

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STAFF NOTE

Topic: 2024-2025 Preschool Grant Allotment System and Funding Rates

Date: June 2024

Action Requested: Review Action/Consent Action/Discussion

Held In: Full Board State Schools United We Learn

SUMMARY OF ISSUE BEFORE THE BOARD:

To take action on the proposed 2024-2025 Preschool Grant Allotment System and Funding Rates.

COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATION:

The Commissioner recommends that the board approve the preschool per-child rates for 2024-2025. The rates are based upon the budget approved by the 2024 General Assembly.

APPLICABLE STATUTE OR REGULATION:

KRS 157.3175, 702 KAR 3:250

BACKGROUND:

Existing Policy:

The state-funded preschool program is available to 3- and 4-year-old children with disabilities and 4-year-olds whose household income falls within 160% of federal poverty guidelines. Children who do not meet eligibility requirements may still participate if space is available. Established in 1990, preschool services are designed to provide children with developmentally appropriate teaching and learning experiences, as well as access to medical, mental health and social services. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) administers this program through a non-competitive state grant allocation process.

A formula is used to distribute funding to school districts. Amounts are based on the average number of children served on Dec. 1 and March 1 of the previous academic year. The sum of this average is multiplied by per-child rates approved by the Kentucky Board of Education for the new school year. There is a standard per-child rate for three enrollment categories: speech, developmental delay and income eligible children. There is a weighted category for children with severe/multiple disabilities. While funding is based upon a per-child rate, funds may be used to support any allowable preschool expenditure in school districts.

Between December 1, 2022, and December 1, 2023, total enrollment of preschool students increased from 19,523 to 19,737. While enrollment continues to climb, the fall count number has not reached the level reported in 2019 (21,649).

Summary of Issue:

Each spring, the Kentucky Board of Education establishes the per-child rates for the Kentucky Preschool Program for the upcoming school year based on the appropriation provided by the General Assembly. The following preschool rates for at-risk children and children with disabilities are recommended for the 2024-2025 school year:

At-Risk:	\$3,889
Speech:	\$3,889
Developmental Delay:	\$3,889
Severe:	\$7,389

Budget Impact:

The General Assembly appropriated \$84,481,100 to the state-funded preschool program for each year of the 2024-2026 fiscal biennium. The preschool program is level funded for 2024-2025. However, additional funding for the Early Childhood Regional Training Centers (RTCs) was not included in the final enacted budget.

This year Kentucky's enrollment grew over the previous year. The average number of children enrolled on Dec. 1 and March 1 increased from 18,333 in school year 2021-2022 to 20,243 in school year 2022-2023.

GROUPS CONSULTED AND BRIEF SUMMARY OF RESPONSES:

The Office of Special Education and Early Learning (OSEEL) and the Office of Financial Operations (OFO) work closely together to finalize preschool enrollment counts, per child rates and school district funding allocations. In addition, OSEEL staff communicate regularly with multiple stakeholder groups, including the Governor's Office of Early Childhood, the Early Childhood Advisory Council, the Child Care Advisory Council, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and other advocacy groups such as the Prichard Committee, about action needed to increase quality and access to early learning environments.

CONTACT PERSON(S):

Gretta Hylton, Associate Commissioner
Office of Special Education and Early Learning
Email: Gretta.Hylton@education.ky.gov
(502) 564-4970


Commissioner of Education

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