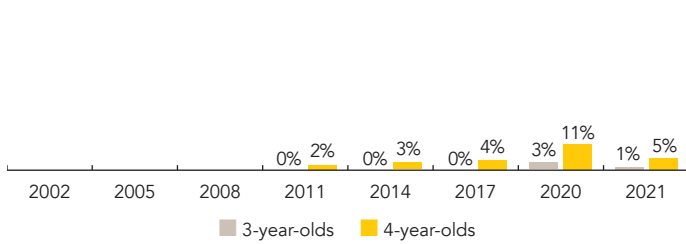
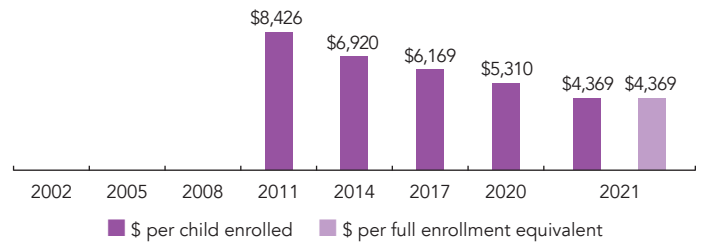


Alaska

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2021 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

During the 2020-2021 school year, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued, Alaska state-funded preschool enrolled 636 children, a decrease of 768 children from the prior year. State funding totaled \$2,778,966 down \$4,676,289 (63%), adjusted for inflation, from last year. State spending per child equaled \$4,369 in 2020-2021, down \$941 from 2019-2020, adjusted for inflation. Alaska met 2 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT'S NEW

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a mix of in-person and remote instruction throughout the 2020-2021 school year and into the 2021-2022 school year based on local rates of infection. The 2020-2021 school year was shortened for some classrooms due to the rate of COVID-19 spread in the community. All grantees had the option to expand or offer new summer programming if they had funding for it, but this was a local decision. In addition to state funding, Alaska used CARES funding to support the pre-K program for the 2020-2021 school year, but the amount could not be reported.

During 2021, the Alaska legislature worked on three different bills that focused on early childhood programs, literacy, and making funding more stable for the Alaska Pre-Elementary programs in the state, but none were voted on or adopted before the end of the session.

BACKGROUND

Since the 1980s, Alaska has supplemented federal funding for Head Start programs in an effort to enhance school readiness and professional development and expand opportunities for children and families. During the 2020-2021 program year, the state provided \$6.85 million to support Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Alaska. In 2009-2010, the state launched the Alaska Pre-Kindergarten pilot program for school districts, now known as the Alaska Pre-Elementary program. During the 2020-2021 school year, the program was open to preschool-age children in 17 of the 54 school districts statewide though funding was available to all districts on a competitive basis. The financial support is part of an effort to develop program quality through school readiness activities and professional improvement. The funds also offer admission to additional children and families whenever possible.

In 2015, the state changed the way competitive grants are offered to include two types of grantees. Districts new to the program may apply for a 3-year pre-elementary development grant geared toward strategic planning to begin implementing or supporting existing Pre-Elementary goals. Previously funded grantees may apply for three-year renewal grants to support the program while the districts worked towards sustainability of the program once the state grant funding ends. Development grants are geared toward strategic planning to begin implementing or support existing Pre-Elementary goals until they can be switched to renewal grants.

Budget reductions have continued to be a challenge, as inconsistent funding has affected program implementation and quality. Funding for the Alaska Pre-Elementary program goes directly to school districts or Head Start agencies. Participating programs may subcontract with public schools, Head Start programs, or private agencies.

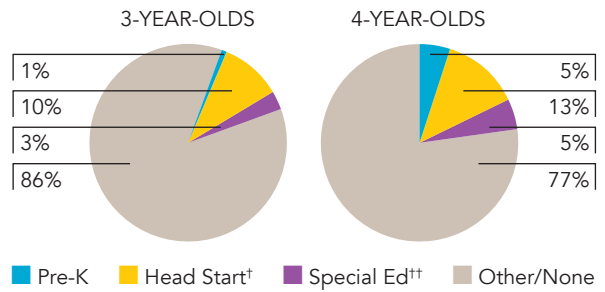
ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
42	27	30	37	2

ALASKA PRE-ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	636
School districts that offer state program	31%
Income requirement	No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation	Determined locally
Operating schedule	Determined locally
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	1,091
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	2,232
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	51

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	AK 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	Approval process & supports	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	Alaska Teaching Certificate (public); None (nonpublic)	Specializing in pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	HSD	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	6 credit hours/5 years (teachers only); PD plans (some teachers & assistants)	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	Determined locally	20 or lower	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	Determined locally	1:10 or better	<input type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	None	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations determined locally	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.



RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$2,778,966
Local match required?	No
State Head Start spending	\$6,853,000
State spending per child enrolled	\$4,369
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$4,369

* 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

