OVERVIEW

During the 2020-2021 school year, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued, Iowa preschool programs enrolled 25,095 children, a decrease of 3,358 children from the prior year. State funding totaled $91,763,127, down $3,972,127 (4%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child equalled $3,834 in 2020-2021, up $314 from 2019-2020, adjusted for inflation. Iowa met an average of 7 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT’S NEW

There was a mix of in-person and remote instruction during the 2020-2021 school year, but all programs were physically open in Fall 2021. Virtual services were provided to medically fragile children to prevent exposure during periods of high positivity rates. The need for family engagement increased as more services were delivered remotely. District preschool programs could access ESSER funding to expand summer programs.

During the last legislative session, the Iowa general assembly granted authority for the School Budget Review Committee to award funding to districts that would experience an increase in Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) enrollment in the 2021-2022 school year after the decrease in 2020-2021 due to parents keeping children home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020-2021 school year was the first year of a new competitive 5-year grant cycle for Shared Visions Preschool programs. Applicants could select from one of three program standards: NAEYC Accreditation, Head Start Program Performance Standards, or Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards — a change from past years when all grantees had to be NAEYC Accredited.

BACKGROUND

Iowa has two state-funded preschool programs: Shared Visions and the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP). The Shared Visions program has provided services to 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds since 1989 through competitive grants to public schools, licensed non-profit childcare centers, other public non-profit agencies, and Head Start. Shared Visions serves children in part-, school-, or extended-day programs.

Iowa began the SWVPP in 2007 to increase 4-year-olds’ access to preschool. All 4-year-olds in the state are eligible to attend SWVPP. Funding for the SWVPP is based on the state funding formula in which 4-year-olds are funded at 50% of the K–12 state aid amount. SWVPP classrooms operate at least 10 hours per week and programs may collaborate with Head Start, other preschool programs, or childcare programs to provide the SWVPP and/or offer full-day services.

Both SWVPP and Shared Visions have undergone formal evaluations. As part of the state longitudinal data system, all children enrolled in either program and received a unique state identification number.

An important difference between the two state-funded preschool programs pertains to child eligibility. Shared Visions is a targeted program where at least 80% of children are required to meet income eligibility guidelines (family income at or below 130% FPL). Children can also qualify for the program based on other risk factors but may be required to pay a fee based on a sliding scale. Services within this program are provided in 29 of Iowa’s 99 counties through 49 awarded grants. Programming is offered in 23 school district locations (through 16 school districts), representing less than 5% of school districts. In addition, services are provided in 26 other community-based locations, representing 11 organizations. In contrast, SWVPP, is available in 98% of school districts and all resident children who turn 4 by September 15th are eligible to attend.

Shared Visions lead teachers are required to meet the educational qualifications as outlined in the program standards selected within the awarded application. While requirements within selected program standards vary, 77% of lead teachers hold a BA degree or higher in early childhood, child development, or a related field, while another 20% hold an AA degree in early childhood or a related field. All SWVPP lead teachers must have at least a BA and an Iowa teaching license with an early childhood endorsement.

Iowa’s overall support for state-funded preschool, including enrollment and funding for Shared Visions and SWVPP, is depicted in the first two pages of this state profile. The third page focuses on Shared Visions and the fourth page provides information on SWVPP.
IOWA STATE OVERVIEW

ACCESS
Total state pre-K enrollment ........................................... 25,095
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ......................... 3,619
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .......... 5,445
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .......... 0

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending ............................................. $91,763,127
State Head Start spending ................................................ $0
State spending per child enrolled ..................................... $3,834
All reported spending per child enrolled* ......................... $4,044

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE

3-YEAR-OLDS
59%
33%
2%
90%

4-YEAR-OLDS
59%
6%
2%
0%

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

PRE-K*
$4,044

HDST**
$10,084

K-12***
$15,040

ACCESS RANKINGS
4-YEAR-OLDS 3-YEAR-OLDS
3 22

RESOURCE RANKINGS
STATE SPENDING ALL REPORTED SPENDING
36 40

TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
7

* 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.

† 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.

Data are for the 2020-2021 school year, unless otherwise noted.
IOWA SHARED VISIONS

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment.................................................. 876
School districts that offer state program.............................. 29% (counties)
Income requirement..............................................................130% FPL
Minimum hours of operation.............................. Determined locally
Operating schedule......................................................... Determined locally

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE

3-YEAR-OLDS

- 1% IA Shared Visions
- 2% IA SWVPP
- 5% Head Start†
- 5% Special Ed††
- 33% Other/None
- 90% K–12***

4-YEAR-OLDS

- 58% IA Shared Visions
- 6% IA SWVPP
- 2% Head Start†
- 3% Special Ed††
- 2% Other/None
- 90% K–12***

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
<th>IA SHARED VISIONS REQUIREMENT</th>
<th>BENCHMARK</th>
<th>REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early learning &amp; development standards</td>
<td>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</td>
<td>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum supports</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher degree</td>
<td>BA (public); AA (nonpublic)</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher specialized training</td>
<td>ECE, CD</td>
<td>Specializing in pre-K</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant teacher degree</td>
<td>HSD</td>
<td>CDA or equivalent</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff professional development</td>
<td>PD hours based on program standards; PD plans; Coaching (teachers with an active teaching license only)</td>
<td>For teachers &amp; assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum class size</td>
<td>20 (3- &amp; 4-year-olds)</td>
<td>20 or lower</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-child ratio</td>
<td>1:8 (3- &amp; 4-year-olds)</td>
<td>1:10 or better</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening &amp; referral</td>
<td>Vision, hearing, health &amp; more</td>
<td>Vision, hearing &amp; health screenings; &amp; referral</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous quality improvement system</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations (every 5 years and determined locally); Data used for program improvement</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending ........................................... $6,391,823
Local match required? ................................................. Yes
State spending per child enrolled...................................... $7,297
All reported spending per child enrolled* ................................ $13,017

* 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

- IA Shared Visions: $13,017
- HDST**: $10,084
- K-12***: $15,040

Data are for the 2020-2021 school year, unless otherwise noted.
**IOWA STATEWIDE VOLUNTARY PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**

**ACCESS**
Total state pre-K enrollment ................................................. 24,219
School districts that offer state program ..................................... 98%
Income requirement ................................................ No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation .............................................. 10 hours/week
Operating schedule .......................................................... Determined locally

**PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE**

- **3-YEAR-OLDS**
  - IA Shared Visions: 3% (1%)
  - IA SWVPP: 58% (58%)
  - Head Start*: 2% (6%)
  - Special Ed**: 5% (2%)
  - Other/None: 90% (33%)

- **4-YEAR-OLDS**
  - IA Shared Visions: 2% (1%)
  - IA SWVPP: 6% (2%)
  - Head Start*: 2% (6%)
  - Special Ed**: 5% (33%)
  - Other/None: 90% (1%)

**QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST**

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<th>REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?</th>
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<td>HSD</td>
<td>CDA or equivalent</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff professional development</td>
<td>15 hours/year recommended (teachers only); PD plans; Coaching (public only)</td>
<td>For teachers &amp; assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching</td>
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<td>Vision, hearing &amp; health screenings; &amp; referral</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Continuous quality improvement system</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement at the local level only</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement</td>
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For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

**RESOURCES**

- Total state pre-K spending ................................................. $85,371,304
- Local match required? .................................................. No
- State spending per child enrolled ................................... $3,703
- All reported spending per child enrolled* ......................... $3,703

* 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**

- **IA SWVPP** $3,703
- **HDST** $10,084
- **K-12** $15,040

Data are for the 2020-2021 school year, unless otherwise noted.