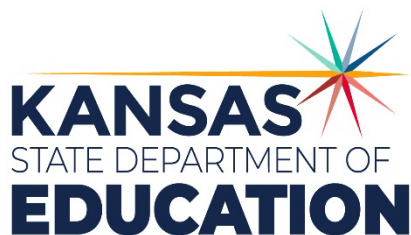


# 2025-2026 Preschool-Aged At-Risk Program Requirements

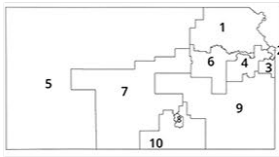


*Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.*

MONTH YEAR



900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 600  
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212  
(785) 296-3203  
[www.ksde.gov/board](http://www.ksde.gov/board)



## SUCCESS DEFINED

A successful Kansas high school graduate has the

- Academic preparation,
- Cognitive preparation,
- Technical skills,
- Employability skills and
- Civic engagement

to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

## OUTCOMES

- Social-emotional growth
- Kindergarten readiness
- Individual Plan of Study
- Civic engagement
- Academically prepared for postsecondary
- High school graduation
- Postsecondary success



# Kansas State Board of Education

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## MISSION

To prepare Kansas students for lifelong success through rigorous, quality academic instruction, career training and character development according to each student's gifts and talents.

## VISION

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

## MOTTO

Kansans Can

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION  Dr. Randy Watson <a href="mailto:Randy.Watson@ksde.gov">Randy.Watson@ksde.gov</a>	DEPUTY COMMISSIONER Division of Fiscal and Administrative Services  Dr. Frank Harwood <a href="mailto:Frank.Harwood@ksde.gov">Frank.Harwood@ksde.gov</a>	DEPUTY COMMISSIONER Division of Learning Services  Dr. Ben Proctor <a href="mailto:Ben.Proctor@ksde.gov">Ben.Proctor@ksde.gov</a>
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The Kansas State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: KSDE General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, KSDE, Landon State Office Building, 900 S.W. Jackson, Suite 102, Topeka, KS 66612, (785) 296-3201.

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

Jan. 25, 2025

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## General Information and Requirements

The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) invites school districts to submit plans to provide preschool services to children at risk of entering kindergarten socially, emotionally, or academically unprepared for success.

**In districts operating approved programs, 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 on Count Day (September 20) will automatically count as a ½ student (0.5 FTE) in calculating a district's enrollment and accompanying weightings.** If September 20 is not a school day, such as a weekend, Count Day moves to the first school day following September 20.

**BASE (Base Aid for Student Excellence) K.S.A. 72-5132:** In 2019, the Legislature amended the “base aid for student excellence” per pupil. The BASE is used to calculate the amount of funding generated by a district’s enrollment and accompanying weightings. Beginning in school year 2023-2024, the BASE is adjusted by the average percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) in the Midwest region during the three immediately preceding school years. The preliminary (November 2024) estimate for the 2025-2026 BASE is **\$5,611. This means that a ½ student (0.5 FTE) would generate \$2,806 in 2025-2026.** The final 2025-2026 BASE will be available in April 2025.

**K.S.A 72-5132** defines a “Preschool-aged at-risk student” as “an at-risk student who has attained the age of three years, is under the age of eligibility for attendance at kindergarten and has been selected by the state board in accordance with guidelines governing the selection of students for participation in Head Start programs.” Each preschool-aged at-risk student enrolled in a school district and receiving services under an approved at-risk student assistance plan is counted as ½ student (0.5 FTE).

A 3-year-old is a child who is three years of age on or before August 31, 2025. A 4-year-old is a child who is four years of age on or before August 31, 2025. Students who are age-eligible for kindergarten (5 years old on or before August 31 of the current school year) do not generate Preschool-Aged At-Risk funding.

Each student enrolled and attending special education and related services for preschool-aged exceptional children provided for by the school district is counted as ½ student (0.5 FTE) in calculating a district’s enrollment and additional weightings. In other words, 3- and 4-year-old students with IEPs generate the same amount of funding as preschool-aged at-risk students.

See the Enrollment Handbook posted to the [KSDE Fiscal Auditing webpage](#) for more information.

## At-Risk Criteria

Children must meet one or more of the at-risk criteria listed below and be enrolled on Count Day (September 20) to be eligible to generate funding. To be eligible for funding, a child must be properly reported on the ENRL report in the KIDS Collection System. Documentation for the criterion met for each child will need to be available for auditors.

### At-Risk Criteria for Preschool-Aged At-Risk include:

- 1. Poverty.** *The student qualifies for free meals under the National School Lunch Program on September 22, 2025. Note that this criterion will match the criteria for determining which PreK-12 students generate the at-risk weighting.*
- 2. Single Parent Families.** *The custodial parent is unmarried on the first day of school.*
- 3. Foster care or Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) referral.** *At any point between the time of enrollment and Count Day, the child is in the custody of the secretary for children and families. This may include foster care, custodial grandparents/kinship care, or other out-of-home placement. For children referred by DCF, the reason for referral must describe the need for the child to attend the Pre-K program or receive the early childhood service and be documented and signed by the DCF agent.*
- 4. Teen Parents.** *At least one parent was a teenager (19 or younger) when the child was born.*
- 5. Either parent is lacking a high school diploma or GED.** *At least one parent is lacking a high school diploma or a GED on the first day of school.*
- 6. English Language Learner.** *The student must qualify for bilingual weighting and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services must be provided, and forms must be in the child's file. See the [KSDE ESOL/Bilingual Education Program Guidance](#) for process and criteria. NOTE: ESOL services must be provided by qualified teachers.*
- 7. Lower than expected developmental progress in at least one of the following areas: cognitive development; physical development; communication/literacy; social emotional/behavior; adaptive behavior/self-help skills.** *Based on appropriate and valid assessment results, the developmental progress of the child has been determined by a trained professional to be lower than typically expected for his/her chronological age, yet above what would be considered eligible for special education services (based on the procedural manual and guidance materials of specific assessment instruments). Scores that fall at or below the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile indicate 'at-risk'.*
- 8. Child qualifying for migrant status.** *A copy of the certificate of eligibility must be on file.*
- 9. Children who experience chronic or episodic homelessness.** *Residence of homeless student while homeless must be completed in the KIDS Collection System as determined by local educational liaison.*

## Preschool-Aged At-Risk Funds

[K.S.A. 72-5154](#) establishes the preschool-aged at-risk education fund. The expenses of a school district directly attributable to providing preschool-aged at-risk assistance or programs shall be paid from the preschool-aged at-risk education fund.

Preschool-Aged At-Risk funds can solely be used to fund preschool programs. All preschool-aged at-risk students must be in classrooms that meet all preschool-aged at-risk program requirements. Individual preschool classrooms may be comprised of students who generate preschool-aged at-risk funding and students who do not generate preschool-aged at-risk funding.

## Using Multiple Sources of Funding

Programs are encouraged to use a variety of funding sources and serve all children in an inclusive setting. It will be essential for programs to maintain clear records identifying how separate funding sources were utilized.

Potential funding sources could include, but are not limited to: [At-Risk Education Funding](#) (to serve qualifying preschool students), School District General Fund, Preschool-Aged At-Risk Fund, Early Childhood Block Grant (Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund), [Categorical Aid/Special Education Funding](#), Head Start (Federal Administration for Children and Families), Kansas Preschool Pilot grant, Child and Adult Care Food Program/National School Lunch Program, Child Care Subsidy (Kansas Department for Children and Families), [McKinney-Vento, Title I, Title II](#), Parent fees/tuition, [Kansas Parents as Teachers](#), Local Grants/Funding (private funders).

See [KSDE's Early Childhood Webpage](#) for resources and information on Early Childhood Funding including the [Preschool Revenue Calculator/Budget Template](#).

Contact Amanda Petersen ([amanda.petersen@ksde.gov](mailto:amanda.petersen@ksde.gov)) for assistance budgeting for preschool using multiple funding sources.

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**Q:** *Has anything changed since the 24-25 Preschool-Aged At-Risk Requirements?*

**A:** *Yes. The following three items have changed.*

**1. At-Risk Criteria #3** *has changed to include children in foster care. See page 5 item 3 for further detail.*

**2. Developmental Screenings** *must now be completed withing 45 days of enrollment. See page 9 for further detail.*

**3. Science of Reading Licensure Requirements.** *Beginning July 1, 2028, Kansas veteran educators serving in the positions listed below will be required to demonstrate knowledge of the science of reading to renew their professional license. See page 12 for further detail.*

## Submission, Review and Approval of Programs

The Kansas State Board of Education shall approve programs for Preschool-Aged At-Risk funding. **Approval Forms** must be submitted to the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 3, 2025.

Approval forms must be completed via Qualtrics survey. Information requested in that survey can be found at the end of this document. Programs will also indicate in this platform that they agree to follow the assurances also found at the end of this document. There will be no need to upload or send any additional documents other than completing the 2025-2026 Preschool-Aged At-Risk Approval Form in the Qualtrics Survey.

Applicants are encouraged to submit early to avoid technical issues. For program questions or technical issues, please contact Natalie McClane at 785-296-5081 or [natalie.mcclane@ksde.gov](mailto:natalie.mcclane@ksde.gov).

## Important Dates

Preschool-Aged At-Risk Approval Forms Due..... April 3, 2025  
Kansas State Board of Education Approval of Programs .....May 14-15, 2025  
Count Day .....September 22, 2025  
ENRL Collection – Report all preschool students..... See [kidsweb.ksde.gov](https://kidsweb.ksde.gov) for deadlines.



## Additional Information and Resources Regarding Program Requirements

KSDE recommends districts utilize the [Kansas Prekindergarten Guide](#) for high-quality prekindergarten practices. The guide supports the implementation of developmentally appropriate and academically rigorous programs. The Guide includes:

*“Play and academics are not an either/or. Play is an essential component in learning for young children. Rigorous standards for math, language, literacy, and social and emotional skills can be provided through playful experiences to support children in reaching benchmarks.”*

### Inclusion of All Children

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. [Research shows that early childhood inclusion is beneficial to both children with and without disabilities.](#)

Districts should provide the most inclusive classrooms possible. Children receiving Early Childhood Special Education Services (ECSE), who are Dual Language Learners (DLL) and English Learners (EL), who are from migrant worker families, and whose families are experiencing homelessness should be included in Preschool-Aged At-Risk classrooms.

Each year school districts report data for Indicator 6 for Part B, one of [the 17 indicators](#) reported to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Indicator 6: Preschool Environments measures the extent to which preschool students with disabilities receive the majority of their special education and related services in settings with children who are typically developing.

Districts can access preliminary data to see whether they are on track to meet State Performance Plan (SPP) targets for both Indicator 6A and 6B: Preschool Environments. The “Projected Indicator 6 Report” in the SPEDPro authenticated application shares a snapshot of current data. Visit [KSDE's Technical Assistance Systems Network \(TASN\) website for additional resources on Indicator 6: Preschool Environments.](#)



## Curriculum, Screening and Assessment

### Curriculum Models

Programs must implement a research-based preschool curriculum that includes literacy, math, and social-emotional components. The curricula must be approved by KSDE and align to the Kansas Early Learning Standards. When selecting curricula, programs should consider:

- the plan for monitoring ongoing progress, including additional assessments.
- any supplemental curriculum/materials used to address literacy, math, and social-emotional development.
- the training plan (should include teachers, assistants, paraprofessionals, and related services staff). It is highly recommended that the director/program administrator also receive training.

Additional information regarding curriculum may be found at:

- [What Works Clearinghouse](#)
- [Evidence for ESSA](#)
- [Ed Reports](#)
- [Head Start's Curriculum Consumer Report](#)
- [CASEL Program Guide \(Social Emotional Development\)](#)
- [KSDE's List of Approved Evidence-Based Practices](#)

### Developmental Screenings

Programs are required to ensure each child receives a valid, reliable developmental screening. The tool must be approved by KSDE, and programs must share results with the child's family. Programs may determine whether children receive screenings prior to the start of the school year or once school begins. Students who enroll after the beginning of the school year must receive a screening within 45 days of enrollment.

KSDE recommends but does not require that the program select the ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 developmental and social-emotional screenings for preschool-aged students. Kansas schools can use their building ASQ Online account for any child they serve in that building, birth through kindergarten entry, at any point during the year at no additional cost to the school.

### Assessments

Programs are required to implement valid, reliable assessments aligned to the Kansas Early Learning Standards to measure children's developmental growth throughout the program year.

## Structure

### Hours

Districts must provide a minimum of 465 instructional hours for each child during the school year. 465 hours is a bare minimum. Programs are encouraged to build in additional days to ensure they meet or exceed these minimum hours, in the event that the school is closed due to inclement weather or for any other circumstances.

Meal and snack times are an important opportunity for learning for preschool students and can be counted as instructional time in preschool classrooms if it takes place with a certified teacher present. Meal and snack times cannot be counted as instructional time in K-12 settings.

Visit the [KSDE Fiscal Auditing webpage](#) for additional resources to calculate total instructional hours provided, including the School Term Audit Guide and the 465 Hour Building Log Calculator (PreK).

### Meals and Snacks

Programs must provide at least one meal or snack per classroom session to all children attending the program. Schools can earn reimbursement for providing nutritious meals and snacks by participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program or the School Lunch Program. Learn more at the [Achieve Good Nutrition with Preschoolers](#) resource or contact the KSDE Child Nutrition and Wellness Team (785-296-2276) for additional information.

### Class Size and Ratios

The adult-to-child ratio must be no more than 1:10 at all times, with a classroom size not to exceed 20 students. This applies to ALL children in the classroom, regardless of funding.

Districts may request a waiver for unique circumstances that lead to class size exceeding 20 students. These circumstances may include promoting inclusive programming, prioritizing services for children and families experiencing acute challenges, supporting a mixed-delivery model of delivering preschool services in community-based settings, unexpected fluctuations in enrollment, challenges related to hiring qualified staff, or challenges related to facilities capacity. The following conditions must be met:

- Classroom size cannot exceed 25 students in one classroom.
- The adult-to-child ratio must be 1:10 or better at all times.

Waivers must be approved by the Kansas State Department of Education before they are considered applicable. Waivers expire annually on June 30. To request a waiver, please email the following information to Natalie McClane at [natalie.mcclane@ksde.gov](mailto:natalie.mcclane@ksde.gov):

- School contact information
- Primary contact information

- Provide justification for the proposed waiver by indicating:
  - Why is the applicant unable to meet the maximum classroom size requirement?
  - How many children will be served in the classroom?
  - How many adults will be in the classroom?
  - How many years has the program had more than 20 students per classroom?
  - How does the applicant plan to prioritize meeting the maximum classroom size requirement in the future? What is the timeline?

## Attendance

Districts must keep daily attendance records for each student. Regular school attendance is an important factor in children's social and cognitive development. Districts should be proactive in educating families, staff, and the community on the benefits of regularly attending school, and the disadvantages associated with absenteeism. For resources and general information on attendance, please visit the following websites:

- [The KSDE Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism Webpage](#)
- [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)
- [Encouraging and Supporting Regular Attendance](#)
- [Kansas Parent Information Resource Center](#)

## Staff Requirements

### Teacher Qualifications

Districts should approach filling preschool teaching positions in the same way that they seek to fill K-12 positions in their district with appropriately qualified staff. An individual who has received a waiver approved by the Kansas State Board of Education satisfies the requirement to fill a preschool teaching position.

Except as otherwise provided in K.A.R. 91-31-34, each education system accredited by the Kansas State Board of Education should fill a general education preschool teaching position with a teacher with one of the following endorsements on their teaching license:

#### **General Education PreK Assignment**

- Early Childhood Unified, Birth to Grade3 (ECU)
- Early Childhood Unified, Birth to Kindergarten (ECU)
- Early Childhood Education (EC-EC)
- Elementary Education, PRK-6, K-6 or K-9
- Elementary Education Unified, K-6

#### **Special Education PreK Assignment**

- Early Childhood Unified, Birth to Grade 3 (ECU)
- Early Childhood Unified, Birth to Kindergarten (ECU)
- Early Childhood Handicapped (ECH)
- High incidence PrK-12
- Low Incidence PrK-12

**Science of Reading Licensure Requirements:** Beginning July 1, 2028, Kansas veteran educators serving in the positions listed below will be required to demonstrate knowledge of the science of reading to renew their professional license. This knowledge may be demonstrated by completing state-approved training or passing a state-approved literacy exam.

- Elementary Reading/English Language Arts teacher.
- Elementary History Government and Social Studies teacher.
- Elementary Special Education teacher.
- Elementary School Psychologist.
- Elementary Reading Specialist.
- Elementary Administrator.

**As it pertains to licensure, elementary indicates grades PreK-6.** When elementary is referenced grades PreK-6 are implied. Educators who have completed this requirement will receive an embossed Seal of Literacy on their State Board of Education issued license.

For additional resources, visit the [KSDE Teacher Licensure webpage](#).

## Assistant Teacher/Teacher Aide Qualifications

Teacher aides/assistant teachers/paraprofessionals should have one of the following credentials:

1. A Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate or an Associate of Arts (A.A.) in early childhood education or a related field;
2. Have a high school diploma or a GED and completed 48 credit hours at an institution of higher education;
3. Associate degree (or higher);
4. Pass a State-approved assessment that determines an ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics; or reading, writing, and mathematics readiness.

KSDE recommends option 1. Options 2-4 are also acceptable. All Assistant Teachers must complete an orientation session addressing confidentiality and the services to be provided in this program. For additional resources regarding paraprofessionals, including approved state assessments, visit the [KSDE Paraprofessionals](#) webpage.

## Professional Learning

Districts must develop a professional learning plan that includes a minimum of 15 hours of in-service training in early learning or related topics, including child abuse and neglect training, for all direct service staff, including teachers, paraprofessionals, and aides.

- These opportunities should align with the philosophy of the selected curriculum model and with the Kansas Early Learning Standards (KELS). Continuous professional learning associated with the selected curriculum model must include assistant teachers.
- See KSDE's Fact Sheet on [Does it count as in-service education?](#) for more information about quality in-service education.
- Learning opportunities should include models and strategies such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) or Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) to facilitate an inclusive classroom.
- Professional learning should include training on social-emotional topics such as Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports as well as trauma-informed care.
- Child Abuse and neglect training is required annually. Some available resources for this training are linked below.
  - [KSDE Preventing Abuse and Mandated Reporting](#)
  - [Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities](#)
  - [Kansas Children's Service League](#)
- First aid and CPR training are recommended.
- Other ideas may include:
  - [Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling \(LETRS\) for Early Childhood](#)

## 2025-2026 PRESCHOOL-AGED AT-RISK PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- The Kansas MTSS and Alignment Symposium each Fall
- [The Kansas Division for Early Childhood conference](#) each February
- [Kansas Education Service Agencies \(service centers\)](#)
  - Greenbush monthly Early Childhood Forums (contact Andrea Scott, [andrea.scott@greenbush.org](mailto:andrea.scott@greenbush.org))
  - ESSDACK [Kinders Can! Conferences](#) (December)
- A Child Development Associate (CDA) is a nationally recognized credential for early educators across settings, and Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO) [supports Kansas educators in attaining the CDA credential](#). This may be a good opportunity for professionals without an early childhood degree to earn a meaningful credential.

## Family, Business & Community Partnerships

### Family Engagement

Family engagement is a critical component of high-quality early care and education. Engaging families in their children's growth and learning can support the healthy social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of young children. These affirmative relationships also support positive lifelong outcomes.

The [Kansas Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Childhood](#) provide guidance for families, practitioners, community members, and educators to examine current practices and plan future strategies to engage families.

Programs must intentionally keep families informed of their child's development and provide opportunities to partner with district/organization staff. Programs may encourage family members to attend existing councils in the building or develop a Parent Advisory Council if one does not exist.

### 1-800-CHILDREN

[1-800-CHILDREN](#) is an easily accessible, reliable, and organized system of community resources that ensures Kansas families and communities are connected to the information, services, and supports they need, when they need them. The 1-800-CHILDREN Call Line and Resource Directory provides 24-hour, confidential, free information, support, and connection to local resources across the state. We are excited to increase the awareness and utilization of available resources and supports across Kansas.

**Preschool-Aged At-Risk programs must establish and maintain an updated listing in the [1-800-CHILDREN Resource Directory](#). [This 1-800-CHILDREN Quick Reference Guide for Providers video](#)** outlines step-by-step instructions on how to update, add, or claim a program.

(Note that the 1-800-CHILDREN Resource Directory is not intended to replace the child care resource and referral services provided by Child Care Aware of Kansas, therefore licensed child care providers do not need to establish and maintain an updated listing for child care services in 1-800-CHILDREN and should continue to maintain updated information via Child Care Aware of Kansas.)

In addition to updating a program listing at least annually, Kansas organizations serving families can:

- Share the electronic Family Outreach Card with families and caregivers in your community. 1-800-CHILDREN offers printed marketing/promotional materials such as magnets, palm cards, pens, etc. and hyperlinked logos for provider websites. Contact Michelle Reichart, 1-800-CHILDREN Community Engagement and Marketing Coordinator, at [mreichart@ksde.org](mailto:mreichart@ksde.org) to request these.



- Review the [1-800-CHILDREN Resource Directory HERE](#).
- Download the free 1-800-CHILDREN Resource Directory app by searching “1800childrenks” in the iOS or Android app store.
- To request a presentation or demo of the resource directory and call line supports or to reach out with additional questions or talk about more opportunities with 1-800-CHILDREN, contact Michelle Reichart, 1-800-CHILDREN Community Engagement and Marketing Coordinator, at [mreichart@ksde.org](mailto:mreichart@ksde.org).

## Community Collaboration

Especially as school districts consider any plans to expand preschool capacity in your community, district leaders should consider how community partnerships can strengthen opportunities for young children communitywide- recognizing that home-and center-based licensed child care, including Head Start and faith-based partners, are critically important partners in our Kansas early learning landscape. K.S.A 72-3215 authorizes the board of education of any school district to contract with private, nonprofit corporations or associations or with any public or private agency or institution, whether located within or outside the state, for the establishment, operation, and maintenance of such preschool programs. Please contact Natalie McClane ([natalie.mcclane@ksde.gov](mailto:natalie.mcclane@ksde.gov)) if KSDE can aid in considering how community partnerships can support expanded preschool capacity.

Programs must communicate and collaborate with community partners. Programs are encouraged to engage with existing early childhood groups in their community such as their Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC). See the [Kansas Interagency Coordinating Councils’s website](#). Contact Stacy Clarke for more information on LICCs at (785) 296-3953 or [kansasicc@ksde.gov](mailto:kansasicc@ksde.gov).

Programs must utilize the LICC or an Advisory Committee that meets at least quarterly. The committee must include at least one currently enrolled parent and may include Part C Infant and Toddler Services Early Intervention, Part B 619, other early learning programs, or local home visiting programs.

Communication with the ICC or Advisory Council should include:

- The number of children enrolled and on the wait list, and number of openings available
- Staffing changes and/or vacancies
- Results of community collaboration and upcoming opportunities to collaborate
- Upcoming professional learning opportunities

Each local educational agency receiving Title I funds is required to develop agreements and carry out coordination with Head Start and, if feasible, with other early childhood programs serving children who will attend the schools of the local educational agency. Kansas has

developed a [Kindergarten Readiness Toolkit](#). This toolkit includes a sample Memorandum of Understanding that can be tailored to the needs and plans of each community.

[Child Care Aware of Kansas](#) provides technical assistance for Kansas communities working to address access to affordable, high-quality child care. Email [communitysupport@ks.childcareaware.org](mailto:communitysupport@ks.childcareaware.org) to request support in establishing and facilitating a community team, planning, and getting connected with the various funding sources that can support start-up.

## Transition to Kindergarten

The transition into kindergarten is a critical milestone for children, families, and staff. A smooth transition helps kindergarten staff meet the individual needs of children. “When these transitions are successful, children and families are more likely to experience better long-term school success” ([Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center](#)). Successful collaboration should engage the wide variety of the stakeholders in a community who support young children and their families. A defined, sustainable kindergarten transition plan benefits the entire community.

KSDE recommends that all communities in Kansas should engage in an intentional, active planning process regarding transitions to kindergarten. Community-led collaboration should occur in an inclusive manner that engages a wide representation of early childhood stakeholders, including families, early childhood care and education providers, schools, businesses, and other partners in the community mixed-delivery system. This planning process should result in a formal agreement that defines the goals, roles, responsibilities, and specific activities of the kindergarten transition process. The following toolkit may be used as a starting point for communities to adopt or adapt as needed to fit their local goals:

[Kindergarten Readiness MOU Toolkit](#).

## Program Approval Form

All programs must receive program approval to be funded for Preschool-Aged At-Risk Funding annually. The Program Approval Form, including agreement to the 2025-2026 Preschool-Aged At-Risk Program Assurances, must be completed in the Qualtrics Survey. [Click here](#) to complete the Program Approval Form.

The following information will be requested in the Program Approval Form.

### District Information

- USD Number:
- Name of District:
- Name of Primary Program Contact:
- Primary Contact Email:
- Primary Contact Phone:
- Name of Superintendent:
- Superintendent Email:
- Superintendent Phone:

### Community

*K.S.A. 72-5154 establishes the preschool-aged at-risk education fund and requires that "Each year the board of each school district shall prepare and submit to the state board a report on the preschool-aged at-risk student assistance or programs provided by the school district. Such report shall include the number of students who were served or provided assistance, the type of service provided, the research upon which the school district relied in determining that a need for service or assistance existed, the results of providing such service or assistance and any other information required by the state board." Annual reports submitted to the KIDS Collection System and the following questions fulfill this statutory requirement.*

- What research did your district rely on in determining that a need for preschool-aged at-risk services or assistance exists in your community?
  - Community Needs Assessment
  - KSDE's List of Evidence-Based Practices for At-Risk Programs and Instruction for Early Learning
  - Parent Survey or Feedback
  - Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot Data
  - District Data Analysis
  - Other (Please describe.)
- What results has your community seen due to providing Preschool-Aged At-Risk services in your district?

- Increased number of children accessing preschool in the community
  - Earlier identification and assistance provided to young students in need of support
  - More successful transitions into kindergarten
  - Improved Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot results
  - Improved kindergarten outcomes
  - Improved 3<sup>rd</sup> grade assessment results
  - Improved attendance rates
  - Positive feedback from families
  - Other (Please describe.)
  - N/A. This will be the first time we have accessed Preschool-Aged At-Risk funding.
- A requirement of the Preschool-Aged At-Risk Program is that programs participate in a Local Interagency Coordinating Council or Advisory Committee. Which of the following is true for your program?
    - Our program will participate in our Local Interagency Coordinating Council.
    - Our program will participate in an Advisory Committee.
    - Our program needs assistance in connecting with our Local Interagency Coordinating Council or with setting up an advisory committee to meet this requirement.
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires each school district receiving Title I funds to develop agreements and carry out coordination with Head Start and, if feasible, with other early childhood programs. Do you have agreements with any early childhood programs that feed into your district for kindergarten?
    - Our district has a written agreement with local Head Start program(s) currently in effect. If so, list the Head Start program(s).
    - Our district is collaborating with Head Start agencies to develop or update our written agreement. If so, list the Head Start program(s).
    - Our community does not include a Head Start program.
    - Our district has a written agreement to carry out coordination with other local early childhood programs. If so, list the program(s).
    - Our district has no written agreements to carry out coordination with another early childhood program(s).
  - Programs must establish and maintain an updated listing in the 1-800-CHILDREN Resource Directory. Has your program done this?

### **Curriculum, Screening and Assessment**

- Name(s) of the Literacy Curriculum the program will be using.

- What resource did you use to verify that this curriculum is research-based?
- Name(s) of the Mathematics Curriculum the program will be using.
- What resource did you use to verify that this curriculum is research-based?
- Name(s) of the Social Emotional Curriculum the program will be using.
- What resource did you use to verify that this curriculum is research based?
- Name of the screening tool(s) the program will be using.
- Name of the assessment(s) the program will be using.

### **Program Structure**

- How many 3-and 4-year-old Preschool-Aged At-Risk students do you expect to serve in the 2025-2026 school year? *(This is for KSDE estimation purposes only. You will not be limited to a certain number of slots based on your answer.)*
- How many days of the week will 3-year-old students attend the program?
- How many days of the week will 4-year-old students attend the program?
- How many hours per day will 3-year-old students attend the program?
- How many hours per day will 4-year-old students attend the program?
- How many total hours of instruction will the district provide each 3-year-old student? If it will vary, please explain.
- How many total hours of instruction will the district provide each 4-year-old student? If it will vary, please explain.
- Where are the program's classrooms physically located?
  - District-owned building dedicated to early childhood
  - District-owned building that includes other grade levels
  - Other district-owned building
  - Community agencies such as child care centers or non-profit organizations
  - Faith-based centers with and/or without religious content
  - Head Start
  - Other
- If you plan on serving both 3- and 4-year-old students, will they be served in mixed-age classrooms?

### **Staff Requirements**

- Do your Preschool-Aged At-Risk teachers and support staff currently hold the credentials required for their positions?
- If no, please explain.

### **Program Funding and Supports**

- What other sources are funding preschool services for any preschool students enrolled in your district? Check all that apply.
  - a. School District General Fund

- b. Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG)
  - c. Categorical Aid/Special Education Funding
  - d. Head Start
  - e. Child Care Development Block Grant (Child Care Subsidy)
  - f. Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
  - g. We are applying for the Kansas Preschool Pilot (KPP)
  - h. McKinney-Vento
  - i. Title I
  - j. Title II
  - k. Parent Fees/Tuition. If so, what do you charge?
  - l. Kansas Parents as Teachers
  - m. Local Grants/Funding (private funders)
  - n. Other. If so, please explain.
- What training topics, information, or other support would be helpful from KSDE in the upcoming year?

## 2025-2026 Preschool-Aged At-Risk Program Assurances

### READ COMPLETELY BEFORE SIGNING.

For the duration of the 2025-2026 school year, the district shall:

1. Provide a nondiscriminatory program.
2. Implement a research-based curriculum aligned with the Kansas Early Learning Standards.
3. Ensure that each child receives a developmental screening using an approved screening tool. The program must share results with the child's family.
4. Implement an approved assessment to measure children's developmental growth upon entry and exit of the program.
5. Implement the Preschool-Aged At-Risk Program for a minimum of 465 instructional hours during the school year in all classrooms.
6. Implement program standards, including maintaining an adult-to-child ratio of 1:10 or better at all times and a maximum class size of 20.
7. Ensure that all staff are qualified and hold the licensure as their position dictates.
8. Utilize the Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC) or an Advisory Committee that meets at least quarterly. The committee must include at least one currently enrolled parent and may include Part C Infant and Toddler Services Early Intervention, Part B 619, other early learning programs, or local home visiting programs.
9. Communicate with the LICC or Advisory Committee about:
  - Number of children enrolled and on the wait list, and number of openings available, staffing changes and/or vacancies, results of community collaboration and upcoming opportunities to collaborate, and upcoming professional learning opportunities
10. Ensure the program's information is included on the 1-800-CHILDREN Resource Directory and update this information annually or as changes occur to program information.
11. Provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for meaningful family engagement (i.e., family nights, parent/teacher conferences, field trips, parent volunteers).
12. Ensure all direct staff, teachers, paraprofessionals, and aides receive at least 15 hours of in-service training in the area of early learning, including Child Abuse and Neglect training.
13. Provide at least one meal or snack per classroom session to each child in attendance.
14. Provide and coordinate services and resources through community collaboration that includes IDEA Part B Section 619 providers and local early learning programs and builds on, but does not duplicate, services for families with age-eligible children.
15. Use fiscal control and accounting procedures to ensure proper disbursement of, and accounting for, state and federal funds paid to such applicants under this program.
16. Submit reports to KSDE to enable the agency to perform its duties, including program information, child attendance, classroom practices, and child assessment results.



17. Maintain records, including child eligibility verification, to substantiate program and funding compliance, and afford access to such records as needed by KSDE.
18. Provide a safe and developmentally appropriate environment for all children.
19. Make available services such as transportation, health services, appropriate nutritional meals, and screenings for hearing and vision as required by federal, state, and/or local law.
20. Obtain a Kansas Individual Data on Students Identification number (KIDS SSID) for each child participating in the Kansas Preschool Pilot and participate in all required KSDE Data Collections, including entry in the KIDS Collection System. KIDS SSID's may be obtained through the ASGT Record to the KIDS Collection System.
21. Ensure that on September 20, 2025, all of the children served by Preschool-Aged At-Risk funding meet at least one of the at-risk criteria.
22. Serve children aged 3 through 5. Children eligible for kindergarten (age 5 on or before August 31) may not be served with these funds.

The "SUBMIT APPROVAL FORM" button is considered your electronic signature certifying the data you entered in the 2025-2026 Preschool-Aged At-Risk Approval Form is accurate and that your program will follow the 2025-2026 Preschool-Aged At-Risk program assurances.

Clicking that button will submit your approval form to KSDE for review. Following review of your approval form, KSDE will reach out to the program contacts to confirm submission and follow-up with any questions. If everything is in order, KSDE will move forward with recommending to the Board of Education that the program be funded in the 2025-2026 school year with Preschool-Aged At-Risk funding. If there are items that do not meet Preschool-Aged At-Risk requirements, KSDE will reach out to assist with addressing these items.