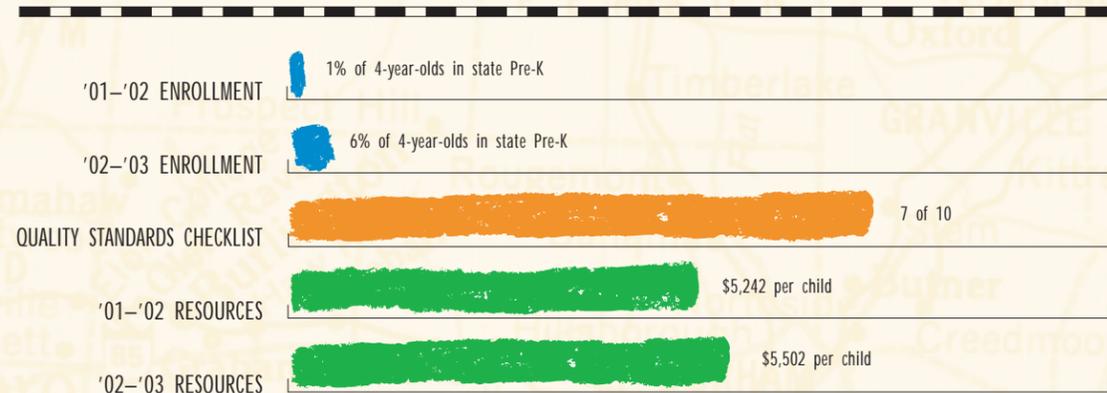


North Carolina



More at Four was established in 2001 to expand prekindergarten opportunities for children at risk. This program has grown rapidly. Enrollment rose from 1,240 children during the 2001–2002 school year to 6,271 during the 2002–2003 year. There are 10,000 slots available during 2003–2004. More at Four is open to 4-year-olds who are eligible to enter kindergarten the following year. In determining which children should receive priority, programs take into account family income (the predominant risk factor), the child's health status, identified disabilities, parent education, parent employment, family composition, housing stability, English proficiency, and minority status. Starting in 2004–2005, at least 80 percent of participants must come from families at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level. Children who have risk factors and have not previously participated in any early care and education program are given first priority. Programs may be operated by schools, child care centers, or Head Start agencies that have a four- or five-star license—the top quality ratings under the state's child care licensing system—or have a three-star license and are working toward four stars. Regardless of the location or provider, quality standards are emphasized.

Although More at Four is the focus of the data reported here, North Carolina also funds Smart Start, a separate initiative that supports local planning and collaboration for comprehensive early childhood services. Smart Start began in 1993 and serves children from birth until they enter kindergarten in each of the state's counties. The services provided by Smart Start vary and are determined at the county level, in response to local children's needs. Funds may be used to enhance the quality of child care, provide family support services, improve child health outcomes, or in support of prekindergarten programs.

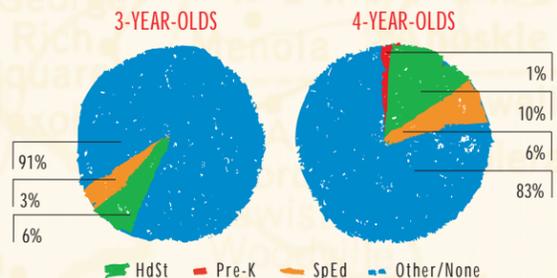
While funding for More at Four has been increasing—to a total of \$34,500,000 in 2002–2003—Smart Start funding was reduced by approximately \$20 million in 2002–2003.



ACCESS

Total state program enrollment	1,240
School districts that offer state program	34% (counties) ¹
Income requirement	None ²
Hours of operation	Full-day, full-week
Operating schedule	Academic year
Special education enrollment	9,833
Federally-funded Head Start enrollment	17,558
State-funded Head Start enrollment	0

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



QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

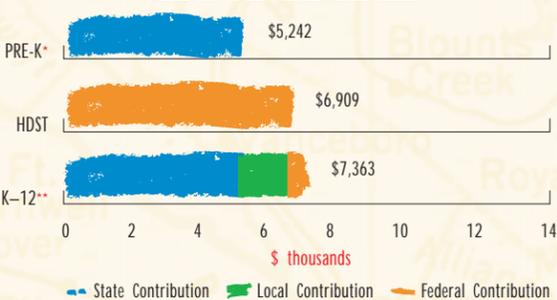
POLICY	STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?
Curriculum standards	None	Comprehensive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree requirement	BA ³	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training requirement	Birth-K license ^{3,4}	Specializing in EC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree requirement	Meets NCLB regs. (public), ⁵ CDA (nonpublic)	CDA or equivalent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher in-service requirement	None ⁶	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	18		
Staff-child ratio		1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	NA		
4-year-olds	1:9		
Screening/referral requirements	Vision, hearing, health, and dental	Vision, hearing, and health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Family support service requirements	None	At least 1 service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meal requirements	Lunch and snack	At least 1/day	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



RESOURCES

Total state Pre-K spending	\$6,500,000
Local match required?	Yes, but amount not specified
State spending per child enrolled	\$5,242
State spending per 3-year-old	\$0
State spending per 4-year-old	\$61

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 '01-'02 school year, unless otherwise noted.

- More at Four was offered in 34 out of 100 counties in 2001–2002. By 2002–2003, the program was offered in 91 of the 100 counties.
- Low-income status is not required in all cases, but is the primary risk factor considered when determining eligibility.
- Providers are given 4 years to phase in the teacher 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 towards a Birth-Kindergarten license.
- NCLB law generally requires that assistant teachers have at least a 2-year degree.
- Teachers working towards a license must have 6 semester hours per year. There is no requirement for teachers already holding the required license.