



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Office of the Governor

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Half of incoming kindergarten students ready to succeed in school

Common kindergarten screener data used to close achievement gaps for remaining students, improve early childhood learning opportunities for all

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Jan. 30 2014) – Governor Steve Beshear announced today that 49 percent of students started kindergarten this school year ready to learn and succeed. However, nearly 26,000 students entered school unprepared for kindergarten work.

“From day one, these students may be at a disadvantage; they are behind, and some lack the foundational skills on which to build,” Gov. Beshear said. “Too often, they don’t catch up with their peers. As a result, these students may face years of poor grades and negative school experiences that usually only end when they drop out or graduate from high school unprepared for college or career.”

The Governor announced the results of the first statewide implementation of the common Kindergarten Readiness Screener at a news conference with Education Commissioner Terry Holliday and Terry Tolan, executive director of the Governor’s Office of Early Childhood.

Teachers administered the BRIGANCE K Screener to 50,532 kindergarten students in all 173 school districts at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year. The screener measures how well a child is prepared to succeed at the time the screener is administered. Students are asked their name and age, to recite the alphabet and count to 30, among other tasks.

Kindergarten Readiness by Student Group

Group	Enrollment	Number Tested	Not Ready	Ready
All Students	51,556	50,532	51%	49%
Male	26,254	25,707	56.4%	43.6%
Female	25,302	24,825	45.5%	54.5%
White (non-Hispanic)	39,493	38,735	48.8%	51.2%
African American	5,299	5,196	55.8%	44.2%
Hispanic	3,685	3,595	72%	28%
Asian	754	731	38.4%	61.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native	66	63	50.8%	49.2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	70	70	48.6%	51.4%
Two or more races	2,188	2,141	49.5%	50.5%
Limited English Proficiency	2,968	2,890	73.9%	26.1%
Free/Reduced-Price Meals	31,788	31,145	62.4%	37.6%
Students with Disabilities	6,605	6,405	71.8%	28.2%

¹Students can belong to more than one student group

The common kindergarten screener, as outlined in [704 KAR 5:070](#), provides teachers with key information early in the school year that they can use to guide instruction to meet the individual needs of all students. The screener is aligned with both Kentucky’s school readiness key definition and Kentucky’s Early Childhood Standards.

“This data will help us prevent and close achievement gaps before they become insurmountable,” Commissioner Holliday said. “It will not only help kindergarten teachers make sure they are providing the best instruction to meet individual student needs, but also will ensure our primary grades are building on a student’s knowledge. Our goal is for every child to be reading on grade level or above by the time they leave the 3rd grade.”

Holliday said countless research studies show that a student’s ability to read and adequately comprehend by the time they exit primary school is a key indicator of a student’s future educational success and whether they will graduate from high school college/career-ready.

As part of the kindergarten screener, parents were also asked to fill out a survey about what type of setting the child was in the year before starting kindergarten, along with several other things. 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.

“This is an opportunity for school districts, parents, public preschools, private childcare providers and communities to come together and join their Community Early Childhood Councils to improve early learning experiences for all children,” said Terry Tolan, executive director of the Kentucky Governor’s Office of Early Childhood (KYGOEC).

The kindergarten readiness screener is just one tool among many that can be used to strengthen communication and collaboration between all members of the community. 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 KYGOEC websites.

“Our objective is continuous improvement,” Tolan said. “With this data, resources from the Race to the Top Early Learning Grant and the Governor’s commitment to early childhood education, I am confident we will see more children arrive at kindergarten prepared to start and succeed in school in the years to come.”

“Quality early childhood education will be the game changer for the next generation of students and for our schools,” Commissioner Holliday said. “I am proud of the Governor and our state’s effort on behalf of our youngest citizens.”

The kindergarten readiness screener data is available in the supplemental data section of KDE’s [Open House](#) and will be added to the school report card in the fall.

To learn more about the common kindergarten screener or to view an early childhood data profile on your area, visit the KYGOEC’s website at <http://kidsnow.ky.gov>.

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