

POLICY 13:

Prekindergarten Education

Why Prekindergarten Policy Matters. States can achieve a stronger work force, more efficient government spending, and healthier communities by expanding access to prekindergarten (pre-k) education. Research demonstrates that early-childhood education in a quality setting significantly improves the education, employment and positive life outcomes of participants.⁶⁶ This research also shows that funding for public prekindergarten produces economic benefits to society (such as higher employment rates and lower reliance on government services) that far exceed the initial investment.

Key State Policy Measures. The following key policies are important for promoting quality, broadly accessible prekindergarten:

13.1 Access to pre-k for four-year-olds. A key policy driver of access to pre-k is state funding, as measured by the annual funding amount per four-year-old resident of the state. This policy indicator reflects the level of access provided, and presents a standard metric of comparison across states. It differs from the measure of funding per four-year-old enrollee, which reflects the amount invested for each child enrolled in pre-k, as opposed to each child residing in the state. Some reports refer to spending-per-enrollee as an indicator of quality, on the assumption that greater per-child spending yields higher-quality programs. While there may be some correlation between spending levels and quality, a more precise method for assessing quality is presented by policy measure 13.2 below.

Changes in 2005-06: Between school year 2004-05 and 2005-06, states made the following changes in funding per four-year-old resident:

Increased Funding Per Four-year-old Resident	Reduced Funding Per Four-year-old Resident	No Pre-k Program for Four-year-olds	No Change
Alabama Arkansas Colorado Connecticut Delaware Kansas Louisiana Maryland Michigan Missouri Nebraska New Jersey New Mexico North Carolina Oklahoma Oregon Pennsylvania Tennessee Vermont Virginia Washington West Virginia Wisconsin	California Florida Georgia Hawaii Illinois Iowa Kentucky Maine Massachusetts Minnesota Nevada New York Ohio South Carolina Texas	Alaska Idaho Indiana Mississippi Montana New Hampshire North Dakota Rhode Island South Dakota Utah Wyoming	Arizona

13.2 Quality of pre-k programs. Research indicates that to achieve long-term social and economic benefits, the quality of pre-k programs is essential.⁶⁸ This research tends to focus on several key factors, which include a comprehensive curriculum, teachers with at least a Bachelor's degree, sufficient teacher compensation to attract qualified teachers, and a high degree of teacher-student interaction as measured by class sizes under 21 students and a staff-to-child ratio of 1:10 or better.

Changes in 2005-06: Between school year 2003-04 and 2005-06, state quality standards changed as indicated below:

- **Maine, Michigan, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania** added comprehensive curriculum standards.
- **Michigan** and **Missouri** began requiring that pre-k teachers hold at least a bachelor's degree, whereas **Arkansas** eliminated this requirement.
- **Nevada** began limiting class sizes to under 21 pupils and requiring a staff-to-child ratio of 1:10 or better.
- **Ohio** no longer limits class sizes to under 21 pupils.
- **Delaware, Maine, and New Mexico** began requiring that teachers in public pre-k programs are paid on the public school salary scale.

13.3 Access to pre-k for three-year-olds. States have typically focused their efforts on expanding pre-k for four-year-olds, seeking to establish broad access for that age group before expanding services to three-year-olds. Given the important brain development that occurs at younger ages, some states have targeted access to quality pre-k to three-year-old children as well.

Changes in 2005-06: Between school year 2004-05 and 2005-06, states made the following changes in funding per three-year-old resident:

Increased Funding Per Three-year-old Resident	Reduced Funding Per Three-year-old Resident	No Pre-k Program for Three-year-olds	No Change
Arkansas California Colorado Connecticut Illinois Kentucky Maryland Missouri Nebraska Nevada New Jersey Oregon Pennsylvania South Carolina Texas Vermont Washington West Virginia	Hawaii Iowa Massachusetts Minnesota New Mexico Ohio Wisconsin	Alabama Alaska Arizona Delaware Florida Georgia Idaho Indiana Kansas Louisiana Maine Michigan Mississippi Montana New Hampshire North Carolina North Dakota Oklahoma Rhode Island South Dakota Utah Virginia Wyoming	New York Tennessee

Prekindergarten Policy Measures

Measure 13.1: Access to Pre-k for Four-year-olds

How much does the state invest per four-year-old in the state to expand pre-k access? (The national average is \$742.) *Table reflects policy as of 2005-06.*

Above \$1,000	D.C., Fla., Ga., La., N.J., N.Y., Okla., Texas, Vt., W.Va.
\$500-\$999	Ark., Conn., Ill., Ky., Md., Mich., Wis.
\$250-\$499	Calif., Colo., Del., Kan., Maine, Mass., N.C.,* Ore., S.C., Tenn., Va., Wash.
Below \$250	Ala., Ariz., Iowa, Minn., Mo., Neb., Nev., N.M., Ohio, Pa.
No pre-k program	Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Ind., Miss., Mont., N.H., N.D., R.I., S.D., Utah, Wyo.

*Data source for spending figures do not include the Smart Start program.

Measure 13.2: Quality of Pre-k Programs

How many of the four key pre-k quality measures does the state meet? These measures are: 1) comprehensive curriculum, 2) teachers with at least a Bachelor's degree, 3) sufficient teacher compensation to attract qualified teachers, 4) class sizes under 21, and 5) a staff-to-child ratio of 1:10 or better. *Table reflects policy as of 2005-06.*

All 5 standards	Ala., Ill., Ky., La., Md., Mo., Neb., Nev. N.C., N.J., Okla., Tenn., Vt.
4 standards	Ark., Conn., Del., Ga., Mass., Mich., N.Y., Ore., S.C., W.Va.
3 standards	Ariz., Iowa, Minn., Texas, Va., Wis.
2 standards	Colo., Kan., Maine, N.M., Pa.
1 standard	Calif., Wash.
No standards	Hawaii, Ohio
No pre-k program	Alaska, Idaho, Ind., Miss., Mont., N.H., N.D., R.I., S.D., Utah, Wyo.

Measure 13.3: Access to Pre-k for Three-year-olds

How much does the state invest per three-year-old in the state to expand pre-k access? (The national average is \$112.) *Table reflects policy as of 2005-06.*

Above \$400	Ark., D.C., Ill., N.J.
\$100-\$399	Calif., Conn., Ky., Mass., Ore., Texas, Vt., W.Va.
\$50-\$99	Colo., Minn., Mo., Neb., Pa., Wash.
Below \$50	Iowa, Md., Nev., N.M., N.Y., Ohio, S.C., Tenn., Wis.
\$0	Ala., Alaska, Ariz., Del., Fla., Ga., Hawaii, Idaho, Ind., Kan., La., Maine, Mich., Miss., Mont., N.H., N.C.,* N.D., Okla., R.I., S.D., Utah, Va., Wyo.

*Data source for spending figures do not include the Smart Start program.

Selected State Policies for Prekindergarten

STATE	13.1		13.2						13.3	
	PRE-K ACCESS FOR 4-YEAR-OLDS		PRE-K QUALITY STANDARDS:						PRE-K ACCESS FOR 3 YEAR-OLDS	
	Funding Per 4-year-old in State	Percent Enrolled in State Pre-K	Comprehensive Curriculum Standards	Teacher Required to have BA	Max. Class Size <21	Staff: Child Ratio of 1:10 or Better	Teachers Required to be Paid on Public School Salary Scale	Funding Per 3 Year-old in State	Percent Enrolled in State	
Alabama	↑ \$72	2%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	\$0	-	
Alaska	\$0	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0	-	
Arizona	\$133	6%	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	\$0	-	
Arkansas	↑ \$879	18%	Yes	↓ -	Yes	Yes	Yes	↑ \$512	11%	
California	↓ \$330	10%	-	-	-	Yes	-	↑ \$152	5%	
Colorado	↑ \$413	14%	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	↑ \$68	2%	
Connecticut	↑ \$974	14%	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	↑ \$227	3%	
Delaware	↑ \$486	8%	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	↑ Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	\$0	-	
District of Columbia [a]	\$4,696	56%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	\$2,080	25%	
Florida [j]	↓ \$1,007	47%	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	N/A	\$0	-	
Georgia	↓ \$2,047	51%	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	\$0	-	
Hawaii	↓ \$0	-	-	-	-	-	-	↓ \$0	-	
Idaho	\$0	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0	-	
Illinois	↓ \$758	23%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	↑ \$475	14%	
Indiana	\$0	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0	-	
Iowa	↓ \$131	4%	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	↓ \$41	1%	
Kansas	↑ \$371	15%	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	\$0	-	
Kentucky	↓ \$703	29%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	↑ \$264	11%	
Louisiana [b]	↑ \$1,083	22%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	\$0	-	
Maine	↓ \$278	16%	↑ Yes	Yes	-	-	↑ Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	\$0	-	
Maryland	↑ \$549	31%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	↑ \$17	1%	
Massachusetts	↓ \$353	10%	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	↓ \$317	9%	
Michigan	↑ \$639	16%	↑ Yes	↑ Yes	Yes	Yes	-	\$0	-	
Minnesota [l]	↓ \$128	2%	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	↓ \$75	1%	
Mississippi	\$0	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0	-	
Missouri	↑ \$104	4%	Yes	↑ Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	↑ \$61	2%	
Montana	\$0	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0	-	
Nebraska	↑ \$90	4%	↑ Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	↑ \$51	2%	
Nevada	↓ \$67	2%	↑ Yes	Yes	↑ Yes	↑ Yes	Yes	↑ \$19	1%	
New Hampshire	\$0	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0	-	
New Jersey [c]	↑ \$2,289	25%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	↑ \$1625	15%	
New Mexico [m]	↑ \$154	7%	↑ Yes	-	-	-	↑ Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	↓ \$13	1%	
New York [d]	↓ \$1,005	29%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	\$17	1%	
North Carolina [e]	↑ \$476	12%	↑ Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No, unless teacher is licensed (nonpublic)	\$0	-	
North Dakota	\$0	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0	-	
Ohio [f]	↓ \$102	4%	-	-	↓ -	-	-	↓ \$24	1%	
Oklahoma	↑ \$2,360	70%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	\$0	-	
Oregon	↑ \$399	5%	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	↑ \$209	3%	
Pennsylvania [g]	↑ \$158	6%	↑ Yes	Yes	-	-	-	↑ \$86	2%	
Rhode Island	\$0	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0	-	
South Carolina	↓ \$337	31%	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	↑ \$46	4%	
South Dakota	\$0	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0	-	
Tennessee	↑ \$431	11%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	\$22	1%	
Texas	↓ \$1,176	44%	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	↑ \$118	4%	
Utah	\$0	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0	-	
Vermont [h]	↑ \$1,178	47%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	↑ \$311	14%	
Virginia	↑ \$377	11%	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	\$0	-	
Washington	↑ \$355	6%	-	-	-	Yes	-	↑ \$80	1%	
West Virginia	↑ \$1,807	40%	Yes	[k]	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	↑ \$203	4%	
Wisconsin [i]	↑ \$976	32%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (public); No (nonpublic)	↓ \$38	1%	
Wyoming	\$0	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0	-	
National Average	↑ \$742	20%						↑ \$112	3%	
Year Data Collected	2005-06		2005-06						2005-06	

Data Source:

W. Steven Barnett, Jason T. Hustedt, Laura E. Hawkinson, Nd Kenneth B. Robin, *The State of Preschool 2006: State Preschool Yearbook*, New Brunswick, N.J.: The National Institute for Early Education Research, 2006.

Data Table Notes:

- a. The District of Columbia was not included in the data source for teacher salary requirements.
- b. Louisiana offers four pre-k programs: 8(g), a program funded by the Louisiana Education Quality Trust Fund; LA 4, a program for at-risk four-year-olds; Starting Points, a program funded through a TANF block grant; and Louisiana Nonpublic Schools Early Childhood Development Program (NSECD). Funding, enrollment, and quality data reflect all four programs, with the following exception: Some programs require payment of teachers on a public school salary scale and some do not.
- c. New Jersey operates three pre-k programs: the Abbott program serves three- and four-year-olds in the state's 31 highest poverty districts, Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA) serving primarily four-year-olds in 102 additional districts, and the Early to Launch Initiative serving four-year-olds in all districts. Funding, enrollment, and quality data reflect all three programs, with the following exception: ECPA does not limit class size or staff-to-child ratios as specified.
- d. New York operates two programs: the Targeted Prekindergarten (TPK) and Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) programs. Funding, enrollment, and quality data reflect both programs, with the following exception: The UPK program does not require teachers to have a bachelor's degree.
- e. North Carolina also operates the Smart Start program, which is a locally controlled and state funded early childhood initiative. Funding for this initiative is not included in the calculation of pre-k spending for three- and four-year-olds. Data in this report reflects only the More at Four program.
- f. Ohio operates two programs: the Public School Preschool Program (PSP) and a state-funded supplement to Head Start called Head Start Plus (HSP). Funding, enrollment, and quality data reflect both programs.
- g. Pennsylvania operates three programs: Kindergarten for four-year-olds (K4), the Education Accountability Block Grant (EABG), and a state-funded supplement for Head Start. Funding data does not reflect the K4 data. Enrollment, and quality data reflect both programs with the following exception: Only K4 requires that teachers have a bachelor's degree, and only the Head Start supplement limits class size and staff-to-child ratios.
- h. Vermont operates two programs: the Early Education Initiative serves three- and four-year-old children at risk, and the Average Daily Membership-funded program available generally. Funding, enrollment, and quality data reflect both programs.
- i. Wisconsin operates two programs: the Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K) program, and a state-funded Head Start supplement. Funding, enrollment, and quality data reflect both programs with the following exceptions: only the 4K program requires that teachers have a BA, and only the the Head Start supplement limits class size and staff-to-child ratios.
- j. Florida operates two programs: the School Readiness Program (SRP) and the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK). The data presented here reflect only the VPK program.
- k. West Virginia instituted universal pre-k in 2003, and as part of this transition, placed a new focus on teacher training in early childhood education. In order to expand the pool of pre-k teachers, West Virginia now allows teachers to hold a teaching permit, and requires early childhood certification.
- l. Minnesota provides state funds for Head Start and a School Readiness Program. Only Head Start funding is reflected in this data.
- m. New Mexico operates two pre-k programs: New Mexico Pre-K and the Child Development Program (CDP). Funding, enrollment, and quality data reflect both programs with the following exception: learning standards, class size limits, and staff-to-child ratios apply to the CDP program only.