



First Five Years Fund

Early Childhood Momentum

50 State Summary -
2014

First Five Years Fund

Contents

Alabama 3

Alaska 4

Arizona 5

Arkansas 6

California 7

Colorado 9

Connecticut 10

Delaware 12

District of Columbia 13

Florida 14

Georgia 15

Hawaii 16

Idaho 17

Illinois 18

Indiana 20

Iowa 21

Kansas 22

Kentucky 23

Louisiana 24

Maine 25

Maryland 26

Massachusetts 27

Michigan 28

Minnesota 29

Mississippi 30

Missouri 31

Montana 32

Nebraska 33

Nevada 34

New Jersey 35

New Mexico 36

New York 37

North Carolina 38

North Dakota 39

Ohio 40

Oklahoma 42

Oregon 43

Pennsylvania 44

Rhode Island 45

South Carolina 46

South Dakota 47

Tennessee 48

Texas 49

Utah 50

Vermont 51

Virginia 52

Washington 53

West Virginia 54

Wisconsin 55

Wyoming 56

DRAFT

Alabama

In Alabama, [6 percent](#) of 4-year-olds are enrolled in a state-funded early learning program and [2,294 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start. This number is steadily increasing as early childhood education has been championed by Gov. Robert Bentley and supported by the state legislature this year. Today, Alabama remains one of only four states that meet the 10 quality benchmarks in early childhood education established by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) is amongst the lowest in the country at \$5,467.

- **What the Governor is saying:** In his [State of the State](#) address on January 14, 2014, Gov. Robert Bentley emphasized the importance of early childhood education in Alabama saying, *"There is no greater opportunity we can give an Alabama child in poverty than a chance to excel in school. So many of our children need this opportunity – but too few have access to it. The earlier they begin receiving a quality education, the better chance they have at success."*
- **What's happening in the legislature:** In April 2014, Gov. Bentley and the Alabama legislature [approved a state funding increase](#) of \$10 million for Alabama's voluntary First Class Pre-K program. Approximately 1,800 more four-year-olds will be able to participate in the program.
- **Funding increases:** In the last two years, Alabama lawmakers have more [than doubled the amount of funding](#) for First Class Pre-K, a voluntary, high-quality early learning program available to 4-year-olds in the state, from \$19.1 million to \$38.5 million. The funding has increased access to the program by more than doubling the number of classrooms available in the 2014-2015 school year to 410, which will serve around 13 percent of 4-year-olds statewide. The Alabama Department of Human Resources also [received](#) a \$1.7 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation that will be used to strengthen the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Alaska

In Alaska, [3 percent](#) of 4-year-olds are served by state-funded preschool and [853 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start. The quality of these existing programs has received high marks, meeting all 10 of the pre-K quality benchmark standards established by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). However, state leaders, business leaders and lawmakers are advocating for change and expressing desire to expand early childhood education to more children in the state. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state can be up to \$10,338.

- **What state leaders are saying:** Former Alaska Gov. Tony Knowles has [urged lawmakers](#) to focus on “educational investments that experts agree are critical,” advising that early learning is one of those investments. Along with nonprofit organization Alaska’s Best Beginnings and The United Way in Anchorage, Knowles has been a leader in calling for Alaska to commit to making investments in pre-K because it “pays long-term rewards of success in high school graduation, college attendance, and employment.”
- **What business leaders are saying:** The Anchorage Chamber of Commerce has [promoted](#) expanding pre-K education as a top priority for building a skilled and educated workforce in Alaska. Andrew Halcro, president of the Chamber, has expressed that 35 percent of kindergarteners in the Anchorage School District are starting school behind. He advocates delivering effective pre-K for improving educational outcomes and better preparing students for college or career.

Arizona

In just one year, Arizona added approximately [1,800 new public preschool slots](#) for 3-year-olds and currently serves [3,526 children](#) under the age of three through Early Head Start in the state. However, work still needs to be done with only 3 percent of 4-year-olds and 2 percent of 3-year-olds in the state having access to state pre-K programs. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$8,671. Aware of this need, advocates, local leaders, and state leaders in Arizona have kept up momentum for early childhood education by putting pressure on lawmakers to restore funding cuts, improve the quality of existing programs and expand access to more children.

- **Statewide support for early education:** Arizona Town Hall, a nonprofit organization which identifies and facilitates discourse on critical issues facing the state, has been a vocal advocate for Arizona's youngest children. During its 103rd Town Hall event in November 2013, the organization hosted a panel on early education in Arizona with hundreds of participants from across the state. Business leaders, educators, nonprofit leaders and economists all came together to develop [recommendations and an action plan](#) for improving early education based on research, proven impact and expert testimony. The final report was presented to public officials, community leaders and many others.

This year, the Women's Foundation of Southern Arizona has worked with Arizona Town Hall and the Tucson Metro Chamber of Commerce to [encourage the state legislature](#) to restore funding for subsidized child care. The organization asserts that policies supportive of child care and early childhood education are the most effective method for helping low-income families achieve economic self-sufficiency.

- **What state leaders are saying:** Fred DuVal, an Arizona gubernatorial candidate and former chairman of the Arizona Board of Regents, has [stated](#) that his campaign will focus on making "targeted reinvestments in K-12 education that prioritize early childhood education and all-day kindergarten." He has been vocal about wanting to hold the state legislature accountable for funding cuts made in public education and wanting to focus more on protecting vulnerable children.

Arkansas

Arkansas is leading the way in expanding early childhood education through state investments. From 2012 to 2013, the state created more than [1,000 additional preschool slots](#) for 3-year-olds. Today, 33 percent of 4-year-olds and 14 percent of 3-year-olds are enrolled in a state pre-kindergarten program. The state also has approximately [2,271 children](#) under the age of three enrolled in Early Head Start. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$5,894. But, advocates and state leaders understand that more can be done to give the most disadvantaged children in the state a strong start in life by expanding access to high-quality early learning programs.

- **What state leaders are saying:** Arkansas Democratic gubernatorial candidate and former Congressman Mike Ross has [introduced a plan](#) for expanding and funding early childhood education in the state. His goal is to provide universal, high-quality preschool for all 4-year-olds by 2025 in a process that would gradually phase in students over 10 years and cost \$37.5 million per year. Ross consistently makes the case for investing in children based on the long-term return on investment the state will gain.
- **What advocates are saying:** Aware of the impact that pre-K programs have had on Arkansas communities, business leaders and early childhood supporters have [pushed for more early childhood funding](#) from the state, citing a desire to increase salaries and create a more productive workforce.

California

Fifteen percent of 4-year-olds and [10 percent](#) of 3-year-olds are enrolled in California's state-funded preschool. The state also has [24,652 children](#) under the age of three enrolled in Early Head Start. However, currently less than half of low-income children in the state have access to publicly funded preschool. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$12,068. Along with increasing access, advocates and state leaders have been on a mission to increase the quality of pre-K programs offered in the state. In addition, support for early childhood education across the state has been made loud and clear, as supporters continue to urge Gov. Jerry Brown to restore cuts and include additional investments for early learning in his proposed state budget.

- **What's happening in the legislature:** In January 2014, the state legislature introduced the Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2014 (SB 837), a bill that would expand pre-K education through California's transitional kindergarten program. Many lawmakers, including Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg have asserted that an early childhood education expansion is a top priority in California. The bill would make the transitional kindergarten program available to all 4-year-olds who qualify for free or reduced price lunch—giving access to 234,000 total children across the state. The bill also includes an increase in child care vouchers for low-income families. The legislature also debated the California Strong Families, Strong Children bill (SB 1123) this year, which would establish a comprehensive program for children birth through age three. More recently, members of the Legislative Women's Caucus have [declared](#) a desire "to restore more than 100,000 early childhood program spaces cut during the recession," and are proposing at least \$625 million in this year's budget for early childhood development. In June 2014, a joint budget committee [announced](#) a plan to include \$264 million in the budget for early learning that would allow for an additional 11,500 preschool slots for 4-year-olds in low-income families by June 2015. Gov. Brown eventually approved and signed this budget.
- **What advocates are saying:** Advancement Project, a national civil rights organization, has [shown support](#) for the bills being considered in the legislature, as they would especially benefit Latino families across the state. Early Edge California, an organization focused on increasing access to high-quality preschool programs in the state, has also [stated support](#) for both SB 837 and SB 1123, declaring that "California is poised to make 2014 the year of early learning." Additionally, a network of early education advocates called [Raising California Together](#) organized a [bus tour](#) from San Diego to Sacramento, hoping to encourage Gov. Jerry Brown to reconsider his proposed budget, and either boost state preschool funding or expand the state's transitional kindergarten program.
- **Public support for early childhood education:** An April 2014 poll conducted by the Field Research Corporation in partnership with EdSource found [widespread support](#) for early childhood education in California. Of the surveyed 1,000 registered voters in the state,

79 percent said that increasing access to preschool for 4-year-olds was either “very important” or “somewhat important.” Sixty percent of voters also stated their support for SB 837, a bill introduced in the legislature to expand the state’s transitional kindergarten program to more 4-year-olds.

DRAFT

Colorado

The Colorado legislature had a productive session that spotlighted the importance of early childhood education this year. The state has approximately [2,623 children](#) under the age of three enrolled in Early Head Start, and about [21 percent](#) of 4-year-olds and 7 percent of 3-year-olds currently have access to state-funded pre-K. However, lawmakers and advocates realize that isn't good enough. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$12,736. While a Race to the Top Early Learning grant will jumpstart a number of early learning initiatives over the next few years, support for expanding opportunities for low-income children and families continues.

- **What's happening in the legislature:** Colorado's most [recent legislative session](#) saw several bills passed which affect early childhood education. Approved in April 2014, HB 14-1317 made changes to the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program by increasing access to affordable child care for working families. The School Finance Act, approved in May 2014, will add 5,000 new slots for preschool and full-day kindergarten for at-risk children. Finally, the Student Success Act includes nearly \$17 million in new funding for an early literacy initiative for K-3 students. Combined, these bills added nearly \$60 million in new funding for Colorado's early education system.
- **What advocates are saying:** Early learning advocates have been vocal in supporting investments in early childhood education on both the state and federal levels. In February 2014, Charlotte Brantley, President and CEO of Clayton Early Learning in Colorado, [testified before the U.S. Senate's HELP Committee](#) during a hearing. There, she presented her organization's work as a model of success in early childhood education on the local level. Brantley encouraged federal investments in early learning to help states, like Colorado, expand and improve upon the quality of programs and build more robust systems.
- **What local leaders are saying:** In June 2014, Denver Mayor Michael Hancock [shared plans](#) to ask voters to renew and increase the city's tax-supported preschool program, which is set to expire in December 2016.
- **Innovation in early childhood education:** During ongoing efforts to expand educational opportunities in Colorado, leaders in the state are also focusing on innovation. When facing funding challenges for high-quality early childhood education programs in Boulder County, the finance task force of the Early Childhood Council decided to pursue an [innovative financing model](#). The "Pay for Success" model will allow private investors to invest in programs, such as high-quality preschool, based on evidence that proves these programs reduce costly interventions and remedial education. The council is working on data collection and the analysis of current programs in the county to move the process forward.

Connecticut

In Connecticut, [10 percent](#) of 3- and 4-year-olds are enrolled in preschool funded by the state and approximately [1,220 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$12,973. By [restoring funding](#) after \$16 million in cuts and adding \$1,290 per early childhood pupil, the state also went on record as having the largest one-year increase in early childhood spending in the 2012-2013 school year. This momentum has continued this year with Gov. Dannel Malloy and the state legislature each devising a plan to increase investments and enroll more kids in early learning programs. Currently, Connecticut is working towards providing universal pre-K for all kids in the state.

- **What the governor is saying:** Gov. Malloy called for a \$14 million investment in early childhood education in his [State of the State speech](#). This investment would provide more than 1,000 additional preschool slots for a total of 4,000 slots. His four-year plan would invest a total of \$51 million in early learning by 2019. *“We know that early education is one of the best ways to level the playing field for students,”* he said. *“We know it, because we’ve seen it firsthand.”* In June 2014, Gov. Malloy [announced](#) the allocation of 1,020 additional pre-K slots across the state.
- **What the governor has accomplished:** Understanding the growing importance of early childhood education, Gov. Dannel Malloy recently [signed into law a bill](#) which established a Connecticut Office of Early Childhood and expanded preschool in the state. The bill will add more than 1,000 slots for children to attend high-quality preschool programs through the state’s School Readiness Program, and establishes the Connecticut Smart Start Program to provide grants that will expand early childhood opportunities for low-income children. The legislation also requires that teachers become certified, programs receive accreditation and limits class sizes to 16 children. In celebrating these successes and those to come, the Governor and the Office of Early Childhood held a [Pre-K to 3rd Grade Symposium](#) during the Week of the Young Child in April. The event raised awareness about the importance of investing in universal access to early childhood education.
- **What advocates are saying:** In a February 2014 [editorial](#), the Hartford Courant emphasized the importance of quality when providing universal preschool for all children in the state. The largest newspaper in the state called for higher standards and more effective teachers in the state’s pre-K program. Representatives from Connecticut Voices for Children, a research and advocacy group, have also [praised](#) the bipartisan support for early childhood education in the state.
- **What’s happening in the legislature:** State lawmakers have been vocal about their support for expanding early childhood education in Connecticut. The state Senate voted

32-2 in favor of the pre-K bill while the state House of Representatives quickly moved it forward.

DRAFT

Delaware

In Delaware, [one in three low-income kids](#) are enrolled in a publically funded early education program. This includes approximately [302](#) children under the age of three that are enrolled in Early Head Start and 7 percent of all four-year-olds that have access to pre-K in the state. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$8,928. Governor Jack Markell has been a champion for early education in his state and nationwide, as Delaware public schools have been a model for public schools around the country. Momentum in the state has largely been focused on expanding educational opportunities, including early education, for the children most at-risk.

- **What the Governor is saying:** In his [State of the State address](#) this year, Gov. Jack Markell said, *“We all agree that a quality education is essential for anyone seeking to unleash his or her potential – and this begins at a very early age. Teachers tell us that the number one barrier to academic success is when kids do not come to school ready to learn.”* The governor has also stated his support for expanding the national Nurse Family Partnership program to support low-income mothers as they care for their newborns.
- **Support from the business community:** In January 2014, 20 prominent business leaders in Delaware joined together as champions of early childhood education to launch the Delaware Commission on Early Education and the Economy. The [goal of the Commission](#) is to serve as the state’s leading business voice for advancing quality early learning programs. Even more, they aim to ensure that the 25,000 Delaware children from low-income families gain access to quality pre-K programs soon. Additionally, the co-chair of the Commission has encouraged the public to voice their support for investing in early childhood to representatives.
- **Advancing quality in early childhood education:** In February 2014, Gov. Markell [announced enhancements](#) to Delaware’s early childhood programs and their quality ratings. Starting July 1, early childhood programs that receive top quality ratings will receive higher reimbursement rates from the state for accepting kids from low-income families. The state will also provide more support to child care providers that need to raise their quality ratings. The governor believes that this boost in quality and accountability will produce “better educated, healthier, and more responsible adults.”

District of Columbia

In Washington, D.C., 80 percent of 3-year-olds and 94 percent of 4-year-olds are enrolled in the city's [pre-K programs](#). This includes the 1,145 3-year-olds and 1,582 4-year-olds who are enrolled in federally funded [Head Start](#) programs, but does not include the 956 children under the [age of 3](#) who are enrolled in federally funded Early Head Start programs. D.C. is also looking to [guarantee access](#) to pre-K for students who live in-bounds for high-poverty schools under its latest proposal to overhaul school boundaries. The D.C. Public Pre-Kindergarten program seeks to provide high-quality, universal pre-K education across the city and serves students in schools that are run through community-based organizations, D.C. Public Schools and public charter schools. D.C. spends an annual [\\$175,096,000](#) on its pre-K programs. According to estimates, an average of 1,000 families and about 1,300 children are also served by the city's [child care services](#). The annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in D.C. costs \$21,948 on average.

- **What the mayor is saying:** Mayor Vincent Gray in his [State of the District](#) address proposed that the fiscal year 2015 budget add resources to strengthen early childhood education programs, stating, "We must grow the supply of high-quality early learning opportunities for children from birth to age 3 so that more children – especially those from low-income families – can develop and learn and be prepared for the transition to pre-K. With additional investment, we will raise the bar on quality for our infant and toddler programs. To ensure the health, learning, and development of these very young children, we will be the first state in the nation to require all subsidized child-care providers to meet the rigorous Early Head Start standards. And we will provide resources to help them succeed." Mayor Gray also highlighted in his speech that the District's programs "lead the nation ... over the past several years the District has done an excellent job of getting our three- and four-year-olds into pre-K programs ... We have been cited as a model for the rest of the nation by child advocates like Marian Wright Edelman and even President Obama."
- **What advocates are saying:** In a February 2014 [blog](#), The Washington Post quotes Elaine Weiss, the national coordinator for the Broader Bolder Approach to Education (a project of the nonprofit Economic Policy Institute), who looked at the Jubilee JumpStart Center in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Northwest Washington as an exemplary model for improving the achievement gap between poor and better-off students. Weiss hails the District's high-quality pre-kindergarten programs and shares that "no state has done better, and most are far behind."
- **Public support for early childhood education:** This spring the [District of Columbia](#) was highlighted in NIEER's annual report as a leader in pre-K access and funding among state-funded pre-K programs. Further demonstrating the District's success was an opinion blog in The Washington Post by Natalie Wexler, a member of the board of the D.C. Scholars Public Charter School, who also [applauded](#) the District for "[leading] the

country in giving its residents universal access to preschool” but noted it must do more to ensure it is high quality.

Florida

Florida ranks the [second highest](#) among states providing access to state funded early childhood education to children in the nation. The state has approximately [9,165 children](#) under the age of three enrolled in Early Head Start and 6 percent of 3-year-olds served by Head Start. In addition, 78 percent of 4-year-olds are enrolled in state-funded pre-K. In an effort to improve these circumstances, Gov. Rick Scott traveled across the state this year promoting his plan to allocate \$1.1 billion in funding for early childhood education and child care. Because Florida meets very few quality standards when it comes to pre-K, lawmakers and advocates also used this year’s legislative session to push for greater safety and teaching standards. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$8,299.

- **What the governor is saying:** Florida Gov. Rick Scott this year [showcased](#) his proposal to boost early childhood education as he traveled around the state. His budget proposal included \$1.1 billion in funding for early learning and care, a \$59 million increase from last year. While pushing for support of this funding and promoting his education agenda, Gov. Scott said, *“A quality early learning system is essential to provide Florida children with the tools they need to succeed.”*
- **What’s happening in the legislature:** Early childhood education was in the spotlight during the recent state legislative [session](#). The largest budget in the state’s history saw an overall 2.3 percent increase for early childhood education. This includes an \$8.8 million increase for the voluntary pre-k program, \$10.5 million for a quality pilot of the state’s school readiness program which provides child care for children of low-income workers and \$3 million for additional slots. Though a [bill](#) intended to upgrade the health, safety and teaching standards in the state’s early childhood education programs was killed, House Education Chairwoman Marlene O’Toole believes it is desperately needed and plans to sponsor it again next session.
- **Support from the business community:** The president of the Florida Chamber of Commerce and the chairman of The Children’s Movement of Florida [praised](#) the business community’s support of investments in early childhood education “to stimulate economic growth and job creation in Florida.” The Florida Chamber Foundation also announced in April 2014 a Business Alliance on Early Learning that would focus on bringing together key leaders in Florida on the issue of early childhood education.

Georgia

Georgia's state-funded universal pre-K program has been [proven](#) to significantly affect language, literacy and math skills in the pre-K students enrolled. The program, which recently celebrated its 20th anniversary as the first state funded early childhood education program in the country, reaches [58 percent](#) of 4-year-olds in the state. Including federal Head Start and special education preschool brings the share of children served to nearly 89 percent, and about [3,464 children](#) under the age of three are served by Early Head Start. Gov. Nathan Deal has stated that the next frontier in his state's early childhood education program is to place greater focus on preparing children from birth to age three. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$7,228.

- **What the governor is saying:** In his [State of the State Address](#), Gov. Nathan praised the progress the state has made in expanding early learning opportunities for preschoolers and serving as a model for the rest of the country. He stated, *"We must work to avoid the necessity of costly remediation. If we hope for the greatest results, we must get it right the first time! This means making sure they're reading on grade level by the end of third grade and then following through as they continue their education journey."* The governor believes that the next step is to expand access to early childhood education for children birth to age three through the Georgia Program for Infant Toddler Care (GAPITC).
- **Funding Increases:** Georgia was one of the six states [awarded](#) with a 2013 Race to the Top-Early Learning grant. The grant totals more than \$51 million and the state's Department of Early Care and Learning has set goals for using the funds, including improving upon the department's Quality Rated system, building a strong early learning education workforce through scholarships, providing more resources to high poverty areas of the state and increasing accountability in systems and programs. Together with the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, Gov. Deal [announced in July 2014](#) plans to select four, multi-county Early Education Empowerment Zones, which will receive more than \$1 million to improve programming for children, birth through 5-years-old. Plans to provide additional financial support to the state's early childhood educators through three programs designed to assist the professionals in enhancing their credentials were also [revealed](#).
- **National recognition:** Georgia's universal pre-K program has [gained national attention](#) for being truly universal, rather than targeted or income-based. As the country's oldest public preschool program that does not rely on taxpayer dollars, it is championed by both Republicans and Democrats alike. The model has served as a case study for mayors, governors, lawmakers, business leaders and many others looking to build the case for boosting early childhood education across the country.

Hawaii

In Hawaii, [835 children](#) under the age of three are served by Early Head Start, and [9 percent](#) of 3-year-olds and 13 percent of 4-year-olds are served through federal Head Start and special education preschool. However, until this year's legislative session, the state did not fund a state-run pre-K program. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$12,473. Governor Neil Abercrombie has been a vocal advocate for better preparing children in Hawaii for kindergarten by funding a pre-K program and making kindergarten mandatory for the first time.

- **What the governor is saying:** In his [State of the State address](#), Gov. Neil Abercrombie said, *"There is no more critical issue before us than early childhood development and education. I look forward to strengthening relationships with the private and nonprofit sectors by the passage of the constitutional amendment to provide for partnerships in early education."* To start, the governor this year has [signed a bill](#) that makes kindergarten mandatory for children who will be at least five on or before July 31 of the school year. Additionally, he has expressed interest ensuring that pre-K is available in 32 classrooms on 30 DOE elementary school campuses across the state.
- **What's happening in the legislature:** Early childhood advocates and Gov. Abercrombie have praised the state legislature for the expansion of the Preschool Open Doors program in their last session. This year, the legislature passed a state budget which includes \$3 million in funding to establish a pre-k program. Hawaii state Sen. Jill Tokuda [praised](#) the progress and stated that "Hawaii will finally come out of the shadows and join 41 other states that publicly fund pre-kindergarten education." She also expressed that \$3 million was just the start. In November 2014, Hawaii voters will have a chance to approve a constitutional amendment that will allow the state to partner with private providers to further expand access to preschool.
- **What advocates are saying:** In March 2014, early learning advocates in Hawaii, including Gov. Neil Abercrombie, [rallied](#) at the state Capitol to push lawmakers to increase funding for Family Child Interaction Learning programs, where a parent or caregiver attends with their child, and other pre-K efforts.

Idaho

In Idaho, [1,340 children](#) under the age of three are served by Early Head Start, and 6.5 percent of 3-year-olds and [13 percent](#) of 4-year-olds are served through federal Head Start and special education preschool. However, until this year's legislative session the state did not fund a state-run pre-K program. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$6,969. The state legislature has made adequate progress in building awareness about the benefits of early childhood education, setting the foundation for moving forward with legislation that would create a pilot pre-K program.

- **What's happening in the legislature:** This year, the House Education Committee in Idaho [introduced](#) a bill to set up pilot preschool classes in five elementary schools across the state. Representative Hy Kloc championed the bill that would require 55 percent of funding to be raised from private sources, with the remaining funds to come from the state. Several lawmakers in the state showed interest in boosting early childhood education in the state after a presentation for Rep. Kloc.
- **What business leaders are saying:** Idaho Business for Education, an organization made up of dozens of CEOs showing concern for where Idaho's education system is headed, has [committed](#) to improving early reading among Idaho kids.
- **What military leaders are saying:** A retired admiral in the U.S. Navy from Boise, Idaho has called for an [increased](#) focus on high-quality early childhood education. In support of children getting a strong start in life he stated that, "To build the military of the future, we need to invest in early childhood education today."

Illinois

In Illinois, [9,719 children](#) under the age of three are served by Early Head Start. In addition, 18 percent of 3-year-olds and [27 percent](#) of 4-year-olds are served through state-run pre-K programs. In Chicago, access is even more widespread with [75 percent](#) of low-income children aged 3 and 4 years enrolled in pre-K education. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$12,697. With the governor and mayors across the state on board, early childhood education has become a common sense solution to solving economic issues in Illinois. Decisions about funding and expansion are being made this year in the legislature.

- **What the governor is saying:** In his “Illinois is Making a Comeback” themed [State of the State address](#), Gov. Pat Quinn championed early childhood education saying, *“Illinois can lead the nation in early childhood education. We have the foundation in place. Now is the time to get the job done for Illinois’ littlest.”* The governor kicked off 2014 by calling for a “Birth to Five” Initiative that would be focused on supporting healthy children through prenatal care, expanding early learning opportunities and parental support. The governor also has set a goal of ensuring 60 percent of Illinoisans have a high-quality, industry-recognized degree or credential by 2025, and he believes reaching it will begin with high-quality early education. In April 2014, he convened his state’s very first [symposium](#) through his new Office of Early Childhood Development themed “College and Career readiness Begins at Birth” to build off of his initiative. In June 2014, Gov. Quinn [signed](#) a law that will guarantee more funding in Illinois will go to early childhood education programs for children 3 and younger. The bill increases the percent of Early Childhood Education Block Grant funding for children up to age 3 from 11 to 14 percent in the next fiscal year, up to 20 percent by fiscal year 2016.
- **What’s happening in the legislature:** In May, the Illinois House [passed](#) a \$6.7 billion budget for the state’s schools, which includes a \$25 million increase in early childhood education funding.
- **Support from the business community:** In Chicago, the PNC Foundation announced the launch of a multiyear vocabulary initiative to address the word gap among underserved pre-K children in the city. The [\\$19 million](#) effort will also extend an early science learning program for preschool children through 2015.
- **Public support for early childhood education:** Statewide support contributed to the increasing importance of early learning this year. In March, a dozen of police chiefs from around the state met with lawmakers to [discuss](#) the importance of pre-K and home visiting funding. This April, early childhood education advocates [rallied](#) at the Capitol to call on lawmakers to protect funding for early childhood education and home visiting programs. Additionally, a collection of Illinois state’s attorneys [called for support](#) of the

Strong Start for America's Children Act and for the state to maintain funding for home-visiting programs.

DRAFT

Indiana

In Indiana, [3,680 children](#) under the age of three are served by Early Head Start. In addition, 10 percent of 3-year-olds and [14.5 percent](#) of 4-year-olds are served through federal Head Start and special education preschool. However, the state currently does not fund a state-run pre-K program. Indiana Governor Mike Pence has championed establishing a voluntary pre-K voucher program to expand early education opportunities for low-income children and the pilot program is moving forward. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$8,073.

- **What the governor is saying:** In his [State of the State Address](#), Gov. Mike Pence said, *“Because every child deserves to start school ready to learn, I believe the time has come for a voluntary pre-K program to help Indiana’s low-income kids.”* In support of this belief, the governor recently [signed](#) into law a preschool pilot program, which will pay for children in five counties to attend early learning programs. Gov. Pence had originally hoped for a statewide program.
- **What’s happening in the legislature:** This year, the state legislature [approved](#) the first ever state-funded pre-K program in Indiana, defeating concerns over cost and effectiveness. The voluntary voucher-style pilot program, which has been advocated by the governor, will soon be available to five counties to be chosen by an executive committee. House Education Chairman Bob Behning, who authored the law, recommends the pilot program begin in the fall of 2015 and Gov. Mike Pence has been tasked with finding \$10 million to fund the first year of the program to serve around 1,000 children.
- **Support from the business community:** The Indiana Chamber of Commerce, activated by research showing the economic benefits of early childhood education, has shown complete support for the state’s pre-k pilot program. Since the announcement of the proposal in Gov. Mike Pence’s State of the State Address, the chamber has [lobbied](#) legislators to create more early learning opportunities in the state. According to Chalkbeat Indiana, support for pre-K in the state has reached a [tipping point](#), especially with more and more business leader vowing to continue lobbying for preschool. Pre-K advocates in the state believe that support was crucial for moving the proposal forward.
- **What advocates are saying:** Eric Ellsworth, president and CEO of YMCA of Greater Indianapolis has been vocal about Indiana falling behind because the state currently lacks a pre-K program. He [praised](#) the legislature as they moved Gov. Pence’s pre-k proposal forward and urged the state leaders to continue prioritizing early childhood education. Similarly, the president and CEO of United Way of Central Indiana Ann Murtlow praised the progress being made on early childhood education and the governor’s bold leadership. However, she [pushed](#) for a greater focus on tying the program to high-quality standards.

Iowa

From 2012 to 2013, Iowa expanded enrollment of state-funded preschool to more than 3,000 4-year-olds and 400 3-year-olds. Today, the Iowa Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program currently serves [60 percent](#) of 4-year-olds and 4 percent of 3-year-olds, and [2,355 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$9,053. Democrats in the state legislature are eager to continue expanding access to early childhood education.

- **What the governor is saying:** Gov. Terry Branstad has proposed spending nearly [\\$70 million](#) on preschool in fiscal year 2015 to help support the currently free, voluntary preschool programs in school districts across the state.
- **What's happening in the legislature:** In addition to the governor's proposal, Democrats in the state legislature are looking to add an [additional \\$30 million](#) in funding for early childhood education. The bill, which has passed through the state Senate on a vote of 28-22, now heads to the state House. The proposed funding would help boost existing programs and create additional programs for 4-year-olds over three years beginning in 2015.
- **Public support for early childhood education:** A February 2014 poll from The Des Moines Register [finds](#) that 76 percent of Iowans "want to make free preschool accessible to every 4-year-old."

Kansas

In Kansas, [3,663 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start. [Twenty-one percent](#) of 4-year-olds are enrolled in state-funded pre-K and the Four-Year Old At-Risk program continues to [provide](#) high-quality early learning experiences for children the year before kindergarten. Kansas is also in its ninth year of the [Kansas Preschool Program \(KPP\)](#), which used the first seven years of the program to gather data from the Pre-K Pilot and KPP Practitioner Group to create a model that would allow children to enter kindergarten even more prepared. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$10,518.

- **What the governor is saying:** In his [State of the State](#) address, Gov. Sam Brownback called for legislative support of all-day kindergarten. His proposal would begin by phasing in new funding over five years and would cost \$80 million a year to maintain. In spring 2014, Gov. Sam Brownback also protected [\\$5 million in early childhood funding](#) by vetoing a plan to transfer the money to the Kansas Bioscience Authority, and signed the state's \$14.6 billion budget.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** Though it doesn't appear Gov. Sam Brownback's proposal to [fund all-day kindergarten](#) will be implemented this year, most of the state's school districts are using blended funding models to cover the costs of all-day kindergarten programs and are even forging ahead with way initiatives to expand preschool in their own districts.

Kentucky

In Kentucky, [3,115 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start, and 8 percent of 3-year-olds and [29 percent](#) of 4-year-olds are served by state-funded pre-K. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$6,105. It is a clear priority for the state as evident from upcoming gubernatorial candidates, such as Kentucky Attorney General Jack Conway, who announced that [early childhood education](#) will be “the central focus of his campaign,” noting “Just as you can’t build a house without a foundation, it’s harder to educate a young person if their early years are wasted.”

- **What the governor is saying:** In his State of the State address on Jan. 7, 2014, Gov. Steven Beshear stated, *“I will seek legislation needed to implement the goals of the All-STARs plan which will provide for more accountability and better transparency throughout our state’s early childcare system. Getting our children off to a better start in life – all of our children, not just those in wealthy, two-parent households – will dictate our success as a state.”* The governor also presented a [fiscal budget for 2014-16](#) that would restore cuts made to Kentucky’s child-care assistance program last year. The plan proposes \$53 million be allotted for the program in 2014 and \$58 million for 2015-16. Preschool funding will also see a boost of \$18 million per year. In June 2014, Gov. Beshear [announced](#) that the state would fund 25 bornlearning Academies starting in fall 2014 as part of a \$1.4 million expansion of 150 academies across the state. The academies are school-based centers “designed to help parents prepare their preschoolers for kindergarten.”
- **What’s happening in the Legislature:** In February of this year, the Kentucky House [passed](#) a bill “that’s part of an effort to improve kindergarten readiness by expanding training for preschool staffs and broadening use of a rating system to critique day cares and preschools.” The bill was sponsored by state Rep. Derrick Graham and was [approved](#) by Kentucky’s House Education Committee.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** This year Gov. Steve Beshear [asked](#) the Legislature to “restore years of funding cuts to public schools,” including restored funding for [child care assistance](#) and \$18 million a year to [expand preschool programs](#). Kentucky also received a federal “[Race to the Top](#)” grant of more than \$44 million to upgrade the quality of its early childhood development programs. While in March, a new report [found](#) that for every \$1 invested in early education in the state, there would be a \$1.64 return in new spending. Together, this evidence provided sufficient support for the governor’s plea to restore funding cuts. The report also argued that restoring child-care subsidies would allow more low-income parents to keep their jobs and decrease their need for other forms of public assistance.

Louisiana

Louisiana is [currently serving](#) 30.9 percent of 4-year-olds with state-funded pre-K. In addition, approximately [2,374 children](#) under the age of three in the state are enrolled in Early Head Start. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$5,574. As part of the state's efforts to reach more children during early childhood the Department of Health and Hospital's Office of Public Health, the Bureau of Family Health and the Southeast Louisiana Area Health Education Center are partnering together to bring [Parents As Teachers \(PAT\)](#), a home visiting program, to the northern part of the state. This program will complement the Bureau of Family Health's Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) home visiting program, which has been operating statewide for approximately 15 years.

- **What state leaders are saying:** In the U.S Senate, John White, the Superintendent of Louisiana's Department of Education, testified before the U.S. Senate's HELP Committee during a recent hearing entitled "Supporting Children and Families through Investments in High-Quality Early Education." During his [testimony](#), Superintendent White shared that "early education can be life changing for low-income children when it is done well, and when quality is sustained in the grades that follow."
- **What's happening in the legislature:** At the state level, there have been several pieces of legislation attempting to improve the access, funding and quality of early childhood education programs. The House Committee on Education passed a bill concerning the Cecil J. Picard LA 4 Early Childhood Education Program, or [House Bill 954](#). Sponsored by Rep. Walt Leger, the bill includes diverse delivery language with the final statute requiring that in the event that there is an increase in funding, 10 percent of the increase would have to be spent to provide slots in non-school sites and community-based learning settings. Reps. Walt Leger and Edward Price introduced [HCR 61](#), which requests that the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education develop an equitable statewide model for the distribution of public funds to support quality early childhood care and education for children birth to age 5. [House Bill 249](#), which would provide child care assistance to homeless families, has been approved by the House Health and Welfare Committee and moves to the House floor for consideration. In July 2014, Gov. Bobby Jindal signed [SB 524](#), which will create a Child Care and Early Education Advisory Council that will serve as advisory council to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** In general, Louisiana's [early education reform efforts](#) are promising, but face some funding hurdles. The state plans to establish early learning performance guidelines for children under age 3 and academic standards for 3- and 4-year-olds, but has not proposed additional funding to assist programs to meet the new guidelines. The Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families Policy Director Melanie Bronfin has called for [renewed investment](#) in the state's Child Care Assistance Program.

Maine

In Maine, [1,250 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start, and data from the state department of education shows an [increase in pre-kindergarten program](#) enrollment for the seventh year in a row. This year, the number of students enrolled in public pre-kindergarten programs jumped from 4,887 students to 5,004 students. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$9,360. Meanwhile, Maine's Educare program is viewed as a model of success in early childhood education and the "[best pre-k program in the state](#)." Currently, 60 percent of the state's 172 school districts offer some kind of pre-kindergarten program, but many communities are unable to afford offering a program to children. Soon, plans to use \$4 million in funds from casino revenues will help alleviate the primary obstacles affecting preschool expansion in Maine, including first year costs.

- **What the governor is saying:** A measure to expand early childhood education in Maine, LD 1530, became law at the end of April without [Gov. Paul LePage's signature](#). The law makes casino revenues available as startup funding to school districts wanting to offer a voluntary pre-K program, and establishes a stakeholder group to develop quality standards, best practices and common assessments. Early childhood is shaping up to be part of the next Maine gubernatorial race, as well, with candidates [highlighting](#) the importance of investments in early education.
- **What's happening in the legislature:** Both chambers of the legislature approved the pre-kindergarten expansion bill that will use casino revenues to expand early childhood education to schools that don't currently offer such programs. [The bill authorizes](#) the Commissioner of Education to provide grant funding beginning in the 2015-2016 school year and each subsequent school year thereafter to qualified school administrative units to implement plans to develop and operate public preschool programs. The bill further establishes the state's goal to provide adequate funding to ensure that public preschool programs for children 4 years of age are offered by all school administrative units by the 2018-2019 school years.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** In FY15-16, \$4 million in funds from casino revenues will address the first year start-up costs of preschool expansion.

Maryland

In Maryland, [2,028 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in early Head Start and [35 percent of 4-year-olds](#) are enrolled in state-funded early learning programs. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$13,055. Currently, the state is facing budget issues that could affect its efforts to establish voluntary, universal preschool. Besides public pre-kindergarten, Maryland also has early learning centers called Judy Centers which are located in Title 1 school districts. There are also many advocates in the state who would like to expand preschool to include all 4-year-olds, regardless of income.

- **What the governor is saying:** In Gov. Martin O'Malley's 2014 [State of the State Address](#) he focused on expanding and advancing universal pre-K for the state and pledged to spearhead the effort. 2014 will be Gov. O'Malley's last year in office, but the Maryland's Capital News Service has [highlighted](#) that each of the seven major gubernatorial candidates "favor expanding pre-K, but vary in their plan, end goal and payment means."
- **What's happening in the legislature:** In spring 2014, after the Maryland Legislature [approved](#) additional funding to expand pre-K classes to an additional 1,600 children from low-income families, Gov. Martin O'Malley [signed](#) legislation which proposed expanding access to pre-K into law.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** The legislation to expand access to preschool that Gov. Martin O'Malley signed in the spring included [\\$4.3 million in next year's budget](#) to fund the expansion. Additionally, Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake [announced](#) that the city's Head Start programs would provide longer days and an extended school year. Later, two business leaders [wrote](#) in the Baltimore Sun that they endorsed expanding pre-K access to all four-year-olds considering the benefits it would have for the state.

Massachusetts

In Massachusetts, at the end of 2013, [3,363 children](#) under the age of three were enrolled in Early Head Start. Additionally, 4 percent of 3-year-olds and 14 percent of 4-year-olds are enrolled in [state-funded pre-K](#). The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is amongst the highest in the country at \$16,430. This year, the state started its Universal Pre-K initiative to try and serve children as young as two years and nine months all the way through kindergarten. The issue of expanding preschool access and enrollment is also emerging as a key campaign issue in the state's 2014 gubernatorial race. During a [speech](#) before the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, Massachusetts State Treasurer Steve Grossman, a Democratic candidate for governor, [called](#) for "the creation of a public-private partnership that would provide the resources to place some 30,000 children into pre-K programs who are now on state waiting lists."

- **What the governor is saying:** In Gov. Deval Patrick's 2014 [State of the Commonwealth Address](#), he highlighted past successes in the early education and childhood realm, such as providing labor organizing rights to home-based early education providers, and also focusing on his goal of making quality early education and all-day kindergarten available to more children.
- **What's happening in the legislature:** The Boston Globe [reports](#) that "preschool pays off, but only for kids that go," commenting that Massachusetts chose with this year's budget to "not [do] much to get kids into high-quality early childhood and child care programs." A state Senate plan [proposed](#) an increase of \$17.5 million to expand the state program, which could cover an additional 3,000 kids or 12 percent of the state's wait list.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** In January 2014, Gov. Deval Patrick filed his budget for the state, which [included](#) a \$15 million [increase](#) in early education. In May 2014, the state Senate unveiled a budget proposing a \$17.5 million increase in early education, slightly higher than the governor's proposal. At the local level, mayors and municipal leaders in the state are attempting to dramatically increase the number of pre-k seats and students enrolled in preschool. For example in Boston, Mayor Martin Walsh [named](#) a 27-member task force responsible for recommending a plan to double the number of pre-K seats in the city by 2018. Meanwhile, the Boston Globe [discussed](#) the potential plans in Cambridge to expand pre-K access to all of the city's 4-year-olds, which "could serve as a model for universal pre-K in neighboring communities, including Boston" and "allow Cambridge to mature from a leader in spending on education to a leader in educational outcomes."

Michigan

In Michigan, [6,390 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start, and [21 percent of 4-year olds](#) are enrolled in preschool. However, child care costs in the state are the [12th highest in the nation](#), with average costs hovering around \$10,114 for infant care. The state is working to alleviate this financial burden on families, and Gov. Rick Snyder proposed an increase in funding of \$65 million for the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). This funding would [provide at least 16,000](#) more half-day preschool slots for at-risk 4-year-olds. The Detroit News also [mentioned](#) that support for early education is growing in the state as parents and providers have excitedly filled newly available pre-K seats.

- **What the governor is saying:** In Gov. Rick Snyder's 2014 [State of the State Address](#), he built on his already impressive financial investment of \$65 million in early education programs in the previous year and proposed an additional \$65 million investment in early childhood education this year to ensure that Michigan becomes a "no-wait state" for early learning.
- **What's happening in the legislature:** The [House Appropriations committee](#) has passed both HB 5313, a general fund omnibus budget bill, and HB 5314, an education omnibus bill. Both bills provide increased funding for early childhood support and services proposed by the governor in his FY2015 budget plan including: expanding Healthy Kids Dental to include Macomb and Kalamazoo counties, increased funding for home visitation programs in northern and rural counties, increased rates and allowable hours for subsidized child care. In June 2014, the legislature [approved](#) a \$65 million expansion of the state's Great Start Readiness Program.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** Gov. Snyder's [latest budget request](#) called for an additional \$65 million increase in the Great Start Readiness Program to make Michigan a "no-wait state" for low-income students enrolling in preschool, creating an additional 16,000 seats for preschools. With the passage of the two appropriations bills, HB 5313 and HB 5314, the funding for the Great Start Readiness Program's funding totals \$239 million, and aligns with Gov. Rick Snyder's proposal to increase funding for the program to serve all eligible 4-year-olds and support program enhancements. Additionally, [several organizations](#) in the Southeast Michigan Early Childhood Funders Collaborative contributed to a new \$4.5 million fund to benefit Head Start programs in Detroit, reports the [Associated Press](#) and [MLive.com](#). Detroit was also one of five cities [selected](#) to receive federal funds for an Office of Head Start program. The \$60 million of federal money will go towards the city's Birth to Five pilot program to be implemented by community-based agencies that hope to serve 1,000 pregnant women and children 0-5.

Minnesota

Minnesota's Department of Education offers a [Early Childhood Family Education](#) program for all families that have children from birth to kindergarten. The program's goal is to enhance families' abilities to provide the best learning environment possible for their children.

Minnesota also offers [financial support and grants](#) for Early Head Start and Head Start programs to increase enrollment. As a result, approximately [3,614 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs in the state, and 5,690 three-year olds and 7,973 four-year olds are enrolled in [Head Start](#) programs. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$13,876.

- **What the governor is saying:** In Gov. Mark Dayton's State of the State address, [he called for](#) an expansion of preschool, stating, "*Let us commit that by the year 2018, all three-and-four-year-olds in Minnesota will have access to quality, affordable early childhood education.*" He also reiterated what Minnesota had [accomplished the previous year](#) in the early learning space, including increasing funding for early childhood education scholarships to \$46 million and enacting state-funded, all-day kindergarten which begins in the fall.
- **What's happening in the legislature:** A [letter to the editor](#) of the Post-Bulletin in Minnesota encourages support of a bill in the state legislature "that would allow all children access to education opportunities" by creating universal preschool in the state.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** The Minnesota House added \$75 million in education funding to their [FY 2014-2015](#) budget. This has added about \$8.8 million for early learning scholarships and a \$8.9 million for a per-pupil allowance increase for early childhood family education.

Mississippi

In Mississippi, [2,150 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs, and 11,781 three-year olds and 16,276 four-year olds are enrolled in [Head Start](#) programs. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$4,863. This year, Mississippi is working on plans to develop and fund the state's first preschool program.

- **What the governor is saying:** In Gov. Phil Bryant's [State of the State Address](#), he expressed support for efforts like Building Blocks that focus on providing high-quality early learning opportunities. His budget also reflected funding for such efforts. In addition to highlighting last year's legislative efforts including establishing "a collaborative pre-K learning program" and funding Mississippi Building Blocks, Bryant [encouraged](#) the legislature to implement a broader merit pay system and fund reading coaches in high-need classrooms.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** This year, Mississippi started providing some public funding for state pre-K. The state's new \$3 million in grants will "reach an estimated 2,400 4-year-olds during the next two and a half years," [according](#) to The Hechinger Report. Due to the need for additional support for its pre-K programs, the Obama administration plans to use its \$250 million in new early learning funding to offer "[Expansion Grants](#)" to states like Mississippi. State Superintendent Carey Wright also [called](#) for more money for state pre-K.

Missouri

In Missouri, about [4,903 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start, but only 1 percent of three-year-olds and 3 percent of four-year-olds are [enrolled](#) in state-funded pre-K programs. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$8,320. There is a statewide push for [increased pre-kindergarten](#), thanks in large part to a hard push from parents. The Missouri Preschool Project (MPP) is the main model dedicated to serving 3- and 4-year-olds and it operates through public schools, nonprofits, and private child care centers.

- **What the governor is saying:** In Gov. Jay Nixon's State of the State address, he [proposed](#) nearly tripling the funding for the Missouri Preschool Program, suggesting a \$30 million increase for early childhood education programs. In July 2014, the [governor signed legislation](#) into law that would expand the state's school funding formula to include a limited number of preschool students eligible for free or reduced lunches. The bill will take effect gradually over the next several years.
- **What's happening in the legislature:** In [both chambers](#) of the Missouri Legislature, "a long line of supporters [have] testified in favor" of bills to add students to the state's pre-K program, with no one testifying against the bills. As a result, the Missouri House [passed a bill](#) at the end of their legislative session to allow school districts to serve more 3- to 5-year-olds in preschool programs.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** While the Missouri state budget includes \$114.8 million for K-12 schools, some state representatives said "it wasn't good enough because public schools in Missouri are still underfunded by \$600 million." State Rep. Margo McNeil, a Democrat, told [St. Louis Public Radio](#) that "We need to be getting early childhood education, really, to everyone who wants it ... at the minimum we should be getting early childhood education to our provisional and unaccredited districts so that they have a chance to get back on track."

Montana

In Montana, [977 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs, and 1,841 three-year olds and 2,720 four-year olds are enrolled in [Head Start programs](#). While Montana is one of nine states that does not have a [publicly funded preschool](#) or early-childhood education program, the state did submit a proposal for a \$37 million grant from the Obama Administration for early-childhood education funding at the end of 2013. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$8,475. The grant ultimately was not accepted, but there is growing momentum from policymakers and business leaders across the state for increasing investments in early childhood education.

- **What the governor is saying:** Gov. Steve Bullock [delivered a speech](#) to business leaders asking for their support on a major proposal he was preparing to fund early-childhood education in Montana. The governor has also traveled throughout the state highlighting the need to expand early childhood education funding, quoting the [economic statistic](#) that, “nationally, we know that a \$1.00 investment from 0 to 5 has a \$7 to \$9.00 return.”
- **Funding increases and additional support:** In spring 2014, a business leader’s summit on early childhood education was held bringing together the government and business leaders to discuss the importance of early childhood education and the need that Montana has for it. A report by the [Montana Budget and Policy Center](#) shared that “a universal program would begin paying for itself in nine years and cost \$88 million a year to run once fully phased in. By 2050, the costs are estimated at \$212 million, far less than the \$1.7 billion in anticipated benefits.”

Nebraska

In Nebraska, [1,764 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs. Additionally, 11 percent of the state's three-year olds and 26 percent of the state's four-year olds are [enrolled](#) in state-funded pre-K. However, many advocates of early education propose that more early childhood investment by the state legislature would "ensure that more children begin their public education experience prepared to succeed." The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$7,797.

- **What's happening in the legislature:** Education groups in [Nebraska](#) advocated for a series of early childhood education bills in the state and a [public hearing](#) before the state Education Committee heard from "speaker after speaker" that even teaching preschoolers basic skills "is the best investment Nebraska can make in its future." The Nebraska legislature also passed [L.B. 507](#) which created the Step Up to Quality Child Care Act to create standards and high quality early education. The bill will provide incentives and support for professional development and training, and postsecondary education opportunities for early childhood education providers.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** The Nebraska Legislature this year [approved](#) a budget with a \$3.5 million increase for early childhood education programs.

Nevada

In Nevada, [1,068 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start. However, only [3 percent of the state's four-year-olds](#) are enrolled in Nevada's state-funded pre-K program, known as the Nevada State Pre-Kindergarten Education Program (PEP). The project supports and funds both community organizations and school districts to help them implement preschool programs. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$9,608.

- **What state leaders are saying:** Kathleen Sandoval, Nevada's first lady, is kicking off an early education initiative to call on "businesses and civic organizations to help young students prepare for a lifetime of learning." The education campaign is called "[Strong Start Nevada](#)." Sandoval says Nevada is the only state that does not have a business-backed effort promoting early learning, and that the goal of the campaign is to ensure there are more preschool opportunities for low-income families.
- **What's happening in the Legislature:** The [Education Initiative](#) that could help fund Nevada's first lady Kathleen Sandoval's early education campaign through the two percent "business margins tax" will be on the ballot in the November 2014 general election.

New Jersey

In New Jersey, [2,393 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs, while 6,324 three-year olds and 7,173 four-year olds are enrolled in [Head Start](#) programs. The state currently has 20 percent of its three-year-olds and 28 percent of its four-year-olds enrolled in [state-funded preschool programs](#). Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$10,949. New Jersey is [known](#) for its efforts to invest in high quality and culturally responsive pre-K programs. The state has also worked with parents and created pre-K classrooms in partnership with diverse local, community-based providers and preschools.

- **What state leaders are saying:** Early in 2014, New Jersey received a Race to the Top grant. Gov. Chris Christie [praised the award stating](#), *“Ensuring access to a high-quality education for every New Jersey student has been a priority of this Administration since day one in office. We have made great progress to improve the educational experience for all New Jersey students, from children in early learning education programs to students attending one of New Jersey’s many institutions of higher learning.”* Education Commissioner Chris Cerf also weighed in sharing, *“In the end, we anticipate our effort will reach at least 83,300 high-needs children, from pregnancy through age 8, over the four years of the grant. This grant is the result of the hard work of Departments across the state, as well as the strong voice and support of advocate groups throughout New Jersey, and I thank them for all of their efforts on behalf of our students.”*
- **Statewide support for early education:** U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan participated in an [early learning parent roundtable](#) in Union City, New Jersey using the event as an opportunity to hear from parents how early learning is helping their children. Local communities are also attempting to look at what makes effective preschools with a [parent-led policy boards](#) like the one in Newark.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** The Star-Ledger in New Jersey [reports](#) that U.S. Sen. Corey Booker, the former mayor of Newark, joined officials from the Foundation for Newark’s Future to announce the creation of a \$1 million campaign that will “invest in the city’s parents, early childhood teachers and child care center directors to improve the quality and resources for children from birth to age 3.” New Jersey also has plans to use its \$44.3 million Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant to implement a preschool rating system called [Grow NJ Kids](#).

New Mexico

In New Mexico, 2,308 children under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs, while [18 percent](#) of 4-year-olds are enrolled in a state-funded early learning program. Over recent years, this number has steadily increased. It will do so again in the upcoming fiscal year as Republican Gov. Susana Martinez and the state Legislature have both championed early childhood education. While New Mexico currently provides a half-day pre-K program, this year's state budget also [included](#) funding for a pilot full-day pre-K program. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$7,360.

- **What the governor is saying:** In her [State of the State address](#) on Jan. 21, 2014, Gov. Martinez noted that a focus of her education spending would be toward *“making sure that every child is able to learn to read. We doubled funding for Pre-K, went from serving 4,600 students to almost 8,000. I am proposing another expansion this year.”* When the governor [signed](#) the state's fiscal year 2015 budget, which increased pre-K funding, she again highlighted how *“we have invested heavily in public education and early childhood programs.”*
- **What's happening in the Legislature:** Attempts were made during this legislative cycle to tap the state's land-grant endowment to help fund early childhood education, with the state Senate Finance Committee [agreeing](#) *“early childhood education is a means to producing more high school and college graduates while cutting prison populations and welfare rolls.”* While that particular funding plan was tabled and will likely be re-introduced in the 2015 legislative session, the Legislature and Gov. Martinez did approve a \$28 million increase in funding for early childhood initiatives, including additional funding for home visiting, New Mexico Pre-K and other early literacy initiatives. After New Mexico's state investment officer [announced](#) that the state's endowments, including the Land Grant Permanent Fund, are now worth a record \$19.6 billion, up from \$14 billion in April 2010, many Democratic lawmakers “revived their long-running debate over whether some of the money should be spent on early childhood education.”
- **Funding increases and additional support:** New Mexico was among 20 states to expand enrollment in publicly supported pre-K programs between 2011-12 and 2012-13, [increasing](#) per-pupil funding by 13 percent. The fiscal year 2015 budget again increases overall early childhood education funding by 14 percent. A [report](#) from the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee also found that the state spends “far more on child care than prekindergarten” even though pre-K programs “deliver more benefits and a greater return on taxpayers' investment than state subsidized child care.” Both the [Albuquerque Journal](#) and [Santa Fe New Mexican](#) editorial boards argue that the state should use the report to make sure it is investing “more of its precious dollars in programs that show educational benefits,” such as pre-K and home visiting.

New York

In New York, [10,431 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs. During the 2012-13 school year, [45 percent](#) of New York's 4-year-olds were enrolled in the state-funded Universal Prekindergarten program. This number is expected to rise in coming years thanks to a major investment by the state Legislature, and the support of Gov. Andrew Cuomo and New York Mayor Bill de Blasio. In March 2014, The New York Times [argued](#) that the city is now "Leading the Country on Pre-K." However, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is amongst the highest in the country at \$14,939.

- **What the governor and other leaders are saying:** In his [State of the State address](#) on Jan. 8, 2014, Gov. Cuomo declared that *"while we remake our class rooms for tomorrow, we must get young minds engaged as early as possible. In 2013 in the State of the State, we called for expanded full day Pre-K. The assembly has long championed the same. It is time for New York State to have universal full day Pre-K statewide."* New York Mayor de Blasio also ran on a campaign to fund full-day public preschool for all New York City children. Marking his 100th day in office shortly after a state budget agreement expanded pre-K funding, the mayor [remarked](#), *"In a progressive city, there's equal education opportunity for every child ... Our goal was to create something universal because the problems were so deep, they couldn't just reach a few. Universal pre-K is one of the most important things we can do to launch kids on a successful educational career and a successful life."*
- **What's happening in the Legislature and New York City:** An [agreement](#) between Gov. Cuomo and the state Legislature on a state budget will provide the state with free, full-day, pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds, at \$340 million in funding a year, or more than \$1.5 billion over five years. New York City will receive \$300 million to expand pre-K, which will aim to serve about 73,000 children by the 2015-16 school year. De Blasio called the state budget agreement *"an extraordinary and historic step forward for New York City ... It's clearly the resources we need to create full-day pre-K for every child in this city."* As of May 2014, New York City had [filled](#) 98.4 percent of expanded pre-K seats within existing public school programs, aiming to increase the number of children in pre-K programs from 20,000 to 53,000 by September 2014. In June 2014, Mayor de Blasio also [highlighted](#) a mixed-use affordable housing development that "combines his affordable housing and universal pre-K" goals.

North Carolina

In North Carolina, [5,678 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs, and [23 percent](#) of 4-year-olds are enrolled in the state-funded NC Pre-K program. Funding for the pre-K program increased in 2012-2013, after a 20 percent cut in the 2011-12 school year, with the state beginning to again enroll more at-risk children (it reached a peak of 25 percent in 2009 and 2010). In addition, North Carolina remains one of only four states that meet the 10 quality benchmarks in early childhood education established by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$8,868.

- **What the governor is saying:** In advance of Republican Gov. Pat McCrory sharing his fiscal year 2014-15 [budget proposal](#) in May 2014, the governor [declared](#) his intentions to increase funding to the state's early childhood education program, noting, *"If a student starts behind in school, they usually end up being behind throughout their career and throughout their life, and therefore in my budget we will provide an additional \$3.6 million to expand early childhood education in North Carolina."* The North Carolina General Assembly is considering the budget proposal as of May 2014.
- **Funding increases:** If passed, Gov. McCrory's fiscal year 2014-15 budget will increase pre-K funding by \$3.6 million, adding approximately 700 slots to the NC Pre-K program.
- **New research demonstrating the success of NC Pre-K:** [Researchers](#) from the University of North Carolina's Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute [found](#) in February 2014 that the state's pre-K program for 4-year-olds "has produced better-than-expected outcomes for participants." The research found significant gains for participants in language and literacy skills, math skills, general knowledge and social skills, and greater gains for preschoolers with low levels of English proficiency.

North Dakota

In North Dakota, [950 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs and [15 percent of 3-year-olds and 22 percent of 4-year-olds](#) are served through federal Head Start and special education preschool. However, the state does not fund a state-run pre-K program. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$8,021.

- **What's happening in the Legislature:** While the North Dakota legislative Assembly is not in session this year, during the 63rd legislative Assembly, Senate Bill 2229 was passed which [created](#) a study committee of “the development, delivery, and administration of comprehensive early childhood care and early childhood education in [the] state.” The committee, representing child care, Head Start, higher education, public and private education, special education, advocacy groups and North Dakota state departments met four times since October 2013 and is set to deliver a report to the Legislative Management Council in June 2014.
- **Other recent efforts in the state:** In September 2013, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction adopted and [released](#) the state’s voluntary Pre-kindergarten Content Standards, which are aligned with the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework as well as the state’s standards for kindergarten.

Ohio

In Ohio, [7,134 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs and [1 percent of 3-year-olds and 2 percent of 4-year-olds](#) are enrolled in the state-funded Ohio Public Preschool Program. In addition to making investments in preschool for the upcoming school year, this past year, Ohio [adopted](#) comprehensive early learning standards. This means 100 percent of state's pre-K programs now meet that quality benchmark established by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$8,482.

- **What the governor and other political leaders are saying:** In his [State of the State](#) address in February 2014, Republican Gov. John Kasich mentioned his state's adoption of early learning standards, saying, *"To make sure Ohio is doing everything it can to help our youngest learners, we're raising the standards for publicly funded early childhood education so that more children enter school ready to succeed."* He also noted, *"at the same time, we're going to make sure we're spending those important dollars in ways that will make a difference. We believe in early childhood education. We're going to promote it. We're going to make it work in our state in an effective way."*
- **What state leaders are saying:** Democratic gubernatorial candidate and Cuyahoga County Executive Ed FitzGerald in May 2014 [announced](#) his "Pre-K All the Way" plan, which calls for legislation to fund preschool for all Ohio 3- and 4-year-olds beginning in fall 2016 with full implementation by 2018. When announcing the plan, which could cost between \$500 million and \$600 million a year, FitzGerald [said](#), *"Any parent that can afford this is doing it for their child because they know it works, but we don't want to be a state where some parents can afford the essentials and others are left behind."*
- **Funding increases:** During its previous legislative session, Ohio's General Assembly [increased](#) funding for early childhood education through House Bill 59, which allocates an additional \$12 million into the early childhood education program in fiscal year 2015. This will allow an additional 2,940 children to receive high-quality preschool during the 2014-15 school year. This comes after a \$10 million increase during the 2013-14 school year, meaning the number of children served will have nearly doubled by 2014-15.
- **Support from business leaders and in cities:** Ohio business leaders in February 2014 used a recent University of Cincinnati Economics Center study to [argue](#) that universal pre-K in Cincinnati could save the city between \$48 million to \$69.1 million for each class of students that starts preschool at age 3 or 4. And in Cleveland, the school district, Cuyahoga County and more than 30 area agencies [joined](#) in a partnership to more than double the number of Cleveland children attending a quality preschool within the next two years," which the Plain Dealer [editorialized](#) is a "smart, well-coordinated educational effort" that the city "should fully embrace and support." The Pre4Cle

(preschool for Cleveland) program hopes to enroll 2,000 additional pre-K students in the next two years.

DRAFT

Oklahoma

Oklahoma is undoubtedly a nationally recognized [leader](#) in early childhood education. Every 4-year-old in the state has access to a year of high-quality prekindergarten. Meanwhile, many three-year olds from low-income families get access to full-day, year-round preschool, and [3,681 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs. The state's Early Childhood Four-Year-Old Program, which started in 1980, is now available in 99 percent of school districts, with 74 percent of four year olds enrolled in a state program and enrollment in the program increasingly steadily each year. High quality early childhood education remains a top priority in Oklahoma, with its state program achieving nine quality benchmarks in early childhood education established by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). Meanwhile, independent analyses of the program led by researchers from Georgetown University [show](#) that that Oklahoma's universal program [improves overall cognitive, academic, and emotional skills](#). The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$7,480.

- **What state leaders are saying:** According to the New York Times, Skip Steele, a Republican Tulsa City Council member recently [said](#), "This [early childhood education] isn't a liberal issue. This is investing in our kids, in our future. It's a no-brainer."
- **What's happening in the legislature:** According to [NIEER](#), Oklahoma's state leaders are currently working to expand early childhood services to three year olds through the Early Childhood Expansion Project which served 314 children from birth-age 4 in 2011. In addition, the Pilot Early Childhood Program started in 2006 was funded in the 2010-2011 school year. This program delivered year-round child care to disadvantaged children and families, using annual contracts with the Community Action Project of Tulsa and served 2,642 children from birth through age 3.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** Oklahoma [spends](#) nearly \$145 million a year on its state early childhood programs. The state legislature recently approved more than \$2 million in state funds to provide additional services for children and families participating in federal Head Start Programs.

Oregon

In Oregon, [3,850 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs. The state currently enrolls 10 percent of its 4-year-olds in high-quality preschool. However, with strong support from Sen. Wyden and his co-sponsorship of the Strong Start for America's Children Act, which would help Oregon improve and expand high-quality, early childhood opportunities, state leaders continue to innovate in the early learning field. Specifically, the state is placing a distinct focus on connecting the early learning and K-12 systems to ensure sustained impact of its early childhood programs. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$13,452.

- **What the governor is saying:** Democratic Gov. John Kitzhaber did not have a State of the State address this year, but his office [named](#) streamlining Oregon's [early childhood services](#) and investing in kids from an early age as a top education priorities.
- **What's happening in the legislature:** Oregon is [making progress](#) in overhauling its approach to early learning with a new set of regional "early learning hubs" that have child care, health care, preschool and social service programs work together. Meanwhile, linkages between Early Learning and K-12: HB 2013 created the Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation Fund to build local connections between early childhood programs and schools.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** Oregon [increased](#) funding for preschool by \$6 million in the 2014 budget and won a competitive Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant that will provide \$20 million to improve early learning and development. In May 2014, Oregon's Early Learning Council [designated](#) nearly \$4 million in grants to 16 applicants through the new Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation Fund. The Fund will especially focus on building local connections between early childhood programs and schools.

Pennsylvania

Currently, 12 percent of 4-year-olds in Pennsylvania are [enrolled](#) in state-funded pre-K programs. Meanwhile, the state [provides](#) pre-K to 5 percent of 3-year-olds, and [7,138 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs. Despite budget cuts to statewide early childhood programs in 2012-2013, state leaders and community advocates continue to rally for expanding access to early childhood opportunities. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$10,319. Advocates in [Pennsylvania](#) recently started a campaign to get greater access to high-quality pre-K programs for all 3- and 4-year-olds in the state. Meanwhile, early childhood education is emerging as a top issue in this year's gubernatorial race with members of the "Pre-K for PA" coalition, which includes military, business and law enforcement leaders "[urging](#) all the candidates for [Pennsylvania] governor to learn more about the social and economic benefits of investing in early childhood education."

- **What the governor is saying:** Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett's budget address [included](#) \$10 million in additional early learning funding, which the Philadelphia Daily News [called](#) "welcome news to parents around the state." Gov. Corbett also promoted a new proposal to spend an additional \$25.5 million on early childhood programs, [calling](#) money for early childhood "the best investment going." During his 2014 State of the State address, Gov. Corbett said, "*At every level, from early childhood to high school and beyond, every dollar we spend is an investment in the future of our commonwealth.*"
- **What state leaders are saying:** Former Pennsylvania Govs. Ed Rendell and Mark Schweiker, a Democrat and Republican respectively, wrote in an [op-ed](#) that investments in early childhood education would "guarantee a kid a sound future" and "ultimately help to build a more successful Pennsylvania." The governors encouraged candidates running for governor and the state Legislature to support the Pre-K for PA campaign, which looks to give every 3- and 4-year-old access to high-quality pre-K by 2018. Local leaders are also embracing early learning. For example, a Pittsburgh [city councilwoman](#) believes that investing in high-quality pre-K "is much more cost-effective than spending tax dollars to address problems later in [people's] lives."
- **What's happening in the legislature:** In the state Senate, Sen. Pat Browne (R-Lehigh) and Rep. Phyllis Mundy (D-Luzerne) are leading the charge to [ensure](#) the \$10 million for preschool programs targeted to low-income children and families remain part of the state's final approved budget.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** In addition to Gov. Corbett's proposed \$10 million investment in early childhood education, the governor is also [promoting](#) a new proposal to spend an additional \$25.5 million on early childhood programs next year.

Rhode Island

In Rhode Island, [981 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs and 1,016 3-year olds and 1,708 4-year-olds are enrolled in [Head Start programs](#). At the state level, Rhode Island [offers](#) a high-quality, well-funded early childhood program targeted to low-income children and families. Nationally, the state ranks 4th in per-child spending for this preschool program, providing \$9,278 per-child, per-year. Rhode Island also has one of the highest quality programs in the country, with its program continuing to meet all 10 quality benchmarks in early childhood education established by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). In December 2011, Rhode Island was one of nine states [awarded](#) grants from the \$500 million Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge fund. As part of the grant implementation process, seven Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge projects have been created including the– Early Learning Workforce Development, Program Quality Improvement, Program Quality Standards Alignment and Measurement, Early Learning Standards and Development, Child Assessment, Early Learning Data System, and Grant Management to ensure high quality standards and accountability. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$12,075.

- **What state leaders are saying:** Under Gov. Chaffee’s leadership, the state secured Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funding and recently [said](#) that early learning can “help get the young children in Rhode Island off to a great start in their education.” Meanwhile, Democratic gubernatorial candidates in Rhode Island, including Providence Mayor and Head Start graduate Angel Taveras, [championed](#) investments in pre-K in a candidate forum, saying, “I’m a Head Start baby...there is nothing more important than investing in early-childhood education and universal pre-K.”
- **What’s happening in the Legislature:** Leaders of the Rhode Island Senate [called](#) for a greater investment in early childhood education during the 2014 legislative session, as part of a focus on long-term workforce development strategies. Meanwhile, 15 pieces of legislation aimed at strengthening and expanding publically financed early childhood programs have been [introduced](#) in the 2015 legislative session.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** The Rhode Island Education Aid Foundation Formula [approved](#) in 2010 will take a phased-in approach to expanding access to high-quality early childhood programs for four-year olds with a distinct focus on low-income children and families. The funding formula [includes](#) an expansion plan for the Rhode Island pre-K program, increasing the state investment each year for 10 years by up to \$10 million per year.

South Carolina

In South Carolina, [2,003 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs, and 7,079 3-year olds and 6,330 4-year olds are enrolled in [Head Start programs](#). South Carolina's statewide early childhood programs [serve](#) 40 percent of 4-year olds and 4 percent of 3-year olds in the state, with a distinct focus on low-income children and families through the Half-Day Child Development Program (4K) and the Child Development Education Pilot Program. The state also [funds](#) an Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP) that primarily focuses on children in kindergarten, also allowing districts to use a portion of the funds to supplement pre-K spending. In addition, First Steps to School Readiness, a separate initiative, connects and provides some financing for public and private preschool initiatives. According to a recent [poll](#) of South Carolina voters commissioned by the Institute for Child Success (ICS), 55 percent of voters do not believe that most South Carolina children are prepared for academic success upon entering kindergarten. Meanwhile, more than half of voters said that they do not believe that the state of South Carolina adequately supports early childhood education programs. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$6,280.

- **What state leaders are saying:** State Sen. Vincent Sheheen(D-Camden) vocally [supports](#) early childhood education calling it, “common sense” and is advocating for statewide pre-K as he hits the campaign trail in his 2014 bid for governor. Meanwhile, Jerry Govan, the Democrat candidate for state superintendent of education is [encouraging](#) voters to embrace early learning as a key strategy for boosting high school graduation rates in the future.
- **What's happening in the legislature:** According to the Aiken Standard, the South Carolina General Assembly recently [pushed](#) to increase the number of 4-year old kindergarten slots in an effort to expand access to early learning opportunities to younger children. Meanwhile, legislation introduced in the 2013-2014 Session of the General Assembly [provides](#) statewide programs with a definition of “school readiness” as a benchmark for improving the quality of early childhood supports.
- **Funding increases:** In the 2013-2014 legislation session, a bill that that would expand access to full-day pre-K classes for four-year olds [advanced](#) all the way to the full State Senate Education Committee. The proposal would nearly double the state's investment in a program that currently benefits approximately 4,700 children in three dozen districts.

South Dakota

In South Dakota, [1,267 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs, and 1,826 3-year-olds and 2,586 4-year olds are enrolled in [Head Start programs](#). According to the U.S. Department of Education, nearly 3,000 students are [enrolled](#) in district operated preschool programs. Even though [South Dakota](#) does not have a state-run early childhood program, leaders are moving toward embracing quality standards and alignment between preschool and K-12 systems by aligning its Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines. Meanwhile, a pilot program in Rapid City is already producing promising results with participating children [demonstrating](#) gains in language skills. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$6,071.

- **What state leaders are saying:** While Gov. Dennis Daugaard, who is running for re-election would like the state to prioritize investments in existing K-12 education programs, the issue of early childhood education is [becoming](#) a cornerstone of the gubernatorial race's Democratic primaries with Joe Lowe and Susan Wismer, the two Democrat candidates both vocally [supporting](#) early childhood programs. Meanwhile, Republican state Rep. Jacqueline Sly who is also a member of the state's legislative planning committee named early learning as a top priority and said, "If children don't have those experiences at home at a very early age...they get left behind."
- **What's happening in the legislature:** In 2013, Rep. Sly [introduced](#) a bill to fund a pre-k pilot program that provides computers to families that could then use them for early childhood programs.

DR

Tennessee

In Tennessee, [2,249 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs, and 21 percent of 4-year-olds are [enrolled](#) in a state-funded early learning program. The persistence of education reformers in Nashville and Memphis, paired with the vocal support of lawmakers such as U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander, is paying off. Tennessee holds its position among the top tier of states with high-quality pre-K programs. The state meets nine out of 10 quality benchmarks for early childhood education standards, and has introduced plans for further improvement. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is amongst the lowest in the country at \$5,857.

- **What's happening in the legislature:** Progress at the local level is remarkable, particularly in Nashville. In February 2014, the city [became one step closer](#) to offering pre-K to all 4-year-olds by 2018. With strong backing from schools chief Jesse Register, the school board voted unanimously to turn two elementary schools into pre-K hubs. Since then, Register has continued to champion the cause of universal pre-K and [proposed](#) an English immersion component that would assist a quarter of the city's 4-year-olds, who come from homes where English is not spoken.
- **What lawmakers are saying:** In April 2014, Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., [announced](#) plans to introduce a bill "that would provide states the flexibility to decide how best to use some or all of the more than \$22 billion in federal money spent annually on 45 different early childhood education programs." Alexander, the senior Republican on the senate education committee, noted the need to innovate: "What we shouldn't do is fall back into the familiar Washington pattern of a grand promise, lots of federal mandates and sending the bill to governors to pay in the end...We have millions of children who need this kind of early education."

Texas

In Texas, [15,096 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs, and 32,906 3-year olds and 42,313 4-year olds are enrolled in [Head Start programs](#). Overall, 52 percent of 4-year-olds are enrolled in a state-funded early learning program. This number is particularly impressive given that the state has grown enrollment by 7 percent during the last five years alone, and has overcome annual decreases in funding to do so. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$8,495. Conversations about how to further expand access to high-quality early learning programs have increased over time, taking center stage in recent political battles on the state and local levels.

- **Impact on the gubernatorial race:** In February 2014, Democratic candidate Wendy Davis [called for](#) expanded access to full-day pre-K, with a plan that proposed using existing resources and surplus budget to fund the effort. Her opponent, Republican candidate Greg Abbott, [shared](#) his proposal shortly thereafter, asking the state “to invest first in improving the quality of pre-kindergarten before opening the door for more students to attend full day classes.” After reviewing the plans, the Houston Chronicle [praised](#) the candidates for their “thoughtful - albeit different - proposals on early childhood education and ... [their work to prompt] a statewide debate over how best to improve effective education programs for youngsters before they reach kindergarten age.”
- **San Antonio as a model:** Texas Public Radio [reports](#) that the first evaluation of San Antonio Mayor Julian Castro’s [Pre-K 4 SA initiative](#) will be released in summer 2014. The report will include data and analysis that help people “get an idea exactly how the program performed in its first year to see what worked well and what needs improving.” The program was launched in 2011 to provide 21,000 4-year-olds high-quality pre-K by June 2021.

Utah

In Utah, [1,507 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs, and 2,336 3-year olds and 4,249 4-year olds are enrolled in [Head Start programs](#). Utah does not have a state-funded pre-K program, however, activity in the state is very promising. In 2014, the state legislature approved future investment in early education programming for at-risk children, through a public-private partnership between business and the state. Results will include increased funding and support for high-quality early learning programs with a proven record of success; existing public and private early education programs to increase quality; and independent evaluation. The state has also released its Early Childhood Core Standards, which will [assist](#) more than 6,000 students currently enrolled in district-operated preschool programs. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$7,860.

- **What's happening in the legislature:** More than 100 pieces of education-related legislation were [sponsored](#) during the 2014 legislative session, including bills to improve the access, quality and resources for early learning programs. In February, Rep. Greg Hughes, R-Draper, sponsored a bill to “extend preschool services to at-risk students through private investment,” which [advanced](#) quickly through the House Education Committee. Despite claims that the funding model was too controversial, the bill [passed](#) the House with a 49-24 vote and later, [advanced](#) through the Senate Education Committee. After it was [approved](#) by the Senate in a 17-10 vote, the bill was [signed](#) into law by Gov. Herbert on April 2, 2014.
- **What the Governor is saying:** Understanding that “an educated workforce is critical for a prosperous economy,” Gov. Gary Herbert has [expressed](#) strong support for public-private partnerships that reward student success and incentivize positive outcomes. The governor not only [signed](#) the bill to extend preschool access to 2,500 at-risk students, but has helped to keep the issue on the political agenda in Utah.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** Utah’s decision to fund early education programs through private investments and corporate partnerships offers a unique model for other states. Many are [looking](#) to its “Pay for Success” model for pre-K with great interest, noting the state’s success in working with Goldman Sachs to [give](#) businesses “a more direct way to support early interventions” with social impact bonds (SIBS). In the Granite School District, for example, Goldman [committed](#) to invest \$7 million in the Utah High Quality Preschool Program, which “provides targeted curricula for 3- and 4-year-olds in hopes of preparing them for academic success.”

Vermont

In Vermont, [621 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs, and 514 3-year olds and 729 4-year olds are enrolled in [Head Start](#) programs. However, 71 percent of 4-year-olds are [enrolled](#) in a state-funded early learning program. This number has steadily increased over the course of a decade, rising 61 percent since 2003. Thanks to new legislation [providing](#) universal access to state-funded pre-K programs, every 3- and 4-year-old in the state will soon have the opportunity to reap the benefits of a high-quality early learning experience, regardless of socioeconomic status. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$9,958.

- **What the Governor is saying:** Highlighting the fact that 87 percent of Vermont communities already offer pre-K programs to young children, Gov. Peter Shumlin [hailed](#) the state's new universal preschool law as a way to ensure that every "3 or 4 year-old will have access to high-quality early education programs, and arrive at school better prepared to learn." He understands that universal pre-K isn't just great for children, but also for taxpayers, working families and employers. He said, "*Investing in our youngest Vermonters is both the right thing to do and the smart thing to do.. I am proud to live in a state that will provide every child an opportunity to arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.*" To underscore this commitment to providing universal access and quality education, the governor recently [released](#) a framework for supporting early childhood programs in the state.
- **What's happening in the legislature:** Gov. Shumlin [signed](#) Vermont's universal pre-K bill into law on May 29, 2014, requiring communities to offer at least 10 hours per week of high-quality, publicly funded pre-K education for 35 weeks annually. Prior to that, the Senate passed the legislation in a close, but definitive vote that excluded a trigger to delay implementation. The House approved the legislation at the end of April 2014. To ensure the legislation advanced through both the House and Senate, policymakers, educators, business and children's advocacy groups [engaged](#) in heated debate over the provisions, timing and funding of the bill. U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders [played](#) an especially crucial role, urging state lawmakers to do more to support early childhood education.

Virginia

In Virginia, [2,784 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs and [17 percent](#) of 4-year-olds are enrolled in publicly funded preschool programs. The Virginia Preschool Initiative, which operates in 88 percent of the state's school districts, has served at-risk 4-year-olds who are not enrolled in preschool programs. However, the Washington Post [reports](#) that, due to the state's continued struggle with funding preschool, hundreds of Virginia business leaders have lobbied for "more high-quality preschool opportunities." The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$10,028.

- **What the Governor is saying:** In Gov. Terry McAuliffe's 2014 State of the State address he [mentions](#) the need to expand early childhood education access across the state.
- **What's happening in the Legislature:** In February, the legislature [debated](#) a new funding formula for pre-K programs which could cause 32 localities to lose nearly 900 pre-K slots statewide, but last year [thousands of slots](#) went unfilled because communities did not contribute matching fund. However, there were new legislative bills that did target improving and strengthening early learning in the state. The [Virginia S.B. 2068](#) requires local school divisions to provide early intervention services not only from grade 3, but to pre-K-3rd-grade students who demonstrate deficiencies based on their individual performance on diagnostic reading tests.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** The Washington Post [reported](#) that in Virginia, more than 6,000 disadvantaged children "missed the opportunity to go to school before kindergarten" because localities did not contribute required matching funds to take "full advantage of the program." There were several major school districts that continue to struggle with funding preschool options. A new [report](#) from Mission: Readiness [found](#) that Fairfax County "remains far behind neighboring districts in providing preschool for children from low-income families," partly due to the challenge of the state's preschool funding plan including a local match. And a Washington Post [editorial](#) discussed why Virginia's second-largest school system, Prince William County, has "all but ignored low-income 4-year-olds" who are not benefiting from the state-funded pre-K program. The editorial cites that the county "ponied up only enough to garner state funding for 72 children just 4 percent of the 1,663 who were eligible for the program."

Washington

In Washington, [6,461 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs, and 5,042 3-year olds and 8,775 4-year olds are enrolled in [Head Start](#) programs. Additionally, 8 percent of the state's 4-year-olds and 1 percent of state's 3-year olds are enrolled in a [state funded preschool](#) program. The Washington Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is the state's program that targets 3- and 4-year-old children from low-income families and is run through education service districts, local governments, public school districts, community colleges and nonprofits. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$12,108.

- **What the Governor is saying:** In Gov. Jay Inslee's [2014 State of the State Address](#), he focused on improving funding to early childhood education programs by asking for a proposed \$4 million for early childhood education programs. And in late March, Gov. Inslee signed [Executive Order 14-03](#), which established a state interagency coordinating council for infants and toddlers with disabilities and it will work with state departments to implement an early intervention system.
- **What's happening in the Legislature:** There have been several pieces of [state legislation](#) in Washington's House and Senate that target early childhood learning efforts. The Washington H.B. 1723 establishes an early start program which will be an integrated high-quality continuum of early learning programs for children from birth to age five. And in an effort to keep the quality of preschool programs high, Washington H.B. 1723 requires that by fiscal year 2015, Washington State preschool programs receiving state funds enroll in the state's voluntary QRIS system and maintain a minimum score level.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** The state's loss of its Elementary and Secondary Education Act waiver means there are new restrictions on how schools can [spend \\$40 million](#) in federal dollars each year, and programs previously funded through the waiver -- such as 10 preschool programs in Tacoma school district serving roughly 200 children -- will have to find new funding sources. On the positive news front, state legislators have passed the FY15 supplemental budget, which included nearly [\\$25 million in new funding](#) for early learning. The [biggest winners](#) in this increase are the \$16.6 million in funding for a 4 percent base subsidy rate increase in both 2014 and 2015 for home- and center-based child care providers serving children with child care subsidies; authorization to use unspent Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to support vulnerable families with home visiting services through the Home Visiting Services Account; and an additional \$50,000 for [Reach Out and Read](#), a program that partners with doctors to provide books to young children and encourage parents to read with them. Meanwhile in Seattle, Mayor Ed Murray [unveiled a plan](#) to offer free, universal preschool in the city that would be funded through a four-year, \$58 million property tax levy. If approved by the Seattle City Council, the initiative will be placed on the November ballot.

West Virginia

In West Virginia, [1,222 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in early Head Start programs, and 2,297 3-year olds and 5,936 4-year olds are enrolled in [Head Start programs](#). Overall in the state, [62 percent of 4-year-olds](#) are enrolled in publicly funded preschool programs through the West Virginia Universal Pre-K System. Despite NIEER's data reflecting a high enrollment in preschool, West Virginia KIDS COUNT released data that only [1,680 of the 68,600 West Virginia children](#) under 6 who need child care are enrolled in nationally accredited child-care programs. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$7,961.

- **Funding increases and additional support:** In local areas of West Virginia there have been promising funding increases, such as the [\\$531,000 in federal funding](#) that the Braxton County Board of Education received to improve and support their head start program.

DRAFT

Wisconsin

In Wisconsin, [3,952 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs, and 8,445 3-year olds and 7,361 4-year olds are enrolled in [Head Start programs](#). Overall in the state, approximately [64 percent of 4-year olds](#) are enrolled in state-funded preschool programs. Since it became a state in 1848, Wisconsin's Constitution has promised to provide free, voluntary education for four-year-olds. Additionally, the average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$9,939.

- **What's happening in the Legislature:** In a recent show of bipartisanship, the Legislature overwhelmingly [passed a joint resolution](#) that the Legislature will take into account the principles of early childhood brain development in their deliberations, and note the role of early intervention and investment in early years as important strategies.
- **Funding increases and additional support:** This year the state invested [\\$35 million of federal grant funds](#) from the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge programs to strengthen YoungStar; establish an early childhood longitudinal data system; improve professional development; and improve family engagement and support. There is still strong support for early education in Wisconsin and many in the state believe the strongest case for early childhood investments can be made through the [business case](#). The president and CEO of the Alliance for Children and Families [wrote](#) in the Journal Sentinel in Wisconsin and calls "an investment in the Strong Start for America's Children Act ... an investment that is sure to pay off, not just for our children's future but for our nation's economic future as well."

Wyoming

In Wyoming, [631 children](#) under the age of three are enrolled in Early Head Start programs, and 776 3-year olds and 1,137 4-year olds are enrolled in [Head Start](#) programs. The state currently does not have a [state-funded preschool program](#). However, Wyoming does have numerous private preschool and childcare facilities that are licensed through the state's Department of Family Services. The average annual cost of [center-based infant care](#) in the state is \$9,100.

- **What the Governor is saying:** Wyoming's first lady Carol Mead is working to advance early childhood literacy in the state through a coalition of community partners with the program titled, [Eat. Read. Grow](#). The program provides financially disadvantaged families with an opportunity to spend quality time together over a hot meal and encourages them to read together at home by providing a free, age-appropriate book to each child.
- **What's happening in the Legislature:** In February 2014, an [early education bill](#) that would have empowered the Wyoming Department of Education to coordinate early childhood learning in the state and funded the enhancement of pre-school and day care programs in the state was defeated in the state's House of Representatives.