

# PRE-KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**DEFINITION:** Number of children enrolled in pre-kindergarten programs in public schools. This count includes children enrolled in special education, as well as children enrolled in general education programs.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Louisiana’s children are served by several publicly funded pre-kindergarten (pre-k) programs. The LA4 program serves over 13,000 children each year, while 8(g) funded programs serve more than 3,000 students. Pre-k slots in public schools may also be funded by Head Start, Even Start, Title I, and/or local funding. Additionally, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act funds preschool services for children ages 3-5 who are eligible to receive special education services.

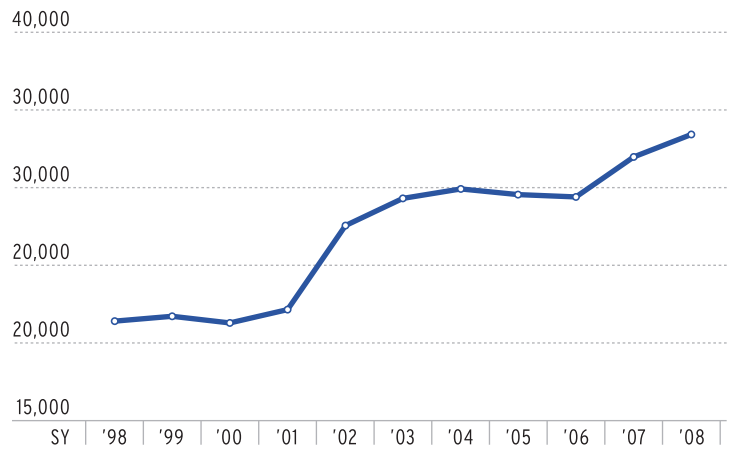
Public pre-k programs in Louisiana are targeted primarily at low-income children, children who are at high risk of being insufficiently ready for school, and children who are eligible for special education services. LA4 serves children who are eligible for free or reduced lunch, meaning that their families earn less than 185% of the federal poverty level (about \$39,000 for a family of four). LA4 programs may enroll children who do not qualify under the income guidelines, provided that their families pay tuition or that local funding is available. 8(g) Student Enhancement Block Grants are used by school districts to provide pre-kindergarten classes for children at risk of being insufficiently ready for school, with priority given to low-income children.

Louisiana’s pre-kindergarten programs rank well in “The State of Preschool” report, produced annually by the National Institute for Early Education Research. In 2008, Louisiana ranked 12th among states in terms of access to publicly-funded preschool for four year-olds. Louisiana also ranked 9th in terms of state spending on preschool and 15th in overall spending on preschool.<sup>1</sup>

The 2008 Louisiana Legislature passed legislation that calls for phasing in universal pre-k by the 2013-2014 school year, making Louisiana the 9th state to approve a universal pre-k program. In addition to gradually increasing the income eligibility thresholds for LA4, the bill requires schools districts to spend 10% of new funding on delivering pre-k in non-public school settings (e.g. Head Start centers, child care centers, etc.) Diverse delivery can benefit children, school systems, and the child care industry. Schools benefit because they can offer additional pre-k slots without building new classrooms, while child care centers benefit through increased investment and

## CHILDREN ENROLLED IN PUBLIC PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS IN LOUISIANA

School years 1998-2008



enrollment. Children gain from the continuity of care they receive at child care centers, which are open year-round and are often better able to accommodate working parents’ schedules.<sup>2</sup>

Enrollment in public pre-kindergarten in Louisiana has increased dramatically over the past decade. Between the 2000 and 2008 school years, pre-kindergarten enrollment in public schools rose by over 50%, from 21,290 children to 33,438 children. Despite the state trend, 15 parishes experienced declines in their public pre-k enrollment during this time. By contrast, pre-k enrollment more than doubled in 19 parishes during the same time period.

## DATA SOURCE

Department of Education, Division of Planning, Analysis, and Information Resources

## DATA NOTE

East Baton Rouge Parish data includes data for the City of Baker, Central Community and the City of Zachary districts. Data for schools operated by the Recovery School District are reflected in the data of the parish in which the school is located. Ouachita Parish data includes data for the City of Monroe district. Washington Parish data includes data for the City of Bogalusa. Data for Lab schools and all other charters are not included in the parish-level data, but are included in the statewide data.

## RATE CALCULATION

$100 * (\text{number of children enrolled in pre-k in public schools in 2008-2009} - \text{number of children enrolled in pre-k in public schools in 2000-2001}) \div \text{number of children enrolled in pre-k in public schools in 2000-2001}$

<sup>1</sup> W. Steven Barnett, Dale J. Epstein, Allison H. Friedman, et al, *The State of Preschool*, (New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research, Rutgers Graduate School of Education, 2008), 67.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Wat, M.A. and Chrisanne Gayl, M.P.P. “Beyond the School Yard: Pre-K Collaborations with Community-Based Partners,” *Pre-K Now*, 2009, retrieved from [www.preknow.org](http://www.preknow.org) on 8/1/2009.

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	SY 2000	SY 2008	CHANGE 2000-08	
	No.	No.	No.	%
<b>LOUISIANA</b>	<b>21,290</b>	<b>33,438</b>	<b>12,148</b>	<b>57</b>
Acadia	373	476	103	28
Allen	212	251	39	18
Ascension	476	720	244	51
Assumption	398	361	-37	-9
Avoyelles	331	353	22	7
Beauregard	141	207	66	47
Bienville	97	103	6	6
Bossier	386	612	226	59
Caddo	1,434	1,678	244	17
Calcasieu	747	2,123	1,376	184
Caldwell	127	115	-12	-9
Cameron	46	59	13	28
Catahoula	43	66	23	53
Claiborne	175	101	-74	-42
Concordia	186	183	-3	-2
De Soto	149	314	165	111
East Baton Rouge	1,251	2,587	1,336	107
East Carroll	77	75	-2	-3
East Feliciana	112	130	18	16
Evangeline	266	298	32	12
Franklin	189	270	81	43
Grant	98	64	-34	-35
Iberia	279	575	296	106
Iberville	101	178	77	76
Jackson	51	83	32	63
Jefferson	1,002	2,487	1,485	148
Jefferson Davis	135	328	193	143
La Salle	76	170	94	124
Lafayette	477	1,039	562	118
Lafourche	360	972	612	170
Lincoln	129	201	72	56
Livingston	120	763	643	536
Madison	133	118	-15	-11
Morehouse	254	237	-17	-7
Natchitoches	385	466	81	21
Orleans	2,425	1,660	-765	-32
Ouachita	859	1,238	379	44
Plaquemines	228	208	-20	-9
Pointe Coupee	84	186	102	121
Rapides	764	1,343	579	76
Red River	111	116	5	5
Richland	159	110	-49	-31
Sabine	202	384	182	90
St. Bernard	193	467	274	142
St. Charles	351	374	23	7
St. Helena	68	73	5	7
St. James	436	385	-51	-12
St. John the Baptist	245	298	53	22
St. Landry	396	617	221	56
St. Martin	235	491	256	109
St. Mary	381	494	113	30
St. Tammany	469	1,297	828	177
Tangipahoa	269	701	432	161
Tensas	94	31	-63	-67
Terrebonne	521	1,248	727	140
Union	103	95	-8	-8
Vermillion	262	523	261	100
Vernon	494	637	143	29
Washington	328	458	130	40
Webster	291	323	32	11
West Baton Rouge	28	360	332	1,186
West Carroll	64	137	73	114
West Feliciana	223	220	-3	-1
Winn	129	141	12	9