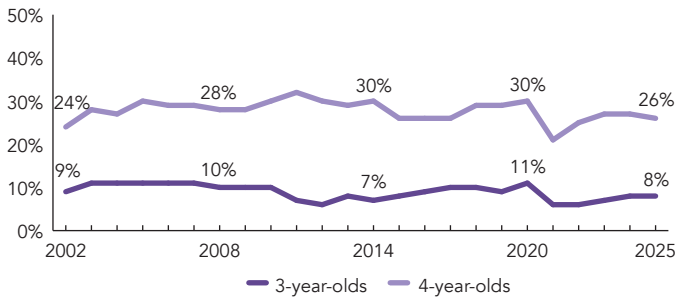
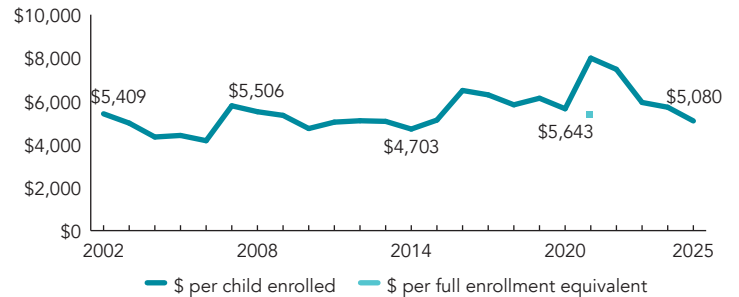


Kentucky

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2025 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

During the 2024-2025 school year, Kentucky preschool enrolled 18,837 children, a decrease of 900 from the prior year. State spending totaled \$90,767,593, and an additional \$4,924,483 in federal recovery funds supported the program, down \$17,082,605 (15%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child (including federal recovery funds) equaled \$5,080 in 2024-2025, down \$634 from 2023-2024, adjusted for inflation. Kentucky met 8 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT'S NEW

During the 2024-2025 school year, Kentucky successfully implemented the revised ALL STARS Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). After a pause caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the state resumed efforts to collect and review data related to the quality of preschool classrooms and programs. This program utilizes the TPOT observation tool and also incorporates components of the Pyramid Model Framework. This framework will encourage districts to implement best practices in classroom management and behavior.

Governor Andy Beshear issued Executive Order 2025-351 in June 2025, which created the Team Kentucky Pre-K for All Advisory Committee, comprised of leaders in education, childcare, workforce development, government, and business. The [Pre-K for All Findings and Recommendations Advisory Committee Report](#) was released on October 30, 2025. Based on the report, the Committee recommended that Kentucky expand preschool with an expectation of district-level partnerships, an emphasis on quality, and the establishment of a unified data system.

BACKGROUND

The Kentucky Preschool Program (KPP), launched in 1990, is available to 4-year-olds from low-income families, and 3- and 4-year-olds with disabilities. KPP programs operate 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% FPL beginning with the 2015-2016 school year. Children who do not meet state eligibility requirements may still participate if there is space, but 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, the Early Learning Unit, School Readiness Branch. Funds are distributed to school districts through a funding formula. School districts may subcontract with private child care centers, Head Start programs, and special education providers to offer preschool services.

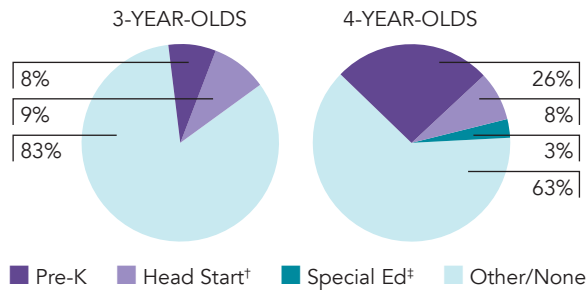
ACCESS RANKINGS		RESOURCE RANKINGS		TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS	STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING	
28	19	33	8	8

KENTUCKY PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	18,837
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	12,111
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	10,012
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	0

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



† Estimates children in Head Start not also enrolled in state pre-K.
 † Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	KY PRE-K REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	Approval process & supports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE, CD, ECE SpEd	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	HSD or equivalent	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	20 (3- & 4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:10 (3- & 4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing, health & more	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations; Data used for program improvement	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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



RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$95,692,076
Local match required?	No
State Head Start spending	\$0
State spending per child enrolled	\$5,080
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$13,685

* 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.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

