



# Kentucky

## *Kentucky Preschool Program*

The Kentucky Preschool Program provides early exposure to education to children at risk of educational failure and those with disabilities or developmental delays. The public schools serve most children, although 12 percent of school districts sub-contract the entire program to community-based providers, and an additional 15 percent have some contracts with community-based providers.

### **Eligibility**

**Income:** eligible for free lunch under the National School Lunch Program; no income limit for children with diagnosed disabilities

**Age:** 4-year-olds (and 3-year-olds with a disability)

**Priority:** 3- and 4-year-olds with disabilities; 4-year-olds eligible for free lunch

### **Length of Program**

**Hours/day:** locally determined; most have a three- or three and a half-hour day, four or five days per week

**Days/year:** academic year

### **Eligible Providers**

School districts, non-public school preschool agencies

### **Number Served<sup>1</sup>**

18,882 (2002-03): 13,675 4-year-olds and 5,207 3-year-olds

### **Total Annual Budget**

\$73.95 million (2002-03): \$46.9 million in state general funds, \$7.75 million in federal funds, \$19.3 million in local funds

### **Monitoring**

The Kentucky Department of Education has responsibility for monitoring the use of state and federal education dollars, including funds used by districts to provide preschool services by contract. On-site visits are not currently required, although they have been in the past. School districts must submit annual “desk audits” for quality assurance. State-funded preschool programs are exempt from child care licensing. In order to provide services through a non-public school program, the local district must assure that all contracted services meet the same standards as would apply if the services were provided directly by the school district.

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<sup>1</sup> For updated figures on the program budget and number served, please see the NIEER State Preschool Yearbook at: <http://nieer.org/yearbook/states/>

## Governance

### **How are state pre-k programs integrated into community-based settings?**

The state statute authorizes sub-contracting. Based on a planning process involving other agencies, the district determines whether to serve eligible children in a program operated by the district, or through a contract or cooperative agreement with another program or programs. School districts receive funds from the state and the state imposes no limits on how schools distribute funds through sub-contracts to non-public school providers.

### **Are there requirements to integrate the state pre-k and subsidized child care programs at the state or local level?**

There is no requirement for integration at the state level, however local programs must coordinate with existing preschool programs. Initially, Head Start enrollment decreased when the Kentucky Preschool Program began. Now school districts must engage in a planning process to avoid duplicate services and maximize funding sources. This includes developing an annual local agreement to assure full utilization of Head Start, and to maximize Head Start funding for income-eligible 4-year-old children with other existing preschool programs. This may include collaborating with other agencies, contracting with an existing preschool program, or operating blended classrooms with slots funded through a variety of sources.

## Procedures and Supports for Community-based Providers

### **What are the rules/guidelines for notifying and selecting pre-k providers?**

School districts vary in how they provide and publicize opportunities for sub-contractors. Local school districts also determine the application process, including whether to include on-site visits as a requirement and whether to use a different process for different types of programs applying. All programs must meet standards prior to approval, and the standards do not vary by location.

### **What resources are available to help providers become eligible to deliver pre-k services?**

There are several initiatives to improve the quality of care in the community, but none are restricted to the purpose of helping providers become eligible to offer pre-k. College scholarships are available to assist all early childhood education teachers in obtaining degrees and teaching credentials. Programs may also receive mini-grants to assist with accreditation. Free technical assistance is available through participation in STARS for KIDS NOW, Kentucky's quality rating system.

### **Do teachers working in community settings earn comparable wages and benefits once they obtain the same credential as teachers in school-based settings?**

There are no requirements to do this.

## Supports for Working Families

**Is there any explicit discussion in the legislation or regulations of extending the day, coordinating with the child care subsidy program, or helping working families?**

No.

**What policies help working families access pre-k and other supports?**

Transportation can be provided by a district to pick up children from home or a child care facility, deliver them to school for the preschool day, and then bring them back home or to a child care facility. There are many Head Start/state-funded preschool programs that are blended in this way.

Some schools have Family Resource Centers to meet the social service needs of students and their families. These Centers make referrals, and help with securing and maintaining eligibility for services such as child care, health insurance, and family support. Centers may also provide services to sub-contracted pre-k programs, even when they are off-site.

## Funding

**What is the per-child payment for the pre-k program?**

The per-child payment of \$3,916 comes from state funds, federal Title I and IDEA funds, and local school district funds.

**How does the state pre-k funding affect other potential sources of funds for a provider?**

If the child is in care for at least four hours outside of the pre-k hours, the center receives a full subsidy. However, very few child care centers participate.

Pre-k funding does not affect Head Start. Head Start agencies either serve additional children or do so for a full day, rather than part of a day. Half of Kentucky's Head Start grantees are public school districts, and 48 districts (27 percent of all districts) blend Head Start and pre-k funds.

## Sources

- Interview: Kim Townley, 09/21/2004
- Website: <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Preschool/default.htm>
- Legislation: KRS 157.3175 <http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/KRS/157-00/3175.PDF>; KRS 157.226 <http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/KRS/157-00/226.PDF>
- Regulations: 704 KAR 3:410 <http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/kar/704/003/410.htm>
- Program Guidelines and Requirements: <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Preschool/Preschool+Regulations/default.htm>

- Sub-contracting requirements: 704 KAR 3:410, Section 4  
<http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/kar/704/003/410.htm>
- TA Guide for Preschool Contracting:  
<http://www.education.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/ehqqokwogn44hcpx4bvvyqk3ze2hf7ea7v3cic3jgzpny6japbznjekpigs3pclzlld2qtaheflhivjbg7cgrgkykb/TAContractingGuide.pdf>
- Additional sources: STARS Childcare Quality Rating System available at  
<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Early+Childhood+Development/STARS+-+The+Childcare+Quality+Rating+System.htm>

For information about national trends, read CLASP's *All Together Now: State Experiences in Using Community-Based Child Care to Provide Pre-kindergarten* at [http://www.clasp.org/publications/all\\_together\\_now.pdf](http://www.clasp.org/publications/all_together_now.pdf).