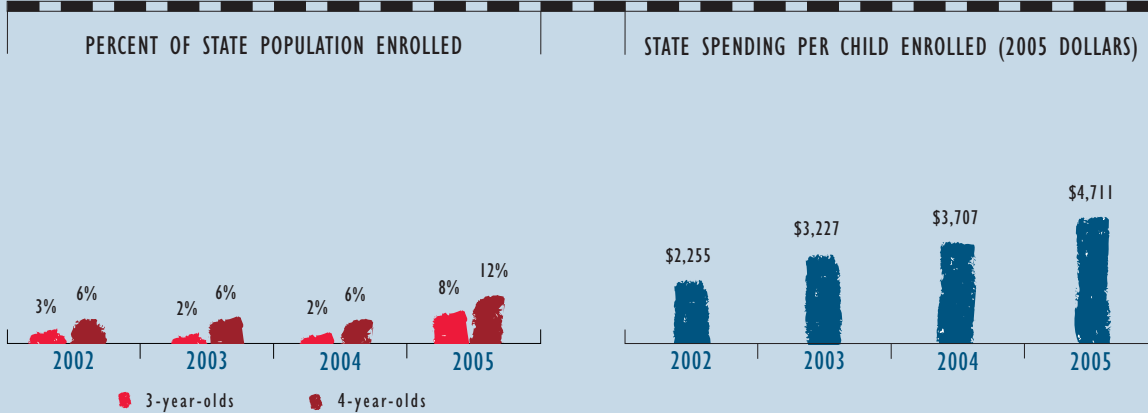


Arkansas



Since 1991, the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program has provided early care and education services for children from birth to age 5 who are from low-income families or at risk due to abuse or neglect, low birth weight, limited English proficiency or other circumstances. Originally, the program was part of a state initiative supported by a dedicated sales tax for the Educational Excellence Trust Fund. The program is now partially funded by 80 percent of the monies received through an excise tax on package beer established in 2001. Localities are required to cover 40 percent of total funding for the program. Public schools operate the majority of programs, but direct funding is also provided to Head Start agencies and private child care centers.

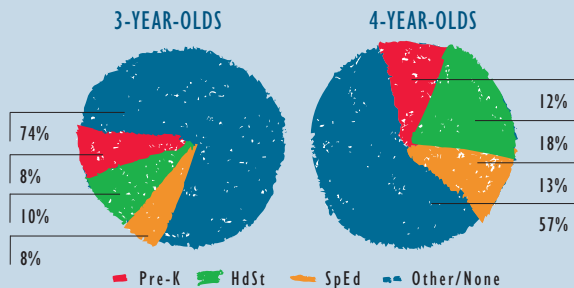
State funding for prekindergarten was increased for the 2004–2005 school year, and again for 2005–2006, allowing greater access to the program. The additional funding supports the new Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (ABCSS) program. This program follows the same quality standards as the original ABC program, but is aimed primarily at districts in which at least 75 percent of children score below proficient levels in literacy and math on State Benchmark exams. ABCSS funds are also targeted for children in schools designated as being in school improvement status. Providers participating in the ABCSS program may include school districts, as well as private early education providers who must meet a list of state-mandated quality standards.



ACCESS

Total state program enrollment	-----	9,316 ¹
School districts that offer state program	-----	93% (counties) ²
Income requirement	-----	200% FPL
Hours of operation	-----	7.5 hours/day, 5 days/week
Operating schedule	-----	Academic year
Special education enrollment	-----	7,907
Federally funded Head Start enrollment '03-'04	-----	10,193
State-funded Head Start enrollment	-----	0

STATE PRE-K AND HEAD START ENROLLMENT AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION



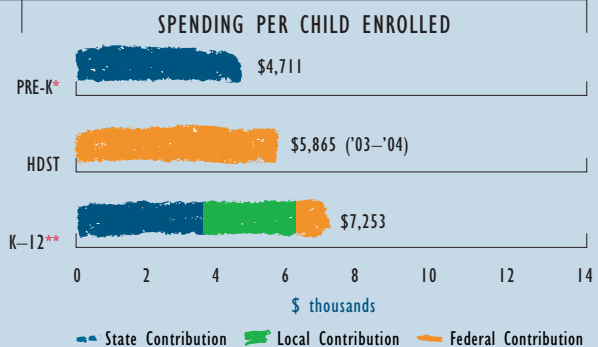
QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?
Early learning standards	----- Comprehensive	Comprehensive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	----- BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	----- P-4 teacher license ³	Specializing in Pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	----- CDA	CDA or equivalent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher in-service	----- 30 clock hours	At least 15 hours/year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size		20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	----- 20		
4-year-olds	----- 20		
Staff-child ratio		1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	----- 1:10		
4-year-olds	----- 1:10		
Screening/referral and support services	----- Vision, hearing, health; and support services ⁴	Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meals	----- Lunch and snack	At least 1/day	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring	----- Site visits and other monitoring	Site visits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



RESOURCES

Total state Pre-K spending	-----	\$43,891,700 ⁵
Local match required?	-----	Yes—40% of total funding
State spending per child enrolled	-----	\$4,711
State spending per 3-year-old	-----	\$380
State spending per 4-year-old	-----	\$576



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

** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

Data are for the '04-'05 school year, unless otherwise noted.

¹ This figure represents center-based enrollment only, and does not include 5,242 children who received home-visiting services during 2004–2005.

² A district is required to provide the Pre-K initiative if at least 75% of the students score below proficient on the primary benchmark exams, if a school has been designated by the state Department of Education as being in school improvement status, or if the district has been identified as being in academic distress.

³ The P-4 teacher license covers birth–Grade 4.

⁴ Support services include one annual parent conference, education services or job training for parents, parenting support or training, parent involvement activities, health services for children, information about nutrition, referral to social services, and transition to kindergarten activities.

⁵ This figure represents funding for center-based programs only, and does not include \$7,228,718 in state funds directed to home-visiting services.