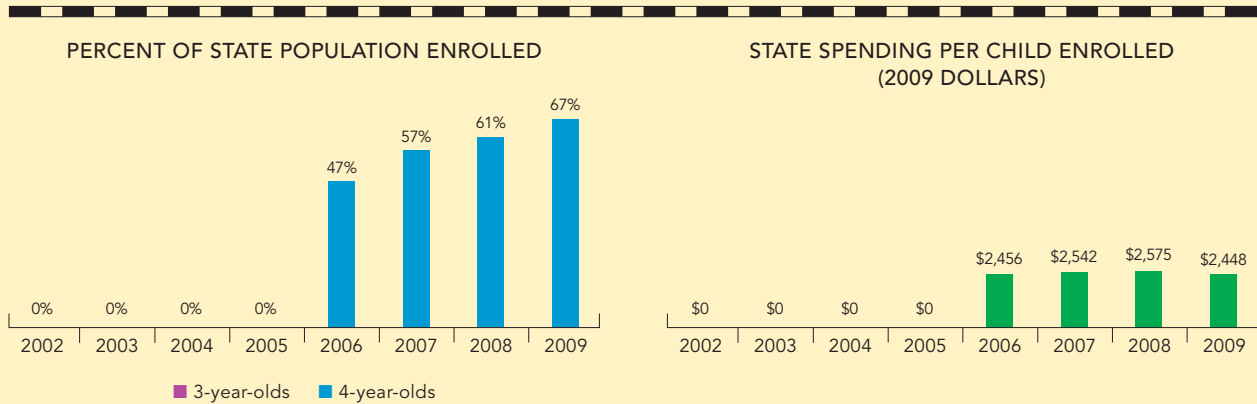


# Florida



**A** 2002 state constitutional amendment requiring universal access to preschool education resulted in the establishment of Florida’s Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program for 4-year-old children. The program began operating in the fall of 2005 across the state and served more than 100,000 children whose parents wanted them to attend. For the 2008-2009 school year, the number of participating children increased by more than 13,000 from the previous year and a similar increase is expected in the 2009-2010 program year.

Families may enroll children in any participating program where space is available. Children can attend either a school-year program totaling 540 instructional hours, which requires teachers to have a Child Development Associate (CDA) or equivalent credential, or a summer program totaling 300 instructional hours, which requires teachers to hold at least a bachelor’s degree.

VPK services are offered in a variety of settings, including public schools, accredited nonpublic schools, licensed child care centers, licensed family child care homes, and accredited faith-based providers, all of which must meet the program’s minimum requirements. Early learning coalitions administer the local programs, distributing funds to the VPK programs based on a fixed per-child amount.

The VPK Education Standards were revised during the 2008-2009 program year to strengthen mathematical and scientific thinking expectations.

Florida’s School Readiness Program, a separate initiative, began in 1999. The program expanded in 2001 by incorporating two other state programs, the Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program and the State Migrant Prekindergarten Program. Through the School Readiness initiative, federal and state funds are distributed via early learning coalitions to support a broad range of early childhood programs and services. Data in this report focus only on the VPK program.

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
2	None Served

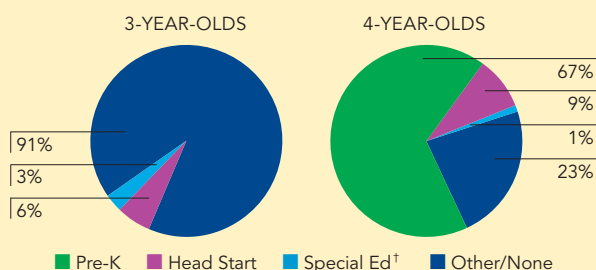
RESOURCES RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
34	37

# FLORIDA VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

## ACCESS

Total state program enrollment .....	147,762
School districts that offer state program .....	100% (counties)
Income requirement .....	None
Hours of operation .....	Determined locally <sup>1</sup>
Operating schedule .....	540 hours/year (school-year program); 300 hours/year (summer program) <sup>1</sup>
Special education enrollment .....	18,422
Federally funded Head Start enrollment .....	33,111
State-funded Head Start enrollment .....	0

STATE PRE-K AND HEAD START ENROLLMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION



<sup>†</sup> This is an estimate of children in special education who are not enrolled in state-funded pre-K or Head Start.

## QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?
Early learning standards .....	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree .....	BA (summer); CDA or equivalent (school year) <sup>2</sup>	BA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training .....	EC or EE certification (summer); Meets CDA requirements (school year) <sup>2</sup>	Specializing in pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree .....	40 clock hours <sup>3</sup>	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher in-service .....	10 clock hours <sup>4</sup>	At least 15 hours/year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size .....		20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds .....	NA		
4-year-olds .....	12 (summer); 18 (school year) <sup>5</sup>		
Staff-child ratio .....		1:10 or better	<input type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds .....	NA		
4-year-olds .....	1:12 (summer); 1:10 (school year) <sup>5</sup>		
Screening/referral and support services .....	Determined locally <sup>6</sup>	Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 support service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meals .....	Depend on length of program day <sup>7</sup>	At least 1/day	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring .....	Site visits and other monitoring	Site visits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

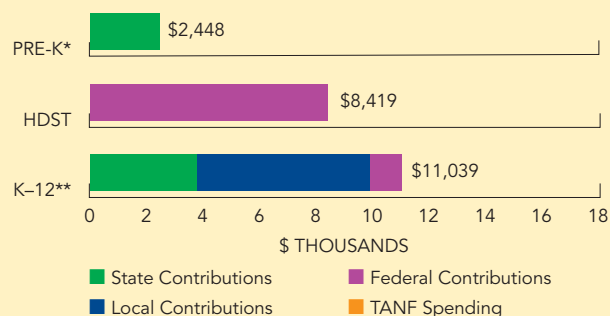
**TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET**

**3**

## RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending .....	\$361,764,938
Local match required? .....	No
State spending per child enrolled .....	\$2,448
All reported spending per child enrolled* .....	\$2,448

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED



\* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.

\*\*K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

Data are for the '08-'09 school year, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>1</sup> VPK programs may choose to operate a summer program, totaling at least 300 hours of service, or a school-year program, totaling at least 540 hours of service. The operating schedule and hours are determined locally, but the average number of hours per day for a 180-day, 540-hour program is 3 and the average number of hours per day for the 300-hour summer program is 7.5.

<sup>2</sup> Teacher qualification requirements are different for the summer and school-year programs. Teachers in the summer programs must have a BA in early childhood, primary or preschool education, family and consumer science, or elementary education. Teachers in the school-year programs are required to have a CDA or equivalent and have completed a Department of Education course on emergent literacy.

<sup>3</sup> Assistant teachers do not have to meet any degree requirements, but must complete a 40-hour training for licensed child care providers.

<sup>4</sup> Lead teachers with a CDA must complete 10 clock hours per year of professional development. For teachers with a BA and certification, the requirement is 120 clock hours per 60 months.

<sup>5</sup> During a special legislative session in 2009, the Legislature adjusted the staff-child ratio for the summer program from 1:10 to 1:12. The maximum class size is now 12. The staff-child ratio for the school-year program was not changed, with one teacher required for classes of up to 10 students, and a second staff member required in classes of 11 to 18 students.

<sup>6</sup> All children participating in programs in licensed child care facilities or public schools must have evidence of vision, hearing, and immunization/general physical health screenings. For public school programs, referrals for further follow-up, as appropriate, are also required.

<sup>7</sup> Meals and snacks are required for full-day programs.