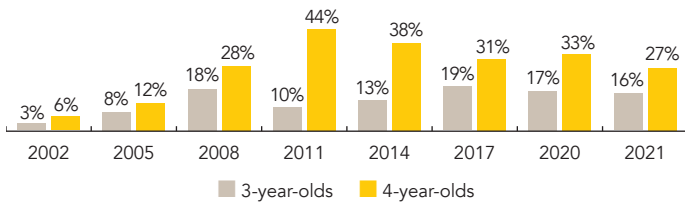
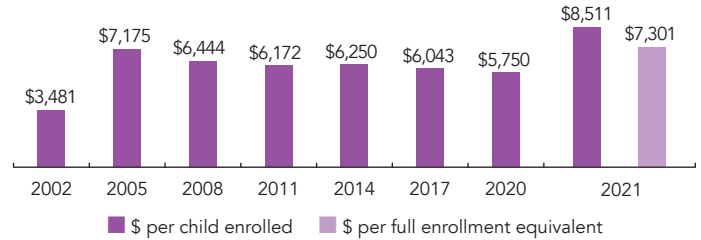


# Arkansas

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2021 DOLLARS)



## OVERVIEW

During the 2020-2021 school year, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued, Arkansas preschool enrolled 17,325 children, a decrease of 2,872 children from the prior year. State funding totaled \$106,500,000 with an additional \$7,500,000 in TANF funds and \$33,456,799 in federal recovery funds to support the program, up \$31,315,917 (27%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child (including TANF and federal recovery funds) equaled \$8,511 in 2020-2021, up \$2,761 from 2019-2020, adjusted for inflation. Arkansas met 8 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

## WHAT'S NEW

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, all Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) programs remained open. If a physical closure of a program due to COVID-19 response levels was required, the program followed the guidance of the Arkansas Department of Health and CDC. During the mandatory quarantine periods, ABC programs followed their approved Ready For Learning Plan by providing families with learning activities, materials and supplies, and support and guidance in order to continue the children's early childhood education remotely. Providers reported an increase in communication and relationships between teaching staff and parents during the 2020-2021 school year.

Despite lower enrollment, each ABC grantee was paid the full awarded grant amount to maintain their business, pay the staff, and provide services for children and families returning to work and school. Arkansas also used \$33 million in CARES funding during the 2020-2021 school year in addition to the typical state, local, and federal funding used to support the program.

## BACKGROUND

The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program began in 1991 as part of a statewide education reform initiative, with funding (\$10 million) earmarked to serve children birth to 5 years old based on family income, developmental, and/or economic risk factors. In 2003, legislation known as Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (ABCSS) set priorities for funding, supporting 3- and 4-year-olds in households with incomes up to 200% of the federal poverty level. School districts with 75% or more of their students scoring below proficient in literacy and math on the State Benchmark exams (statewide assessment), and children in schools designated as "school improvement status" received prioritized funding.

ABC/ABCSS components intended to ensure quality include: one teacher with at least a bachelor's degree per every three classrooms at a site and teachers with an associate degree in the other two classrooms; teacher assistants/paraprofessionals with a minimum of a CDA or equivalent; low child-to-teacher ratios (1:10); health and development screenings; parent involvement and community engagement; statewide evaluation (Work Sampling); an approved list of curriculum aligned with the 2016 Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards; and classroom quality observations to inform technical assistance; and an evaluation of child outcomes through a longitudinal study.

Arkansas provides additional pathways for those working with young children to gain advanced knowledge and skill, such as Birth through Kindergarten Licensure and a Birth through Pre-kindergarten Teaching Credential. These pathways prepare teachers to work with all children, birth through age five, including children with special needs.

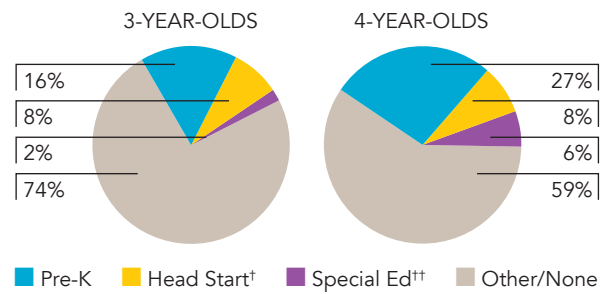
ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
24	6	12	6	8

# ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE/ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

## ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment .....	17,325
School districts that offer state program .....	99% (counties)
Income requirement .....	200% FPL
Minimum hours of operation .....	7 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule .....	School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....	6,768
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....	5,926
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....	0

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



† Some Head Start children may also be counted in state pre-K.  
 †† Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

## QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	AR PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<b>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	<b>Approval process &amp; supports</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	One BA per 3 classrooms; AA for other 2 classrooms	<b>BA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE, CD, ECE SpEd	<b>Specializing in pre-K</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	CDA	<b>CDA or equivalent</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	30 hours/year; PD plans (public teachers only)	<b>For teachers &amp; assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	20 (3- & 4-year-olds)	<b>20 or lower</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:10 (3- & 4-year-olds)	<b>1:10 or better</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing, health & more	<b>Vision, hearing &amp; health screenings; &amp; referral</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement	<b>Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.



## RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending .....	\$147,456,799
Local match required? .....	Yes
State Head Start spending .....	\$0
State spending per child enrolled .....	\$8,511
All reported spending per child enrolled* .....	\$12,530

\* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.  
 \*\* Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.  
 \*\*\* K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

