

State Pre-Kindergarten: Getting Started

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Presentation Overview

- Overview
- Examples of ways to get started
 - Pilot program (TN, GA, KS)
 - Commission and task force (IL, FL, HI, VA)
 - Include in school funding formula (OK, WV)
 - Connect to low performing schools (NJ, AR)
 - Build on pre-k programs for children with disabilities (KY)
 - Tie into Quality Rating System approach (NC)
 - Permissive options and local decisions (PA, MA, CT)
 - Head Start expansion funding

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Growth of Pre-K Programs

- **1960's & 70's:** Giving low income children a head start
 - 11 states created programs, mix of pre-k and Head Start expansions
- **1980's:** Education reform focus, new data from model programs
 - 23 new programs in 21 states
- **1990's:** National Education Goals, school readiness, brain development research
 - 21 states passed legislation

Source: Anne Mitchell, Pre-Kindergarten Programs in the States: Trends and Issues

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Why Pre-K Now?

- Majority of parents at all income levels are choosing pre-k
- Part of education reform in early grades
- Concern about NCLB at 3rd grade
- Concern about achievement gap at kindergarten
- New research
 - Brain research
 - Economic data
 - State evaluations

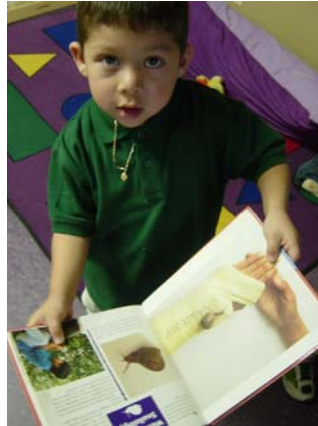


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Challenges to Getting Started with Pre-K

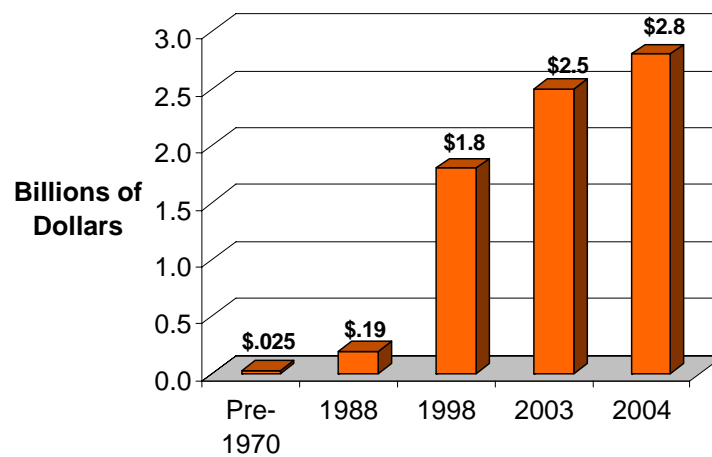
- Differing views of best approach to early childhood
- Not sure where to start
- Fiscal constraints and competing priorities
- Skepticism about benefits of pre-k
- Concerns about adding more to K-12
- Capacity and specific challenges in rural states



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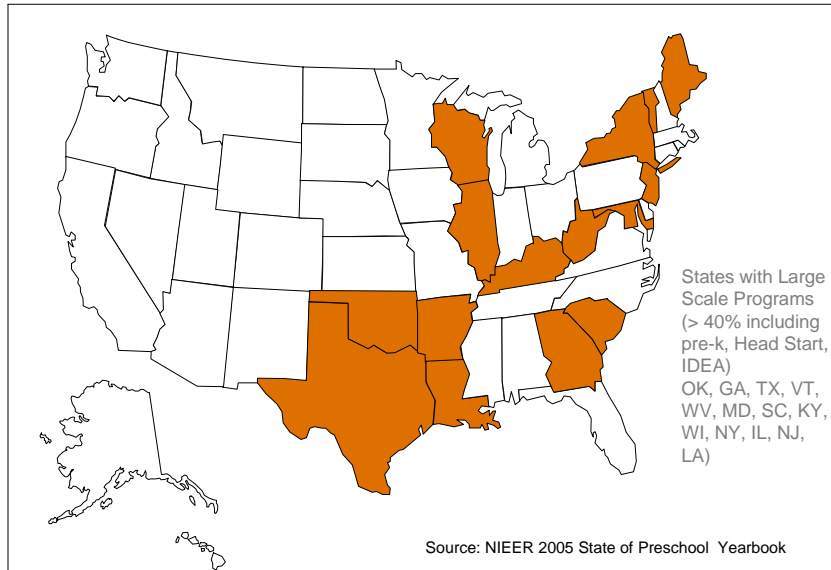
State Spending on Pre-K



Source: Anne Mitchell, Early Childhood Policy Research, NIEER

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2006 State Pre-Kindergarten Expansions

- Illinois pre-k for three and four year olds: \$45 million to EC Block Grant
- New York: \$50 million
- Kentucky: \$23 million
- Kansas: \$2 million pilot in 7 counties
- South Carolina: \$23 million
- Colorado: expansion of 2000 children
- Texas: \$7.3 million in funding for military families

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Different Strategies for Pre-K

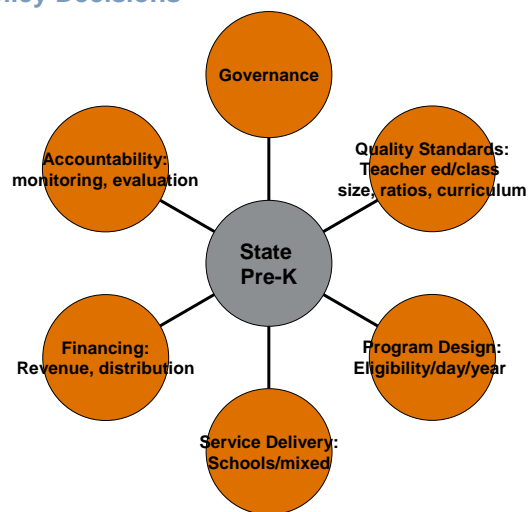


- Early education package (Illinois)
- Consideration of school funding formula (Iowa, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Maine)
- School adequacy litigation with pre-k as a remedy (South Carolina)
- Specific population (Texas)
- Ballot measures (Arizona, California, Florida)

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Pre-K Policy Decisions



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Beginning as a Pilot Program

- Tennessee
- Georgia
- Oklahoma
- Kansas



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Tennessee: Evolution of Pre-K

1998-99	\$3 million (state)	30 classes	600 children
2000-01	\$6 million (state) \$9 million (TANF) added in January	60 classes 90 classes added mid-year	1,200 children 1,800 children added mid-year
2003-04	\$10 million (state) TANF funding ended	147 classes	2,500 children
2005-06	\$10 million (state) \$25 million (lottery)	146 pilot classes 300 voluntary pre-k classes	8,900 children
2006-07	\$30 million (state) \$25 million (lottery)	146 pilot classes 550 voluntary pre-k classes	14,000 children

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Tennessee: Scope of Service

Eligibility

- Primarily target four-year-olds at 185% FPL
- Other risk factors may be used after income eligible children are enrolled

Organization

- Maximum class size 20 (ratio of 1:10)
- Full day, full year
- Lead teacher must have BA / endorsement in pre-k
- 18 hours of professional development per year

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Tennessee: Scope of Service (ctd)

Curriculum

- Research-based curriculum aligned with the TN Early Learning Developmental Standards (State approved list)

Collaboration

- Local Pre-K Advisory Council
- Develop collaborative partnerships with licensed 3 star rated child care agencies for the provisions of services

Evaluation and Assessment

- ECERS, ELLCO, teacher evaluation, family survey
- End of year monitoring report, quarterly financial reports
- Improvement plan

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Tennessee: Laying a Strong Foundation

- Leadership
- Quality
- Community support
- Funding
- Momentum
- Data collection
- Accountability

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Georgia

- Began in 1992 as a pilot serving 750 at-risk four-year-old children and their families at 20 sites
- Originally school-based, center-based, and home-based programs suited to meeting individual community needs
- Started with \$3 million general fund
- Later expanded through lottery revenue
- First program in the country to serve all four year olds
- Currently serves 70,000 children

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Kansas

- Will begin as a pilot program in seven counties
- Funding includes \$2 million plus a budget for program evaluation
- Programs must adhere to quality standards
- Slots evenly distributed between school and community based programs
- At least 50% of the children must be at-risk
- Supported by the business community

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Commission and Task Force

- Good first step to increase public dialogue around pre-k
- Task force should address access and quality issues and provide recommendations
- Include representatives from a variety of fields such as business, early education, K-12, policymakers
- Governor and legislators must feel invested

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Commission and Task Force: State Examples

- Illinois, Florida, Hawaii, Virginia
- Increased political support
- Policymakers heard from broad range of pre-k supporters
- Researchers presented the compelling economic, academic, and social benefits



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Inclusion in the School Funding Formula

- Oklahoma
- West Virginia



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Oklahoma



- Started as a pilot program in 1980
- Expanded to all four year olds in 1998
- Uses the school funding formula
 - May offer half or full day
 - Most in schools, some in community based providers
 - BA degree required with certification in early childhood
 - Paid according to school salary

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West Virginia

- Legislation passed in 2002
- All four year olds will have access by fall of 2012
- Included in the school funding formula
 - Individual school systems coordinate their own pre-k programs
- Close collaboration between Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Resources
 - Half of pre-k classes are located in community settings

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Focus on Low Performing Schools

- New Jersey
- Arkansas



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New Jersey

Abbott Preschool Program (result of litigation)

- Targets 30 poorest school districts (based on percent threshold qualifying for school lunch)
 - Geographic focus – all children in those districts are eligible
- Serves three and four year olds
- Full school day plus childcare for extended hours
- Teachers must have their BA plus Early Childhood certification
- Those in community-based settings are paid salaries comparable to school-based teachers

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Arkansas

Arkansas Better Chance for School Success

- Targets children in low-performing school districts plus eligibility tied to income and other risk factors
- Funded with excise tax on beer, state funds, and a local match
- Serves three and three year olds
- Teachers licensed
- Full day, full week

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Build on Pre-K for Children with Disabilities

- Kentucky



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Kentucky



- Started in 1990
- Serves 3 and 4 year olds with developmental delays or disabilities & 4 year olds eligible for free lunch
- Coordinates with pre-k for children with disabilities
- Advantage: builds on services to children with disabilities as required by federal law

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Quality Rating Systems

- Pre-k and childcare providers rated by a series of quality measures
- Provide incentives for childcare providers to increase quality
- Goal is for states to fund pre-k centers with the highest rating
- Helps families make educated decisions
- 13 states currently have rating systems, three others passed legislation this year and many more are considering rating systems
- Many base highest rating on NAEYC accreditation guidelines

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Quality Rating Systems: State Example

North Carolina: More at Four

- Targeted to at risk four year olds
- Program is part of their Quality Rating System
 - Community-based programs can participate if they meet four or 5 stars
 - Number of programs earning 4 or 5 stars has increased from 27% to 40% since 2002

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Permissive Options and Local Decisions

School districts in PA can provide pre-k in one of two ways:

- Accountability Block Grant Pre-K
 - Block grant funding that allows districts to opt for pre-k
- Four-year-old kindergarten
 - Follow K-12 rules and allow two years of kindergarten



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Grants to Local Communities

States provide grants to communities and allow local councils to determine program design and delivery:

- MA funds Community Partnerships for Children - grants to towns with concentrations of low income families
- CT provides funds to School Readiness Councils in needy areas including priority school districts and specific towns

Ideas to Keep in Mind

- Data regarding current need and capacity
- Goal of pre-k program
 - Connection to family needs, educational achievement, other areas?
- Approach
- Quality standards
- Funding options
- Ways to measure success

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