

**State Pre-Kindergarten Program
(Four Year Old At-Risk) Program Standards and Requirements
2015-2016**

GUIDELINES

OUTCOME: Children will enter school ready to succeed.

The **State Pre-Kindergarten Program (Four Year Old At-Risk)** is based upon research and evidence based practice recognizing the correlation between participation in high quality early learning environments and improved child outcomes essential for later school success [Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2007). *A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy: Using Evidence to Improve Outcomes in Learning, Behavior, and Health for Vulnerable Children*. <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>] Evidence-based practice is defined as a decision-making process that integrates the best available research evidence with family and professional wisdom and values (Buisse & Wesley, 2006). The characteristics of a high quality program includes; a) well trained and knowledgeable staff, b) the implementation of curriculum and instructional practices that are supported by scientific research and/or an established evidence base (e.g. well defined scope and sequence, intentionally designed learning opportunities, a balance of teacher/child initiated activities, the use of explicit/incidental/and embedded teaching strategies), and c) a system for collecting, analyzing, and using formative and summative assessment data for instructional planning and program evaluation. All of the described characteristics are implemented with tools and procedures that are consistent with developmentally appropriate practices. In addition, high quality programs establish positive collaborative relationships with community programs and partners in order to maximize potential benefits to the families and young children they serve.

Funds will be awarded through an application process. Program descriptions must include the evidence-based practices used to promote quality. As is noted in the “Assurances” page, school districts are required to offer services that will build on and not duplicate services already provided in the community for the four-year-old at-risk population.

At-risk criteria: Any child (including a child with an IEP) is eligible to participate in a State Pre-Kindergarten (Four Year Old At-Risk) program, if they meet (1) at least one of the risk criteria; and, (2) the age requirement (4 by August 31st of the attending school year). The at-risk criteria #1-7 apply to ALL CHILDREN, including those who have IEPs. Criterion #8 applies only to children who do NOT have an IEP. This means that Districts may not exclude age eligible children who have an IEP AND who meet one of the 1-7 at-risk criteria from being enrolled in the State Pre-Kindergarten (at-risk) classroom. **The number of children in the classroom may not exceed 20—no matter what funding source is being used.**

Children who have an IEP are NOT counted in the number of a district’s awarded slots. These slots are funded through the at-risk funding and school districts are awarded funding of .5 FTE per each child who meets at least one of the 8 at-risk criteria. Age-eligible children who have an IEP AND meet at least one of the 1-7 at-risk criteria are funded through Special Education

funding, and are not considered to fill one of the ‘awarded slots’, but have the right to be in the classroom and take up one of the 20 child slots allowed in an at-risk classroom.

NOTE: Children who do not meet the age requirement can still be placed in the classroom based upon local decisions. They will be included in the ‘no more than 20 children in the classroom’ count, but will not receive any at-risk funding.

State Pre-Kindergarten (Four Year Old At-Risk) Program Standards

Program standards and components required for participation in the State Pre-Kindergarten (Four Year Old At-Risk) Program are described below.

1. Teacher Requirements

Lead Teacher Qualifications:

a. State Pre-Kindergarten Program Requirement

Teaching staff for the State Pre-Kindergarten program must have a current teacher license and must have, at the minimum, a current Elementary Education license. A Kansas license in Early Childhood Education is recommended. KSDE encourages school districts to hire teachers who have one of the following:

- Early Childhood Unified, Birth to Grade 3 license
- Early Childhood Unified, Birth to Kindergarten license
- Early Childhood Education license
- Early Childhood Special Education (ECH) license
- Early Childhood endorsement with a license in Elementary Education.

NOTE: Please be aware that teachers who do not have one of the Early Childhood licenses will not be able to use their State Pre-Kindergarten teaching experience to re-license because they are teaching outside of their license area of expertise.

Assistant Teacher/Teacher Aide Qualifications:

b. Assistant teachers must hold at least a CDA or equivalent certificate. Having the ‘highly qualified Paraprofessional’ status for QPA is acceptable but not preferred. It is strongly recommended that school districts employ paraprofessionals or aides who have at least a Child Development Associate (CDA certificate) or an A.A. in early childhood education or a related field. This teacher is considered to be a second teacher in the classroom and teaching under the supervision of the Lead Teacher.

NOTE: Paras who have been hired to work with individual children to implement their IEPs do NOT meet the requirement of a second teacher. Districts must carefully consider the assistant teacher qualifications. For more information, contact Gayle Stuber at gstuber@ksde.org

2. Curriculum & Assessment requirements:
All State Pre-Kindergarten (Four Year Old At-Risk) programs are required to collect data on child outcomes, classroom/transition practices, and family practices (this is voluntary on the part of the family). Programs should develop local child outcomes that align with their curricula as well as collect ongoing data for KSDE on the assessments listed below and enter data into the Early Childhood—Success in School database.

All programs will collect data for KSDE via the Early Childhood Success in School web-based application. The instruments used are the KELI-4 (twice annually), the Family Survey, Protective Factors Survey, the Classroom Practices Survey, and Transition Survey. Any current or new information on the instruments and the process as well as any training to be made available will be posted online and sent via various list serves to keep all involved staff up-to-date. Children in the classroom who have IEPs and are age-eligible MUST be included in the random selection process. Children who are three or five (not age-eligible) are NOT included in the random selection process but can be participants in the classroom.

Curriculum and Assessment requirements: This information will be collected via the web-based application instruments.

The core curriculum used in each program is locally determined or developed. All must be aligned with the Kansas Early Learning Standards and must be evidenced-based. Evidence-based practice is defined as a decision-making process that integrates the best available research evidence with family and professional wisdom and values (Buisse & Wesley, 2006). An evidence-based curriculum should be based upon the best research available.

NOTE: The Kansas Early Learning Standards have been revised and are aligned with the Kansas Career and College – Ready Standards. The KELI-4 has been revised to align with these newly revised standards.

To collect child data for local outcomes and to determine growth over the year, programs must use developmentally appropriate, valid, and reliable assessments, aligned with Kansas Early Learning Standards and the core curriculum of the program. The KELI-4 is used at the state level and is not appropriate for use at the program level for program outcomes because not all children are assessed in the KELI-4 process and other behaviors and skills may need to be assessed at the local level, based upon local decisions.

NOTE: Remember that a data collection process for local assessments may be used to complete items on the KELI-4R that are the same skills/behavior.

3. The teacher: child ratio will be no higher than 1: 10. This is for ALL children in a classroom—not just age-eligible children who meet at least one of the 1-7 risk criteria.
4. NO MORE THAN 20 CHILDREN MAY BE IN THE CLASSROOM—with 2 teachers (2 adults—teacher, assistant teacher/paraprofessional/teacher aide)—this is applicable to

all children, including those who have IEPs, those who are not age-eligible for the four year old at-risk program, and those who are peer-models.. Note: Itinerant special education staff or Paras who have been hired to work with individual children to implement their IEPs do NOT meet the requirement of a second teacher.

5. Teachers and assistant teachers/paraprofessionals/teacher aides must participate in at least 15 hours of in-service training annually.
6. The State Pre-Kindergarten (Four Year-Old At-Risk) program must be implemented at least 465 hours during the school year. This is typically around 3 hours a day for 5 days a week. Districts that choose a four day a week program may need to add minutes to their classroom day to meet the 465 hours a year requirement.
7. Collaboration with community early childhood partners is required to meet application assurances and must be described in the application.
8. All children must meet one or more of the at-risk criteria listed in the following table. This information will be used for the September 20th count and will determine the reimbursable number of at-risk children. Documentation for the criteria met for each child will need to be available for auditors.

Criteria for State Pre-Kindergarten (Four-Year Old At-Risk) Program

Criteria	Clarification
1. Poverty (4 year old at-risk)	1. Qualifies for free lunch program on September 20,
2. Single parent families	2. At the time of enrollment, the custodial parent is unmarried.
3. Department for Children and Families (DCF) referral	3. The reason for referral must describe the need for the child to attend the <i>State Pre-Kindergarten Program (4 year AR)</i> program and be documented and signed by the DCF agent.
4. Teen parents	4. At least one parent was a teen when the child was born.
5. Either parent is lacking a high school diploma or GED.	5. At the time of enrollment, either parent lacks a high diploma or a GED.
6. Child qualifies for migrant status	6. There must be a copy of the Certificate of Eligibility on file.
7. Limited English Proficiency	7. LEP status must be documented. Forms must be in child's file. Process and criteria are found at www.ksde.org under Early Learning. NOTE: ESOL services must be provided by qualified teachers.
8*. Lower than expected Developmental Progress in at least one of the following areas: Cognitive Developmental; physical development;	8.* Based on results of an appropriate and valid assessment (screening, authentic assessment, or standardized instrument), which has been administered and interpreted by a trained professional, the developmental progress of the

communication/literacy; social-emotional/behavior; adaptive behavior/self-help skills	child has been determined to be lower than typically expected for his/her chronological age, yet above eligibility requirements for special education services (based the special education eligibility requirement in the Kansas Special Education Process Handbook).
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***Criterion 8 would NOT be used to determine if children who have an IEP are also at-risk. Criteria 1-7 would be used to determine children who have an IEP AND who are at-risk.**

Note: **Participants must be four years of age on or before August 31, 2015.** (*Children turning 5 years old on or before August 31, 2015 cannot generate funds for this program.*)
 NOTE: *children who are not age eligible may still be placed in the classroom and will be included in the required count of no more than 20 children in the classroom. However, they cannot be funded through the at-risk funding,*

Other Policies:

Meal or Snack: At least one a classroom period	Programs must provide at least one snack per classroom session to all the children attending their program. By participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program schools can earn reimbursement for providing nutritious snacks. For further information, contact Child Nutrition & Wellness at the Kansas State Department of Education (785-296-2276). As with kindergarten programs, teachers can request parents to provide nutritious snacks.
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Eligibility/Funding: State Pre-Kindergarten (Four Year Old At-Risk) Program

As part of the school finance formula for 1998-1999, the legislature and governor approved funding a half-day educational program for at-risk four-year-olds. Any public school district in Kansas may apply for funds through the application process. Funds for this program are available through weighted state aid, so only school districts may apply. Funds are to be used to provide a half-day early learning educational experience for four-year old children who are at-risk: i.e., those who meet one or more of the criteria described above.

Districts with current programs must develop and submit a **program application**. Programs funded in 2014-2015 will be continued, pending approval by the Kansas State Board of Education. As determined by the legislature, funding is available for a total of **(unknown at this time)** four-year-old at-risk children across the state.

The four-year old at-risk children in State Pre-Kindergarten Programs are to be counted in the same manner as kindergarten students with funding based on children in attendance on September 20, 2015. PLEASE NOTE: Children who have an IEP AND who meet at least one of the first seven (1-7) at-risk criteria must be considered as potential members of the State Pre-Kindergarten (Four Year Old At-Risk) classroom. They will not generate at-risk funding; therefore, will not reduce the number of funded slots requested by a district. They will take a

‘participation slot’ in the classroom, thereby potentially requiring districts to increase the number of State Pre-Kindergarten classrooms if more than 20 children in the district fit the at-risk requirements.

The weighted enrollment for those children who meet the criteria is 0.50 times the number of four-year old at-risk children times the state aid per pupil for the school district. Once districts have been notified that their program has been selected for funding, the at-risk four-year olds must be included in the enrollment counts when calculating the school district’s general fund.

Budget Year: State Pre-Kindergarten (Four Year Old At-Risk)

All activities are to be completed and all funds received under this program must be spent or encumbered by June 30, 2016. Salaries may not be encumbered.

Application Deadline

Applications are due March 12, 2015. Applications will be reviewed by KSDE staff. Recommendations will be forwarded to the Kansas State Board of Education for action at the April 2015 meeting. The potential age-eligible children with IEPs who meet at least one of the at-risk criteria will NOT be included in the request for ‘funded slots’. Immediately following Board action, letters detailing results from the Board meeting will be sent to all districts applying for funding.

One original of the application (emailed or mailed) is to be submitted to Beccy Strohm, State Pre-Kindergarten/Four-Year Old At-Risk, Kansas State Department of Education 900 SW Jackson St., Topeka, KS, 66612. **The application must be received by Beccy Strohm via email at bstrohm@ksde.org or by mail by 5:00 p.m. on March 12, 2015. A signed assurances page Must be FAXED to 785-296-6715 ATTN: BECCY STROHM or mailed to Beccy Strohm at the above address by 5 p.m. on March 12, 2015.**

QUESTIONS? Contact Beccy Strohm at 785-296-6602 or bstrohm@ksde.org
OR:
Gayle Stuber at 785-296-5352 or gstuber@ksde.org