

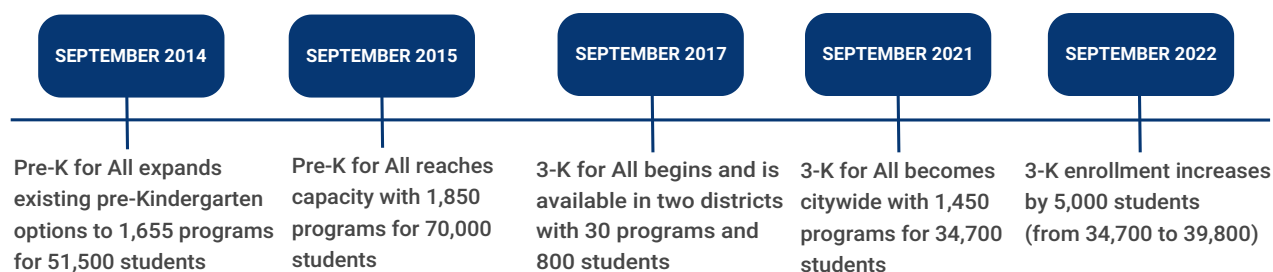
Freeze Tag: A Snapshot Of Pre-K and 3-K Students in NYC

In 2014, then Mayor Bill de Blasio launched Pre-K for All, which aimed to expand access to free full-day pre-K for all 4 year-old students in New York City in Department of Education (DOE) school system, stand-alone pre-K centers, or in Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) under contract with the city. This initiative signaled an expansion from the 20,000 students enrolled in pre-K programs the prior school year. In 2017, the DOE expanded the continuum of education to 3-year-olds, providing two additional years of education before students typically entered public school at kindergarten.

The program for 3-year-olds, known as 3-K for All, began as a pilot in districts 7 and 23 and depended heavily on partnerships with Community-Based Organizations to build capacity. Mayor Bill de Blasio sought to expand access to 3-K citywide, with the use of federal Covid-era stimulus aid. For more information on the funding of pre-K and 3-K, read [IBO's recent brief](#) on the historical changes to the early childhood education budget.

Using data from the New York City Department of Education, IBO explored the demographics of who attended 3-K and pre-K programs in the 2022-2023 school year and the types of programs that students attended. To determine the extent to which the expansion to 3-K citywide provided a continuum of education, IBO also analyzed the rate at which students who attended 3-K in the 2021-2022 school year returned for pre-K the following year, and what type of program students attended for pre-K (DOE, CBO, or Charter). Alternative programs for pre-K and 3-K exist, including private schools which are not included in this analysis.

Timeline



Student Enrollment and Demographics


Approximately 1.05 million students were enrolled in the New York City Public Schools in grades 3-K through 12th grade during the 2022-2023 school year (the New York City Public Schools includes traditional public schools districts 1 through 32, charter schools, and Community-Based Organizations). For more information on public school student enrollment and demographics, see [IBO's Education Indicators](#). While pre-K and 3-K students make up around 9 percent of overall enrollment within traditional public schools, the population within each grade is not entirely representative of the wider population of students.


Pre-K and 3-K enroll higher shares of students from low neighborhood poverty neighborhoods than students citywide. Advocates have cited concerns of low recruitment of pre-K and 3-K families from higher poverty neighborhoods as these programs require opting in.

Pre-K and 3-K have similar shares of race and ethnicity aside from Hispanic students, who are enrolled at higher rates in pre-K than in 3-K. Citywide shares of race and ethnicity, however, show much higher rates of Hispanic students and lower rates of White students than pre-K and 3-K programs.


How Many Students Enrolled in Pre-K and 3-K in New York City? 2022-2023

3-K

 **39,820**
Enrolled 3-K students

 **53,000**
Budgeted 3-K seats

Pre-K

 **59,260**
Enrolled pre-K students

 **75,000**
Budgeted pre-K seats

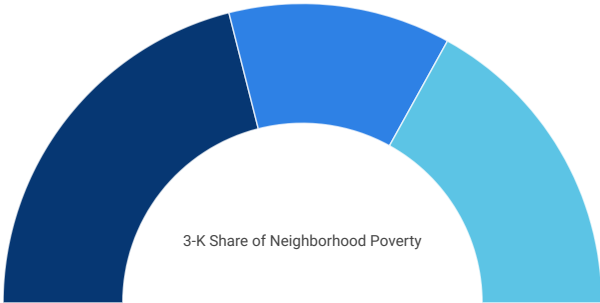
Note: This snapshot includes all enrolled pre-K and 3-K students for the 2022-2023 school year. In subsequent analyses, IBO excludes 2-year-olds and 5-year-olds enrolled in pre-K and 3-K programs because those students may repeat a year in either program.

Across Pre-K and 3-K, Larger Shares of Students Lived In Neighborhoods at Either End of the Income Distribution Compared With Students Citywide, 2021-2022

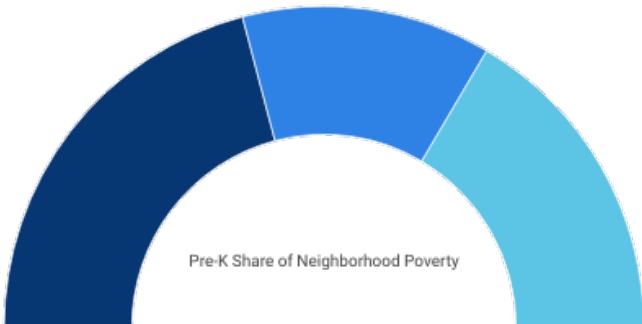
Use the buttons above the following charts to toggle between chart views.

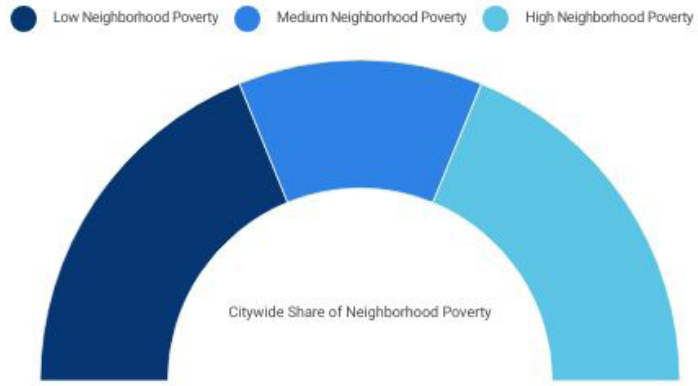
- 3-K Share of Neighborhood Poverty
- Pre-K Share of Neighborhood Poverty
- Citywide Share of Neighborhood Poverty

● Low Neighborhood Poverty ● Medium Neighborhood Poverty ● High Neighborhood Poverty



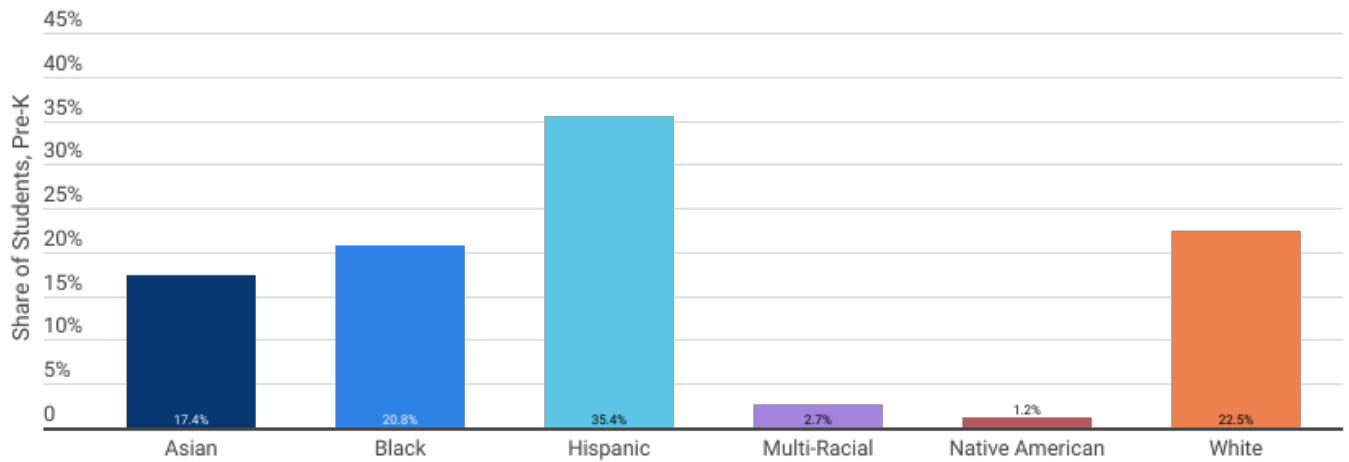
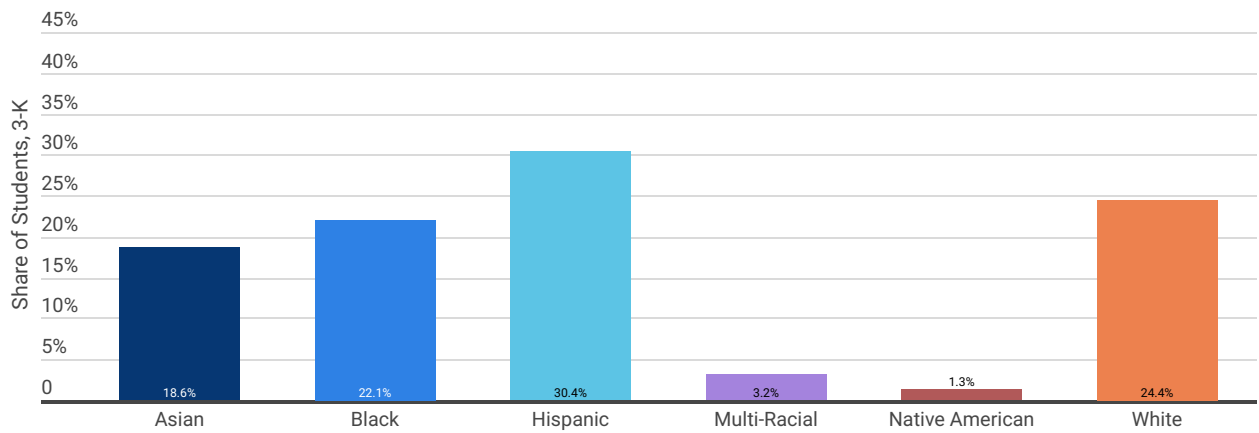
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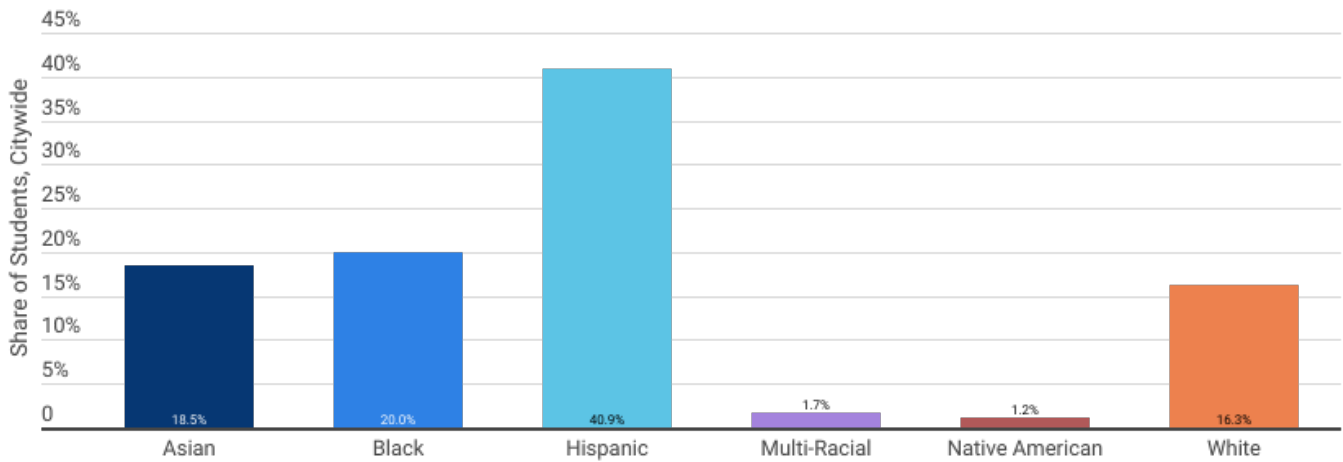




In 2022-2023, A Higher Share of Hispanic Students Enrolled in Pre-K than in 3-K

3-K Race and Ethnicity Pre-K Race and Ethnicity Citywide Race and Ethnicity



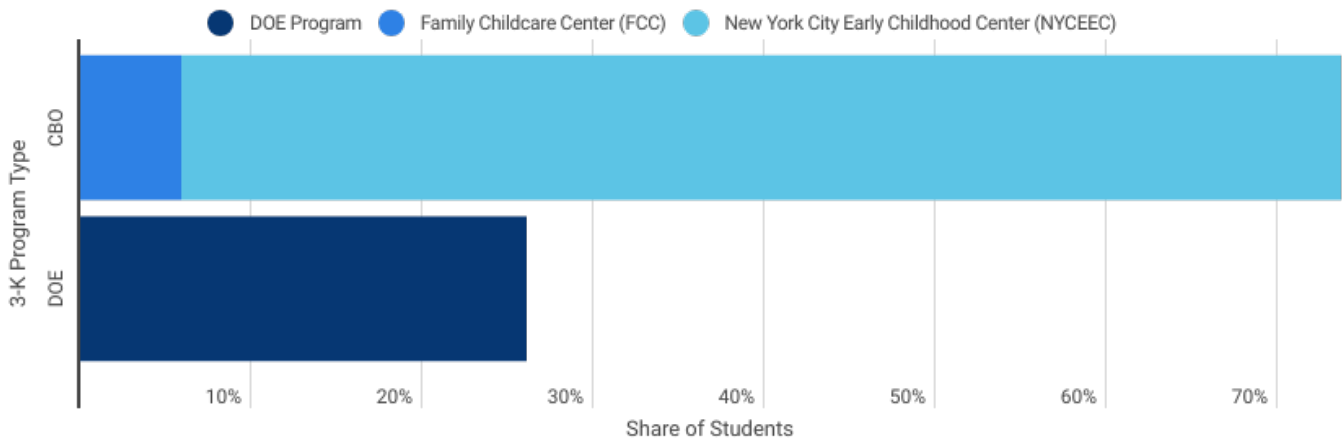


Programs

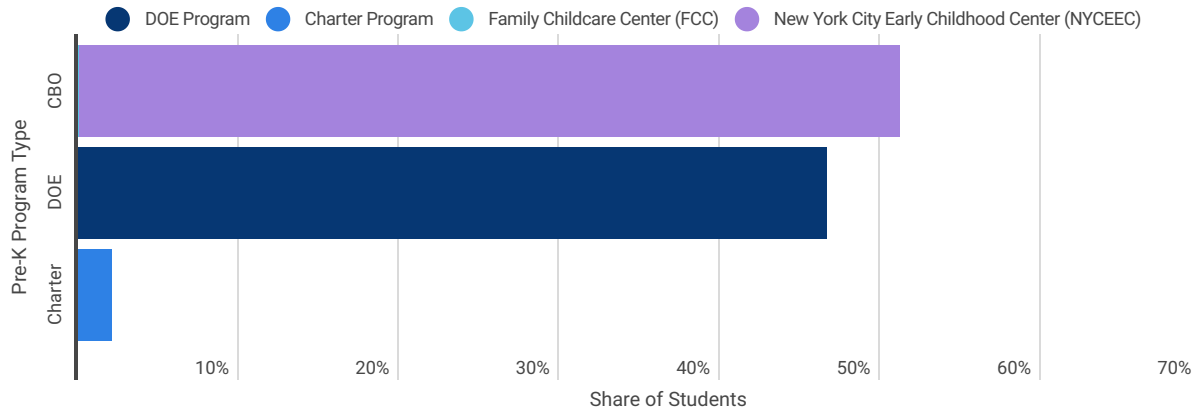
To ensure there was capacity to support the expanding 3-K program, former Mayor Bill de Blasio made the policy decision to rely on pre-existing availability within Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). In the 2022-2023 school year, 75 percent of 3-K students enrolled in CBO-based programs. CBOs also participate in the Pre-K for All program: a little more than half of pre-K students that same year attended a CBO-based program.

Community-Based Organizations include Family Childcare Centers (FCCs) and New York City Early Childhood Centers (NYCEECs). FCCs are home-based provider networks that are contracted to provide care for mixed-age children from birth through three years. NYCEECs offer center-based care for infants through pre-K aged children.

3-K Students Enroll at Higher Rates in Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), While Pre-K Students Enroll at Similar Rates in Both CBOs and Traditional Public Schools, 2022-2023



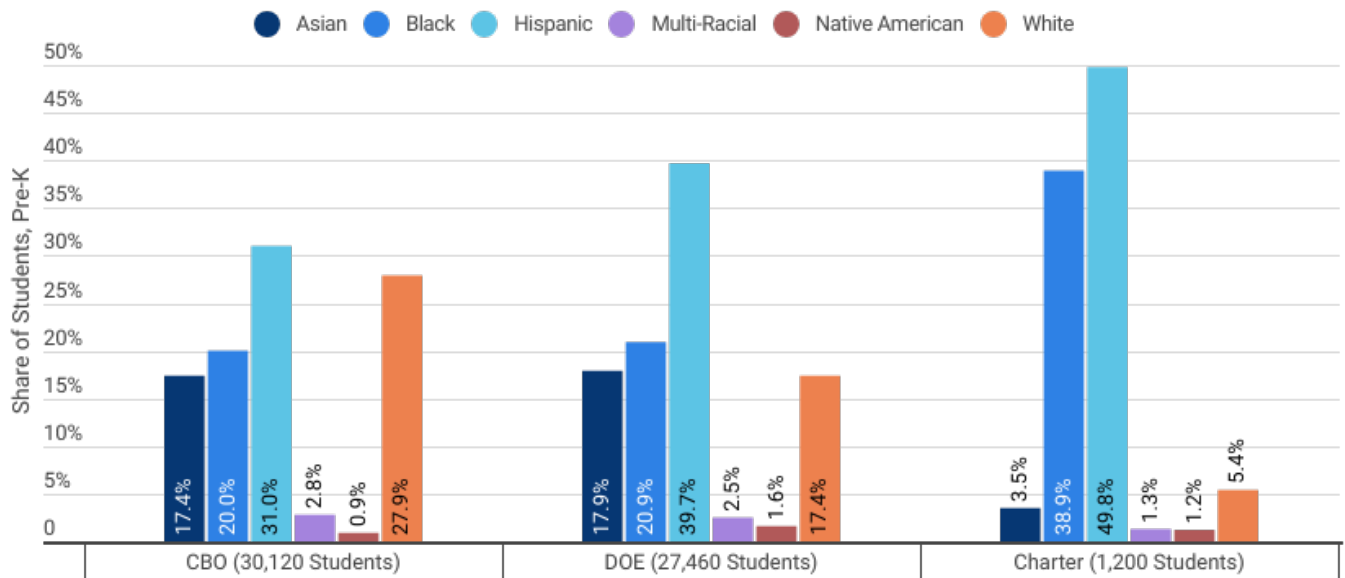
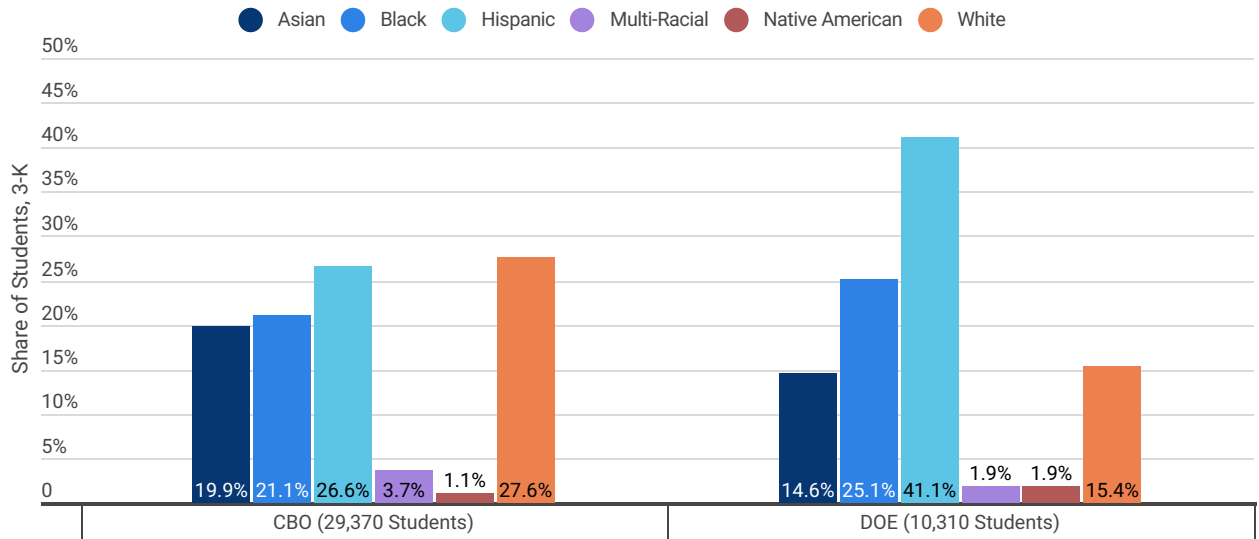
[Download data](#)



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CBOs Enrolled Smaller Shares of Hispanic Students and Larger Shares of White Students in Pre-K and 3-K Compared with DOE Programs, 2022-2023

3-K Race & Ethnicity by Program Type
Pre-K Race & Ethnicity by Program Type



[Download data](#)

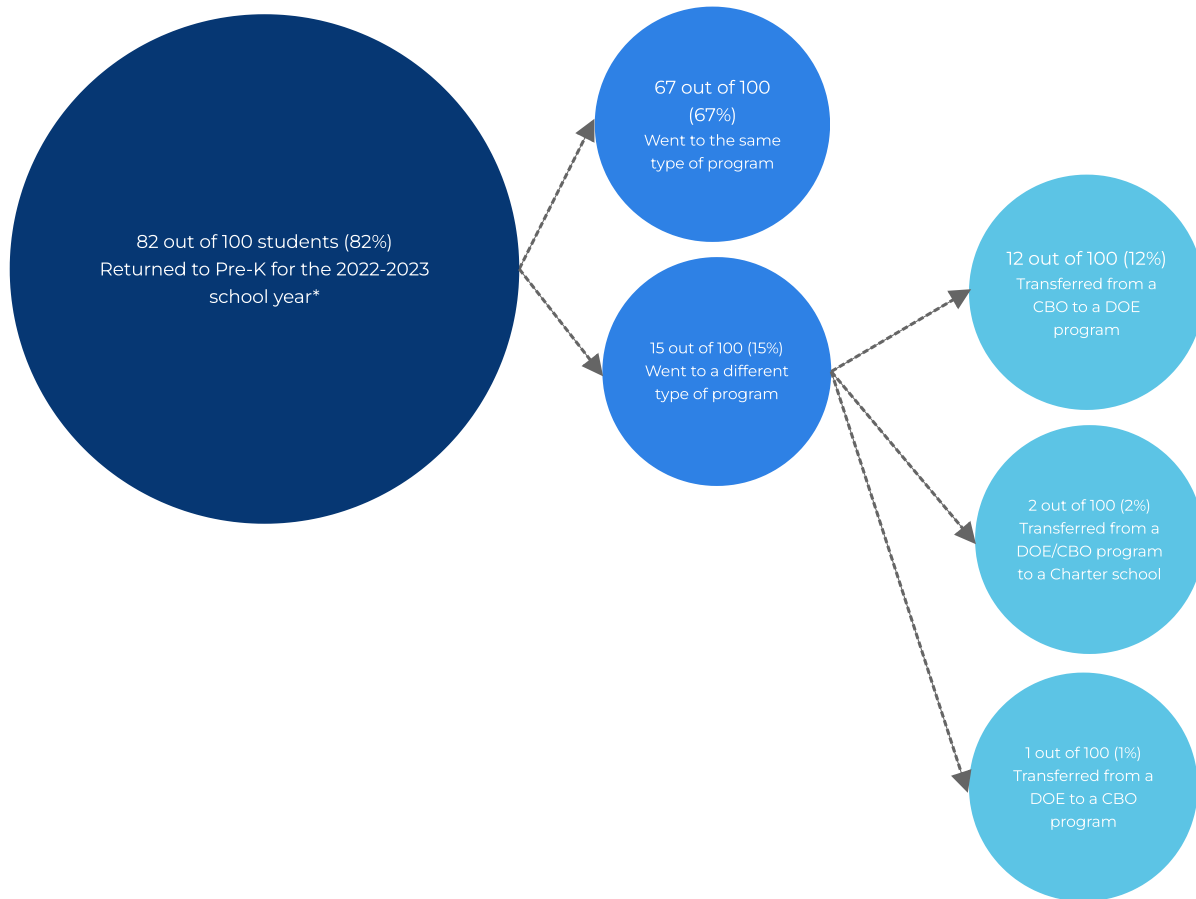
Returners

Returners were defined as 3-K students who attended any program and returned the following year and attended any pre-K program. IBO found no notable differences between students who attended 3-K and returned for pre-K, and those who did not return.

Because 3-K slots reside primarily in CBO-based programs and pre-K programs are evenly split between CBO and DOE-based programs, IBO examined the movement between program types and found that approximately two-thirds of students returned to the same type of program after attending 3-K.

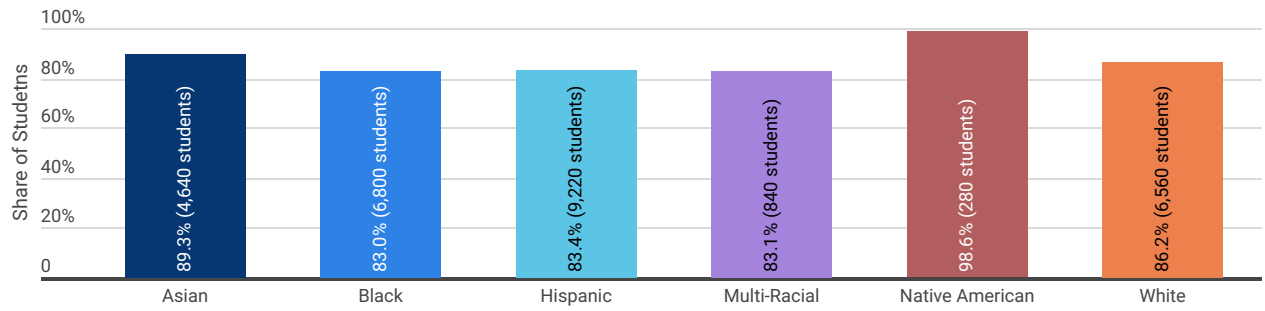
Return rates varied by district: in District 9, which includes Morris Heights and Highbridge, 75 percent of 3-K students returned to a pre-K classroom the following year. In contrast, in District 15, which covers Park Slope, Red Hook, and Sunset Park, nearly 90 percent of 3-K students returned the next year. Districts 5 and 6, which include Harlem and Washington Heights, saw the lowest return rates in Manhattan. Other districts with low retention rates included Districts 8, 9, 10, and 12 in the Bronx (Riverdale, West Bronx, and Soundview), and Districts 14, 17, 18, and 19 in Brooklyn (Williamsburg, Flatbush, and Canarsie).

Of All 34,700 Students Who Attended 3-K in the 2021-2022 School Year,



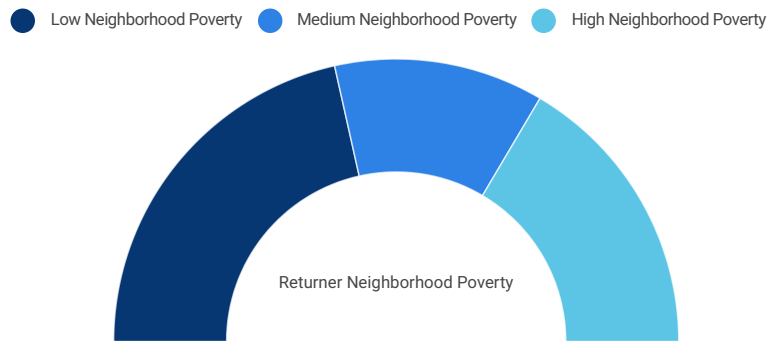
NOTE: The students who do not return to pre-K the next year may go to numerous alternatives. Some may attend a private school, some may be homeschooled, while some others may have moved to a different school system entirely.

More than 83 Percent of 3-K Students in Each Racial Group in 2021-2022 Returned to Any Type of Program for Pre-K in 2022-2023



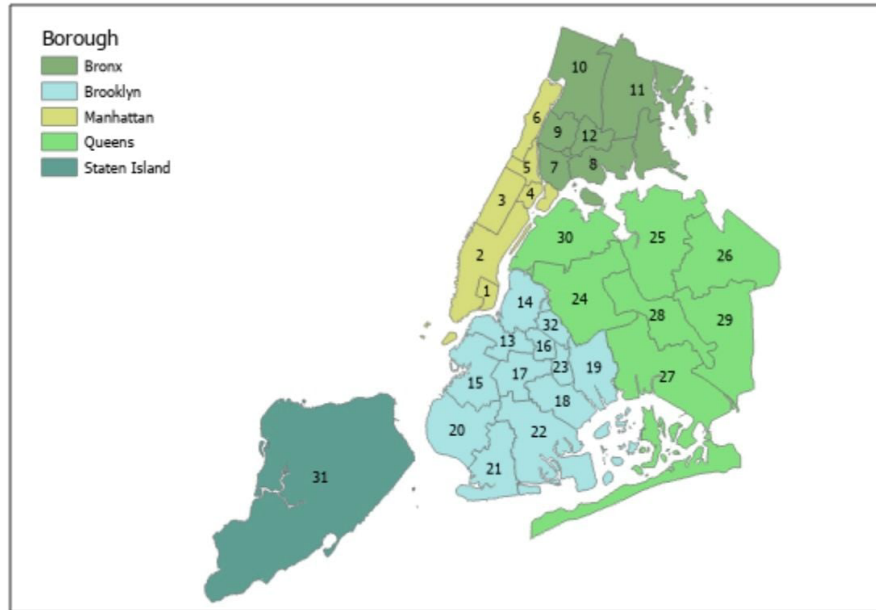
[Download data](#)

The Distribution of Pre-K Returners was Similar to the Distribution of 3-K Students the Prior School Year



Retention Rates* Were Highest Overall in Staten Island, Central Queens, and Northwest Brooklyn

Clicking on the map below will take you to an interactive version of the map.



SOURCES: IBO analysis of DOE Audited Register Data. Analysis includes 3-K and Pre-K students in Traditional Public Schools, Community-Based Organizations, and Charter Schools for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.
NOTE: Retention Rate refers to the share of 3-K students in the district that returned for pre-K in any program the following year.



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