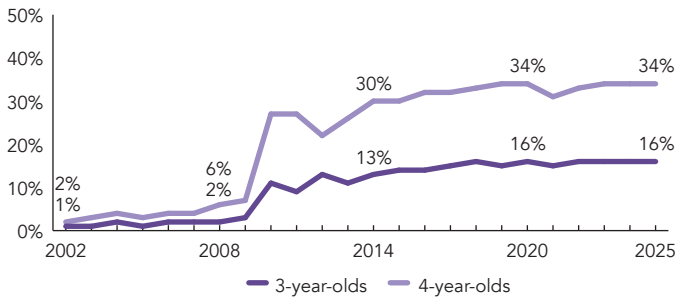
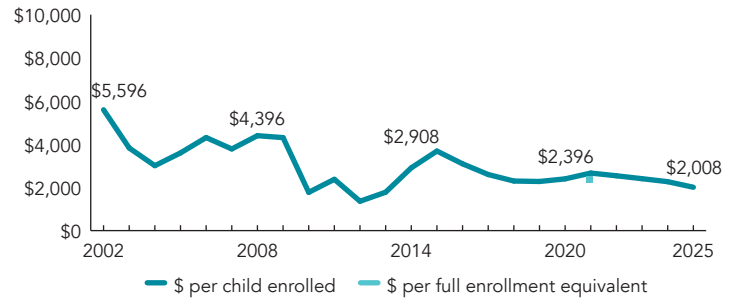


Nebraska

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2025 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

During the 2024-2025 school year, Nebraska preschool enrolled 13,212 children, a decrease of 20 from the prior year. State spending totaled \$26,532,334, down \$3,448,914 (12%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child equaled \$2,008 in 2024-2025, down \$258 from 2023-2024, adjusted for inflation. Nebraska met 6 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT'S NEW

In December 2025, Nebraska was awarded a federal PDG B-5 Systems Building Grant totaling \$4,036,709 to support system building and strengthen ECE programs in a mixed-delivery system, improve system efficiency and collaboration, and raise the overall quality of programs.

Nebraska is expected to face a significant budget shortfall in 2025. This has the potential to decrease funding for early childhood education and care support across the state, including preschool grant funds, and state agency staff.

In 2024, legislation was passed to allow districts to enroll kindergarten-eligible children in pre-K until they reach the compulsory attendance age. In response to this change, districts are in the process of creating and implementing policies, and the state will revise the policies and rules for this program.

BACKGROUND

The Nebraska Early Childhood Education Program began as a pilot program in 1992 and expanded in 2001, providing preschool education for children ages three to five. Direct financial support is available on a competitive basis for public schools and education service units that partner with childcare centers, Head Start agencies and/or human services agencies. Grantees are required to match 100% of the funding with local and/or federal sources.

At least 70% of the children in the program must have at least one of the following risk factors: disability or developmental delay, living in a home in which English is not the primary language, eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch (185% FPL), having teen parents or parents who have not completed high school, or having been born prematurely or with a low birth weight.

Most programs operate 3.5 to 4 hours per day, four or five days per week and must operate for a minimum of 12 hours per week during the school year. All teachers in the Nebraska Early Childhood Education Program are required to have at least a bachelor's degree and training in early childhood education. The program monitors child, program, and family outcomes annually.

While the Early Childhood Education Grant Program has expanded, many districts and education service units fund their early childhood programs without the use of state grants yet follow the same regulations as the grant program. Those programs are also included in this report.

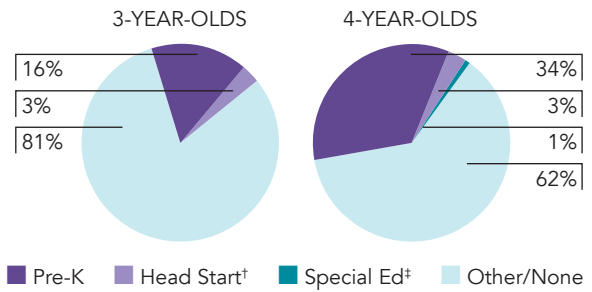
ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
23	11	45	13	6

NEBRASKA EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	13,212
School districts that offer state program	94%
Income requirement	No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation	12 hours/week
Operating schedule	School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	4,116
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	2,978
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	NE 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, ECE SpEd	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	CDA, K–6 Endorsement, 6 credits in CD or ECE, or previous experience	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	15 hours/year; PD plans; Coaching (teachers participating in the Pyramid model)	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	Determined locally	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations per state rubric; 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.

6

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$26,532,334
Local match required?	Yes
State Head Start spending	\$0
State spending per child enrolled	\$2,008
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$11,926

* 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

