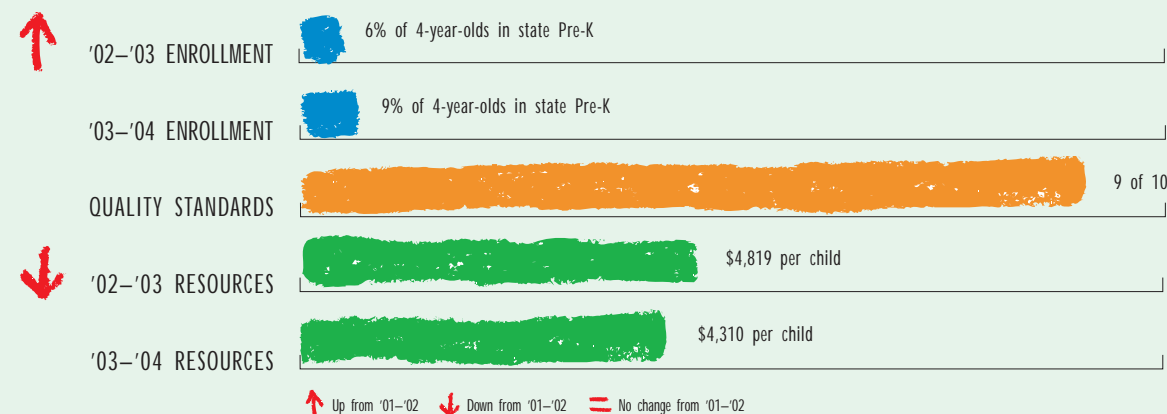


# North Carolina



**E**stablished in 2001, *More at Four* provides prekindergarten for 4-year-olds considered at risk for future school failure. The program has grown rapidly over the past three years, offering an estimated 10,000 available slots in 2003–2004. Individual programs determine eligibility for services, but are required to consider family income and risk factors related to child health status, disability, parent education, family composition, parent employment, housing stability, and English proficiency. Programs may also offer enrollment to children based on minority status. First priority for enrollment is given to children who present risk factors but have not previously participated in an early childhood program. By the year 2004–2005, at least 80 percent of participants will be required to come from families at or below 75 percent of the state median income. The remaining 20 percent of enrollees may come from families with incomes up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level. To be eligible, children from these families must have one of the following risk factors: an identified disability, a chronic health condition, limited English proficiency, or an educational or developmental need.

School districts, child care centers, and Head Start agencies may receive funding to operate *More at Four* programs if they have a four- or five-star license—the top quality ratings under North Carolina's child care licensing system—or if they currently have three stars and are working toward four. All teachers must have a bachelor's degree with a Birth–K license, and programs are evaluated annually using assessments of both program quality and child developmental outcomes.

Funding for *More at Four* has increased to \$43.1 million in 2003–2004, and will increase to approximately \$50 million in 2004–2005, at which time the program is expected to serve 12,000 children.

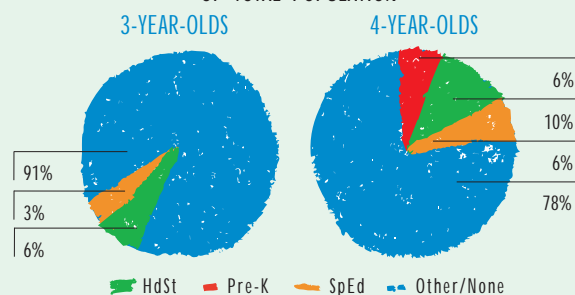
Although *More at Four* is the focus of data in this report, North Carolina also funds Smart Start, a separate initiative begun in 1993, which supports local planning and collaboration to provide comprehensive early childhood services. Based on the needs of each county, Smart Start serves children from birth to age 5 and provides funds that may be used to increase child care quality, improve child health outcomes, provide family support services, or support prekindergarten programs. Funding for Smart Start in 2002–2003 was \$198.6 million. After several budget cuts in preceding years, funding further decreased to \$190.7 million in 2003–2004, and will remain level in 2004–2005.



## ACCESS

Total state program enrollment	6,271
School districts that offer state program	91% (counties)
Income requirement	None <sup>1</sup>
Hours of operation	Full-day, full-week
Operating schedule	Academic year
Special education enrollment	10,487
Federally funded Head Start enrollment	17,684
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	None	Comprehensive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree requirement	BA <sup>2</sup>	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training requirement	Birth–K license <sup>2</sup>	Specializing in Pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree requirement	CDA or meets NCLB regs. (public), CDA (nonpublic) <sup>3</sup>	CDA or equivalent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher in-service requirement	150 clock hours/5 years or 15 credit hours/5 years <sup>4</sup>	At least 15 hours/year	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size			
3-year-olds	NA	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4-year-olds	18		
Staff-child ratio			
3-year-olds	NA	1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4-year-olds	1:9		
Screening/referral requirements	Vision, hearing, health, and dental	Vision, hearing, and health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Required support services	Support services <sup>5</sup>	At least 1 service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meal requirement	Lunch and either breakfast or snack	At least 1/day	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

TOTAL:

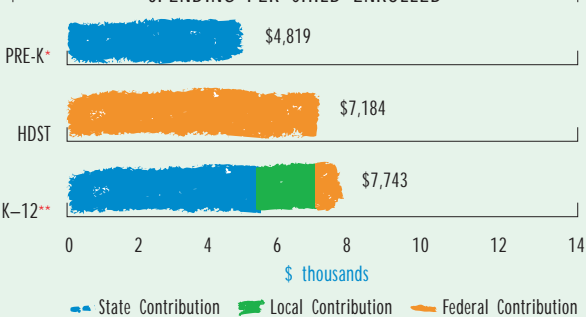
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## RESOURCES

Total state Pre-K spending	\$30,217,723
Local match required?	Yes <sup>6</sup>
State spending per child enrolled	\$4,819
State spending per 3-year-old	\$0
State spending per 4-year-old	\$271

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.

- In 2002–2003, low family income was one of the risk factors that could be considered for enrollment priority.
- Providers are given 4 years to phase in the degree requirement after being recognized as a *More at Four* program. Teachers with degrees in other fields may be given provisional licenses, but must work toward a Birth–K license.
- An AA in early childhood or child development is encouraged for assistant teachers in both public and private settings. Teachers in public schools must meet the employment provisions of the No Child Left Behind law, which generally requires that assistant teachers have at least a 2-year degree. Assistant teachers in public schools who meet NCLB employment provisions (with a BA or AA) but do not hold a CDA must also have 6 semesters of coursework in early childhood or 2 years in an early childhood classroom setting.
- All licensed Pre-K teachers have a continuing education requirement to renew their licenses every 5 years. If they do not hold a Birth–K license, they must be working toward one at the rate of a minimum of 6 semester hours per year.
- Support services include parent involvement activities and transition to kindergarten activities. Parent conferences are recommended but not required.
- Legislation requires that local districts access resources other than state funding to support the program, but does not specify an amount of federal or local funds that must be used.