OVERVIEW
During the 2020-2021 school year, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued, New Jersey preschool programs enrolled 46,895 children, a decrease of 8,518 children from the prior year. State funding totaled $874,274,717, up $78,127,692 (10%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child equaled $18,643 in 2020-2021, up $4,276 from 2019-2020, adjusted for inflation. New Jersey's programs met 8 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT'S NEW
Governor Murphy allocated $26 million in new funding for preschool expansion during the 2020-2021 school year, marking the fourth year in a row of increased funding for state preschool. The NJ Department of Education (DOE) led two competitions to award school districts with funding to serve more children in high-quality, full-day preschool programs. Increased funding was also allocated to maintain the prior year expansion and provide a cost of living increase for all other existing preschool slots. Despite the increase in funding, overall enrollment decreased due to the pandemic.

At the end of the 2020-2021 school year, all school districts were operating under a hybrid model of in-person and virtual school. However, the state required all school districts to open for in-person instruction by the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

BACKGROUND
New Jersey funds three preschool programs. The largest and most intensive of the programs, formerly known as the Abbott Preschool Program and now referred to as the state’s Preschool Expansion program, served 44,815 children in 156 districts during the 2019-2020 school year. These numbers include the original 31 Abbott districts as well as districts more recently approved to expand their preschool programs to meet Abbott standards. The NJ DOE funds eligible districts to provide a full-day program to all 3- and 4-year-olds who live in those districts and choose to enroll. Private child-care centers or Head Start programs that meet state standards may contract with districts to deliver services.

The non-Abbott Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA) program operates in districts where 20% to 40% of children met the criteria for free or reduced-price lunch when the program was established in the late 1990's. New Jersey's third program, formerly known as the Early Launch to Learning Initiative (ELLI), was established in 2004 as part of an effort to expand access to high-quality pre-K education to all 4-year-olds in low-income households across the state. There is some overlap between districts in the ECPA and ELLI programs, and some of these districts have recently elected to expand their programs in line with the former Abbott program.

Now that the original federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG) has phased out, New Jersey is using state funding to support former grant slots and further increase access in those districts.

New Jersey's overall support for state-funded preschool, including enrollment and funding for Abbott/Preschool Expansion, ECPA, and ELLI, is depicted in the first two pages of this state profile. The third page focuses solely on Abbott/Preschool Expansion, the fourth page provides information on ECPA, and the fifth on ELLI.
**NEW JERSEY STATE OVERVIEW**

**ACCESS**
Total state pre-K enrollment .............................................. 46,895  
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4  12,501  
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4  11,318  
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4  0

**RESOURCES**
Total state pre-K spending ................................................. $874,274,717  
State Head Start spending .................................................. $0  
State spending per child enrolled ....................................... $18,643  
All reported spending per child enrolled*  $18,643

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

**PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>3-YEAR-OLDS</th>
<th>4-YEAR-OLDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-YEAR-OLDS</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-YEAR-OLDS</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Spending per Child Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRE-K*</td>
<td>$18,643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDST**</td>
<td>$11,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12***</td>
<td>$23,774</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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.

**ACCESS RANKINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4-YEAR-OLDS</th>
<th>3-YEAR-OLDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESOURCE RANKINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Spending</th>
<th>All Reported Spending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET**

8

Data are for the 2020-2021 school year, unless otherwise noted.
NEW JERSEY PRESCHOOL EXPANSION PROGRAM (FORMER ABBOTT PRESCHOOL PROGRAM)

ACCESS
Total state pre-K enrollment ........................................... 44,815
School districts that offer state program ........................................ 26%
Income requirement .............................................................. No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation ............................................ 6 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule .......................................................... School or academic year

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
<th>NJ ABBOTT 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</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher specialized training</td>
<td>ECE</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>100 hours/5 years; PD plans (teachers only); Coaching</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>15 (3- &amp; 4-year-olds)</td>
<td>20 or lower</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-child ratio</td>
<td>2:15 (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; 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 ........................................... $855,660,144
Local match required? .............................................................. No
State spending per child enrolled ........................................... $19,093
All reported spending per child enrolled* ........................................... $19,093

* 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.

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3-YEAR-OLDS</th>
<th>4-YEAR-OLDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NJ Abbott</td>
<td>NJ ECPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start†</td>
<td>Special Ed††</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† 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.
NEW JERSEY FORMER NON-ABBOTT EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM AID (ECPA)

ACCESS
Total state pre-K enrollment.................................................... 1,852
School districts that offer state program........................................ 6%
Income requirement................................................................. No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation.................................................... 2.5 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule................................................................. School or academic year

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY                                NJ ECPA REQUIREMENT

Early learning & development standards Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive
Curriculum supports                   Approval process & supports
Teacher degree                        BA
Teacher specialized training          ECE
Assistant teacher degree              HSD
Staff professional development        100 hours/5 years; PD plans teachers only; Coaching
Maximum class size                    18 (3- & 4-year-olds)
Staff-child ratio                     1:9 (3- & 4-year-olds)
Screening & referral                  Vision, hearing, health & more
Continuous quality improvement system Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement

BENCHMARK
Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive
Approval process & supports
BA
Specializing in pre-K
CDA or equivalent
For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching
20 or lower
1:10 or better
Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral
Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement

REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
✓
✓
✓
✓

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

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending..................................................... $17,680,673
Local match required?............................................................. No
State spending per child enrolled........................................... $9,547
All reported spending per child enrolled*................................ $9,547

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

* 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.

Data are for the 2020-2021 school year, unless otherwise noted.
NEW JERSEY FORMER EARLY LAUNCH TO LEARNING INITIATIVE (ELLI)

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment ......................................................... 228
School districts that offer state program ........................................ 1%
Income requirement ...................................................................... 185% FPL
Minimum hours of operation ......................................................... 2.5 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule ...................................................................... School or academic year

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY | NJ ELLI REQUIREMENT | BENCHMARK | REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
--- | --- | --- | ---
Early learning & development standards | Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive | Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive | ✓
Curriculum supports | Approval process & supports | Approval process & supports | ✓
Teacher degree | BA | BA | ✓
Teacher specialized training | ECE | Specializing in pre-K | ✓
Assistant teacher degree | HSD | CDA or equivalent | □
Staff professional development | 100 hours/5 years; PD plans (teachers only); Coaching | For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching | □
Maximum class size | 20 (4-year-olds) | 20 or lower | ✓
Staff-child ratio | 1:10 (4-year-olds) | 1:10 or better | ✓
Screening & referral | Vision, hearing, health & more | Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral | ✓
Continuous quality improvement system | Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement | Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement | ✓

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

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending ........................................................... $933,900
Local match required? ................................................................ No
State spending per child enrolled .................................................. $4,096
All reported spending per child enrolled* ...................................... $4,096

* 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.

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