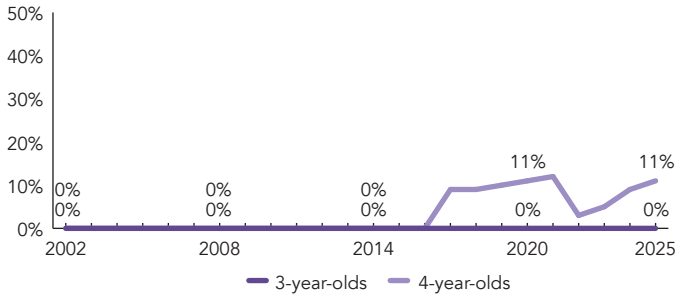
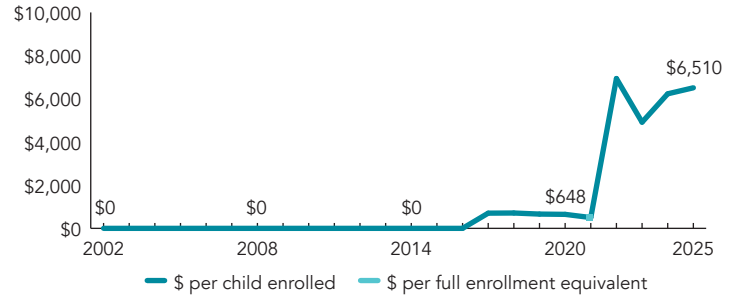


# North Dakota

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2025 DOLLARS)



## OVERVIEW

During the 2024-2025 school year, North Dakota Best in Class enrolled 1,076 children, an increase of 180 from the prior year. State spending totaled \$7,005,089, up \$1,421,869 (25%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. Spending per child equaled \$6,510 in 2024-2025, up \$279 from 2023-2024, adjusted for inflation. North Dakota met 5 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

## WHAT'S NEW

During the 69th Legislative Assembly, North Dakota appropriated an additional \$4 million to expand the Best in Class preschool program, supporting continued growth in access to state-funded early learning. The legislature also approved funding to provide infant and toddler quality bonuses for all children birth to three years served in Bright & Early North Dakota-rated programs, extending these incentives beyond families enrolled in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).

## BACKGROUND

Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, North Dakota's legislature provided Early Childhood Education Program Grants through a biennial appropriation to the state Department of Commerce. The program provided services in 55 districts for at least 400 hours over 32 weeks per year. All program providers were required to incorporate at least 10 hours of research-based parent involvement activities. Four-year-old children who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch were eligible for the program. The program sunsetted after the 2020-2021 school year.

The 2021 Legislative Assembly authorized the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services to pilot Best in Class, North Dakota's year before kindergarten experience program, utilizing ESSER public emergency funding. The program is intended to serve at least 50% of children who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, come from families with incomes less than 60% of North Dakota's SMI, or have an identified developmental delay or disability. Funding is based on an annual competitive grant to public schools, Head Start, and licensed child care participating in the QRIS.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) had other early childhood education initiatives as well, including grant opportunities for educators and school districts. Early Childhood Continuing Education Grants of up to \$3,000 every two years enable lead and assistant teachers in pre-kindergarten, Head Start, and child care to enhance their credentials at North Dakota state colleges and universities. Additionally, 1,000 pre-K students participated in Waterford Upstart, an at-home early learning program funded by North Dakota Health and Human Services.

The North Dakota Early Learning Standards Birth-Kindergarten, revised in 2018, are voluntary and cover multiple domains including social-emotional development, language development, physical well-being and motor development, approaches toward learning, and cognitive and general knowledge. The standards are aligned with the state's kindergarten standards and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework.

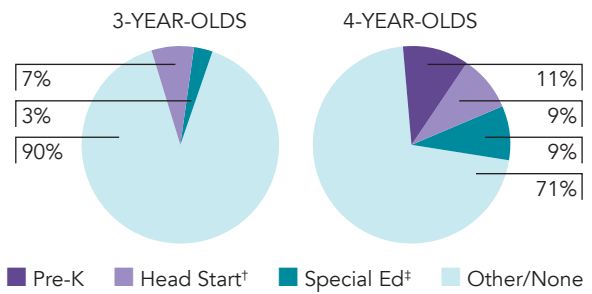
ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
40	None Served	23	32	5

# NORTH DAKOTA BEST IN CLASS

## ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment.....	1,076
School districts that offer state program.....	58% (counties)
Income requirement... 185% FPL, 60% SMI, or Child Care Assistance	
Minimum hours of operation.....	3 hours/day; 400 hours/year
Operating schedule.....	Determined locally
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	1,588
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	1,644
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	ND 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 (public); Other (nonpublic)	BA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE, Elem. Ed., ECE SpEd (public); ECE, Elem. Ed. with K credential, Other (nonpublic)	Specializing in pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	HSD	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	15 hours/year (teachers); PD varies by setting (assistants); PD plans (all public teachers & some nonpublic teachers); Coaching	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	20 (4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:10 (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	Site visits	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.....	\$7,005,089
Local match required?.....	Yes
State Head Start spending.....	\$0
State spending per child enrolled.....	\$6,510
All reported spending per child enrolled*.....	\$6,510

\* 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

