The Kentucky Preschool Program was launched in 1990 in response to the Kentucky Education Reform Act. The program is available to 4-year-olds from low-income families as well as 3- and 4-year-olds with disabilities. In the 2006-2007 school year, the number of children eligible for the program increased when the income eligibility requirement was raised from 130 percent of the federal poverty line (FPL) to 150 percent of FPL. Children who do not meet these eligibility requirements may participate based on space availability, though they are funded by district money or tuition rather than state dollars. The Kentucky Preschool Program distributes money to local school districts according to a funding formula. School districts may subcontract with private child care centers, Head Start programs, and special education providers to offer preschool services.

The Kentucky Department of Education began identifying Classrooms of Excellence, or high-quality state-funded preschool education classrooms, during the 2006-2007 school year. To meet the qualifications as a Classroom of Excellence, preschool teachers must hold certification in early childhood and undergo a rigorous application process, which includes implementation of early childhood standards, intensive self-study, and regional or national accreditation.

Kentucky also participates in the Strong Start initiative, which was established by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence in the 2008-2009 school year. Strong Start seeks to establish private/public partnerships in order to increase access to high-quality preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-olds from families whose incomes are up to 200 percent of FPL. In addition, Kentucky is implementing a statewide Kentucky Student Intervention, which includes preschool and is Kentucky’s version of Response to Intervention. Under the Kentucky Student Intervention, programs must implement instruction by qualified personnel with research-based interventions.

A 27-member Task Force on Early Childhood Development and Education was established by the governor in February 2009. The task force seeks to increase collaboration among child care providers, define school readiness, and raise quality in early learning settings. Kentucky also implemented the first stage of the Preschool Program Review (P2R) monitoring process through pilots in seven districts in the 2009-2010 school year. The process includes an ECERS-R for every classroom and an online survey, as well as site-visit teams that examine documentation, observe classrooms, and interview teachers, administrators, and parents. The P2R pilot will continue in the 2010-2011 school year with the goal of establishing assessors in each district who can use ECERS-R with valid inter-rater reliability to help districts improve their teaching and learning processes.
KENTUCKY PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state program enrollment ................................................... 22,2991
School districts that offer state program .................................. 100%
Income requirement ................................................................. 150% FPL
Hours of operation ................................................................. 2.5 hours/day, + meal time,
4 or 5 days/week
Operating schedule ............................................................... Academic year
Special education enrollment .................................................... 10,7942
Federally funded Head Start enrollment .................................... 14,933
State-funded Head Start enrollment ........................................... 0

Total statepre-K spending .......................................................... $69,187,530
Localmatch required? .............................................................. No
Statespending per child enrolled .............................................. $3,103
All reportedspending per child enrolled *................................. $6,290

Total stateprogram enrollment .................................................. 22,299 1
School districtsthat offer stateprogram .................................... 100%
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Hours of operation ................................................................. 2.5 hours/day, + meal time,
4 or 5 days/week
Operating schedule ............................................................... Academic year
Special education enrollment .................................................... 10,794 2
Federally funded Head Start enrollment .................................... 14,933
State-funded Head Start enrollment ......................................... 0

1 This total includes a supplemental count of 1,295 3-year-olds who received special education services after reaching their third birthday later than December 1.
2 Because the state pre-K program is interrelated with the state special education program, it is not possible to provide a unique special education enrollment count for Kentucky. The estimates for special education enrollment include some children also counted in the totals for state pre-K.
3 Teachers hired as lead teachers before 2004-2005 can hold a CDA or A.A. in child development. These teachers are allowed to remain in their current positions but may not transfer to other districts.

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT BENCHMARK DOES REQUIREMENT MEET BENCHMARK?
Early learning standards ....................................................... Comprehensive Comprehensive
Teacher degree ................................................................. BA1 BA
Teacher specialized training ......... Interdisciplinary ECE - Birth to K Specializing in pre-K
Assistant teacher degree ................................. HSD CDA or equivalent
Teacher in-service .............................................. 28 clock hours At least 15 hours/year
Maximum class size ......................................................... 20 or lower
3-year-olds ................................................................. 20
4-year-olds ................................................................. 20
Staff-child ratio ................................................................. 1:10 or better
3-year-olds ................................................................. 1:10
4-year-olds ................................................................. 1:10
Screening/referral Vision, hearing, health; and Vision, hearing, health; and
and support services developmental; and support services4 at least 1 support service
Meals Breakfast or lunch At least 1/day
Monitoring Site visits and other monitoring4 Site visits

RESOURCES

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* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
** Head Start per-child spending for the 2009-2010 year includes funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).
*** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

Support services include two annual parent conferences or home visits, parenting support or training, health services for parents and children, information about nutrition, referral to social services, and transition to kindergarten activities.

1 In the 2009-2010 school year, Kentucky began a mandatory process that will initially provide site visits to seven pilot sites. By 2011-2012, 20 percent of programs statewide will be visited each year.

10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%
Pre-K Head Start Special Ed† Other/None
† All special education students are included in state pre-K enrollment.

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