Roadmap to the State Profile Pages

How to interpret data on the individual state profiles

For each state with a preschool education program, we include one page with a description of the state's program, followed by a page with data on the program's key features, focusing on access, quality, and resources.

The first page for each state begins with two sets of bar graphs. The first set shows percentages of the state's 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds enrolled in the state preschool program. The second set shows the state's spending per child enrolled in the state preschool program. Both sets of bar graphs depict changes in state preschool over time, from fiscal year 2002 (which corresponds to the 2001-2002 school year) through fiscal year 2018 (which corresponds to the 2017-2018 school year). Due to space constraints, not all years can be included. Instead, data is included for the years ending in 2002, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2017, and 2018. Most of the data used for comparison purposes come from NIEER's previous Yearbooks, although spending figures are adjusted for inflation and represent 2018 dollars. In addition, there are some exceptions in cases where states revised data or reported data differently. The percent of children enrolled is calculated using Census estimates of 3- and 4-year-old children in each state.

Following the bar graphs is a brief narrative providing information on the main features of the state's program(s). This includes an overview of preschool enrollment, spending and quality; any new developments; details such as the program's history, the types of settings in which state-funded preschool can be offered, and eligibility criteria. In many cases, the narrative also describes unique or particularly interesting aspects of the state's program(s) that may not be highlighted elsewhere in the report, as well as expected changes for the 2018-2019 school year. Some descriptive information in the narratives was originally based on information found in the reports Seeds of Success from the Children's Defense Fund and Quality Counts 2002 from Education Week.

For the 44 states with preschool programs and the District of Columbia, the bottom of the first page of each state profile presents four numbers showing the state's ranking on the following measures:

- The percentage of the state's 4-year-old population enrolled in the state's preschool program (Access Rankings – 4-Year-Olds)

- The percentage of the state's 3-year-old population enrolled in the state's preschool program (Access Rankings – 3-Year-Olds)

- State expenditures per child enrolled in the program (Resources Rankings – State Spending)

- All reported expenditures per child enrolled in the program, including local and federal spending as well as state spending (Resources Rankings – All Reported Spending).

The All Reported Spending ranking often provides a more complete picture of preschool spending in states using local and federal funding sources than the State Spending ranking alone. Because states vary in their ability to report spending from these other sources, however, this ranking is imperfect and sometimes underestimates total spending.

The bottom of the first page of each state profile (including Guam) also presents a box indicating the total number of quality standards benchmarks met.

California, Connecticut, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin each have more than one distinct preschool education initiative. Therefore, information is presented slightly differently for these states and is explained on their individual profiles.

State profile pages are also given for the five states that did not fund preschool education programs in the 2017-2018 school year. For these states, the table of quality standards is omitted. These profiles do report enrollment data for special education and federally funded Head Start, however. In addition, data on per-child spending for K-12 education and federal Head Start are included. State-funded Head Start spending and enrollment are also provided for no-program states. Profile pages are also included for five U.S. territories that do not offer "state-funded" preschool (American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands). For these five territories, a narrative is provided, as is information about Head Start and special education.

The following sections provide an overview of information contained in the data tables on the state profile pages and explain why these elements are important. Data in the tables are for the 2017-2018 school year except where noted.

ACCESS

The Access data table begins with the total state preschool enrollment, which is the number of children of all ages enrolled at a specific point in time. Following that is the percentage of school districts (or other local education authorities, such as counties or parishes) providing state-funded preschool programs. This information shows the extent of the initiative's geographic coverage. Next, the table shows what, if any, income requirement is used in determining eligibility for the program.

Data on the minimum hours of operation (hours per day and days per week) and operating schedule (academic or full calendar year) are shown as additional measures of access because working parents may find it difficult to get their children to and from programs that operate only a few hours a day or week. The amount of time children participate in a preschool program also matters for other reasons, such as influencing the program's effects on children's development and learning.

The Access data table also shows enrollment of 3- and 4-year-old children in two federally funded programs: preschool special education and Head Start. The Head Start enrollment total includes children in the American Indian/Alaskan Native and Migrant & Seasonal Head Start programs where applicable. The final item in the table reports how many children ages 3 and 4 years old are participating in Head Start through state supplemental funds.

Two Access pie charts illustrate the percentages of the state's 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in the state-funded preschool program(s), special education, and Head Start. The remaining children are categorized as enrolled in "Other/None." These children may be enrolled in another type of private or publicly funded program (e.g., state-subsidized child care) or may not be attending a center-based program at all. We calculated an unduplicated count for special education enrollment in order to more accurately represent the percentage of children served in the state. The special education percentage in the pie chart represents children who are in special education but not enrolled in Head Start or state preschool programs. For the fourth time, in the 2018 report, we also calculated an unduplicated count for Head Start enrollment in order to avoid double counting Head Start children enrolled in state-funded preschool. For the states that were able to report this information, the Head Start percentage does not include children also enrolled in state-funded preschool.

QUALITY

State policies in critical areas related to quality are shown in the Quality Standards Checklist table. This year we replace the original 10 policies and benchmarks, dating back to 2002, with an updated set first presented in 2016. For each policy area, states receive a checkmark when their policy meets or exceeds the related benchmark standard. The first column in the Quality Standards Checklist table lists the policy that is being evaluated. The second column presents information about each state program's requirements regarding each policy. The third column lists the benchmark for each policy—that is, the rigor of the state requirement needed to meet the benchmark. The fourth column depicts whether the state preschool program's requirements met the benchmark. A box at the bottom of the fourth column displays the total number of benchmarks met by the state program.

The Quality Standards Checklist represents a set of minimum criteria, established by state policy, needed to ensure the effectiveness of preschool education programs, especially when serving children who are at-risk for school failure. Although the checklist is not intended to be an exhaustive inventory of all the features of a high-quality program, each of these research-based standards is essential for setting the groundwork for high-quality experiences for children. Meeting all 10 standards does not necessarily guarantee that a program is of high quality, but no state's prekindergarten policies should be considered fully satisfactory unless all 10 benchmarks are met. Although programs may routinely engage in practices meeting criteria for quality standards, credit is given only when the practices are explicitly required in state policy.

Judgment inevitably plays a role in setting specific benchmarks based on evidence, as research rarely is completely definitive. We have given more weight to the risk of losing substantial benefits by setting benchmarks too low than to the risk of unnecessarily raising costs by setting benchmarks too high, because research has found the benefits of high-quality programs to be substantially greater than the costs. In other words, there is more to lose when programs are weak or ineffective. Nevertheless, the original benchmarks were still conceived as minimum standards. The current benchmarks raise the bar somewhat.

Based on advances in research over the decade and a half since establishing the original quality standards benchmarks, we have created the current set. These shift the focus somewhat from policies regarding classroom structure toward policies that shape classroom processes associated with positive child developmental outcomes.[1] Specifically, the current benchmarks introduce one new quality standards benchmark and make substantial changes or enhancements to three others. The rationale for each benchmark is fully explained in the Executive Summary. Below, we briefly describe the criteria used to assess whether state policies meet each benchmark.

Early learning and development standards (ELDS) offer programs guidance and ensure that they cover the full range of areas essential to children's learning and development. To meet the ELDS benchmark, states should have comprehensive ELDS covering all areas identified as fundamental by the National Education Goals Panel[2]—children's physical well-being and motor development, social/emotional development, approaches toward learning, language development, and cognition and general knowledge. These standards should be specifically tailored to the learning of preschool-age children so that they are appropriate for their level of development. The ELDS should also be vertically aligned with the state's infant and toddler standards and either K–3 or college-and career-ready standards, as well as horizontally aligned with preschool child assessments (when assessments are required). The state should have supports in place for the ELDS such as professional development and resources. The ELDS should also be sensitive to children's diverse cultural and language backgrounds.

To meet the curriculum supports benchmark, state policies must provide guidance or have an approval process for curriculum selection and provide support for curriculum implementation, such as training or ongoing technical assistance. States do not need to mandate the use of specific curriculum models to meet the benchmark.

Of the 10 standards we use to gauge the quality of state-funded preschool programs, four involve teacher qualifications or training. State preschool policies are evaluated based on whether programs require teachers in all classrooms to have at least a bachelor's degree, whether they require teachers to have specialization in preschool education, and whether they require assistant teachers in all classrooms to have at least a Child Development Associate (CDA) or equivalent credential based on coursework. The fourth benchmark requires both teachers and assistant teachers to have at least 15 hours of annual in-service training and individualized, annual professional development plans. In addition, to meet the professional development benchmark, state policies must also require that all classrooms receive coaching, or ongoing classroom-embedded support.

Class size and staff-child ratios are also emphasized in the Quality Standards Checklist, with the expectation that states will limit class sizes to 20 children at the most and have no more than 10 children per classroom teaching staff member.

To meet the screening and referral benchmark, states must require vision and hearing screenings, and at least one additional health screening; as well as referrals when needed. This quality standards benchmark no longer assesses provision of support services. Nearly all state-funded pre-K programs have some requirement for parent engagement and support, and we could not set an evidence-based benchmark that differentiated among them based on effectiveness.

The original Quality Standards Checklist required that programs should provide at least one meal per day. While nutritious meals are important, this requirement has been removed from the Checklist because whether a program met the requirement was largely determined by whether the program operated for a half day or full school day.

The final benchmark focuses on state requirements regarding a continuous quality improvement system (CQIS). This reflects a shift in focus from compliance to state support for continuous improvement. Minimum requirements for a CQIS to meet the benchmark are: (1) the use of data to support planning and support for improvement of policy or practice at local and state levels, and (2) a requirement for annual systematic collection of classroom observation data for use in continuous improvement.

[1] Minervino, J. (2014) *Lessons from research and the classroom: Implementing high-quality pre-k that makes a difference for young children*. Seattle, WA: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Weiland, C. (2016). Launching preschool 2.0: A roadmap to high-quality public programs at scale. *Behavioral Sciences & Policy, 2*(1). 37-46. Yoshikawa, H., Weiland, C., Brooks-Gunn, J., Burchinal, M., Espinosa, L. M., Gormley, Jr., W. T., Ludwig, J., & et al. (2013). *Investing in our future: The evidence base on preschool education*. Ann Arbor, MI: Society for Research in Child Development.

[2] National Education Goals Panel (1991). *The Goal 1 Technical Planning Subgroup report on school readiness*. Washington, DC: Author.

RESOURCES

The table in the Resources section provides the following information: total state spending for the state preschool program; whether a local match, monetary or in-kind, is required; amount of state Head Start spending; state spending per child enrolled in the program; and all reported (local, state, and federal) spending per child enrolled in the program. These measures show various views of the resources dedicated to state preschool programs, which allows for a more complete picture of a state's commitment to preschool education. For example, a state's total spending may appear low, but may prove to be high relative to the number of children enrolled. On the other hand, a state with a high total funding level may have a low per-pupil spending level if it enrolls a large number of children. In some states, local communities contribute substantial additional funds to state preschool education by using local funding sources or by leveraging federal funding sources. In such cases, the figure that includes all reported spending is the best gauge of the level of available resources, to the extent that information about local and locally allocated federal spending is available. In 2017-2018, several states also utilized federal Preschool Development grant (PDG) dollars which is reflected in the all reported spending number.

The bar chart in the Resources section compares per-child spending in state-funded preschool programs to federal Head Start and K–12 per-child spending. Head Start per-child spending for the 2017-2018 year includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds served. Past years' figures have unintentionally included funds for Early Head Start, which made per-child amounts seem artificially higher (although this has been corrected for the past several years). Different colors indicate the different funding sources (local, state, and federal). Separate colors are used to indicate any TANF funds that a state directs toward its preschool initiative. While TANF funds are federal dollars, it is the state's decision to devote these funds to preschool education, as opposed to other purposes. Data on the amounts of local and federal preschool funds are included in the bar chart when available.

Guide to State Profiles

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment ....Number of children of all ages in state pre-K program

School districts that offer state program .... Percentage of school districts in state where program is offered

Income requirement ....Maximum family income for program eligibility

Minimum hours of operation.. Minimum hours per day and days per week program operates

Operating schedule..Annual schedule of operation (school/academic year or full calendar year)

Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .... Number of 3- and 4-year-olds served by the Preschool Grants Program of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ....Number of slots for 3- and 4-year-olds in Head Start funded with federal money

State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4....................................Number of slots for 3- and 4-year-olds in Head Start funded with state money

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned with state infant & toddler and K–3 or college & career ready standards, aligned with child assessments, supported, and culturally sensitive
Curriculum supports	Approval process for selecting curricula and supports in place for curriculum implementation
Teacher degree	Lead teacher must have a BA, at minimum
Teacher specialized training	Lead teacher must have specialized training in a pre-K area
Assistant teacher degree	Assistant teacher must have a CDA or equivalent, at minimum
Staff professional development	Teacher and assistant teacher must receive at least 15 hours/year of in-service professional development and training, individualized annual professional development plans, and coaching
Maximum class size	Maximum number of children per classroom must be 20 or fewer
Staff-child ratio	Lowest acceptable ratio of staff to children in classroom (e.g., maximum number of students per teacher) must be 1:10 or better
Screening & referral	Screenings and referrals for vision, hearing, and health must be required
Continuous quality improvement system	Systematic structured observations of classroom quality and information collected is used for classroom/program improvement at the state and local levels

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending ....Total state funds spent on state pre-K program

Local match required?..Whether state requires local providers to match state monetary contributions to program

State Head Start spending .... Total state funds spent to supplement Head Start program

State spending per child enrolled.................................. Amount of state funds spent per child participating in pre-K program

All reported spending per child enrolled ....Amount of all reported funds (local, state, and federal) spent per child participating in pre-K program

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Associate of Arts
ACF	Administration for Children and Families
AEPS	Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System for Infants and Children
ASQ-3/ ASQ-SE	Ages & Stages Questionnaires, Third Edition/Ages & Stages Questionnaires - Social Emotional
B–	Denotes that the age range covered by a teaching license begins at birth (e.g., B–3 = birth–grade 3)
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BMI	Body Mass Index
BS	Bachelor of Science
CACFP	Child and Adult Care Food Program
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCDF	Child Care and Development Fund
CD	Child Development
CDA	Child Development Associate credential
CLASS	Classroom Assessment Scoring System
COR	HighScope Child Observation Record
CQIS	Continuous Quality Improvement System
DIAL	Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning
DIBELS	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills
DLL	Dual Language Learner
DOE	Department of Education
DRA	Developmental Reading Assessment
DRDP	Desired Results Developmental Profile
DSC	Developing Skills Checklist
EC	Early Childhood
ECE	Early Childhood Education
ECERS-3	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Third Edition
ECERS-R	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised
ECSE/ ECE Sp Ed	Early Childhood Special Education
Ed.D	Doctor of Education Degree
Ed.S	Educational Specialist Degree
EE	Elementary Education
ELDS	Early Learning and Development Standards
ELL	English Language Learner
ELLCO	Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation
ELS	Early Learning Standards
EPSDT	Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment
ERS	Environmental Rating Scale
ESL	English as a Second Language
FCCERS	Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale
FPL	Federal Poverty Level
FRPL	Free or reduced-price lunch
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
FY	Fiscal Year
GED	General Equivalency Diploma
HdSt	Head Start
HSD	High School Diploma
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan
IOM	Institute of Medicine
ITERS	Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale
K	Kindergarten
KEA	Kindergarten Entry Assessment
KIDS	Kindergarten Individual Development Survey
LEA	Local Education Agency
MA	Master of Arts
myIGDis	My Individual Growth and Development Indicators
N–	Denotes that the age range covered by a teaching license begins at nursery (e.g., N–3 = nursery–grade 3)
NA	Not Applicable
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
PALS	Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening
P–	Denotes that the age range covered by a teaching license begins at preschool (e.g., P–4 = preschool–grade 4)
PEG	Preschool Expansion Grant
PD	Professional Development
PDG	Preschool Development Grant
PDG B–5	Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five
PIR	Program Information Report (Head Start)
PPVT	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test
Pre-K	Prekindergarten
QRIS	Quality Rating and Improvement System
RTT	Race to the Top
RTT-ELC	Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge
SEA	State Education Agency
SMI	State Median Income
SpEd	Special Education
TANF	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
T.E.A.C.H.	Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project)
TS GOLD	Teaching Strategies GOLD
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WSS	Work Sampling System