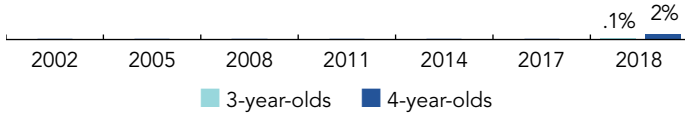
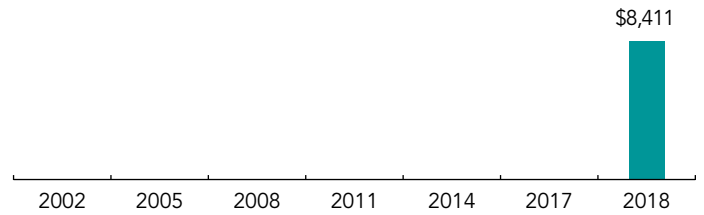


Montana

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2018 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

Montana preschool enrolled 306 children in 2017-2018 during the first year of the Montana’s STARS Preschool Pilot program. State funding totaled \$2,573,914 and state spending per child equaled \$8,411. Montana met 6 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT’S NEW

In April 2017, Governor Steve Bullock signed HB 639 authorizing Montana’s STARS Preschool Pilot program. The 2017-2018 program year was the first for implementation of the \$6 million STARS Preschool Pilot, which is Montana’s first state-funded preschool effort. In his proposed 2019-2020 budget, Governor Bullock included a request for \$30 million to build on the success of the Pilot program. The proposal would allow for preschool funding in the school funding formula as well as grants to Head Start and other qualified preschool providers. In addition to these proposals for increased access to state-funded preschool, the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services was awarded \$4,208,250 under the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five in December 2018.

BACKGROUND

The STARS Preschool Pilot served more than 300 children across 11 counties in public schools, Head Start programs, family child care providers and private preschools providing a full-day program. Programs were encouraged to enroll a minimum of 25% high needs students including, but not limited to: children who are low income; children receiving services from IDEA Part B or Part C; children who are engaged in mental health services and supports; children who are enrolled Tribal Members; and children who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Teachers in both public and private settings are required to hold a bachelor’s degree, and assistant teachers must have at least two years of study in higher education, or an associate’s degree in a related field. In addition to on-going teacher coaching, all classrooms are observed at least annually to ensure program quality. The state also provides professional development in the implementation of Montana’s Early Learning Standards.

The Best Beginnings STARS to Quality Program is Montana’s voluntary quality rating improvement system (QRIS), aligning quality indicators with support and incentives for early childhood programs and early childhood professionals. Licensed preschool programs can participate in the QRIS and earn up to five stars, indicating the level of quality. All private providers participating in STARS Preschool must achieve a level of at least 3 on Montana’s QRIS.

Montana has taken advantage of recent federal grant opportunities to support preschool programs. In 2017-2018, 1,000 children were provided with new or enhanced preschool slots under the state’s federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG). Also, in 2017, Montana received another competitive federal grant through the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program to support literacy skills among disadvantaged children, and earmarked 15% of grant funding for preschool programs.

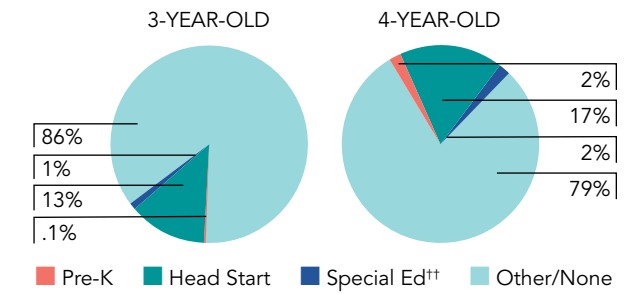
ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
44	30	6	11	6

MONTANA'S STARS PRESCHOOL PILOT PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	306
School districts that offer state program	20% (counties)
Income requirement	No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation	5.5 hours/day
Operating schedule	School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	861
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	3,857
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	0

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



** Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	MT PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned with other state standards, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<input 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	P-3 (public); ECE (nonpublic)	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	HSD	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	24 hours/year; Coaching	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	18 (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	Immunizations, behavioral, developmental	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input 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.

6

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$2,573,914
Local match required?	Yes
State Head Start spending	\$0
State spending per child enrolled	\$8,411
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$8,496

* 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

