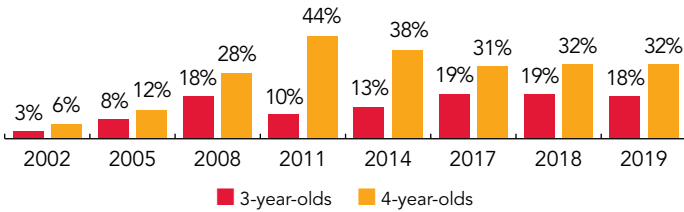
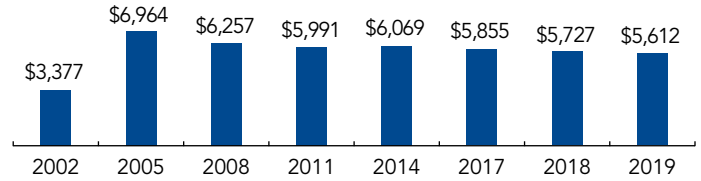


Arkansas

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2019 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

Arkansas preschool enrolled 20,186 children in 2018-2019, a decrease of 432 children from the prior year. State funding totaled \$105,776,553 with an additional \$7,500,000 in TANF funds to support the programs, down \$4,800,418 (4%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child (including TANF funds) equaled \$5,612 in 2018-2019, down \$115 from 2017-2018, adjusted for inflation. Arkansas met 8 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT'S NEW

As a result of the State Transformation Act 910, during the 2019-2020 school year the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program officially transitioned from the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS): Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) to the Arkansas Department of Education: Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) with a team of nine staff members. DESE has administrative oversight of the ABC Program and works collaboratively with the DCCECE to ensure the continuation of high-quality services for preschool age children in the state.

BACKGROUND

The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program began in 1991 as part of a statewide education reform initiative, with funding (\$10 million) earmarked to serve children birth to 5 years old based on family income, developmental, and/or economic risk factors. In 2003, legislation known as Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (ABCSS) set priorities for funding, supporting 3- and 4-year olds in households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level. School districts with 75% or more of their students scoring below proficient in literacy and math on the State Benchmark exams (statewide assessment), and children in schools designated as "school improvement status" received funding priority.

In 2014, Arkansas was awarded a \$14.9 million federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG) enabling the state to expand quality services to 1,368 additional children and enhance preschool services for 1,464 children already enrolled during the 2018-2019 school year. After the grant ended in June 2019, the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) provided resources through federal Child Care and Development Funds to continue funding these services. The funding and requirements align with the ABC program requirements.

ABC/ABCSS components intended to ensure quality include: teachers with at least a bachelor's degree and an associate's degree beyond the first classroom at a site; teacher assistants/paraprofessionals with a minimum of a CDA or equivalent; low child-to-teacher ratios (1:10); health and development screenings; parent involvement and community engagement; statewide evaluation (Work Sampling); an approved list of curriculum aligned with the 2016 Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards; and classroom quality observations to inform technical assistance; and an evaluation of child outcomes through a longitudinal study.

Arkansas provides additional pathways for those working with young children to gain advanced knowledge and skill, such as Birth through Kindergarten Licensure and a Birth through Prekindergarten Teaching Credential. These pathways prepare teachers to work with all children, birth through age five, including children with special needs.

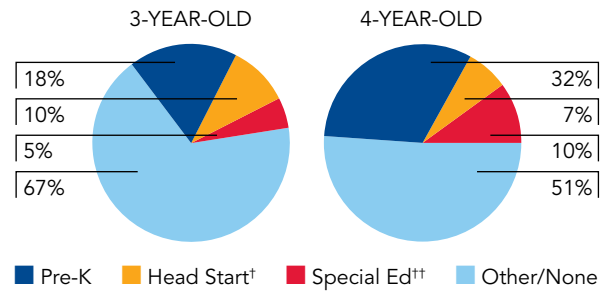
ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
17	5	18	8	8

ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE/ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment.....	20,186
School districts that offer state program.....	100% (counties)
Income requirement.....	200% FPL
Minimum hours of operation.....	7 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule.....	School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	8,385
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	6,561
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	0

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



† Some Head Start children may also be counted in state pre-K.
 †† Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	AR 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; AA beyond first classroom at a site	BA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE, CD, ECE SpEd	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	CDA	CDA or equivalent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	30 hours/year; PD plans	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; 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.



RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending.....	\$113,276,553
Local match required?.....	Yes
State Head Start spending.....	\$0
State spending per child enrolled.....	\$5,612
All reported spending per child enrolled*.....	\$9,332

* 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

