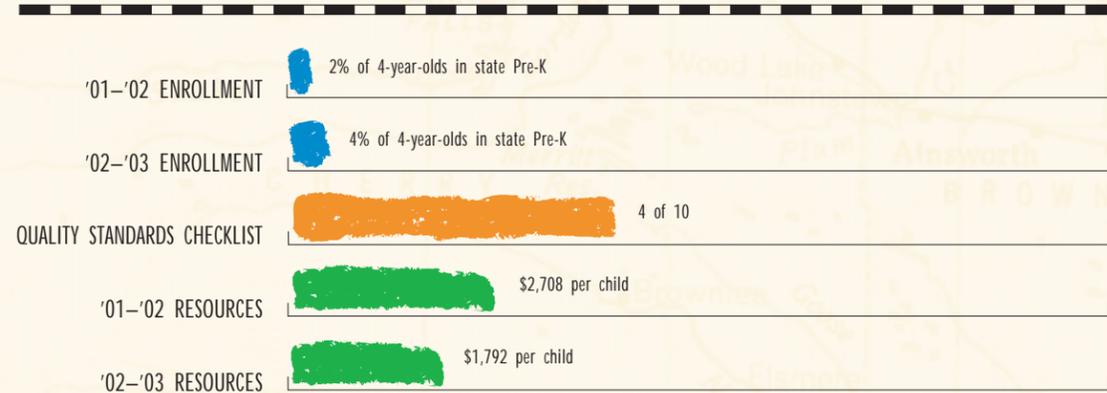


Nebraska



Nebraska's Early Childhood Pilot Project was established by legislation enacted in 1990 and implemented with very limited funding in 1992. In 2001, legislation expanded the Early Childhood Grant Program—which grew out of the earlier pilot project—and increased funding for additional classrooms. Schools and educational service units are eligible recipients of grants to fund up to 50 percent of the total program budget. Providers must obtain an equal or greater match from local, state, and federal sources. Providers are also required to offer inclusive programs and collaborate with other schools and community initiatives, including Head Start. Nebraska's program primarily serves 3- and 4-year-olds, but some infants and toddlers participate as well.

Each grant program must target at least 70 percent of its grant funds to serve children who are eligible in at least one of the four priority areas identified by the state (from low-income families, English Language Learners, born to teen parents who have not completed high school, born prematurely or at low birth weight). Up to 30 percent of funds may be used to serve children not in the priority areas, to encourage participation of children from different groups.

Nebraska has focused on building a collaborative, comprehensive system of professional development to improve the quality of care and education for young children. The Early Childhood Training Center and system of 14 Early Childhood Regional Training Coalitions serve the state by increasing access to training, resources, and development of partnerships.

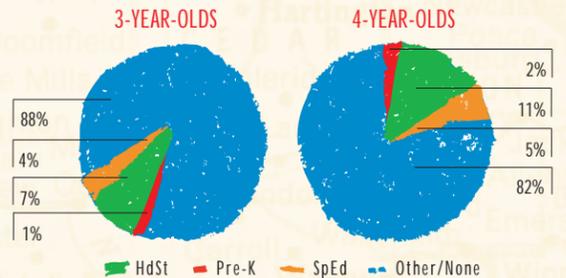
Funding for the Early Childhood Grant Program in 2002–2003 was \$2,330,000 with 1,300 children enrolled.



ACCESS

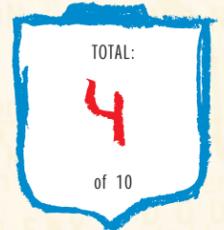
Total state program enrollment	480 ¹
School districts that offer state program	2% ²
Income requirement	None ³
Hours of operation	Determined locally ⁴
Operating schedule	Determined locally ⁴
Special education enrollment	2,271
Federally-funded Head Start enrollment	4,120
State-funded Head Start enrollment	0

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



QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

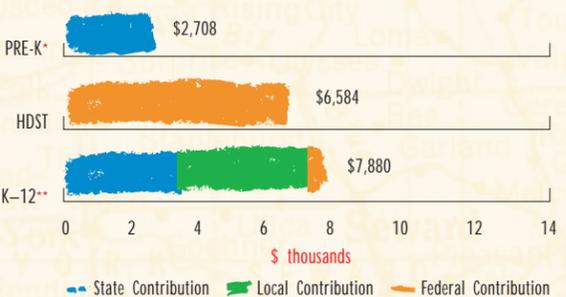
POLICY	STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?
Curriculum standards	Not comprehensive	Comprehensive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree requirement	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training requirement	EC endorsement	Specializing in EC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree requirement	12 cr. hours in EC	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher in-service requirement	12 clock hours	At least 15 hours/year	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>
3-year-olds	1:10 ⁵		
4-year-olds	1:12 ⁵		
Screening/referral requirements	None ⁶	Vision, hearing, and health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family support service requirements	Family support services and 2 parent conferences ⁷	At least 1 service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meal requirements	Varies ⁸	At least 1/day	<input type="checkbox"/>



RESOURCES

Total state Pre-K spending	\$1,300,000
Local match required?	Yes—state funds up to 50% of cost, district can match w/ SpEd, HdSt, Title I, etc.
State spending per child enrolled	\$2,708
State spending per 3-year-old	\$14 ⁹
State spending per 4-year-old	\$41 ⁹

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.

1 Most children are 3 or 4 years old, though some grantees serve infants and toddlers as well.
 2 There were 15 districts with planning grants in 2001–2002, and the program expanded to include 28 districts in 2002–2003.
 3 However, grant funding requires meeting 1 of 4 priorities, which include eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch.
 4 All programs operate at least 12 to 15 hours per week, and most run full-day, 5 days per week. Grants can be for either the academic or calendar year.
 5 Classes typically combine 3- and 4-year-olds.
 6 Although there is no specific screening requirement, comprehensive services are available, including access to health and referral services. Also, public schools mandate screenings and probably apply this requirement to Pre-K.
 7 Family support is based on parents' assessments of their needs and interests. Available services include providing information and volunteer opportunities. Programs offer access or referrals for health, family literacy, and identification of special needs.
 8 Meal requirements depend on hours during which children are in the program. Most provide lunch and some offer breakfast as well.
 9 Nebraska 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 2001–2002. Although Nebraska's Pre-K program served children younger than age 3, for purposes of these calculations we considered all children to be ages 3 or 4. This likely results in overestimates of spending per 3-year-old and spending per 4-year-old.