

# Preschool

## Definition

*At risk* is all participating 4-year-olds who meet income eligibility for the Kentucky Preschool Program. *Disabled* is all participating 3- and 4-year-olds who meet eligibility for the Kentucky Preschool Program due to developmental delay or disabilities. *Head Start* is participating 3- and 4-year-olds whose family income meets federal guidelines for poverty. *Percent* is the total number of children enrolled in these programs of all 3- and 4-year-olds.

## Data in context

All families want their children to succeed in school, but many lack the necessary supports to provide a strong start. High-quality early childhood education programs, including state- and federally-funded preschool programs, build a solid foundation for young children, preparing them for future learning.<sup>1</sup> Preschool programs also foster positive long-term academic and social gains for children at risk of starting primary school behind their peers.<sup>2</sup>

Investments in early childhood programs yield greater returns than many publically-funded economic development projects.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, participants are more likely to graduate from high school,<sup>4</sup> increasing their potential earnings and tax contributions. Thirty-eight states offered public preschool programs in SY 2007, serving 22 percent of 4-year-olds and 3 percent of 3-year-olds.<sup>5</sup>

In Kentucky, children from low-income families and children with disabilities qualify for the federally-funded Head Start program until all Head Start funds are used, and the Kentucky Preschool Program serves remaining eligible children. Kentucky's preschool program serves approximately 29 percent of all 4-year-olds but only 11 percent of 3-year-olds.<sup>6</sup> During the 2006-07 school year, the majority of children served by the program were White (77 percent), 15 percent were African-American, 5 percent were Hispanic, 1 percent were Asian, and 1 percent were Native American.<sup>7</sup>

Head Start provides education, as well as health, nutrition, and social services, to low-income children and their families to promote school readiness.<sup>8</sup> In addition to the 16,368 children served by Head Start, Early Head Start served an additional 1,094 infants, toddlers, and pregnant women during the 2006-07 school year.<sup>9</sup> In Kentucky during the past



five years, most children served by Head Start were White (74 percent), 20 percent were Black, 2.3 percent were Hispanic, and 2.7 percent were Bi- or Multi-racial.<sup>10</sup>

The Kentucky Preschool Program served 1,138 children with limited English proficiency (LEP) in SY 2007.<sup>11</sup> Children with LEP face several risk factors that increase the potential benefits of preschool participation. However, national research indicates children in immigrant families are less likely to participate in early childhood programs, due to factors such as poverty, level of parental education, and language barriers.<sup>12</sup> Increasing access to quality early education for immigrant families through targeted outreach can strengthen future education outcomes and also help facilitate integration into American society.<sup>13</sup>

In December 2007, Kentucky served 34 percent of all 3- and 4-year-olds through Head Start and the Kentucky Preschool Program. Fewer than 20 percent of children were served by public preschool in Allen, Boone, Christian, Fayette, Trimble, and Woodford Counties. Rates exceeded 80 percent in Breathitt, Leslie, Owsley, and Robertson Counties.

Kentucky can strengthen its preschool program by expanding access to all 3- and 4-year-olds in families with income below 200 percent of the federal poverty line.<sup>14</sup> By

delivering expanded services through a diverse model that includes existing community-based child care, programs can achieve cost savings, improve the overall quality of child care, and reduce the amount of time young children spend in transit to school sites out of their neighborhoods.<sup>15</sup>

**Data Note:** Data reflect enrollment on December 1, 2007.

**Data Source:** Kentucky Department of Education. Number of children for rate calculation from Kentucky Population Research at the University of Louisville Urban Studies Institute.

**Rate Calculation:** (total number of students enrolled in preschool \* 100) / (number of 3- and 4-year-olds)

- 1 Barnett, W. (2008). *Preschool Education and Its Lasting Effects: Research and Policy Implications*. National Institute for Early Education Research. Available at <http://www.nieer.org>. Accessed September 2008.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Rolnick, A., and Grunewald, R. (2003). "Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return." *fedgazette*. Available at <http://www.minneapolisfed.org>. Accessed September 2008.
- 4 Barnett, W. (2008). *Preschool Education and Its Lasting Effects: Research and Policy Implications*. National Institute for Early Education Research. Available at <http://www.nieer.org>. Accessed September 2008.
- 5 Barnett, W., Hustedt, J., Friedman, A., Boyd, J., and Ainsworth, P. (2007.) *The State of Preschool 2007*. National Institute for Early Education Research. Available at <http://www.nieer.org>. Accessed September 2008.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Kentucky Department of Education. *Kentucky Preschool Program 2007 Performance Report*. Available at <http://www.education.ky.gov>. Accessed September 2008.
- 8 Office of Head Start website. Available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov>. Accessed September 2008.
- 9 Data obtained from the Kentucky Department of Education, Head Start Collaboration Office, July 2008.
- 10 Fassinger, P. (2007). *Head Start and Early Head Start Data Available Through the KIDS COUNT 2007 Head Start Excel File*. Fargo, ND: North Dakota KIDS COUNT.
- 11 Kentucky Department of Education. *Kentucky Preschool Program 2007 Performance Report*. Available at <http://www.education.ky.gov>. Accessed September 2008.
- 12 Laosa, L., and Ainsworth, P. (2007). "Is Public Pre-K Preparing Hispanic Children to Succeed in School?" *Preschool Policy Brief*. National Institute for Early Education Research. Available at <http://www.nieer.org>. Accessed September 2008.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence (2007). *Strong Start Kentucky: Investing in Quality Early Care & Education to Ensure Future Success*. Available at <http://www.prichardcommittee.org>. Accessed August 2008.
- 15 Ibid.

## Preschoolers enrolled in public schools (number & percent of all 3- & 4-year-olds)

	December 2007			
	Kentucky Public Preschool At Risk	Disabled	Head Start	Percent
<b>Kentucky</b>	<b>9,631</b>	<b>11,661</b>	<b>16,368</b>	<b>34</b>
Adair	33	43	72	34
Allen	34	13	40	18
Anderson	20	194	37	47
Ballard	5	99	40	72
Barren	123	214	180	49
Bath	20	17	77	38
Bell	42	80	163	39
Boone	65	368	89	15
Bourbon	75	50	183	66
Boyd	32	71	320	35
Boyle	78	157	18	40
Bracken	2	62	20	38
Breathitt	15	220	60	81
Breckinridge	14	35	135	39
Bullitt	191	125	84	22
Butler	20	30	34	24
Caldwell	44	46	34	44
Galloway	58	122	105	39
Campbell	69	354	1,275	78
Carlisle	1	61	20	72
Carroll	13	21	105	44
Carter	95	53	138	42
Casey	23	35	72	32
Christian	190	144	109	15
Clark	52	100	190	36
Clay	34	55	212	55
Clinton	23	77	40	54
Crittenden	9	34	54	53
Cumberland	2	18	60	49
Daviess	300	387	370	40
Edmonson	40	72	31	54
Elliott	0	3	60	40
Estill	40	32	40	29
Fayette	524	332	326	16
Fleming	23	17	150	50
Floyd	17	87	250	31
Franklin	44	127	109	23
Fulton	4	34	55	65
Gallatin	33	28	15	31
Garrard	66	44	44	39

	December 2007			
	Kentucky Public Preschool At Risk	Disabled	Head Start	Percent
Grant	46	44	234	42
Graves	120	141	116	40
Grayson	47	85	158	46
Green	0	0	80	31
Greenup	34	48	223	35
Hancock	41	27	36	45
Hardin	224	344	141	24
Harlan	97	95	271	61
Harrison	23	33	135	42
Hart	31	72	40	29
Henderson	155	74	98	26
Henry	78	43	53	41
Hickman	0	44	20	61
Hopkins	122	196	191	46
Jackson	15	66	85	49
Jefferson	2,827	917	1,690	28
Jessamine	112	92	64	21
Johnson	7	33	150	30
Kenton	309	608	498	30
Knott	17	105	130	72
Knox	73	116	300	51
LaRue	30	27	40	30
Laurel	117	131	134	25
Lawrence	51	28	40	33
Lee	0	5	80	55
Leslie	57	45	140	95
Letcher	7	59	200	46
Lewis	6	101	140	75
Lincoln	44	54	185	43
Livingston	23	27	37	47
Logan	50	184	145	57
Lyon	10	11	29	41
McCracken	61	160	302	33
McCreary	72	94	60	50
McLean	19	28	22	29
Madison	100	265	172	26
Magoffin	4	11	152	48
Marion	27	39	90	28
Marshall	41	82	60	28
Martin	0	14	139	51
Mason	34	77	154	65

	December 2007			
	Kentucky Public Preschool At Risk	Disabled	Head Start	Percent
Meade	61	109	33	35
Menifee	5	4	63	46
Mercer	19	93	38	27
Metcalfe	22	46	40	41
Monroe	39	32	40	40
Montgomery	45	64	97	28
Morgan	1	42	63	36
Muhlenberg	36	105	181	45
Nelson	93	202	180	40
Nicholas	20	12	52	44
Ohio	83	85	116	47
Oldham	57	139	72	20
Owen	25	39	30	33
Owsley	3	2	90	83
Pendleton	29	96	20	42
Perry	111	121	170	49
Pike	6	66	528	40
Powell	14	29	130	48
Pulaski	237	157	120	34
Robertson	15	3	18	90
Rockcastle	40	36	65	34
Rowan	47	121	40	40
Russell	38	49	52	32
Scott	115	176	49	25
Shelby	104	77	62	20
Simpson	45	58	40	33
Spencer	20	98	15	29
Taylor	53	68	107	40
Todd	39	153	15	57
Trigg	28	44	50	42
Trimble	0	9	32	18
Union	40	58	100	55
Warren	274	292	618	43
Washington	21	32	75	40
Wayne	77	68	112	52
Webster	31	53	83	44
Whitley	96	87	177	35
Wolfe	0	0	108	47
Woodford	38	50	37	19