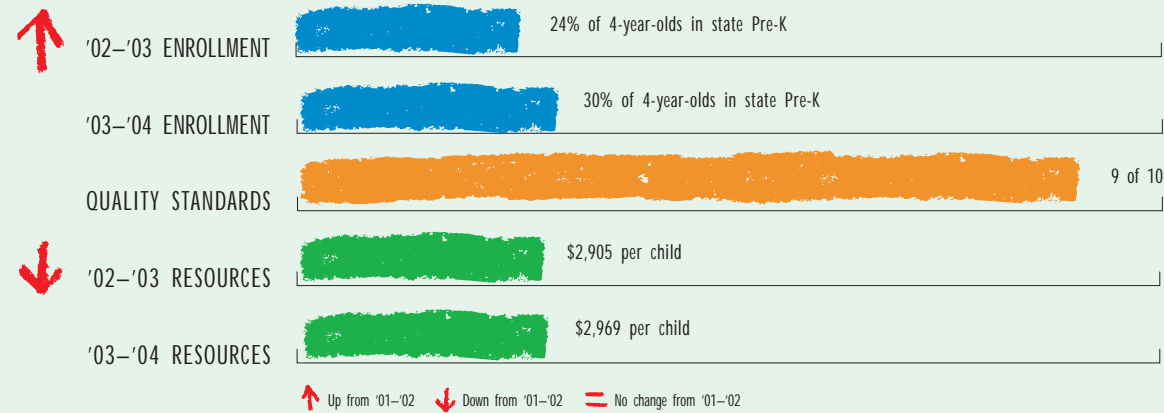


Illinois



In 1985, education reform legislation led to the establishment of the Prekindergarten Program for At-Risk Children, and funding for the program has grown relatively steadily since then. Since 1998, funds for this initiative have been provided through the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG). Separate components of the block grant support a parent training initiative and prevention efforts for first-time and teen parents. In order to reach children considered to be the most at risk early in life, 11 percent of the total block grant must be used for children from birth to age 3.

Until 2003, funding for the Prekindergarten Program for At-Risk Children was distributed by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) directly to school districts demonstrating the greatest need. Districts could then subcontract with nonpublic programs in order to provide services. As of 2003–2004, school districts as well as child care centers and Head Start programs are eligible to compete directly for funds distributed by the ISBE. All teachers in the Prekindergarten Program for At-Risk Children must hold an ISBE Early Childhood Teaching Certificate and are paid according to the public school salary scale.

Eligibility criteria are determined locally and based on community needs. Children between the ages of 3 and 5 who are considered at risk are eligible for the program, and targeted populations may include children from households with low parental education or children in poverty. Children are identified for enrollment based on individual screening and assessment.

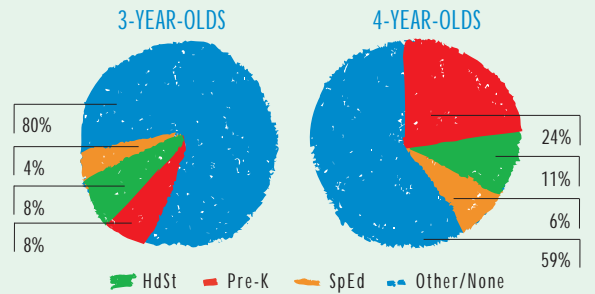
In 2003–2004, the state significantly increased its appropriation for the Prekindergarten Program for At-Risk Children, bringing total state funding to \$190,015,000. As a result, enrollment increased to an estimated 64,000 students.



ACCESS

Total state program enrollment	55,984
School districts that offer state program	81%
Income requirement	None ¹
Hours of operation	Determined locally ²
Operating schedule	Academic year
Special education enrollment	17,597
Federally funded Head Start enrollment	32,592
State-funded Head Start enrollment	0

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



QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

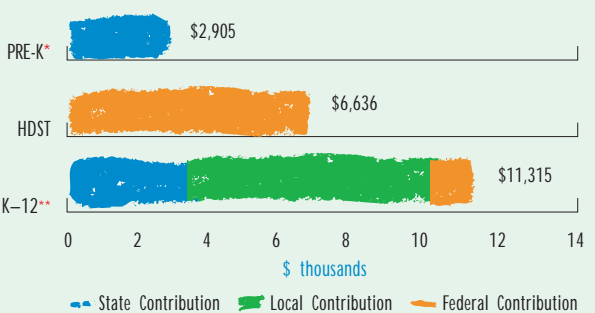
POLICY	STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?
Curriculum standards	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree requirement	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training requirement	EC teaching certificate ³	Specializing in Pre-K CDA or equivalent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree requirement	AA	At least 15 hours/year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher in-service requirement	120 clock hours/5 years or 8 credit hours/5 years ⁴	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size		1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	20		
4-year-olds	20		
Staff-child ratio		Vision, hearing, and health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	1:10	At least 1 service ⁵	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4-year-olds	1:10	At least 1/day	<input type="checkbox"/>
Screening/referral requirements	Vision, hearing, health, developmental screening, and parent interview		
Required support services	Support services ⁵		
Meal requirement	Snack ⁶		

TOTAL:
9
of 10

RESOURCES

Total state Pre-K spending	\$162,618,616 ⁷
Local match required?	No
State spending per child enrolled	\$2,905
State spending per 3-year-old	\$231 ⁸
State spending per 4-year-old	\$708 ⁸

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED



* 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 '02-'03 school year, unless otherwise noted.

¹ Eligibility criteria are determined locally, but low-income status may be considered as one of the risk factors that qualify a child to participate.
² Most programs operate for a half day, 5 days per week. Districts request funds for the program type that they choose to operate.
³ The early childhood certificate covers birth through grade 3.
⁴ The in-service requirement can be met with 24 continuing education units over 5 years or by attaining a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification.
⁵ Support services include education services or job training for parents, parenting support or training, parent involvement activities, referral to social services, and transition to kindergarten activities.
⁶ Children in full-day programs generally receive lunch and a snack. Some programs use federal funds to provide breakfast as well.
⁷ This amount only includes funding for the prekindergarten component, and not the entire Early Childhood Block Grant.
⁸ Illinois did not break its total enrollment figure into specific numbers of 3- or 4-year-olds. As a result, these calculations are estimates, based on proportions of enrollees who were ages 3 and 4 in states that served 3-year-olds and provided age breakdowns for 2002–2003.