

Pre-K 4 SA State Funding, Partnerships and Access

Pre-K 4 SA does not compete with the state's public pre-k system. It complements it, expands who can be served, and operates through the same partnership model Texas is increasingly promoting.

1. Texas provides funding intended to support full-day prekindergarten for eligible four-year-olds.

Texas requires school districts to provide full-day prekindergarten for eligible four-year-olds. While the school finance formula continues to generate one-half day of attendance funding for each eligible pre-K student, the state provides additional funding to support the second half of the day. Beginning with the 2025-26 school year, the Legislature revised this funding mechanism to more directly align full-day pre-K funding with districts' actual enrollment of eligible four-year-olds.

2. Pre-K 4 SA works in partnership with public school districts.

Children attending Pre-K 4 SA may also be enrolled through a participating public school district, allowing the district and Pre-K 4 SA to work together to serve eligible children. This type of partnership extends public prekindergarten beyond a traditional school district classroom while preserving the connection between the child and the public school system. The Pre-K 4 SA model for partnering with the districts was adopted by the Legislature in 2019 as a model for the state.

3. Texas is actively encouraging the expansion of pre-K partnerships.

Recent legislation has strengthened the state's commitment to partnerships between public school systems and qualified early learning providers.

In 2025, the Legislature created a statewide system of Pre-K Partnership Intermediaries to help school systems and providers develop and expand these partnerships. Beginning with programs operating in 2027-28, school systems seeking certain expansions of public pre-K must first consider qualified community-based providers and receive a determination from a state-designated partnership intermediary.

4. Pre-K 4 SA expands access beyond the children served through traditional public prekindergarten.

Eligibility for free public prekindergarten is established by state law and is limited to children who are economically disadvantaged, emergent bilingual, experiencing homelessness, in or formerly in foster care, children of active-duty military members, children of Star of Texas Award recipients, and children of classroom teachers employed by the district. Since inception, Pre-K 4 SA has served a broader population including military veterans and reservists, moderate-income families, and children with exceptional needs. Pre-K 4 SA provides an affordable option for families who do not qualify for public pre-k and cannot afford it in the private sector.

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5. Pre-K 4 SA has helped increase public prekindergarten enrollment.

When Pre-K 4 SA launched in 2013, only 46.8% of eligible four-year-olds in San Antonio enrolled in public prekindergarten. By 2018, enrollment had increased to 61.3%, substantially outpacing growth in other major Texas urban areas. A study by the Urban Education Institute at UTSA identified Pre-K 4 SA as an important contributor to that increase.

By 2022, 90% of eligible four-year-olds in San Antonio were enrolled in prekindergarten. Access for three-year-olds remained far more limited because Texas does not require school districts to offer prekindergarten to eligible three-year-olds.

Pre-K 4 SA began serving three-year-olds in 2023 to help close that gap. By the 2024-25 school year, enrollment of eligible three-year-olds in public prekindergarten had increased to 20% primarily because of Pre-K 4 SA serving approximately 1,000 three-year-olds annually.

Pre-K 4 SA continues to expand access by working alongside public school districts and high-quality child care providers to create more opportunities for San Antonio's youngest learners.

SOURCES

1. Texas Education Agency. *House Bill 2 (HB 2) Implementation: Foundation School Program Funding Formula Changes.*
2. Texas Education Agency. *Prekindergarten Registration and Enrollment.*
3. Texas Education Agency. *Prekindergarten Partnerships.*
4. Texas Education Agency. *Early Childhood Education FAQs.*
5. Villarreal, M. U. (2019). *Impact Study of Prekindergarten for San Antonio (2019).* Urban Education Institute at UTSA.