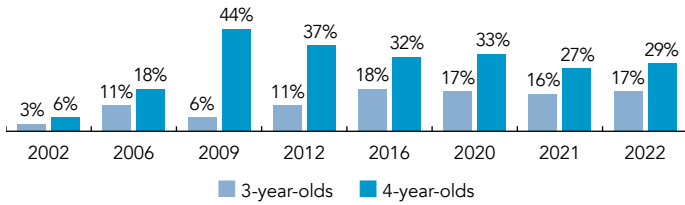
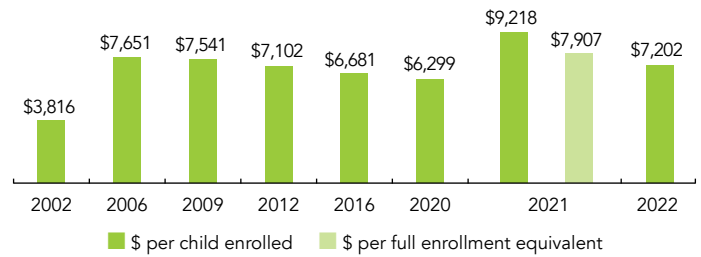


Arkansas

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2022 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

During the 2021-2022 school year, Arkansas preschool enrolled 19,097 children, an increase of 1,772 from the prior year, as the program began to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. State spending totaled \$106,500,000 and an additional \$7,500,000 in TANF funds and \$23,535,701 in federal recovery funds supported the program, down \$22,161,173 (14%), adjusted for inflation since last year. State spending per child (including TANF and federal recovery funds) equaled \$7,202 in 2021-2022, down \$2,016 from 2020-2021, adjusted for inflation. Arkansas met 8 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT'S NEW

For the second year in a row, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Arkansas paid each Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) grantee the full awarded grant amount during the 2021-22 school year, to maintain their business, pay staff, and provide services for children and families. Arkansas is also in the second year of the [Pre-K R.I.S.E. Early Childhood Literacy Initiative](#) with a sharpened focus on early literacy by providing professional development grounded in the Science of Reading to strengthen instruction in foundational literacy as well as provide high quality instructional materials to align research and practice. The LearnERS: Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Coaching Framework is being piloted to combine collaborative relationships to support CQI by providing job embedded professional development to early childhood educators across the state based on individual CQI growth plans. The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Arkansas Scholarship and the Step Up to WAGE\$ wage supplement programs have been developed in Arkansas to increase the level of education for early childhood educators while making the educational process affordable, increasing wages, and reducing turnover.

In December 2022, Arkansas was awarded a federal Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) three-year renewal grant for \$12 million. The state plans to use the funding to provide additional support for enhancement of infant and toddler care, family engagement and trauma informed care for children ages three to five.

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 Assessment, and children in schools designated as "school improvement status" receive prioritized funding.

ABC/ABCSS components intended to ensure quality include: one teacher with at least a bachelor's degree per every three classrooms at a site and teachers with an associate degree in the other two classrooms; 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 child assessment (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.

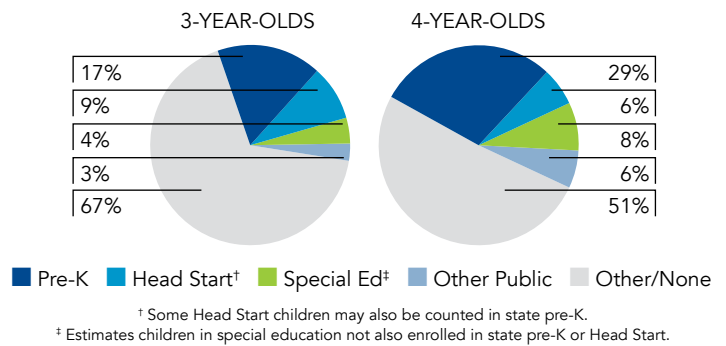
ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
22	6	15	12	8

ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE/ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	19,097
School districts that offer state program	99% (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	7,297
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	5,758
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	0

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



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	One BA per 3 classrooms; AA for other 2 classrooms	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; Coaching for novice teachers	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.
 * Indicates that while policy meets the benchmark, it is not being implemented fully.



RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$137,535,701
Local match required?	Yes
State Head Start spending	\$0
State spending per child enrolled	\$7,202
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$11,086

* 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

