD PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	Approval process & supports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	HSD	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	6 credit hours/5 years (public teachers); 24 hours/year (public assistants); 20 clock hours/year (nonpublic teachers and assistants)	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	20 (3- & 4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:10 (3- & 4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing, health & more	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations vary by program type; Data used for program improvement	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	\$269,734,230
Local match required?	No
State Head Start spending	\$2,440,960
State spending per child enrolled	\$7,933
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$11,899

* 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

