



# 50-STATE REVIEW



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## State Pre-K Funding for 2015-16 Fiscal Year: National trends in state preschool funding

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For the fourth year in a row, both Republican and Democratic policymakers are making significant investments in state-

**TOTAL STATE FUNDING FOR PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS INCREASED BY \$755 MILLION TO A TOTAL OF NEARLY \$7 BILLION. THIS IS A 12 PERCENT INCREASE OVER THE 2014-15 SPENDING LEVELS.**

funded pre-k programs. In the 2015-16 budget year, 32 states and the District of Columbia raised funding levels of pre-k programs. This increased support for preschool funding came from both sides of the aisle - 22 states with Republican governors and 10 states with Democratic governors, plus the District of Columbia.

In contrast, only five states with Republican governors and three states with Democratic governors decreased their pre-k funding. Overall, state funding of pre-k programs across the 50 states and the District of Columbia increased by nearly \$755 million, or 12 percent over 2014-15.

### NATIONAL LOOK

The trend of increasing funding of pre-k programs in the states is echoed in national priorities as seen in the recent passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The ESSA increases funding for early childhood education in three ways - Title I funding, Title II funding and Preschool Development Grants.

**Support for preschool transcends partisan labels, with 22 states with Republican governors and 10 states with Democratic governors (plus the District of Columbia) increasing funding for pre-k programs in 2015-16.**

**Five states still do not invest state funds into preschool programs - Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire, South Dakota and Wyoming.**

Although states have always been allowed to support children in early childhood education with Title I and Title II funding, the ESSA explicitly encourages the use of Preschool Development Grant funds to strengthen the transition from early childhood to kindergarten programs.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the Preschool Development Grant program will allocate \$226 million, which will help expand access to high-quality pre-k slots for low-income families.

Nationwide, state funding for pre-k increased by \$755 million to a total of nearly \$7 billion. This is a 12 percent increase in state investment in pre-k programs, which builds on an additional 12 percent increase during the 2014-15 fiscal year.

In 2015-16, only five states (Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire, South Dakota and Wyoming) did not provide state funding for pre-k. This compares to 11 states that were not investing in pre-K just **three years ago**. And 2015-16 was the first time North Dakota used state funds for early childhood education in the form of a \$3 million one-time grant. However, this is not an ongoing appropriation.

## STATE HIGHLIGHTS

### MINNESOTA

Minnesota invested nearly \$28 million more during the 2015-16 budget year than it did the previous year into its three state-funded pre-k programs – the School Readiness Program, Early Learning Scholarships and supplemental funding to the Head Start program. The School Readiness Program’s budget nearly doubled (a 94 percent increase) over the 2014-15 budget and the Early Learning Scholarships program, which increases access to high-quality early childhood programs for 3- and 4-year-old children with the highest needs, added more than \$11 million to its budget.

The question state policymakers grappled with in Minnesota is the distinction between universal access to preschool versus subsidies for preschool. Gov. Mark Dayton wanted a portion of the state’s budget surplus to go toward the creation of universal, school-based pre-k for all 4-year-olds. The legislature wanted to allocate funding to the state’s Early Learning Scholarship program. Gov. Dayton called for a special session to work out the differences and ultimately settled on a \$17 billion education funding bill. Minnesota’s increased funding for preschool programs comes from this appropriation.

PROGRAM TITLE	2014-15 FUNDING LEVEL	2015-16 FUNDING LEVEL	LEVEL CHANGE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
<b>School Readiness Program</b>	\$12,170,000	\$23,558,000	\$11,388,000	94%
<b>Head Start Supplemental</b>	\$20,100,000	\$20,100,000	\$0	0%
<b>Early Learning Scholarships</b>	\$27,650,000	\$44,134,000	\$16,484,000	60%

## NEW YORK

In addition to increasing the budget for the state's Priority Pre-Kindergarten program by nearly \$5 million, New York appropriated \$340 million for universal, full-day pre-kindergarten. This opens an additional 37,000 slots for pre-k across the state. Overall, the state invested nearly \$785 million into pre-k programs, a 91 percent increase over 2014-15, making New York one of the top states for both per capita funding and the total amount of state dollars going toward preschool programs.

PROGRAM TITLE	2014-15 FUNDING LEVEL	2015-16 FUNDING LEVEL	LEVEL CHANGE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
<b>Universal Pre-Kindergarten</b>	\$385,034,734	\$385,034,734	\$0	0%
<b>Priority Pre-Kindergarten</b>	\$25,000,000	\$29,942,675	\$4,942,675	20%
<b>Statewide Universal Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten Program</b>	n/a	\$340,000,000	\$340,000,000	n/a
<b>Expanded Pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds</b>	n/a	\$30,000,000	\$30,000,000	n/a

## NORTH DAKOTA

For the first time, North Dakota invested state funds – a one-time appropriation – into a pre-k program. The 2015 North Dakota Legislature appropriated \$3 million for 4-year-olds, to be allocated based on need. Funding awards are given to early learning programs based on the number of students deemed eligible for free or reduced lunches.

## TEXAS

In 2015, Texas passed House Bill 4, which created the High Quality Pre-Kindergarten Program. The bill came with an additional \$59 million appropriation. Combined with the increases associated with the pre-k program Texas increased pre-k spending by almost \$90 million, which is an 11 percent increase over its 2014-2015 spending level.

PROGRAM TITLE	2014-15 FUNDING LEVEL	2015-16 FUNDING LEVEL	LEVEL CHANGE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
<b>Pre-Kindergarten Program</b>	\$790,000,000	\$820,000,000	\$30,000,000	4%
<b>Supplemental Funding for Pre-K</b>	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000	\$0	0%
<b>Texas School Ready!</b>	\$15,200,000	\$15,200,000	\$0	0%
<b>High Quality Prekindergarten Grant</b>	N/A	\$59,000,000	\$59,000,000	N/A



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## UTAH

In fiscal year 2015-16, the state appropriated \$5.8 million for the UPSTART program, which provides preschool-aged children access to academic school readiness software. This is a \$1 million increase over the previous fiscal year's \$4.8 million appropriation. The UPSTART software is available to a limited number of Utah students at no cost to them. After the limited number of spots in the program are filled, families can purchase the UPSTART software for \$725 (in 2015). In addition to the software, 397 families received computers, Internet or both through the publicly funded UPSTART program. While this is not a physical preschool program, the UPSTART program has seen positive results over its six-year history, improving educational outcomes for participants.<sup>2</sup>

## PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania is currently at a budget impasse and not included in final calculations for total pre-k spending. By June 30 of each year, the Pennsylvania legislature must submit a budget to the governor to be signed into law. This year, the governor and the legislature have not agreed on a budget. Whether Pennsylvania increases its funding for pre-k, reduces it or remains flat is yet to be seen.

## INCREASE, DECREASE OR STAY THE SAME?

Of the 45 states and the District of Columbia funding pre-k programs:

- 32 states and the District of Columbia increased their total investment in pre-k.
- Nine states decreased funding.
- Three states stayed constant.

Five states do not invest state funding into pre-k programs.





## WHY PRE-K MATTERS

A significant body of empirical work at the interface of neuroscience and social science has established that fundamental cognitive and non-cognitive skills are produced in the early years of childhood, long before children begin kindergarten. As illustrated by the majority of states continuing to invest resources into preschool programs, states typically view access to high-quality preschool programs as a critical long-term economic investment in school readiness, student achievement and the future workforce.

Nationally, parents report that only 46 percent of preschool-aged students are enrolled in preschool programs, leaving more than half the population with no formal education before they set foot in a kindergarten classroom.<sup>3</sup> Research indicates that preschool is particularly important for low-income children because it has high potential to change a child's trajectory. A Stanford University study found that by 18 months, toddlers from low-income families already were several months behind their high-income peers in language development.<sup>4</sup> This inequality continues to widen before school entry at age 5, leaving disadvantaged students up to two years behind their higher-income peers.

Studies also show that preschool programs provide significant benefits for children that last into adulthood. By offering children a high-quality learning environment in a pre-k classroom, a new path may be charted for them. An analysis integrating evaluations of 84 preschool programs concluded that children gain about one-third of a year of additional learning across language, reading and math skills when attending quality preschool programs.<sup>5</sup> Children who attend pre-k are more likely to be school-ready, which means that schools can reap the benefits of preschool by reducing funds spent on special education and remediation.

States that appropriate additional resources to preschool can improve access by providing additional slots or extending hours of operation. While investing additional resources into pre-k, states should ensure that all funded programs meet high-quality standards and that programs are compliant with these standards.

The continued support from policymakers for preschool programs has the potential to greatly benefit children and society as a whole. There are still a limited number of studies, the latest being the

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Vanderbilt study on Tennessee preschool-age children, which makes the case that preschool has no lasting benefit.<sup>6</sup> Policymakers need to not only consider these studies, but also take into account the research from child development, cognitive science and [neuroscience](#) that shows the [tremendous learning potential](#) of young children. These studies contend that a lack of support for learning in the early years can lead to large disparities in developmental outcomes before children even reach school. The majority of the research indicates that high-quality preschool programs promise impressive returns on investment, and researchers agree that pre-k programs have a high rate of return – improving education outcomes, health effects and economic prosperity for children, families and the nation.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

For the fourth year in a row, a majority of states increased their investments in preschool programs. Bridging the gap between the two parties, both Democratic and Republican policymakers made preschool programs a priority. A total of 32 states and the District of Columbia increased their investments in pre-k programs, resulting in a 12 percent increase in total state funding for preschool programs, over the 2014-15 budget year.

While this progress is promising, there is still work to be done to set children on the path to academic success early in life. Still, less than half of preschool-aged students have access to pre-k programs. Increasing the number of students in high-quality preschool programs is broadly viewed as a way to set young learners on a path to a secure economic future and stable workforce.

## APPENDIX

### TOTAL STATE PRE-K FUNDING

STATE	2014-15 FUNDING LEVEL	2015-16 FUNDING LEVEL	LEVEL CHANGE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Alabama	\$38,624,146	\$48,462,050	\$9,837,904	25.47%
Alaska	\$11,185,100	\$9,308,700	-\$1,876,400	-16.78%
Arizona	\$17,220,685	\$37,206,696	\$19,986,011	116.06%
Arkansas	\$103,500,000	\$105,000,000	\$1,500,000	1.45%
California	\$921,488,000	\$1,029,987,000	\$108,499,000	11.77%
Colorado	\$83,099,166	\$85,881,179	\$2,782,013	3.35%
Connecticut	\$96,358,572	\$101,255,328	\$4,896,756	5.08%
Delaware	\$6,149,300	\$6,149,300	\$0	0.00%
District of Columbia	\$207,226,639	\$213,223,589	\$5,996,950	2.89%
Florida	\$396,065,224	\$389,254,479	-\$6,810,745	-1.72%
Georgia	\$314,300,032	\$321,295,347	\$6,995,315	2.23%
Hawaii	\$3,000,000	\$2,876,182	-\$123,818	-4.13%
<b>Idaho</b>				
Illinois	\$300,192,400	\$314,238,100	\$14,045,700	4.68%
Indiana	\$12,000,000	\$12,000,000	\$0	0.00%
Iowa	\$77,490,446	\$74,698,988	-\$2,791,457	-3.60%
Kansas	\$41,288,990	\$41,288,117	-\$873	0.00%
Kentucky	\$71,315,300	\$90,113,200	\$18,797,900	26.36%
Louisiana	\$90,281,071	\$90,858,450	\$577,379	0.64%
Maine	\$16,383,452	\$20,641,778	\$4,258,326	25.99%
Maryland	\$114,464,245	\$115,457,232	\$992,987	0.87%
Massachusetts	\$17,350,000	\$26,869,279	\$9,519,279	54.87%
Michigan	\$239,275,000	\$243,593,000	\$4,318,000	1.80%
Minnesota	\$59,920,000	\$87,792,000	\$27,872,000	46.52%
Mississippi	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	0.00%
Missouri	\$19,258,100	\$16,194,141	-\$3,063,959	-15.91%
<b>Montana</b>				
Nebraska	\$31,298,523	\$32,246,176	\$947,653	3.03%
Nevada	\$3,247,375	\$3,338,875	\$91,500	2.82%
<b>New Hampshire</b>				
New Jersey	\$652,843,000	\$655,517,000	\$2,674,000	0.41%
New Mexico	\$39,600,000	\$51,500,000	\$11,900,000	30.05%
New York	\$410,034,734	\$784,977,409	\$374,942,675	91.44%
North Carolina	\$144,927,934	\$144,178,390	-\$749,544	-0.52%



STATE	2014-15 FUNDING LEVEL	2015-16 FUNDING LEVEL	LEVEL CHANGE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
North Dakota		\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	
Ohio	\$45,268,341	\$60,268,341	\$15,000,000	33.14%
Oklahoma	\$143,119,465	\$143,296,282	\$176,817	0.12%
Oregon	\$66,354,262	\$69,999,910	\$3,645,648	5.49%
Pennsylvania	\$136,462,000*			
Rhode Island	\$3,750,000	\$4,750,000	\$1,000,000	26.67%
South Carolina	\$79,434,547	\$78,034,547	-\$1,400,000	-1.76%
South Dakota				
Tennessee	\$86,366,000	\$87,043,400	\$677,400	0.78%
Texas	\$820,200,000	\$909,200,000	\$89,000,000	10.85%
Utah	\$7,800,000	\$8,800,000	\$1,000,000	12.82%
Vermont	\$17,931,751	\$20,700,000	\$2,768,249	15.44%
Virginia	\$68,569,714	\$68,651,478	\$81,764	0.12%
Washington	\$76,474,000	\$96,925,000	\$20,451,000	26.74%
West Virginia	\$93,429,297	\$93,316,924	-\$112,373	-0.12%
Wisconsin	\$186,314,100	\$190,314,100	\$4,000,000	2.15%
Wyoming				
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$6,237,398,911</b>	<b>\$6,992,701,968</b>	<b>\$755,303,057</b>	<b>12.11%</b>

\*Not included in total funding. Because of the budget impasse in Pennsylvania, the 2014-15 funding level is not included in the total. See page 3 for a discussion of the Pennsylvania budget impasse.



**STATE PRE-KINDERGARTEN FUNDING: BY PROGRAM**

STATE	PROGRAM	2014-15 FUNDING LEVEL	2015-16 FUNDING LEVEL	LEVEL CHANGE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Alabama	First Class Pre-K	\$38,624,146	\$48,462,050	\$9,837,904	25%
Alaska	Alaska Pre-K Program	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$0	0%
	Head Start	\$9,185,100	\$7,308,700	-\$1,876,400	-20%
Arizona	Quality First Scholarships	\$17,220,685	\$37,206,696	\$19,986,011	116%
Arkansas	Arkansas Better Chance	\$103,500,000	\$105,000,000	\$1,500,000	1%
California	Part-Day California State Preschool Program	\$604,450,000	\$665,937,000	\$61,487,000	10%
	Additional Funding for Full-Day California State Preschool Program	\$257,038,000	\$314,050,000	\$57,012,000	22%
	Preschool Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Grant	\$50,000,000	\$50,000,000	\$0	0%
	One-time facilities funding for California State Preschool Program	\$10,000,000			
Colorado	Colorado Preschool Program	\$83,099,166	\$85,881,179	\$2,782,013	3%
Connecticut	Priority School Readiness	\$80,853,135	\$83,535,744	\$2,682,609	3%
	Competitive School Readiness	\$9,761,344	\$10,458,991	\$697,647	7%
	Head Start	\$5,744,093	\$5,630,593	-\$113,500	-2%
	Smart Start		\$1,630,000		
Delaware	Early Childhood Assistance Program	\$6,149,300	\$6,149,300	\$0	0%
District of Columbia	Pre-K	\$207,226,639	\$213,223,589	\$5,996,950	3%
Florida	Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK)	\$396,065,224	\$389,254,479	-\$6,810,745	-2%
Georgia	Georgia Pre-K Program	\$314,300,032	\$321,295,347	\$6,995,315	2%
Hawaii	Executive Office of Early Learning Prekindergarten Program	\$3,000,000	\$2,876,182	-\$123,818	-4%
Idaho	NO PROGRAM				



STATE	PROGRAM	2014-15 FUNDING LEVEL	2015-16 FUNDING LEVEL	LEVEL CHANGE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Illinois	Early Childhood Block Grant	\$300,192,400	\$314,238,100	\$14,045,700	5%
Indiana	On My Way Pre-K	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$0	0%
	Early Education Matching Program Grant	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$0	0%
Iowa	Statewide Voluntary Preschool for 4-Year-Olds	\$69,790,458	\$66,999,000	-\$2,791,458	-4%
	Shared Vision At-Risk Preschool Program	\$7,699,988	\$7,699,988	\$0	0%
Kansas	State Pre-Kindergarten Program	\$18,360,000	\$18,360,000	\$0	0%
	Kansas Preschool Program	\$4,799,812	\$4,799,812	\$0	0%
	Early Childhood Block Grant	\$18,129,178	\$18,128,305	-\$873	0%
Kentucky	Kentucky Preschool Program	\$71,315,300	\$90,113,200	\$18,797,900	26%
Louisiana	Cecil J. Picard LA 4 Early Childhood Program	\$74,576,369	\$74,576,140	-\$229	0%
	Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development Program	\$7,181,440	\$7,181,440	\$0	0%
	8(g) Student Enhancement Block Grant Program	\$8,523,262	\$9,100,870	\$577,608	7%
Maine	Public Preschool Program	\$13,870,722	\$17,554,047	\$3,683,325	27%
	Head Start	\$2,512,730	\$3,087,731	\$575,001	23%
Maryland	Maryland Pre-Kindergarten Program	\$106,564,245	\$108,511,645	\$1,947,400	2%
	Head Start	\$1,800,000	\$1,800,000	\$0	0%
	State Pre-K Expansion	\$4,300,000	\$4,300,000	\$0	0%
	Preschool for All	\$1,800,000	\$845,587	-\$954,413	-53%



STATE	PROGRAM	2014-15 FUNDING LEVEL	2015-16 FUNDING LEVEL	LEVEL CHANGE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Massachusetts	Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program	\$7,500,000	\$7,500,000	\$0	0%
	Head Start Supplemental	\$9,100,000	\$9,100,000	\$0	0%
	Early Childhood Mental Health Program	\$750,000	\$1,250,000	\$500,000	67%
	Inclusive Preschool Learning Environments Grant		\$9,019,279	\$9,019,279	
Michigan	Great Start Readiness Program	\$239,275,000	\$243,593,000	\$4,318,000	2%
Minnesota	School Readiness Program	\$12,170,000	\$23,558,000	\$11,388,000	94%
	Head Start Supplemental	\$20,100,000	\$20,100,000	\$0	0%
	Early Learning Scholarships	\$27,650,000	\$44,134,000	\$16,484,000	60%
Mississippi	Early Learning Collaborative	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	0%
Missouri	Missouri Preschool Project	\$15,758,100	\$12,694,141	-\$3,063,959	-19%
	Child Development Missouri Early Head Start	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	\$0	0%
Montana	NO PROGRAM				
Nebraska	School Funding Formula	\$24,213,359	\$26,776,890	\$2,563,531	11%
	Early Childhood Education Grant Program	\$7,085,164	\$5,469,286	-\$1,615,878	-23%
Nevada	Early Childhood Education	\$3,247,375	\$3,338,875	\$91,500	3%
New Hampshire	NO PROGRAM				
New Jersey	Preschool Education Aid	\$652,843,000	\$655,517,000	\$2,674,000	0%
New Mexico	Pre-K Program	\$39,600,000	\$51,500,000.00	\$11,900,000	30%
New York	Universal Pre-Kindergarten	\$385,034,734	\$385,034,734	\$0	0%
	Priority Pre-Kindergarten	\$25,000,000	\$29,942,675	\$4,942,675	20%
	Statewide Universal Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten Program		\$340,000,000	\$340,000,000	
	Expanded Pre-K for 3 & 4-year-olds		\$30,000,000	\$30,000,000	
North Carolina	Pre-K Program	\$144,927,934	\$144,178,390	-\$749,544	-1%



STATE	PROGRAM	2014-15 FUNDING LEVEL	2015-16 FUNDING LEVEL	LEVEL CHANGE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
North Dakota	NO PROGRAM		\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	
Ohio	Early Childhood Education	\$45,268,341	\$60,268,341	\$15,000,000	33%
Oklahoma	Early Childhood 4-Year-Old Program	\$143,119,465	\$143,296,282	\$176,817	0%
Oregon	Head Start Pre-Kindergarten	\$66,354,262	\$69,999,910	\$3,645,648	5%
Pennsylvania	Pre-K Counts	\$97,284,000*			
	Head Start Supplemental Assistance	\$39,178,000*			
Rhode Island	Pre-K	\$2,950,000	\$3,950,000	\$1,000,000	34%
	Head Start	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$0	0%
South Carolina	Child Development Education Pilot Program: Full Day 4K	\$63,920,701	\$62,520,701	-\$1,400,000	-2%
	Education Improvement Act: Half-Day Child Development Program	\$15,513,846	\$15,513,846	\$0	0%
South Dakota	NO PROGRAM				
Tennessee	Voluntary Pre-K Program	\$86,366,000	\$87,043,400	\$677,400	1%
Texas	Pre-Kindergarten Program	\$790,000,000	\$820,000,000	\$30,000,000	4%
	Supplemental Funding for Pre-K	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000	\$0	0%
	Texas School Ready!	\$15,200,000	\$15,200,000	\$0	0%
	High Quality Prekindergarten Grant	N/A	\$59,000,000		
Utah	Utah School Readiness Initiative	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	0%
	UPSTART Program	\$4,800,000	\$5,800,000	\$1,000,000	21%
Vermont	ACT 62/ACT 166	\$16,800,000	\$20,500,000	\$3,700,000	22%
	Voluntary Pre-K Program	\$1,131,751	\$200,000	-\$931,751	-82%
Virginia	Preschool Initiative	\$68,569,714	\$68,651,478	\$81,764	0%
Washington	Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program	\$76,474,000	\$96,925,000	\$20,451,000	27%
West Virginia	Early Childhood Education Program	\$93,429,297	\$93,316,924	-\$112,373	0%



STATE	PROGRAM	2014-15 FUNDING LEVEL	2015-16 FUNDING LEVEL	LEVEL CHANGE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
Wisconsin	4-Year-Old Kindergarten	\$178,700,000	\$182,700,000	\$4,000,000	2%
	4-Year-Old Kindergarten: Start up grants	\$1,350,000	\$1,350,000	\$0	0%
	Head Start Supplement	\$6,264,100	\$6,264,100	\$0	0%
Wyoming	NO PROGRAM				
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>\$6,237,398,911</b>	<b>\$6,992,701,968</b>	<b>\$755,303,057</b>	<b>12%</b>

*\*Not included in total funding. Because of the budget impasse in Pennsylvania, the 2014-15 funding level is not included in the total. See page 3 for a discussion of the Pennsylvania budget impasse.*

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## ENDNOTES

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