The Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 established accountability standards for public schools, and created the Kentucky Preschool Program to help schools achieve these standards. The state provides funding to school districts for all 4-year-olds who qualify for free lunch, and for all 3- and 4-year-olds with disabilities. In 2002–2003, 61 percent of the children served in the program had disabilities. School districts are required to coordinate with Head Start, so several districts have preschool classrooms that blend state funds with federal Head Start funds. Currently, teachers must have a minimum of a Child Development Associate credential; but beginning in 2004–2005, all new teachers will be required to hold an interdisciplinary early childhood education certificate.

The Kentucky Early Childhood Standards (KYECS) describe what children from birth to age 3 and from ages 3 to 4 should know and should be able to do, across all developmental domains. KYECS uses standards, benchmarks, a developmental continuum and direct child observation. Content areas are matched to the Kentucky Program of Studies and K–12 content as well as Head Start outcomes.

Funding for the Kentucky Preschool Program was $47,000,000 in 2002–2003, with a total of 5,207 3-year-olds and 13,675 4-year-olds enrolled. In fiscal year 2004, the Kentucky Preschool Program will be funded at the previous year level while serving an additional 1,000 children, thereby reducing per-child funding.

### RESOURCES

- **Total state Pre-K spending:** $46,300,000
- **Local match required:** No
- **State spending per child enrolled:** $2,776
- **State spending per 3-year-old:** $204
- **State spending per 4-year-old:** $662
- **Total state program enrollment:** 16,681
- **School districts that offer state program:** 99%
- **Income requirement:** Free...
- **Special education enrollment:** 10,493
- **Federally-funded Head Start enrollment:** 15,029
- **State-funded Head Start enrollment:** 0

### ACCESS

- **30% of 4-year-olds in state Pre-K**
- **20% of 4-year-olds in state Pre-K**

### RESOURCES

- **60,796 per child**
- **60,796 per child**

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1. All districts are required to serve children by 2 on the expected date they are due to enroll.
2. Children with disabilities do not have to meet any income eligibility requirements.
3. Full days of operation vary by program according to the following percentages: 30% 6 hours, 7% 4-6 hours, 25% 3.5 hours and 38% 2.5 hours. Programs are required to operate for a minimum of 2.5 hours daily, and also must provide at least one meal.
4. The minimum teachers' degree requirement will change for the 2004–2005 program year, when the requirement for new hires will be certification in early childhood or special education.
5. Services offered include referrals to health and social services, adult education and parenting information.

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