



50-STATE REVIEW

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State Pre-K Funding 2016-17 Fiscal Year: Trends and opportunities

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Birth to age eight represents a critically important window of opportunity to develop a child's full potential and to shape key academic, social, emotional and cognitive skills. A child's experiences during these years can set them up for future success or for failure,

**STATE PRE-K FUNDING HAS
INCREASED BY NEARLY
\$480 MILLION OR
6.8 PERCENT SINCE 2015-16.**

thereby exacerbating the achievement gap. An analysis of the 2016-17 state appropriations for pre-kindergarten (pre-K) by the 50 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.) shows continuing support from both Republican and Democratic governors, legislators and state boards of education. In the 2016-17 budget year, 30 states increased funding levels for pre-K programs. Overall, state funding has increased by nearly \$480 million or 6.8 percent since 2015-16. Additionally, since Education Commission of the States began producing this report five years ago, states have increased funding to pre-K programs by 47 percent.

Supporting the Early Learning Continuum

In 2016, notable research developments were released highlighting the value of pre-K on a student's educational trajectory, as well as the societal impacts of investing in early learning. Most notably, a recent report from Duke University indicates that the impacts of early childhood education programs can be seen through the fifth grade.¹ This study, which followed students in North Carolina, shows that students who participated in state-funded early education programs between 1995-2010 scored higher on math and literacy tests in third through fifth grade than their peers who did not participate in a high-quality pre-K experience. Additionally, schools were less likely to retain these students in third through fifth grade and students were less likely to qualify for special education services. The Duke research results are one more indication that the gains made in the pre-K space are fundamental to a student's academic success and provide students with an equitable entry into education.

Over the past five years, states have increased funding to pre-K programs by **47 percent**.

In 2016-17, **six states** (Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire, South Dakota, North Dakota and Wyoming) **did not provide state funding for pre-K**. This is an increase from the 2015-16 report, where **only five states** did not fund pre-K.

Additionally, a new study from Nobel Laureate James Heckman follows two generations of families who experienced high-quality programs for low-income children from birth to five years old. Students in the study were more likely to graduate from high school, had higher IQs, experienced better overall health and were less likely to be incarcerated than their peers who did not experience high-quality early learning programs. These results held constant across socio-economic status and race. All of these factors lead to society paying less for these students later in life and a rate of return on public investment at 13 percent per year for every \$1 invested in early learning.²

While pre-K continues to gain attention and receive increased funding, experts argue that the gains made in the pre-K environment need to be considered as part of a P-3 continuum. Strengthening the early learning continuum to better drive student outcomes means creating a seamless space in which schools further nurture the foundational developments made in pre-k through a high-quality **k-3 environment**. Currently, 13 states plus D.C., require districts to offer **full-day kindergarten** programs, which means that

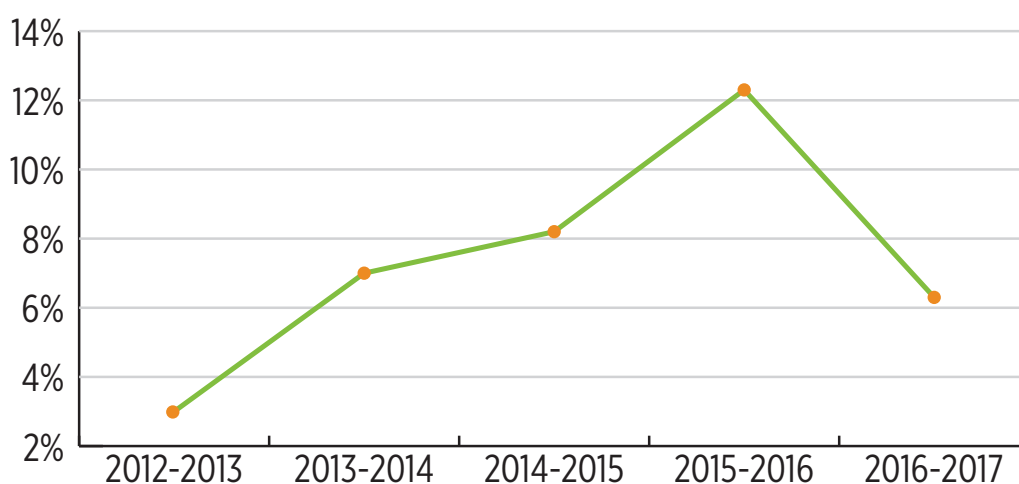
students in the majority of states may leave a high-quality pre-K program only to experience less learning time in kindergarten. Additionally, only 18 states plus D.C., provide guidance for the pre-K to kindergarten transition process.

Nine states plus D.C., include pre-K programs in their state education funding formulas.³ Some states have included their voluntary pre-K programs within their state constitutions as a way to ensure that equity and access for four-year-old students are upheld. In doing so, pre-K becomes a state priority and is maintained over time, as opposed to becoming a discretionary annual decision. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) offers states opportunities for redefining pre-K funding and states can now reevaluate how to best support students as they begin their educational journeys.

9 states plus D.C., incorporate pre-K funding in their school funding formulas: Colorado, D.C., Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Oklahoma, Texas, Vermont, West Virginia and Wisconsin.⁴

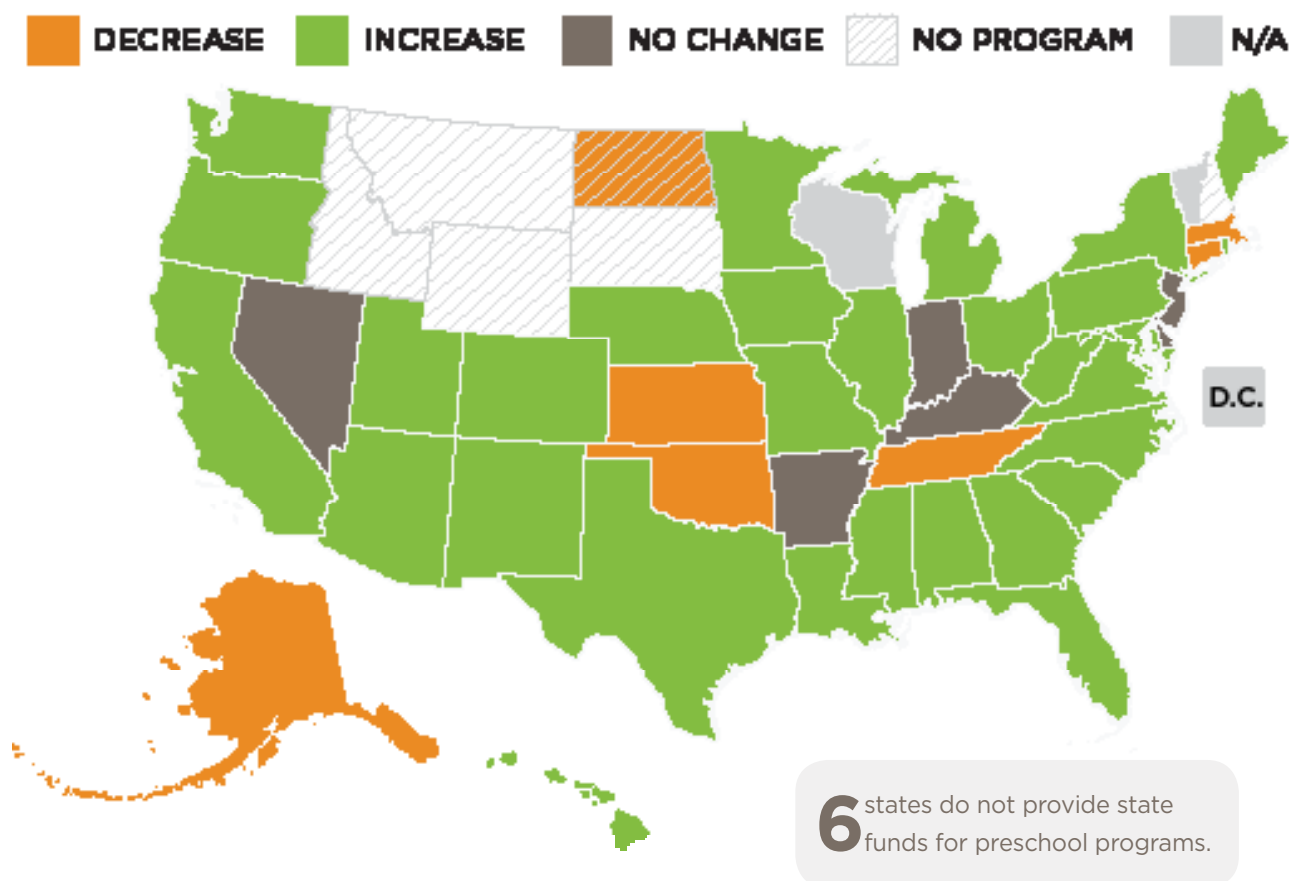
The Past Five Years: Pre-K Funding 2012-2017

Growth in State Pre-K Funding (Year-Over-Year, %)



Despite the continued growth of pre-K spending across the states in 2016-17, states have increased funding at a slower pace than previous years. This demonstrates that although pre-K funding has gained momentum overall, its security

within a state's funding remains inconsistent and as many states must deal with budget deficits, many cannot increase their pre-k appropriations.



In 2016-17, six states (Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire, South Dakota, North Dakota and Wyoming) did not provide state funding for pre-K programs. Most of these states have attempted to secure funding for pre-K programs, but the proposals continue to be denied.

ESSA and Early Learning Opportunities

With the passage of ESSA in 2015, states have the unique opportunity to reevaluate and prioritize pre-K funding, teacher and leadership training, and support transitions into a high-quality, early elementary experience.

- Title I encourages the use of funds to support professional learning staff, maintenance of preschool programs, health, nutrition and comprehensive services for students.
- Title II explicitly states that funds can be used for early educator teacher and principal development.
- Through Title IX, states can apply for initial or renewal

discretionary Preschool Development Grants (PDG) to further develop the number of students able to attend high-quality pre-K programs.⁵

- ESSA encourages vertical and horizontal alignment among the pre-K-12th grade continuum.
- States must include the number and percentage of children in preschool programs on their report cards.
- States must coordinate their state plans and pre-K initiatives with Head Start.

States Highlights

Alabama

Since 2005-2006, **Alabama** has dramatically increased its pre-K funding amounts and number of students served. Additionally, Alabama's pre-K programs meet all of the National Institute for Early Education Research's 10 quality benchmarks.⁶ Since 2005-2006, the state has increased the number of students served from 1,026 to 14,598 in 2016-2017, so that 25 percent of Alabama's four-year-olds have access to their high-quality First Class Pre-K program.

Additionally, the First Class Pre-K program includes several key components of a high-quality pre-K system, including early learning standards and workforce development. In doing so, the state created new jobs in early childhood education and funded scholarships to expand the early childhood education workforce. Over the past decade, Alabama steadily made gains in increasing funding, access and quality in its pre-K programs.

State	Program	2015-16	2016-17	Change	%
Alabama	First Class Pre-K	\$48,462,050	\$64,462,050	\$16,000,000	33%

Minnesota

During the 2016 legislative session, **Minnesota** created a voluntary pre-K program to support districts in expanding their pre-K-12 system. In doing so, 3,300 four-year-olds will attend pre-K programs tuition free in 2016-17.⁷ This funding targets school districts with higher percentages of low-income students.⁸

State	Program	2015-16	2016-17	Change	%
Minnesota	School Readiness Program	\$23,558,000	\$33,683,000	\$10,125,000	43%
	Head Start Supplemental	\$25,100,000	\$25,100,000	\$0	0%
	Early Learning Scholarships	\$44,134,000	\$59,884,000	\$15,750,000	36%

Florida

Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program is part of the state constitution and covers all tuition costs for four- and five-year-old students. Funding for the program adjusts each year based on the projected number of pre-K students likely to attend. Currently, 78.2 percent of pre-K students are enrolled in the VPK program. The state covers all tuition for the program and provides families with a variety of school options for their students. The program also follows a curriculum designed to prepare students for kindergarten success with heavy emphasis on reading, writing and social

emotional skills. Student to teacher ratios are limited within the program and additional options exist for students with disabilities.⁹ Since its creation, student attendance in the program has steadily increased.

State	Program	2015-16	2016-17	Change	%
Florida	Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)	\$389,254,479	\$395,180,396	\$5,925,917	2%

West Virginia

West Virginia is one of 10 states that funds their pre-K programs using their school funding formula.¹⁰ The West Virginia strategic plan for closing the third-grade literacy achievement gap, West Virginia Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, includes a component stating that all four-year-olds must have access to voluntary pre-K programs, which resulted in a 75 percent participation rate for the 2015-16 year. To do so, West Virginia requires local county collaborative teams to design pre-K programs and processes.¹¹ Although the state passed legislation for universal pre-K in 2002, its goal was to accomplish this within a 10-year period, giving local education agencies the time to develop their capacity for pre-K programs. West Virginia is also one of six states that meets all 10 quality benchmarks standards according to the National Institute for Early Education Research.¹² In 2013, the West Virginia national ranking for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) third-grade reading was 46th, in 2015 they moved up six states to be ranked 40th.¹³

State	Program	2015-16	2016-17	Change	%
West Virginia	Early Childhood Education Program	\$93,316,924	\$93,440,418	\$123,494	0%

Final Thoughts

As research builds in favor of pre-K's meaningful impact on a student's academic success, policymakers are rethinking the ways early education can be incorporated into their state plans and funding. Research suggests that a strong foundation helps support a student's third-grade reading and math proficiency long before a child reaches third grade, and that supporting the developmental needs of young learners can provide significant payouts for

the individual student, schools and society. Additionally, with the enactment of ESSA there is the opportunity to reevaluate how funds are used in a state, and to ensure that the most at-risk students are accounted for from the

beginning. Increasing the quality and access of pre-K is not only a best practice across the vast majority of states but based on the most current and longitudinal research, a wise economic investment.

Appendix A: State Pre-K Funding by Program

State	Program	2015-16	2016-17	Change (\$)	Change (%)
Alabama	First Class Pre-K	\$48,462,050	\$64,462,050	\$16,000,000	33%
Alaska	Alaska Pre-K Program	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$0	0%
	Head Start	\$7,308,700	\$6,852,991	-\$455,709	-6%
Arizona	Quality First Scholarships	\$37,206,696	\$41,413,543	\$4,206,847	11%
Arkansas	Arkansas Better Chance	\$105,000,000	\$105,000,000	\$0	0%
California	Part-Day California State Preschool Program	\$665,937,000	\$719,180,000	\$53,243,000	8%
	Additional Funding for Full-Day California State Preschool Program	\$314,050,000	\$355,163,000	\$41,113,000	13%
	Preschool Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Grant	\$50,000,000	\$50,000,000	\$0	0%
Colorado	Colorado Preschool Program + Flex Funding	\$108,160,918	\$109,422,592	\$1,261,674	1%
Connecticut	Priority School Readiness	\$83,535,744	\$82,792,842	-\$742,902	-1%
	Competitive School Readiness	\$10,458,991	\$10,241,933	-\$217,058	-2%
	Child Day Care (State-Funded Preschool Only)	\$11,131,250	\$10,421,880	-\$709,370	-6%
	Head Start	\$5,630,593	\$5,571,838	-\$58,755	-1%
	Smart Start	\$1,630,000	\$2,444,046	\$814,046	50%
Delaware	Early Childhood Assistance Program	\$6,149,300	\$6,149,300	\$0	0%
District of Columbia (D.C.)¹	Pre-K	\$213,223,589	\$213,223,589	\$0	0%
Florida	Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)	\$389,254,479	\$395,180,396	\$5,925,917	2%
Georgia	Georgia Pre-K Program	\$321,295,347	\$357,846,380	\$36,551,033	11%
Hawaii	Executive Office of Early Learning Prekindergarten Program	\$2,764,000	\$3,201,810	\$437,810	16%
Idaho	NO PROGRAM			\$0	
Illinois	Early Childhood Block Grant	\$314,238,100	\$393,738,100	\$79,500,000	25%
Indiana	On My Way Pre-K	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$0	0%
	Early Education Matching Program Grant	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$0	0%

State	Program	2015-16	2016-17	Change (\$)	Change (%)
Iowa	Statewide Voluntary Preschool for 4- Year- Olds	\$66,999,000	\$76,300,000	\$9,301,000	14%
	Shared Vision At-Risk Preschool Program	\$7,699,988	\$7,699,988	\$0	0%
Kansas	State Pre-Kindergarten Program	\$18,360,000	\$18,360,000	\$0	0%
	Kansas Preschool Program	\$4,799,812	\$4,799,812	\$0	0%
	Early Childhood Block Grant	\$18,128,305	\$15,782,000	-\$2,346,305	-13%
Kentucky	Kentucky Preschool Program	\$90,113,200	\$90,113,200	\$0	0%
Louisiana	LA 4	\$74,576,140	\$75,514,057	\$937,917	1%
	Nonpublic School Early Childhood Development Program	\$7,181,440	\$7,181,440	\$0	0%
	Student Enhancement Block Grant (8g)	\$9,100,870	\$11,143,600	\$2,042,730	22%
Maine ²	Public Preschool Program	\$17,554,047	\$19,001,011	\$1,446,964	8%
	Head Start	\$3,087,731	\$3,087,731	\$0	0%
Maryland	Maryland Pre-Kindergarten Program	\$108,511,645	\$115,634,333	\$7,122,688	7%
	Head Start	\$1,800,000	\$1,800,000	\$0	0%
	State Pre-K Expansion	\$4,300,000	\$4,300,000	\$0	0%
	Preschool for All	\$845,587	\$605,880	-\$239,707	-28%
Massachusetts	Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program	\$7,500,000	\$7,400,000	-\$100,000	-1%
	Head Start Supplemental	\$9,100,000	\$9,100,000	\$0	0%
	Early Childhood Mental Health Program	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000	\$0	0%
	Inclusive Preschool Learning Environments (IPLE) Grant	\$9,019,279	\$8,978,875	-\$40,404	0%
Michigan	Great Start Readiness Program	\$243,593,000	\$243,600,000	\$7,000	0%
Minnesota	School Readiness Program	\$23,558,000	\$33,683,000	\$10,125,000	43%
	Head Start Supplemental	\$25,100,000	\$25,100,000	\$0	0%
	Early Learning Scholarships	\$44,134,000	\$59,884,000	\$15,750,000	36%
Mississippi	Early Learning Collaborative	\$3,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$1,000,000	33%
Missouri	Missouri Preschool Project	\$12,694,141	\$13,694,141	\$1,000,000	8%
	Child Development Missouri Early Head Start	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	\$0	0%
Montana	NO PROGRAM			\$0	
Nebraska	School Funding Formula	\$19,128,896.00	\$20,607,732.00	\$1,478,836	8%
	Early Childhood Education Grant Program	\$5,409,136.00	\$4,272,468.00	-\$1,136,668	-21%
Nevada	Early Childhood Education	\$3,338,875.00	\$3,338,875.00	\$0	0%
New Hampshire	NO PROGRAM				
New Jersey	Preschool Education Aid	\$655,517,000	\$655,517,000	\$0	0%
New Mexico	Pre-K Program	\$51,500,000.00	\$51,900,000.00	\$400,000	1%



State	Program	2015-16	2016-17	Change (\$)	Change (%)
New York	Universal Pre-Kindergarten	\$385,034,734	\$385,034,734	\$0	0%
	Priority Pre-Kindergarten	\$29,942,675	\$30,526,144	\$583,469	2%
	Statewide Universal Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten Program	\$340,000,000	\$340,000,000	\$0	0%
	Expanded Pre-K for Three- and Four Year-Olds	\$30,000,000	\$30,000,000	\$0	0%
	Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds	\$0	\$22,000,000	\$22,000,000	
North Carolina	NC Pre-K Program	\$144,178,390	\$145,503,300	\$1,324,910	1%
North Dakota ³	NO PROGRAM	\$3,000,000	\$0	-\$3,000,000	-100%
Ohio	Early Childhood Education	\$60,268,341	\$75,268,341	\$15,000,000	25%
Oklahoma	Early Childhood 4-Year-Old Program	\$143,296,282	\$141,394,474	-\$1,901,808	-1%
Oregon	Head Start Pre-Kindergarten	\$69,999,910	\$72,646,487	\$2,646,577	4%
Pennsylvania	Pre-K Counts	\$119,674,232	\$147,284,000	\$27,609,768	23%
	Head Start Supplemental Assistance	\$43,517,672	\$49,178,000	\$5,660,328	13%
Rhode Island	Pre-K	\$3,950,000	\$5,160,000	\$1,210,000	31%
	Head Start	\$800,000		-\$800,000	-100%
South Carolina	Child Development Education Pilot Program - Full Day 4K	\$62,520,701	\$62,616,166	\$95,465	0%
	EIA Half Day Child Development Program	\$15,513,846	\$15,513,846	\$0	0%
South Dakota	NO PROGRAM			\$0	
Tennessee	Voluntary Pre-K Program	\$87,043,400	\$86,617,200	-\$426,200	0%
Texas	FSP Pre-Kindergarten Program	754,000,000	761,000,000	\$7,000,000	1%
	Supplemental Funding for Pre-K	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000	\$0	0%
	Texas School Ready!	\$15,200,000	\$15,200,000	\$0	0%
	High Quality Prekindergarten Grant	\$0	\$118,000,000	\$118,000,000	
Utah	Utah School Readiness Initiative	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$0	0%
	UPSTART Program**	\$5,800,000	\$6,263,900	\$463,900	8%
Vermont ⁴	ACT 62/ACT 166	\$20,500,000	\$20,500,000	\$0	0%
	Voluntary Pre-K Program	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$0	0%
Virginia	Preschool Initiative	\$68,651,478	\$68,869,827	\$218,349	0%
Washington	Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program	\$96,925,000	\$96,971,321	\$46,321	0%
West Virginia	Early Childhood Education Program	\$93,316,924	\$93,440,418	\$123,494	0%
Wisconsin ⁵	4-Year-Old Kindergarten	\$183,200,000	\$183,200,000	\$0	0%
	4-Year-Old Kindergarten - Start Up Grants	\$1,350,000	\$1,350,000	\$0	0%
	Head Start Supplement	\$6,264,100	\$6,264,100	\$0	0%
Wyoming	NO PROGRAM			\$0	
TOTALS		\$7,061,984,535	\$7,541,457,691	\$479,473,156	7%



Appendix B: Total State Pre-K Funding

State	2015-2016	2016-2017	Change (\$)	Change (%)
Alabama	\$48,462,050	\$64,462,050	\$16,000,000	33%
Alaska	\$9,308,700	\$8,852,991	-\$455,709	-5%
Arizona	\$37,206,696	\$41,413,543	\$4,206,847	11%
Arkansas	\$105,000,000	\$105,000,000	\$0	0%
California	\$1,029,987,000	\$1,124,343,000	\$94,356,000	9%
Colorado	\$108,160,918	\$109,422,592	\$1,261,674	1%
Connecticut	\$112,386,578	\$111,472,539	-\$914,039	-1%
Delaware	\$6,149,300	\$6,149,300	\$0	0%
District of Columbia (D.C.) ¹	\$213,223,589	\$213,223,589	\$0	0%
Florida	\$389,254,479	\$395,180,396	\$5,925,917	2%
Georgia	\$321,295,347	\$357,846,380	\$36,551,033	11%
Hawaii	\$2,764,000	\$3,201,810	\$437,810	16%
Idaho	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Illinois	\$314,238,100	\$393,738,100	\$79,500,000	25%
Indiana	\$12,000,000	\$12,000,000	\$0	0%
Iowa	\$74,698,988	\$83,999,988	\$9,301,000	12%
Kansas	\$41,288,117	\$38,941,812	-\$2,346,305	-6%
Kentucky	\$90,113,200	\$90,113,200	\$0	0%
Louisiana	\$90,858,450	\$93,839,097	\$2,980,647	3%
Maine ²	\$20,641,778	\$22,088,742	\$1,446,964	7%
Maryland	\$115,457,232	\$122,340,213	\$6,882,981	6%
Massachusetts	\$26,869,279	\$26,728,875	-\$140,404	-1%
Michigan	\$243,593,000	\$243,600,000	\$7,000	0%
Minnesota	\$92,792,000	\$118,667,000	\$25,875,000	28%
Mississippi	\$3,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$1,000,000	33%
Missouri	\$16,194,141	\$17,194,141	\$1,000,000	6%
Montana	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Nebraska	\$24,538,032	\$24,880,200	\$342,168	1%
Nevada	\$3,338,875	\$3,338,875	\$0	0%
New Hampshire	\$0	\$0	\$0	
New Jersey	\$655,517,000	\$655,517,000	\$0	0%
New Mexico	\$51,500,000	\$51,900,000	\$400,000	1%
New York	\$784,977,409	\$807,560,878	\$22,583,469	3%
North Carolina	\$144,178,390	\$145,503,300	\$1,324,910	1%
North Dakota ³	\$3,000,000	\$0	-\$3,000,000	-100%
Ohio	\$60,268,341	\$75,268,341	\$15,000,000	25%
Oklahoma	\$143,296,282	\$141,394,474	-\$1,901,808	-1%



State	2015-2016	2016-2017	Change (\$)	Change (%)
Oregon	\$69,999,910	\$72,646,487	\$2,646,577	4%
Pennsylvania	\$163,191,904	\$196,462,000	\$33,270,096	20%
Rhode Island	\$4,750,000	\$5,160,000	\$410,000	9%
South Carolina	\$78,034,547	\$78,130,012	\$95,465	0%
South Dakota	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Tennessee	\$87,043,400	\$86,617,200	-\$426,200	0%
Texas	\$784,200,000	\$909,200,000	\$125,000,000	16%
Utah	\$8,800,000	\$9,263,900	\$463,900	5%
Vermont ⁴	\$20,700,000	\$20,700,000	\$0	0%
Virginia	\$68,651,478	\$68,869,827	\$218,349	0%
Washington	\$96,925,000	\$96,971,321	\$46,321	0%
West Virginia	\$93,316,924	\$93,440,418	\$123,494	0%
Wisconsin ⁵	\$190,814,100	\$190,814,100	\$0	0%
Wyoming	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Total	\$7,061,984,535	\$7,541,457,691	\$479,473,156	7%

Footnotes

1. The pre-K allocation amount for the District of Columbia was not available at the time of publication. The authors assume flat funding from the 2015-2016 fiscal year to the 2016-2017 fiscal year.
2. The pre-K allocation amount for Maine's support of Head Start program was not available at the time of publication. The authors assume flat funding from the 2015-2016 fiscal year to the 2016-2017 fiscal year.
3. During 2015-16, North Dakota used state funds for the first time for early childhood education in the form of a \$3 million one-time grant. 2015-16 was the first time North Dakota used state funds for early childhood education in the form of a \$3 million one-time grant. However, the state did not renew this appropriation for the 2016-2017 year. However, this is not an ongoing appropriation and was not renewed for the 2016-2017 year.
4. The pre-K allocation amount for Vermont was not available at the time of publication. The authors assume flat funding from the 2015-2016 fiscal year to the 2016-2017 fiscal year.
5. The pre-K allocation amount for Wisconsin was not available at the time of publication. The authors assume flat funding from the 2015-2016 fiscal year to the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

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Endnotes

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