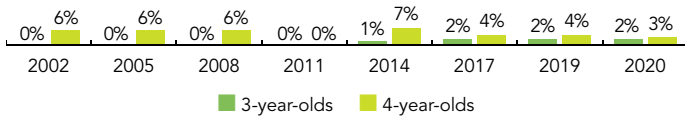
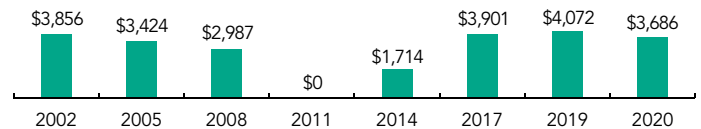


Arizona

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2020 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

Arizona preschool enrolled 5,216 children in 2019-2020, a decrease of 194 children from the prior year. State funding totaled \$19,224,515, down \$2,804,561 (13%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child equaled \$3,686 in 2019-2020, down \$386 from 2018-2019, adjusted for inflation.¹ Arizona met 3 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT'S NEW

In March 2020, Arizona went into lockdown in response to COVID-19, closing all schools and many community child care settings. While many of those early learning environments have since re-opened, they continue to struggle with lower enrollment (about 41% compared to pre-pandemic) coupled with higher operational costs (about an 84% increase in monthly costs for centers to meet new health and safety guidelines). Each school district and program determines when/how to re-open (in-person, remote or hybrid) based on community/facility circumstances.

BACKGROUND

Arizona began funding preschool programs in 1991 with supplemental services for preschool, full-day kindergarten, and first through third grade education supported by the federal Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) from 1996 until 2010 when that funding ended.

In 2006, Arizona voters earmarked tobacco tax revenues for early childhood development and health programs and created the Early Childhood Development and Health Board, known as First Things First (FTF), to oversee those funds. FTF allocates funds to communities based on the birth to 5 population and percentage of young children in poverty. Volunteer regional councils recommend early childhood programs to fund. These public funds can be used for various early childhood programs, including increasing access to early learning. This is accomplished through Quality First (QF) Scholarships serving children birth to 5 years old living at or below 200% FPL. Private child care, public schools, Head Start settings, tribally regulated programs, family child care homes, and faith-based programs are eligible to receive QF Scholarships as long as they participate in Quality First, the state's Quality Improvement and Rating System (QIRS) and have met at least a three-star rating on the QIRS quality standards. QF Scholarship reimbursement rates vary by program type.

Due to dramatic decreases in tobacco tax revenues (a 30%, \$49 million drop since 2008), the FTF Board in 2015 determined that a budget reset was necessary to ensure consistent funding levels over the next nine to 15 years. This resulted in a sharp drop in program funding for SFY16, including QF scholarships. Despite ongoing decreases in tobacco revenue (8% in the past two years alone), FTF's commitment to QF Scholarships has grown, increasing from \$35 million in FY16 to \$44 million in FY19 in all settings (center-based and home based) and for all ages birth through 5.

FTF collaborates with the state to meet federal match requirements and preserve \$37 million per year in federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) funds. In the 10 years this partnership has been in place, Arizona has been able to leverage \$378 million in federal subsidy dollars that otherwise would have been lost.

¹These figures reflect only 3- to 5-year-olds in quality center-based environments. However, in total, spending for Quality First scholarships totaled \$35,782,443 and served 7,776 children birth to 5 years old across a variety of quality settings. Depending on the number of children 0-3 participating in the program each year, per pupil spending on 3- to 5-year-olds may vary from year to year.

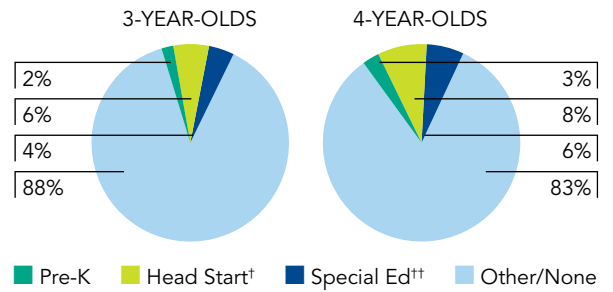
| ACCESS RANKINGS | | RESOURCE RANKINGS | | TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 4-YEAR-OLDS | 3-YEAR-OLDS | STATE SPENDING | ALL REPORTED SPENDING | |
| 45 | 25 | 32 | 39 | 3 |

QUALITY FIRST SCHOLARSHIPS

ACCESS

| | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Total state pre-K enrollment..... | 5,216 |
| School districts that offer state program..... | .86% (Regional Partnership Councils) |
| Income requirement..... | .200% FPL |
| Minimum hours of operation..... | 34 hours/month |
| Operating schedule..... | Determined locally |
| Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4..... | 9,961 |
| Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4..... | 12,927 |
| 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 | AZ PRE-K REQUIREMENT | BENCHMARK | REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK? |
|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Early learning & development standards | Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive | Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Curriculum supports | Approval process & supports | Approval process & supports | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Teacher degree | 12 credit hours in ECE, CDA (25% of teachers) | BA | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Teacher specialized training | 12 credit hours in ECE, CDA (25% of teachers) | Specializing in pre-K | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Assistant teacher degree | HSD | CDA or equivalent | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff professional development | 18 hours/year | For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Maximum class size | 26 (3-year-olds); 30 (4-year-olds) | 20 or lower | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff-child ratio | 1:13 (3-year-olds); 1:15 (4-year-olds) | 1:10 or better | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Screening & referral | Immunizations | Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Continuous quality improvement system | Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement | Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

3

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

RESOURCES

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Total state pre-K spending..... | \$19,224,515 |
| Local match required?..... | No |
| State Head Start spending..... | \$0 |
| State spending per child enrolled..... | \$3,686 |
| All reported spending per child enrolled*..... | \$3,686 |

* 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

