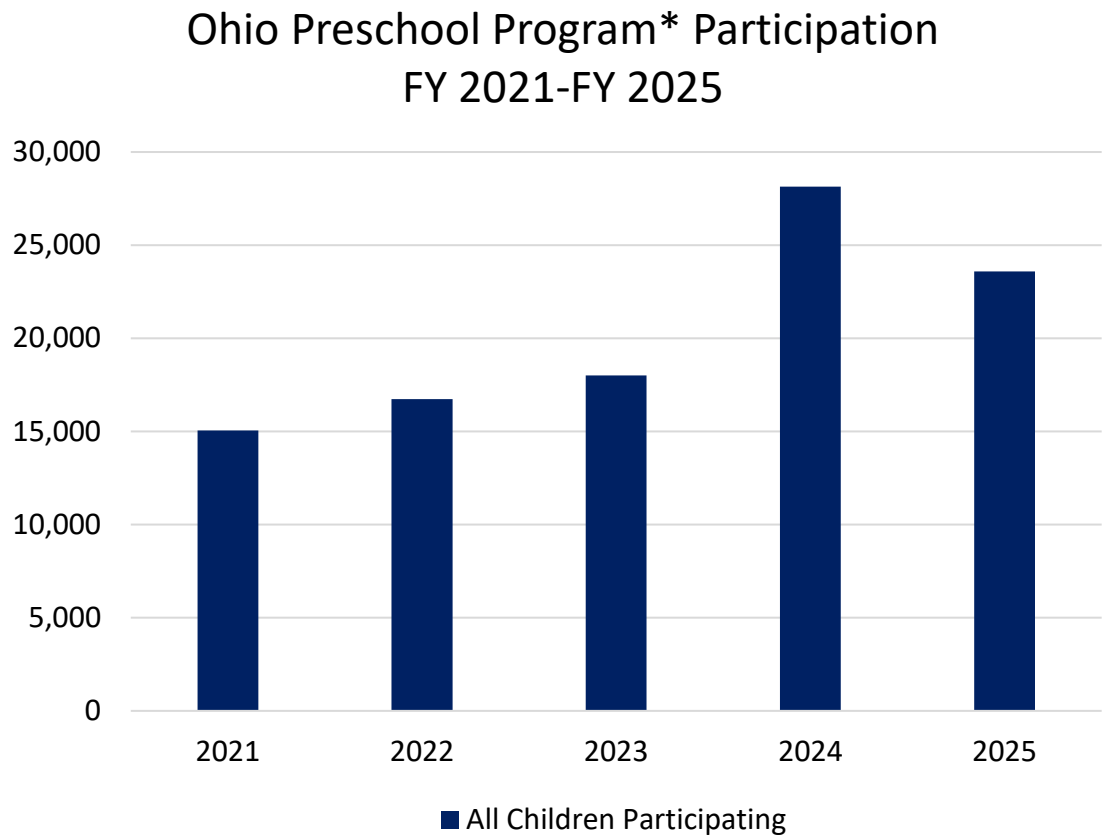
Participation in Ohio Preschool Program (OPP) decreases in FY 2025 after notable increase in FY 2024



*Formerly known as the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Grant
Sources: Ohio Department of Children and Youth; Ohio Department of Education and Workforce

- After increasing slightly from FY 2021 to FY 2023, the number of OPP participants increased drastically in FY 2024 – from 18,000 in FY 2023 to 28,100 in FY 2024 (56.4%). This was due to a substantial increase in funding. However, participation declined to 23,600 in FY 2025 (16.2%). Several states experienced decreases in state preschool enrollment in this year. Nationally, this was due to many factors such as declining child populations and rising early childcare costs.
  - OPP is fully funded by the GRF. In FY 2024 about $112.7 million was expended on the program and in FY 2025, approximately $97.2 million was expended.
  - In FY 2024 and FY 2025, reimbursement was $4,250 per part-day slot. Before FY 2024, reimbursement was $4,000. In FY 2025, full-day slots were available at a reimbursement of $8,500.
- To be eligible for OPP, a child must be between three and five years of age but not yet eligible for kindergarten and in families with incomes below 200% FPL ($53,300 for a family of three in 2025).
  - Certain children are categorically eligible, including those with individual education programs (IEPs), homeless children, and those in foster or kinship care, among others.
- In FY 2025, 55.8% of participants were four-year-olds, 26.1% were three-year-olds, and 18.1% were five-year-olds; 18.7% of participants had disabilities.
  - In FY 2024, three-year-old children were automatically considered for participation; previously, four- and five-year-old children were given priority.
- OPP provides eligible children with access to high-quality early learning services led by degreed teachers in gold or silver Step Up to Quality-rated early care and education programs. Participating children are assessed twice annually for kindergarten readiness.