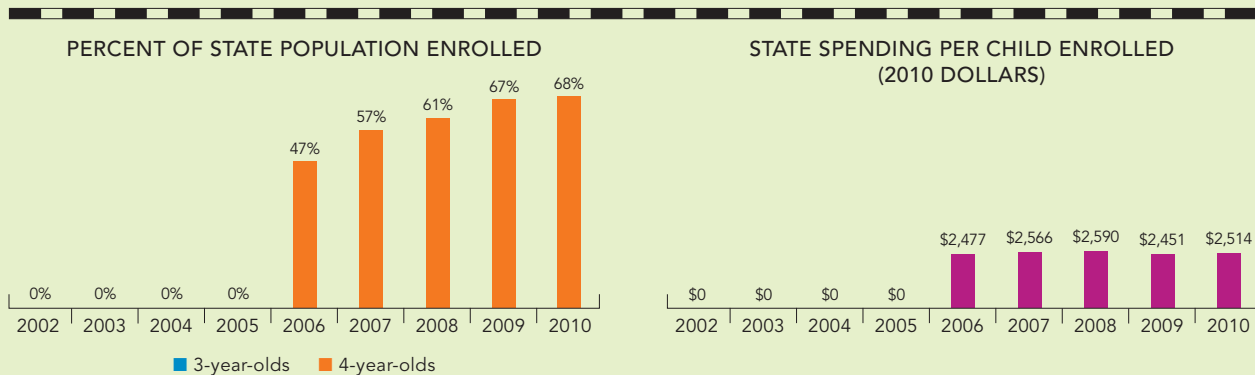


Florida



Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program was established as a result of a 2002 state constitutional amendment requiring prekindergarten access for all of the state's 4-year-old children. In 2005, the program began operating across the state, serving more than 100,000 children. Enrollment increased in the 2009-2010 program year to 155,877.

Children may enroll in any participating program where space is available and may attend either a school-year program totaling 540 instructional hours or a summer program totaling 300 instructional hours. The school-year program requires teachers to have a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) or equivalent credential while the summer program requires teachers to hold at least a bachelor's degree.

The VPK program is offered in a variety of settings, including accredited faith-based centers, accredited nonpublic schools, licensed child care centers, licensed family child care homes, and public schools. Regardless of setting, all providers must meet the program's minimum requirements. The program is administered locally through early learning coalitions, which distribute funds to the VPK programs based on a fixed per-child amount. The VPK program was evaluated for program impact/child outcomes in 2008.

A separate initiative, Florida's School Readiness Program, began in 1999 and expanded in 2001 by incorporating two other state programs, the Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program and the State Migrant Prekindergarten Program. The Early Intervention Program focuses on young children's health, and the Migrant program serves 3- and 4-year-olds whose parents are migratory agricultural or fishing laborers. This report focuses only on the VPK program.

Starting in 2010, a change in the law allows a public or private VPK provider that has been on probation for two consecutive years and subsequently failed to meet the minimum rate set by the state Board of Education to apply for a "good cause" exemption and remain eligible to offer the VPK program. Such programs must serve at least twice the statewide percentage of children with disabilities or children identified as limited English proficient, meet local and state health and safety requirements, and submit assessment data documenting children's learning gains. Ongoing data analysis will be used to determine the impact of the exemption.

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

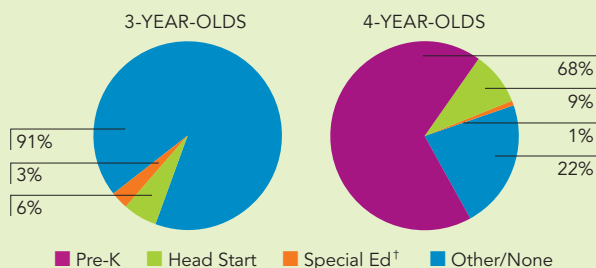
RESOURCES RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
34	37

FLORIDA VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment	155,877
School districts that offer state program	100% (counties)
Income requirement	None
Hours of operation	Determined locally ¹
Operating schedule	540 hours/year (school year program); 300 hours/year (summer program) ¹
Special education enrollment	19,430
Federally funded Head Start enrollment	33,675
State-funded Head Start enrollment	0

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



† This is an estimate of children in special education who are not enrolled in state-funded pre-K or Head Start.

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 (summer); CDA or equivalent (school year) ²	BA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	EC or EE certification (summer); Meets CDA requirements (school year) ²	Specializing in pre-K	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	40 clock hours ³	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher in-service	10 clock hours ⁴	At least 15 hours/year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size		20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	NA		
4-year-olds	12 (summer); 18 (school year) ⁵		
Staff-child ratio		1:10 or better	<input type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	NA		
4-year-olds	1:12 (summer); 1:10 (school year) ⁵		
Screening/referral and support services	Determined locally ⁶	Vision, hearing, health; and at least 1 support service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meals	Depend on length of program day ⁷	At least 1/day	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring	Site visits and other monitoring	Site visits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET

3

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$391,819,943 ⁸
Local match required?	No
State spending per child enrolled	\$2,514 ⁸
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$2,514

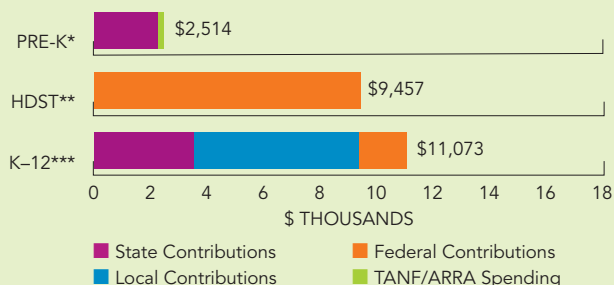
* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.

** Head Start per-child spending for the 2009-2010 year includes funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

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

Data are for the '09-'10 school year, unless otherwise noted.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED



¹ VPK programs may choose to operate a summer program, totaling at least 300 hours of service, or a school-year program, totaling at least 540 hours of service. The operating schedule and hours are determined locally, but the average number of hours per day for a 180-day, 540-hour program is 3 and the average number of hours per day for the 300-hour summer program is 7.5.

² Teacher qualification requirements are different for the summer and school-year programs. Teachers in the summer programs must have a BA in early childhood, primary or preschool education, family and consumer science, or elementary education. Teachers in the school-year programs are required to have a CDA or equivalent and have completed a Department of Education course on emergent literacy.

³ Assistant teachers do not have to meet any degree requirements, but must complete a 40-hour training for licensed child care providers.

⁴ Lead teachers with a CDA must complete 10 clock hours per year of professional development. For teachers with a BA and certification, the requirement is 120 clock hours per 5 years.

⁵ During a special legislative session in 2009, the Legislature adjusted the staff-child ratio for the summer program from 1:10 to 1:12. The maximum class size is now 12. The staff-child ratio for the school-year program was not changed, with one teacher required for classes of up to 10 students, and a second staff member required in classes of 11 to 18 students.

⁶ All children participating in programs in licensed child care facilities or public schools must have evidence of vision, hearing, and immunization/general physical health screenings. For public school programs, referrals for further follow-up, as appropriate, are also required.

⁷ Meals and snacks are required for full-day programs.

⁸ For the 2009-2010 program year, this funding amount includes \$38,017,534 in funds from ARRA.