



# KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## NEWS RELEASE

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## **READINESS RESULTS HIGHLIGHT NEED FOR QUALITY EARLY LEARNING**

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Many Kentucky students are at a disadvantage for learning before they even start school, according to Kindergarten Readiness Screener data released by the Kentucky Department of Education.

Only about half of the students entering kindergarten in 2016-17 were considered ready, the Kentucky Board of Education learned at its meeting in Frankfort today. School readiness is defined in [704 KAR 5:070](#) as “a student entering school ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences that best promote the student’s success.”

The results, however, did show consistent growth for students enrolled in state-funded preschool and federal Head Start programs. Additionally, African American and Hispanic students and students with limited English proficiency also showed modest increases in school readiness.

“This data reinforces the importance of quality early learning opportunities for all children,” said Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt. “All children need to have the same opportunities to develop and learn before they enter school so that they can hit the ground running from the first day they enter kindergarten. Without those opportunities, children often struggle and fall behind their peers. While it is good to see some growth in certain areas this year, it is critical that Kentucky continue in its efforts to improve early childhood programs for all students.”

**Kindergarten Readiness by Group**

Group	Number Tested				Kindergarten Ready Percentage			
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
All Students	50,532	49,089	46,789	46,582	49.0	50.0	50.1	<b>50.1</b>
Male	25,707	25,130	24,065	23,856	43.6	44.6	45.2	<b>45.5</b>
Female	24,825	23,959	22,724	22,726	54.5	55.6	55.2	<b>55.0</b>
White (Non-Hispanic)	38,735	37,389	35,538	35,170	51.2	52.1	52.7	<b>52.3</b>
African American	5,196	5,158	4,818	4,855	44.2	46.3	44.5	<b>46.9</b>
Hispanic	3,595	3,486	3,362	3,389	28.0	28.7	27.7	<b>28.6</b>
Asian	731	737	804	835	61.6	64.2	59.1	<b>63.4</b>
American Indian/Alaska Native	63	55	55	72	49.2	45.5	50.9	<b>52.8</b>
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	70	51	61	58	51.4	49.0	31.1	<b>48.3</b>
Two or more races	2,141	2,210	2,150	2,203	50.5	51.0	50.9	<b>50.5</b>
Limited English Proficiency	2,890	2,886	2,788	2,951	26.1	28.7	26.0	<b>26.9</b>
Free/Reduced-Price Meals	31,145	31,600	29,840	29,805	37.6	39.4	39.7	<b>39.8</b>
Students with Disabilities	6,405	7,034	6,076	5,542	28.2	27.6	31.1	<b>29.7</b>

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Studies show that children who attend high quality early learning environments have better math, language and social skills. Additionally, they are less likely to be retained in a grade and have a lower likelihood of being chronically absent in their primary and secondary school years and of graduating high school.

Kentucky is focused on improving the quality of early care and education programs and increasing educational outcomes and success for all preschoolers.

One way it is doing that is through the new [Kentucky All STARS](#) program, an expanded five-star quality rating and improvement system that serves all early care and education programs that receive public funding including child care centers, Head Start and public preschool. Kentucky All STARS is based on Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards and research-based indicators of quality, and recognizes programs that have made a commitment to continuous quality improvement.

"Quality early learning programs and experiences are a key strategy in closing the opportunity and achievement gaps that currently exist among our various student groups," Pruitt said. "Our efforts with the Kentucky All STARS and other early childhood initiatives are geared toward improving student outcomes and also helping parents recognize and select the best, high-quality program for their child."

This is the fourth year that the Kentucky Readiness Screener has been given statewide to all incoming kindergarten students.

Teachers administered the BRIGANCE K Screener to 46,582 students in all 173 school districts at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year. Students are asked their name and age, to recite the alphabet and count to 30, among other tasks.

The screener provides a snapshot of student readiness in the following domains: academic/cognitive, language development and physical development. Performing at a certain level is not a requirement to enter kindergarten.

As part of the screener, parents also fill out a survey on their child's ability to help him or herself and social-emotional development, though this information is not factored into readiness scores.

Parents also are asked to fill out a survey about what type of setting the child was in the year before kindergarten.

The questionnaire did not distinguish whether the program was a half-day or full-day program, or the duration a child spent in a particular setting. Students can be included in multiple prior settings.

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### Kindergarten Readiness by Prior Setting

Prior Setting	Number Tested				Kindergarten Ready Percentage			
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
State Funded Preschool	14,987	17,396	16,559	16,339	44.9	47.4	48.1	<b>49.5</b>
Head Start	5,822	6,615	6,603	6,942	42.4	44.5	45.8	<b>48.0</b>
Child Care	9,562	10,652	10,673	10,994	70.0	69.9	70.1	<b>69.7</b>
Home	10,468	13,629	12,618	13,568	37.4	37.9	36.2	<b>36.1</b>
Other	5,152	5,596	5,190	4,915	60.3	61.3	61.2	<b>62.0</b>
Unknown	9,857	2,171	1,947	2,039	45.2	41.0	41.1	<b>39.9</b>

The settings include:

- State-Funded Preschool – State-funded preschool serves three- and four-year-old children. Three-year-old children qualify based on developmental delay; four-year-old children qualify based on developmental delay or family income.
- Head Start – Federally-funded program serving three- and four-year-old children. Children qualify based on developmental delay and family income.
- Child care – Privately owned, licensed child care facilities and certified homes; usually private pay and subsidized.
- Home – Home with parent or guardian.
- Other – Non-licensed child care facilities, baby-sitters, kin care.
- Unknown – No data gathered from families.

Resources to support quality learning experiences are available for parents and for early care and education providers on the [Kentucky Department of Education](#) and the [Governor’s Office for Early Childhood](#) websites.

The kindergarten readiness screener data is available in the supplemental data section of the [KDE Open House](#).

To learn more about [kindergarten readiness](#) or to view an [early childhood data profile](#) in your area, visit the Governor’s Office for Early Childhood website at <http://kidsnow.ky.gov>.

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