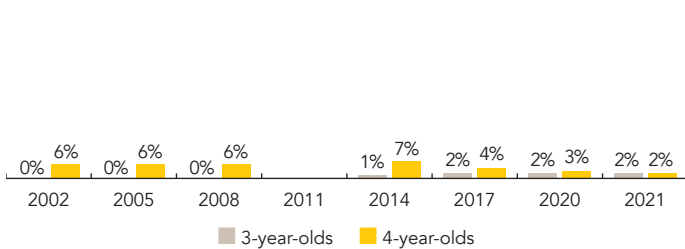
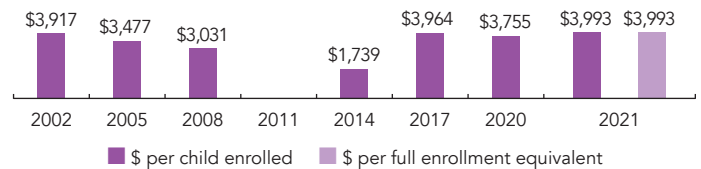


# Arizona

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, Arizona preschool enrolled 3,630 preschool-aged children for in-person services, a decrease of 1,586 children from the prior year. State funding totaled \$14,496,361, down \$5,089,184 (26%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child equaled \$3,993 in 2020-2021, up \$239 from 2019-2020, adjusted for inflation.<sup>1</sup> Arizona met 3 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

## WHAT'S NEW

There was a mix of in-person and remote instruction during the 2020-2021 school year and Fall 2021. Less than 10% of programs were not open in the Fall 2021 due to sovereign government executive orders. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Environment Rating Scale and the Quality First Points Scale assessments were not required in 2020-2021, but observation requirements returned to normal during 2021-2022.

All participants of Quality First Scholarships (QF) receive an annual state financial incentive based on their star rating and program size that can be used on recruitment and retention supports for program staff. While Quality First Scholarships (QF) did not receive any federal COVID-19 relief funds, these funds were used to support 800 new programs in the state's Quality Improvement and Rating System (QIRS). QF Scholarships' financial reimbursements were maintained throughout the school year for a variety of operating schedules to ensure programs could stay open and/or re-open during the year.

## 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 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 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 (\$47 million drop as of FY2021 [28%]), 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 \$46 million in FY21 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 11 years this partnership has been in place, Arizona has been able to leverage \$453.2 million in federal subsidy dollars that otherwise would have been lost.

<sup>1</sup> These figures reflect only 3- to 5-year-olds in quality center-based environments. However, in total, spending for Quality First scholarships totaled \$28,411,012 and served 5,863 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.

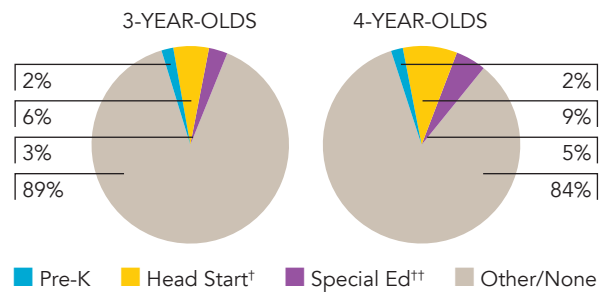
ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
45	24	34	39	3

## QUALITY FIRST SCHOLARSHIPS

### ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment .....	3,630
School districts that offer state program .....	82% (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 .....	7,982
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .....	13,920
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	<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	12 credit hours in ECE or CDA (25% of teachers)	<b>BA</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	12 credit hours in ECE or CDA (25% of teachers)	<b>Specializing in pre-K</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	HSD	<b>CDA or equivalent</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	18 hours/year	<b>For teachers &amp; assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	26 (3-year-olds); 30 (4-year-olds)	<b>20 or lower</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:13 (3-year-olds); 1:15 (4-year-olds)	<b>1:10 or better</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	Immunizations	<b>Vision, hearing &amp; health screenings; &amp; referral</b>	<input 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.

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### RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending .....	\$14,496,361
Local match required? .....	No
State Head Start spending .....	\$0
State spending per child enrolled .....	\$3,993
All reported spending per child enrolled* .....	\$3,993

\* 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

