OVERVIEW

WHAT'S NEW
The Commonwealth of Kentucky was awarded a Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five award in 2018 for $10.62 million to strengthen its comprehensive early childhood system to support all young children and their caregivers, with an emphasis on highly vulnerable children and children in rural or limited accessibility areas of the state.

In 2018-2019, Kentucky began a new monitoring system, the Kentucky Preschool Evaluation System, which is aligned with the Kentucky All STARS quality rating system and requires all programs to be evaluated once every three years during a six-year cycle.

BACKGROUND
The Kentucky Preschool Program (KPP), launched in 1990, is available to 4-year-olds from low-income families, as well as 3- and 4-year-olds with disabilities. KPP programs operate either half- or full-day, for at least 2.5 hours per day, four or five days per week. Income eligibility increased from 150% to 160% of FPL beginning with the 2015-2016 school year. Children who do not meet state eligibility requirements may still participate, depending on space availability, although they are funded either by the school district or tuition rather than state dollars.

KPP is administered by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), Office of Special Education and Early Learning, Division of IDEA Implementation and Preschool, School Readiness Branch. Funds are distributed to school districts through a funding formula. Each of Kentucky’s 173 school districts offered KPP services in 2017-2018. School districts may subcontract with private child care centers, Head Start programs, and special education providers to offer preschool services.

The KDE launched a grant program in 2016-2017 to encourage cooperative public/private partnerships between public school districts and child care providers to increase the number of Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) eligible preschool children served in high-quality, full-day programs. High-quality is defined as achievement of three or more STARS in the state’s QRIS.

All early childhood programs that receive public funds, including KPP, participate in the Kentucky All STARS quality rating system. In 2017-2018, the ECERS-3 was used to evaluate preschool classrooms.
KENTUCKY PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

ACCESS
Total state pre-K enrollment ........................................... 21,270
School districts that offer state program .................................. 100%
Income requirement .......................................................... 160% FPL
Minimum hours of operation ........................................... 2.5 hours/day
Operating schedule .................................................. School or academic year
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .......................... 10,181
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 .......... 13,294
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ................. 0

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY | KY PRE-K REQUIREMENT | BENCHMARK | REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
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Early learning & development standards | Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive | Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive | ✓
Curriculum supports | Approval process & supports | Approval process & supports | ✓
Teacher degree | BA | BA | ✓
Teacher specialized training | ECE, CD, ECE SpEd | Specializing in pre-K | ✓
Assistant teacher degree | HSD | CDA or equivalent | No
Staff professional development | 24 hours/year (teachers); 18 hours/year (assistants); PD plans (public teachers only); Coaching (certified teachers) | For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching | No
Maximum class size | 20 (3- & 4-year-olds) | 20 or lower | ✓
Staff-child ratio | 1:10 (3- & 4-year-olds) | 1:10 or better | ✓
Screening & referral | Vision, hearing, health & more | Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral | ✓
Continuous quality improvement system | Structured classroom observations (every 5 years); Data used for program improvement | Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement | No

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending .................................................. $96,011,951
Local match required? ..................................................... No
State Head Start spending ........................................... $0
State spending per child enrolled ........................................ $4,514
All reported spending per child enrolled* ................................ $8,412

For more information, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

PRE-K* | $8,412
HDST** | $8,956
K-12*** | $11,606

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
** Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.
*** K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.