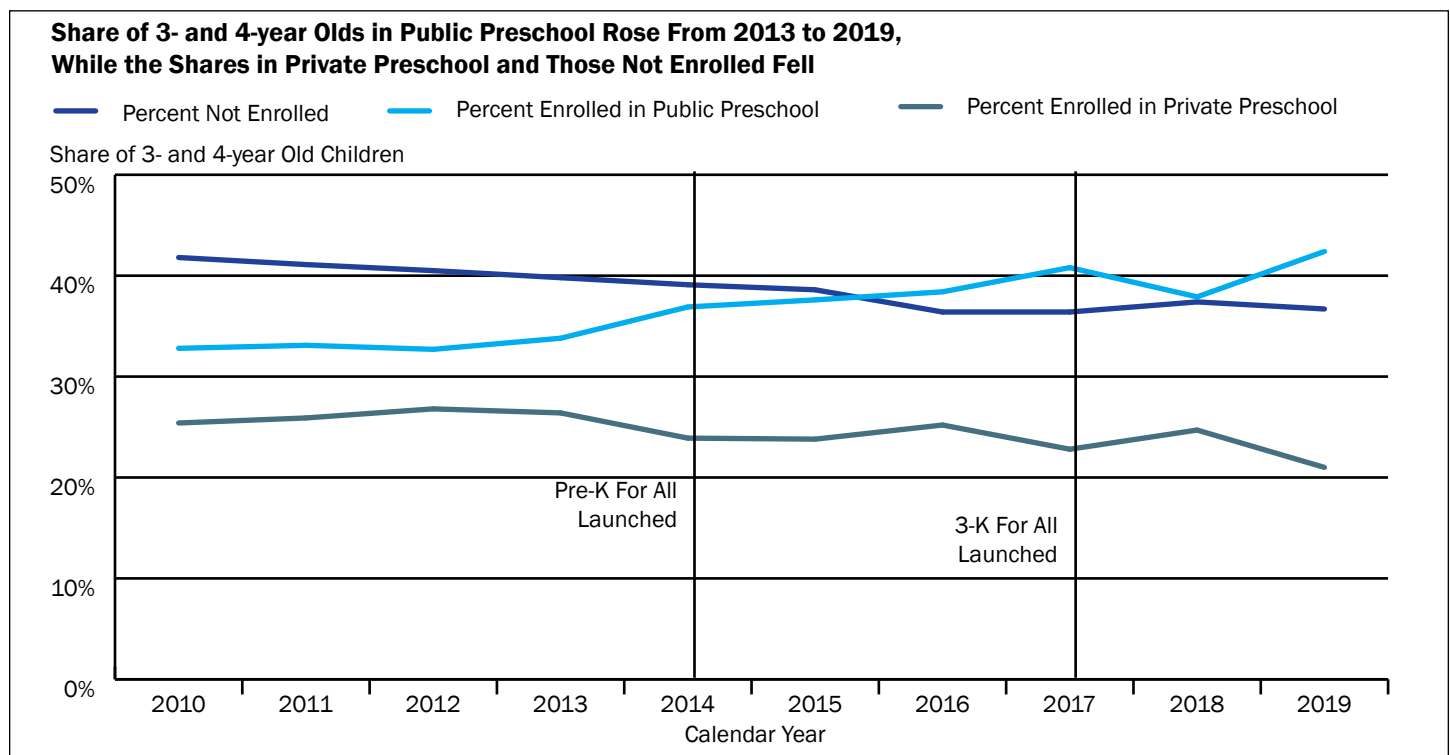


How Has Universal Preschool Changed the Shares of City Children Enrolled in Public Preschool, Private Preschool, and Not Enrolled at All?

Universal public preschool remains one of Mayor Bill de Blasio's signature initiatives. Launched in the 2014-2015 school year (calendar year 2014) and largely implemented over the next year, Pre-K for All substantially increased the number of 4-year olds in full-day, public pre-K. Enrollment in full-day, public Pre-K jumped from 22,609 in 2013-2014, the last year before Pre-K for All, to 71,588 in 2015-2016, the first year of full-implementation, and changed only slightly through 2018-2019 when it was 71,431. While Pre-K for All increased the city's total preschool slots, it also converted the city's largely half-day program to almost exclusively full-day, accounting for much of the full-day growth. The Mayor added a pilot 3-K for All program to expand preschool access to 3-year olds in the 2017-2018 school year. It began in two school districts and has been gradually expanded, with the city offering 3-K in 12 of its 32 school districts last year. The Mayor plans to implement 3-K citywide in the upcoming school year.

Students enrolled in the education department's new preschool programs previously would have enrolled in the existing public preschool slots, attended a private preschool, or not have enrolled in any school. IBO used data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS)—which includes questions about the type of preschool, if any, 3- and 4-year olds attend—to examine the extent to which Pre-K for All and 3-K for All reduced the share of children not enrolled in any school and the degree to which it crowded out private preschools. From here on, all years refer to calendar years.



- In 2014, the first calendar year of Pre-K for All, the share of 3- and 4-year olds in public preschool increased to 37 percent from a relatively stable 33 percent to 34 percent in the years before Pre-K for All (the ACS reports on these ages together). By 2019, the share in public preschool had risen to 42 percent. (Because ACS does not distinguish between full- and half-day preschool, increases in public, full-day enrollment compared with public, half-day enrollment caused by Pre-K for All are not captured in the data.)
- Over the same years, both the share of students attending private preschools and the share of 3- and 4-year olds not enrolled at all declined. The percentage-point decline was larger for the share enrolled in private schools compared with those not enrolled at all. The private preschool share dropped from 26 percent in 2013 to 21 percent in 2019, while the share not enrolled fell from 40 percent to 37 percent over the same period.
- In 2016, the share of 3- and 4-year olds enrolled in public school surpassed the share not enrolled at all for the first time.

It is likely that 3-year olds comprised the largest share of the 37 percent of children not enrolled in any preschool in 2019 because 3-K was only offered in 12 school districts that year. Citywide implementation of 3K for All has the potential to reduce this share even further.

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SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2010 -2019

NOTE: The U.S. Census Bureau has not yet released its 1-Year Estimates from the 2020 American Community Survey.