

# INFORMATION SHEET



## Early Childhood Funding

### CONSIDERATIONS FOR 2025-2026 AND 2026-2027

A child's earliest years are an incredible opportunity to support later success. More than 90% of a child's brain architecture develops by age five, and one million new neural connections happen every second during the first years of life. Districts can consider the following while planning programming.

### Kansas Parents as Teachers

- Programs should seek to achieve **Blue Ribbon** or **Model** status to ensure delivery of quality services with fidelity to the evidence-based Parents as Teachers model.
- **The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) will continue to administer Kansas Parents as Teachers for the 2025-2026 school year.** Beginning July 1, 2026, the new Kansas Office of Early Childhood will be responsible for state-level administration of home visitation programs, including Kansas Parents as Teachers.
  - Lisa Williams ([lisa.williams@ksde.gov](mailto:lisa.williams@ksde.gov)) will remain the Kansas Parents as Teachers state coordinator through this transition.
  - Anticipated grant application timelines for 2026-2027 may need to adjust to account for this lead agency change.
- The Fiscal Year 2026 budget maintained level state funding allocated for Kansas Parents as Teachers grants at \$9,437,635.
  - Kansas Parents as Teachers grants require a minimum local match of at least 50% (\$0.50 cents local match for each \$1 of state grant funding). This is a minimum required local match, and districts may certainly exceed this minimum required local contribution. **Districts should consider increasing local sources of funding to maintain or expand Kansas Parents as Teachers services.**
  - Partnering with existing programs is an effective strategy to expand programming.
  - Forecasted declines in state master tobacco settlement revenue creates fiscal pressure for the Children's Initiatives Fund, which is currently the funding source for these grants.

### Preschool Programming

- Districts can offer preschool in a variety of settings and generate school finance formula aid. Contracting with partners to operate preschool is one strategy to expand preschool access while supporting community-based childcare.
- The Kansas Preschool Revenue Calculator and Budget Template ([www.ksde.gov](http://www.ksde.gov), Early Childhood > Early Childhood Funding) can help estimate revenue and budget across multiple funding sources.

*Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.*

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Preschool-aged students with disabilities AND 3- and 4-year-old students who meet an at-risk criterion for the Preschool-Aged At-Risk Program and who are enrolled and attending a program that meets program requirements on Count Day automatically count as a ½ student (0.5 FTE) in calculating a district's enrollment and accompanying weightings.

- Review Preschool-Aged At-Risk Program Requirements, available at [www.ksde.gov](http://www.ksde.gov), **Early Childhood > Preschool Programming**, for program expectations.
  - Preschool-Aged At-Risk programs must implement a research-based curriculum. This curriculum may or may not be included on the approved list of state at-risk evidence-based programs.
- The (separate) at-risk student weighting is calculated by determining the number of students eligible for free meals included in the district enrollment, including preschool students.
  - This funding may be used to provide services for qualifying preschool students.
    - The approved list of state at-risk evidence-based practices includes providing quality early learning opportunities (PreK).
  - If districts are spending Kansas At-Risk Pupil Assistance Program funding to purchase preschool curriculum, that preschool curriculum must be included on the approved list of state at-risk evidence-based programs.

## Kansas Preschool Pilot grant

- The amount of Kansas Preschool Pilot grant funding requested remains much larger than the amount of funding available. There are other larger and more sustainable options for districts to invest in preschool. These include state school finance formula funds, special education funds, and federal Head Start grants.
- KSDE anticipates continuing to require applicants to use the Preschool Revenue Calculator and Budget Template tool in 2026-2027 to demonstrate applicants are reinvesting other funding sources into preschool programs before requesting Kansas Preschool Pilot grant funds to supplement gaps.
- Forecasted declines in state master tobacco settlement revenue creates fiscal pressure for the Children's Initiatives Fund, which is currently half of the funding source for Kansas Preschool Pilot grants.

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