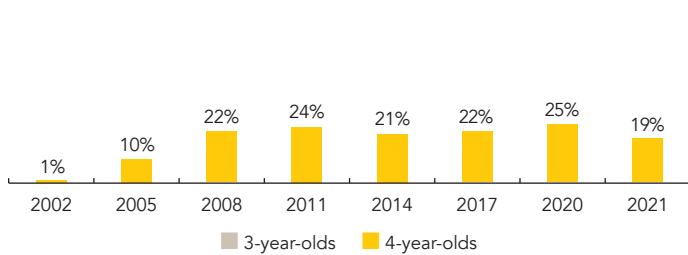
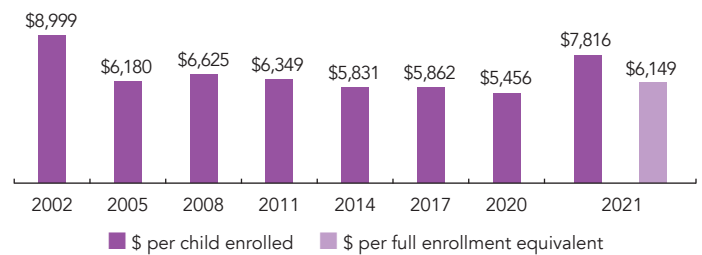


North Carolina

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, North Carolina preschool enrolled 23,718 children, a decrease of 7,341 children from the prior year. State funding totaled \$113,509,071 with an additional \$68,300,000 in TANF and \$3,581,732 in federal CARES funds, up \$15,940,600 (9%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child (including TANF and CARES) equaled \$7,816 in 2020-2021, up \$2,361 from 2019-2020, adjusted for inflation. North Carolina met 8 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. Child assessments could be done virtually; classroom observations were not required during the 2020-2021 school year but returned to pre-COVID requirements in the 2021-2022 school year. Additional professional development was required this school year on health & safety, supporting children's social and emotional needs, and on providing remote instruction. The releases of a cloud curriculum, a family engagement program (Ready Rosie), several teacher resources, and required professional development were all new — and positive — implementations as a result of the pandemic. Teachers reported better understanding of formative assessment and more meaningful family engagement. These resources will be continuously provided during the 2021-2022 school year.

BACKGROUND

North Carolina has provided state-funded pre-kindergarten education since 2001, originally via the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program. During the 2011-2012 school year, the program was renamed the North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten (NC Pre-K) Program, and administrative control moved from the Department of Public Instruction to the Department of Health and Human Services.

NC Pre-K enrolls at-risk 4-year-olds from low-income families who have not participated in other early childhood programs. NC Pre-K programs are required to operate 6.5 hours per day for 36 weeks each year and serve as many eligible children as funding levels permit. Eligibility generally requires children to be in a household with income at or below 75% of the state median income (SMI), but up to 20% of children may be in a household with a higher income if they have another designated risk factor. Risk factors include a developmental delay or identified disability, a chronic health condition, or limited English proficiency.

Funding for NC Pre-K includes state general appropriations and North Carolina Education Lottery receipts, federal funds, and a local contribution, with the majority of the funding from the state. NC Pre-K classrooms operate statewide in settings such as privately licensed Head Start programs, childcare centers, and public schools. All programs, whether in public or private settings, must earn high-quality ratings under the state child-care licensing system to participate in NC Pre-K and the state's subsidy system.

NC Pre-K sets a maximum class size of 18 4-year-olds and requires a staff-child ratio of 1:9. Lead teachers must have a bachelor's degree and hold or be working towards a birth-through-kindergarten license. Classroom staff are required to use approved curricula and formative assessments aligned with the state's early learning standards. Staff conduct ongoing formative assessments to gather information about each child's growth and skill development, as well as to inform instruction.

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
27	None Served

RESOURCE RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
19	15

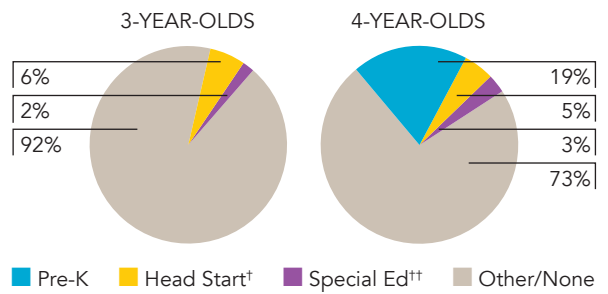
TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
8

NORTH CAROLINA PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	23,718
School districts that offer state program	100% (counties/parishes)
Income requirement	75% SMI
Minimum hours of operation	6.5 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule	School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	8,491
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	15,750
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	0

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



† 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.

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	NC 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	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE or CD	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	HSD	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	21 hours/year (teachers); 5 hours/year (assistants); PD plans; Coaching	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	18 (4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:9 (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.



RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$185,390,794
Local match required?	Yes
State Head Start spending	\$0
State spending per child enrolled	\$7,816
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$10,764

* 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

