



Critical Fact Sheet

A Publication of the Office of Special Education and Early Learning

What Every DoSE Needs to Know about the State-Funded Preschool Program

State Funded Preschool Program

Kentucky's preschool education programs are available for all four-year-old children whose family income is no more than 160% of poverty; all three and four-year-old children with developmental delays and disabilities, regardless of income; and other four-year-old children as placements are available based on district decision.

The preschool program is designed to be developmentally appropriate for young children. "Developmentally appropriate" is defined in law to mean that the program focuses on the child's physical, intellectual, social and emotional development, including interpersonal, intrapersonal, and socialization skills.

Preschool teachers are required to hold the Kentucky Early Childhood teaching certificate, the Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (IECE), birth to primary teaching certificate.

The Learning Environment:

The preschool classroom setting should be arranged so that children may work individually, together in small groups and in a large group. Areas of the room should include space for centers such as art, block building, housekeeping, dramatic play, language arts/library, math, multimedia, and science. Preschool classroom activities could include cooking, social studies, gross motor, problem solving, experiments, counting and measuring, early literacy songs and games and outdoor activities. Materials are to be developmentally appropriate and reflect the cultural and ethnic background of the children.

The educational component of the preschool program consists of developmentally appropriate experiences. Those experiences focus on school readiness. School readiness means each child enters school ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences that best promote the child's success. There are five developmental areas for school readiness:

- Approaches to learning
- Health and physical well-being
- Language and communication development
- Social and emotional development
- Cognitive and general knowledge

Special Education Services:

Preschool programs are designed to include and meet the needs of children across a wide range of abilities in an inclusive setting. Programs must provide adaptations for children with special needs. Children with disabilities may also receive a variety of related services to meet individual needs: speech therapy, occupational and physical therapy, parent education, coordination of services relating to child development, and special transportation.



Parent Involvement:

The preschool program is required to allow for active parent/family involvement and consider the different types of family structure and needs. At least the following types of opportunities are to be made available to families:

- Periodic home visits (minimum of two per child per year) by the child's teacher
- Participation in all activities as observers or volunteers
- Parent/family education activities which the parent/families helped design or develop
- Two-way communication systems developed with the parent/families
- Participation in the program evaluation

Program Collaboration:

Local school districts may collaborate with other agencies in the following ways: (note: this is not an exhaustive list of collaborative pathways)

- Planning with other existing preschool programs to avoid duplication of programs and services to the same children and to avoid supplanting federal funds
- Developing an annual full utilization local agreement with Head Start to assure full utilization of federal funds for income-eligible four-year-old children
- Optionally operating the preschool program by contracting with an existing approved preschool program (Head Start, other)
- Optionally operating blended or shared classrooms, where the children in a room are financially supported through several funding sources and agencies (state, Head Start, Title I, tuition, other). In a blended classroom:
 - costs are shared (e.g. prorated to each fund source)
 - separate audit trails are maintained for each fund source
 - classrooms must operate meeting requirements of all funding sources (e.g. where standards are not comparable or the same, the most stringent standard applies)
 - children receive all services for which they are eligible
- Working with childcare providers and the Family Resource Center to assist in coordinating before- and after-school childcare (wrap-around services)
- Collaborating with medical, health, mental health and social service agencies to meet the comprehensive needs of children and families.

Quick Links:

<https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/conpro/prim-pre/Pages/School-Readiness-Definition.aspx>

<https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/conpro/prim-pre/Pages/Preschool-Regulations.aspx>

<https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/conpro/prim-pre/Pages/Early-Childhood-Resources.aspx>

<https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/conpro/prim-pre/Pages/Head-Start-Full-Utilization.aspx>

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