Georgia’s Pre-K Program is a voluntary, free program available to all of Georgia’s four-year-olds regardless of parental income. Approximately 1.6 million Georgia students have been served by Georgia’s Pre-K since it began in 1992. The program continues to be nationally recognized for its success.

80,874 kids enrolled in Georgia’s Pre-K in the 2016-17 school year. Representing 60% of all four-year-olds in Georgia.

Georgia’s Pre-K operates in all of the state’s 159 counties in 1,871 locations which operate 3,863 Pre-K Classes. Approximately 47% are located in a public school system, 53% are located in private centers.

Georgia is one of only ten states and D.C. that provide high-quality care to more than 50% of 4-year-olds.

Demand is Still High

Of Georgia’s 4-year-olds are not currently enrolled. Some receive supplemental forms of care, while others receive no care at all. At the end of the 2017-18 school year, there still were 4,030 kids on the waitlist.

Georgia’s Pre-K Improves Outcomes

In 2011, the Georgia General Assembly began a multi-year evaluation led by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. So far, the study has found that children enrolled in the Georgia Pre-K Program:

- Are more prepared for Kindergarten compared to four-year-olds in other forms of care
- Earn higher grades and retain more of what they learn
- Spanish speaking children showed growth in both English and Spanish

Children in Georgia’s Pre-K showed significant growth across all learning domains including:

- Math Skills
- Language & Literacy Skills
- Social-emotional Skills

These gains happened for all students, regardless of gender and income differences and are sustained through the end of first grade.
About Georgia’s Pre-K

Administered by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

Full day program
Maximum of 22 kids per class
Operates 180 days a year

Required to use the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS)
Hearing, vision, and dental screenings are required
Required to have a lead teacher and assistant teacher
All Pre-K lead and assistant teachers must meet credential requirements

574 of the 1,871 centers are Quality Rated, a voluntary, quality rating system for early and child care centers.

Funding Georgia’s Pre-K

$354 MILLION
GA Lottery dollars were allocated to Georgia’s Pre-K in 2017

For the 80,874 children enrolled in the 2016-17 school year

$4,255 was spent per child

Although spending per child has risen since the recession, recent spending lags behind 2002 levels by more than $1,400 per child.*

*Adjusted for inflation

In 2016, the Georgia General Assembly approved a $34 million increase for Pre-K salaries. Despite recent increases, Pre-K teacher salaries are lower than similar professions. Assistant teachers make $15,873/year. The salary for lead teachers for the 2018 school year range from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Type</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-yr Degree</td>
<td>$21,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-yr Degree</td>
<td>$27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-yr Degree &amp; Certified</td>
<td>$36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research shows a significant factor in an early childhood teacher’s decision to leave the profession is low pay.

In comparison, the average wage for Kindergarten teachers in Georgia is:

$53,410

High turnover rates have been linked to lower program quality and shown to negatively impact a child’s social and emotional development and relationships between teachers, children, and parents.

Sources: https://tinyurl.com/y799skms