

Early Childhood and Primary Education

Environmental Data

- President Obama has focused new attention on the importance of high quality early childhood education and its link to later student achievement and success in school. This federal support is demonstrated in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.
- In the United States today, more than 80% of all 4-year-olds attend some kind of preschool program. About half of those (39% of all 4-year-olds) are enrolled in some kind of public program (state pre-K, Head Start or special education), with the other half enrolled in a private program. Most of the 4-year-olds in public programs attend state pre-K, which enrolls almost a quarter of the population at age 4. Unfortunately, these numbers vary tremendously by state. Pre-K enrollment at age 3 is much more limited, primarily because public provision is so much lower. Enrollment in private programs is very similar at ages 3 and 4. Only 14% of 3-year-olds attend some type of public program, with barely 4% of 3-year-olds attending a state-funded pre-K program. Enrollment also varies dramatically by state, but most states serve less than 1% or 2% of their 3-year-olds outside of special education and Head Start.
- Grantmakers in the education field often specialize in that field. A 2008 Grantmakers in Education survey of its members found that 30% of respondents devote more than 80% of their grantmaking to education. In the same survey, respondents used the following educational grantmaking strategies: funding public schools or school districts directly (68%); grants to influence public policy or build public will (66%); grants for general operating support (57%); grants to support community organizing (50%).
- Top five issues for private foundations (general educational field): 1) out-of-school/after-school programs; 2) teacher professional development; 3) reading/literacy skills; 4) family, community and social supports; 5) effective school and/or district leadership. (Grantmakers for Education website)
- New York's Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) program began providing prekindergarten services in 1998. The program aims to serve all 4-year-olds in the state, regardless of income, but has not received sufficient funding to meet this goal. As a result, UPK served about 40% of the state's 4-year-olds during the 2007-2008 school year.
- UPK is a voluntary program for both school districts and children. Parents and/or guardians may choose, but are not required, to enroll their children in a UPK program. Standards include: curricula aligned with State learning standards and with instruction in the early elementary grades of the district, effective and developmentally appropriate instructional strategies, a process for baseline and ongoing assessment of development of language, cognitive and social skills, screening for health and nutrition, and employment of staff with a

teaching license or certificate valid for service in the early childhood grades. The collaborating agencies may employ staff with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a related field with a written plan to obtain early childhood certification within five years. A collaborating agency with staff without teaching certificates must employ an onsite director with a teaching license or certificate for early childhood or childhood grades.

- The Early Education for All (EEA) Campaign, an initiative of Strategies for Children, Inc. (SFC), was launched in the summer of 2000 to address the pressing need for high-quality early education in Massachusetts. The campaign is a coalition of leaders from business, early education and care, labor, higher education, religion, healthcare, K-12, and philanthropy, working in partnership with parents, grassroots leaders, and state policymakers to make publicly funded, high-quality pre-k education and full-day public school kindergarten available to every Massachusetts child. At that same time, Massachusetts launched a Universal Pre-kindergarten (UPK) initiative and also changed the name of its existing prekindergarten initiative from Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) to Preschool Direct, which was again renamed Preschool Scholarships in fiscal year 2008. Children are eligible to participate in Preschool Scholarships and UPK from age 2 years, 9 months until they reach the locally determined kindergarten eligibility age.
- Massachusetts' *Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program* currently provides access to 10% of all three year olds in the state and 11% of all four year olds. In 2008, Massachusetts increased funding for *UPK* to \$12.1 million to serve additional children, placing an emphasis on at-risk communities.
- New York certification requirements for UPK teachers: Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2008 amended section 3602-e of Education Law, which establishes the Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) program, to provide increased flexibility pertaining to the qualifications of CBO (community-based organization) teachers. UPK teachers employed by a CBO that is licensed or registered by a State agency may meet the qualifications of that authority. Teachers employed by a CBO that is not required to be licensed or registered may meet the qualifications established by their employers. In both instances, the teacher must have an education plan that will lead to obtaining NYS teacher certification for Birth – Grade 2 within five years after commencing employment or by January 3, 2013, whichever is later. This provision expires and will no longer be available after June 30, 2010.
- New York's Universal Pre-Kindergarten (pre-kindergarten) legislation is unique in that although funding flows through school districts, it requires that at least 10% of those funds be subcontracted to local, community-based organizations. This legislative mandate has encouraged the development of partnerships between school districts and the child care community (e.g., child care centers, Head Start programs). Then Governor Spitzer made pre-kindergarten a priority by adding an additional \$50M in funds for pre-kindergarten. Pre-kindergarten funding is now available to virtually all school districts in the state (with the exception of ineligible high school and special act districts).

- Key Findings for rural county slot distribution by total age-eligible children and poverty status:
 1. In rural counties with fewer children living below the poverty line, a greater proportion of age-eligible children are being served in group child care settings that are not home-based. This finding is true for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.
 2. Public pre-kindergarten and family child care programs are serving greater proportions of age-eligible children in rural counties with higher rates of children living in poverty.
- Home care licensure requirements:
 - New York: For Providers in both Small and Large Family Child Care (FCC) Homes: must log 30 “ongoing clock hours” over 2 year period to be licensed. Providers are required to complete 15 clock hours of training within the first 6 months of registration. This training counts toward the 30 hours for the first 2-year period of registration.
 - Massachusetts: For Providers in Small Family Child Care (FCC) Homes: must log 15 “ongoing clock hours” over 3 years to be licensed. For Providers in Large Family Child Care (FCC) Homes: Pre-service Requirements/Qualifications include 5 clock hours of large FCC training approved by the licensing office, and 3 years of experience; must log 30 “ongoing clock hours” over 3 years”.
- High quality early childhood development programs generate benefit-cost ratios exceeding 3-to-1 – or more than a \$3 return for every \$1 invested. (Economic Policy Institute, 2004)
- Early experiences help determine whether a person’s brain architecture develops in ways that promote future learning, behavior, and health. (The Economics of Early Childhood Policy, Rand 2008)
- Rigorous evaluations show that there are effective early intervention strategies that can improve a wide range of outcomes from childhood through early adulthood. (The Economics of Early Childhood Policy, Rand 2008)
- New York’s public schools spend more per pupil than the schools do in any other state, according to report issued in July 2009 by the U.S. Census Bureau. Spending in NY translated to \$15,981 per pupil in 2007, the latest year for which figures are available.
- States and school districts will soon be able to compete for more federal money to undertake school reforms. Part of the economic stimulus law enacted earlier in 2009, the \$5 billion education fund will be used to prod states to toughen academic standards and find better ways to recruit and keep effective teachers. To get the money, states will also need to be able to track student performance and have a plan of action to turn around failing schools.
- Effective teachers are capable of inspiring significantly greater learning gains in their students when compared with their weaker colleagues. Value-added assessment studies in Tennessee show that the difference in achievement between students who attended classes taught by high-quality versus those taught by low-quality teachers for three consecutive

years is sizeable: approximately 50 percentile points on standardized tests. (Sanders & Rivers, 1996) (Education Week, 2007)

- Teaching experience also appears to have an influence on student achievement. Teachers with less teaching experience typically produce smaller learning gains in their students compared with more seasoned teachers. (Fetler, 1999; Murnane & Phillips, 1981) However, most of those studies have also discovered that the benefits of experience level off after the first five or so years of teaching. (Education Week, 2007)
- Minimum head start teacher qualifications are due to be raised, effective October 2011. All headstart classrooms will be required to have a teacher with an associates degree or better in early childhood education. By September 2013, at least 50% of high school teachers nationally must have a bachelors or higher in early childhood education. (US Department of Health & Human Services Admin. for Children & Families)