



**KENTUCKY PRESCHOOL
PROGRAM OUTLINE
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2016-2017**

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Kentucky Department of Education
500 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY 40601
School Readiness Branch
(502) 564-7056 phone - (502) 564-1984 fax
<http://education.ky.gov/educational/pre/Pages/default.aspx>



Kentucky Preschool Program Outline

STATUTORY AUTHORITY (KENTUCKY REVISED STATUTES):

- KRS 157.3175. [Preschool Education Program; Grant Allocations; Program Components; Exceptions](#)
- KRS 157.318. [Network of Regional Training Centers for Preschool established](#)
- KRS 156.160 [Vision Exam requirements \(g\)](#)

RELEVANT REGULATIONS (KENTUCKY ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS)

- Program Regulations:
 - 704 KAR 3:410. [Preschool Education for Four-Year-Old Children](#)
 - 707 KAR 1:280 through 707 KAR 1:380 [Special Education Regulations](#)
 - 16 KAR 2:040. [Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education](#) (teacher certification and standards)
 - 16 KAR 2:140. [Probationary Certificate for Teachers of Children, Birth to Primary](#)
 - 704 KAR 3:420 [Preschool Associate Teachers](#)
 - 702 KAR 5:150. [Transportation of Preschool Children](#)
 - 702 KAR 3:250. [Preschool Grant Allocations](#)
[Facility Requirements for Preschool Program](#) - Division of Facilities Management

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS FOR DISTRICTS:

- Districts are required to assure that preschool services are available to all four-year-old children whose families meet federal poverty guidelines up to 160% of poverty.
- Districts are required to make available a free, appropriate preschool education and related services to all three- and four-year-old children with disabilities.
- Districts are allowed and encouraged to serve other four-year-old children as placements are available. However, federal, local or private sources should be used since state funding is not available for children who are not eligible.
- In designing the program, districts must work with existing preschool programs to avoid duplication of programs and services, to avoid supplanting federal funds, and sign a full utilization agreement with Head Start to serve as many four-year-old children as possible.
- Programs may be operated directly by the district or through an approved non-public school preschool agency by contract or cooperative agreement with the district.
- Districts must submit a proposal for state preschool funding. The application is disseminated as part of the district's Comprehensive Improvement Plan. A tentative local allotment for the coming year is disseminated in the late spring based on the average of the district's December 1 and March 1 state preschool enrollment. For more information on preschool funding contact the KDE finance office at (502) 564-1979.
- Beginning July 2016, the state funded preschool will participate All STARS system, a unified star rating system including child care, Head Star and the Kentucky preschool program.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Educational Components

The educational component of the preschool program consists of developmentally appropriate experiences. Programs must provide at least a half-day program. The standard district preschool program operations are a four- or a five-day classroom model, with the fifth day reserved for services to children and families outside the classroom setting such as home visits, parent involvement activities and coordination of services to families. The local program shall provide direct services for children or parents for the minimum number of teaching days set by the local school district for the school year.

Four-year-old children with disabilities are expected to be in the same program as the rest of the four-year-old children in the district, unless the child's Individual Education Program (IEP) requires otherwise. In addition to inclusion in the mainstream setting, options for three- and four-year-old children with disabilities include: settings where the majority of children have disabilities, home settings (parent-child programs), and itinerant services in the place where the child is already receiving other services (e.g. day care, hospital, private placement).

In the classroom setting the maximum number of children is 20 with at least 2 adults (1:10 adult-child ratio) although smaller group sizes and additional adults are encouraged. When children with disabilities are included in the mainstream setting, the IEP team is to review the group size and the adult-child ratio to assure that the needs of the child are met.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices

The preschool program is to include developmentally appropriate experiences in all areas of child development: cognition, communication, social, physical, and emotional development as well as creative expression. Specifically, the program must assist young children in their interpersonal skills and in maximizing self-management and independence. The educational component as required in regulation outlines the curriculum framework for preschoolers and promotes development of skills in the following ways:

Cognition and communication:

- encouraging children to explore and learn by doing (concrete experiential learning)
- encouraging language understanding and use among children as well as between children and adults
- integrating skills across content areas into activities targeted toward the interests of children (integrated curriculum)
- providing a balance of activities (indoor/outdoor, child/staff-initiated, structured/spontaneous, large/small group, group/individual, quiet/active)
- encouraging children to develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills such as cause and effect relationships.

Social and emotional development:

- providing an environment of acceptance to help develop a positive self- concept
- providing positive guidance for self-regulation of behavior
- providing positive adult and peer role models with appropriate adult-child and child-child interactions
- having a curriculum which is relevant, enhances his or her individual strengths, and builds ethnic pride.

Physical development:

- providing developmentally appropriate information on nutrition
- involving children in snack and meal preparation where feasible
- working with children during meals to develop language and problem-solving

- providing appropriate indoor and outdoor space with materials and equipment designed to increase physical skills
- providing developmentally appropriate instruction in health and safety procedures.

The process of determining a local preschool curriculum should include consideration of the above information and an understanding of social and cultural values, and parental input. The decision is often made by the school council and district administration in coordination with the preschool coordinator, teachers and other professionals with advice from families. The state does not specify any one curriculum but encourages local districts to consider utilizing multiple sources of guidance to assist in designing a preschool curriculum. One resource, [Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards](#) outlines the critical knowledge and skills for young children, birth to age 5. This document is aligned to [Kentucky Core Academic Standards](#) and the [Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework](#).

The Learning Environment

The preschool classroom setting should be arranged so that children may work individually, together in small groups and in a large group. Areas of the room should include space for centers such as art, blockbuilding, housekeeping, dramatic play, language arts/library, math, multimedia, and science. Preschool classroom activities could include cooking, social studies, gross motor, problem solving, experiments, counting and measuring, early literacy songs and games and outdoor activities. Materials are to be developmentally appropriate and reflect the cultural and ethnic background of the children. Tests, workbooks and ditto sheets are not used.

Preschool facilities include classroom space (at least 35 square feet per child, exclusive of closets, etc.) and an additional play area (75 square feet per child of fenced outdoor play area and/or 60 square feet per child of indoor play area). The classroom space should have an attached bathroom or, in older buildings, be within 75 feet of the classroom. New construction should be a minimum of 825 square feet for 20 students maximum with at least 25 square feet for one uni-sex accessible toilet bathroom with a door directly connected to the classroom. Furniture should be an appropriate size for the children. Play areas must have safe and appropriate equipment. Temporary isolated classroom units are acceptable for preschool if approved in writing by facilities management on a year to year basis subject to certain requirements (702 KAR 4:170).

Beginning 2016-17, the state-funded preschool programs use the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale – 3rd edition ([ECERS-3](#)) to measure classroom quality as part of the Preschool Program Review (P2R) and All STARS system.

Inclusion

Districts are responsible for a child find system that locates and identifies each child that may be in need of special education and related services. All children receive developmental screening to identify any possible developmental concerns. Programs also screen for instructional needs so that struggling learners may be identified and receive the supports needed for learning in the regular classroom. Programs implement relevant, research-based instruction and interventions to ensure that there is no over identification or disproportionate identification of children as children with disabilities. Children whose progress over time is significantly limited despite the provision of instruction and/or interventions may be considered for a special education evaluation. For additional information, see the [Child Find / Kentucky System of Intervention \(KSI\) Preschool Toolkit](#).

Preschool programs are designed to include and meet the needs of children across a wide range of abilities in an inclusive setting. Programs must provide adaptations for children with special needs. Unless a child's IEP requires otherwise, children with disabilities are to be educated in classes with typically developing

children. Children with disabilities may also receive a variety of related services to meet individual needs: speech therapy, occupational and physical therapy, parent education, coordination of services relating to child development, special transportation, other. Children are not retained in preschool but are eligible for the primary school program in the school year when they are five by October 1.

Transportation

Preschool programs are encouraged to make [transportation](#) available to all children. While school districts have the option of whether or not to transport preschoolers, transportation has been made available to most children in Kentucky. In addition to the high Kentucky safety standards for transportation of school age children, all school buses carrying preschool children must have at least one driver assistant (bus monitor) trained in safety and the needs of young children. Young children are supervised on the bus and personally delivered only to the parent or other person designated by the parent.

Each Head Start agency providing transportation services must ensure that children enrolled in its program are transported in school buses or allowable alternate vehicles that are equipped for use of height- and weight-appropriate child restraint systems, (Part 1310 Head Start Transportation). The Child Restraint System is a device designed to restrain, seat or position children who weigh 50 pounds or less. Contact the Division of Pupil Transportation (502) 564-4718 or the Head Start Collaboration office (502) 564-8341 for more information.

Nutrition

Preschool programs are required to provide at least one meal per day. Children are to be involved in preparing snacks and meals where feasible and provided opportunities during meals to develop language, social, and problem-solving skills. [Nutrition](#) information is required to be integrated into the curriculum.

Health and Social Services

Children in the program are required to be [immunized](#). All children receive health screening consisting of at least growth assessment, vision and hearing screening, assessment of current immunization status and general health status. Children attending schools/centers must have the physical examination required for school entry. These exams do not need to be repeated for enrollment into primary school (kindergarten). Programs are to work with parents if screening results indicate a need for further assessment or follow-up. To meet the comprehensive needs of children, programs are to collaborate with medical, health, mental health and social service agencies. Program staff assists parents in locating needed community resources and interagency services. Programs coordinate with after-school child care programs and Family Resource Centers to meet the needs of families.

As part of the KIDS NOW Early Childhood Initiative, (KRS 156.160 (1) (g)) all 3, 4, 5 and 6-year-old children entering public school, public preschool, Head Start for the first time must have an eye examination by an optometrist or ophthalmologist no later than January 1 of the school year. For more information, call (502) 564-5625.

Parent/Family Involvement

The preschool program is required to allow for active parent/family involvement and consider the different types of family structure and needs. At least the following types of opportunities are to be made available to families:

- periodic home visits (minimum of two per child per year) by the child's teacher
- participation in all activities as observers or volunteers
- parent/family education activities which the parent/families helped design or develop
- two-way communication systems developed with the parent/families

- participation in the program evaluation

Program Evaluation

Each local preschool program is required to involve parents, staff and other professionals in an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the program. Together, they are to review the rate of participation of children (effectiveness of recruitment), parental satisfaction, success of children as they progress through the primary program and adherence to program requirements. Local programs submit an annual Preschool Performance Report of services provided.

Collaboration

Local school districts collaborate with other agencies in the following ways:

- planning with other existing preschool programs to avoid duplication of programs and services to the same children and to avoid supplanting federal funds
- developing an annual local agreement with Head Start to assure full utilization of federal funds for income-eligible four-year-old children
- optionally operating the preschool program by contracting with an existing approved preschool program (Head Start, other).
- optionally operating blended or shared classrooms, where the children in a room are financially supported through several funding sources and agencies (state, Head Start, Title I, tuition, other). In a blended classroom:
 - ✓ costs are shared (e.g. prorated to each fund source);
 - ✓ separate audit trails are maintained for each fund source;
 - ✓ classrooms must operate meeting requirements of all funding sources (e.g. where standards are not comparable or the same, the most stringent standard applies)
 - ✓ children receive all services for which they are eligible
- working with child care providers and the Family Resource Center to assist in coordinating before- and after-school child care (wrap-around services)
- collaborating with medical, health, mental health and social service agencies to meet the comprehensive needs of children and families.
- Beginning the 2016-17 school year, grants will be available for school districts to collaborate with the local community child care settings to increase the number of children served.

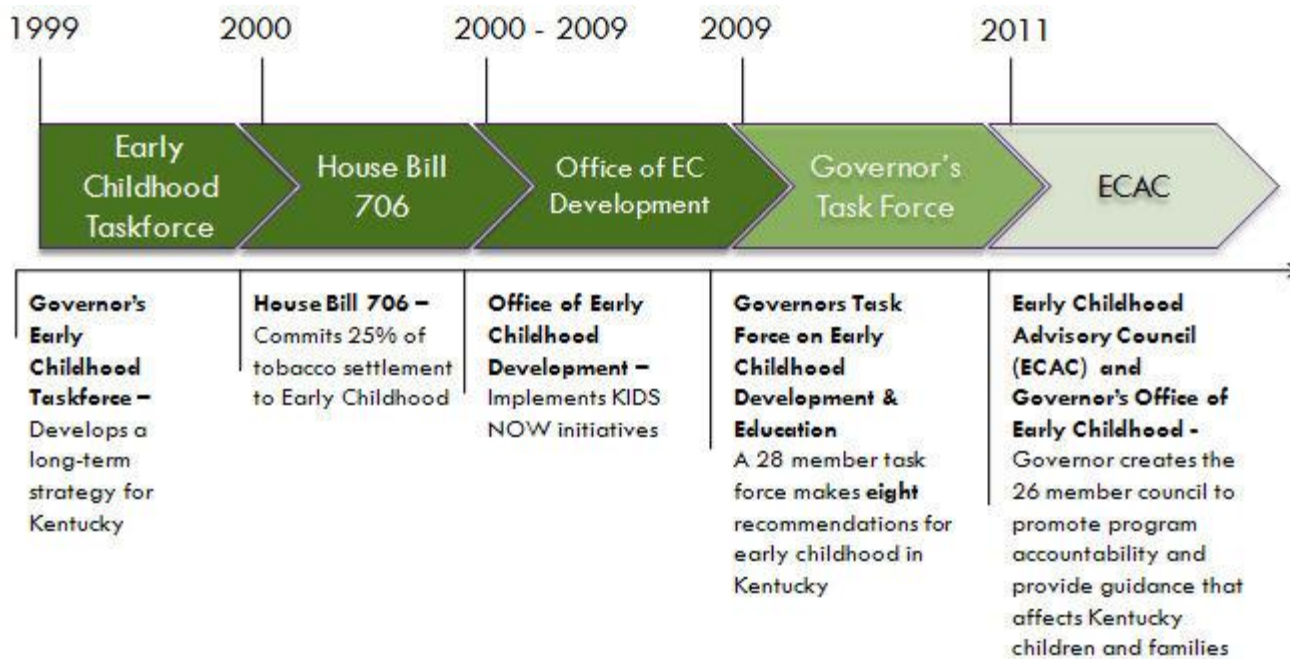
Teacher Certification

Beginning Fall 2004, all new preschool teachers are required to hold the Kentucky Early Childhood teaching certificate, the [Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education \(IECE\)](#), birth to primary teaching certificate. Classified Preschool Associate Teachers with the child development associate (CDA) or associate's degree in IECE who were employed as lead teachers before fall 2004 may continue in their current position, but no new Preschool Associate Teachers may be hired into lead teacher positions. Districts which are unable to find a certified teacher may hire personnel with a bachelor's degree and pursue permission from the Education Professional Standards Board to hire this teacher as a [Probationary IECE](#) teacher. Contact the [Education Professional Standards Board](#) for more information at www.kyepsb.net or (502) 564-4606 or (888) 598-7667.

Preschool Program Review

The intent of the [Kentucky Preschool Program Review \(P2R\)](#) is to create an oversight system leading to improved teaching and learning environments in Kentucky's Preschool Program. Every program is carefully evaluated once every five years for student achievement, preschool environment, professional development, collaborative partnerships and family and community involvement. Programs receive evaluation reports, feedback, technical assistance, service and support relevant to district needs.

The Governor's Office of Early Childhood



The Kentucky General Assembly established, with legislation in 2000, the Kentucky Early Childhood Initiative, KIDS NOW. The numerous programs of KIDS NOW were designed to help Kentucky move forward in this vision:

“All young children are healthy and safe, possess the foundation that will enable school and personal success, and live in strong families that are supported and strengthened within their communities” Governor’s Early Childhood Task Force (1999).

KIDS NOW program components address four major areas: assuring maternal and child health, supporting families, enhancing early care and education, and establishing a support structure.

In 2011, Governor Beshear created a 26 member [Early Childhood Advisory Council](#) (ECAC) and the [Governor’s Office of Early Childhood](#) and charged them with all the duties of the KIDS NOW initiative as well as implementation of the ECTE Task Force.

Building a Strong Foundation for School Success

The [Building a Strong Foundation for School Success](#) (BSF) documents were developed and designed for early care and education programs for children birth through four. The series includes the *Kentucky Early Childhood Standards*, *Parent Guides*, *Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide* and the *Quality Self Study*.

Kentucky’s Early Childhood Standards are designed to provide a framework to support and assist families, educators and caregivers in understanding the developmental accomplishments of young children. These standards were designed to reflect the range of developmental abilities of young children at different ages and to represent the expectations for the skills and levels of knowledge that children are able to achieve. *Kentucky’s Early Childhood Standards* address a developmental continuum and link to the content areas of the Kentucky Program of Studies for K-12.

Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards are not intended to serve as a curriculum guide or as an assessment tool of children's performance. This document is not a detailed listing of all skills and knowledge that children exhibit in their developmental progress; neither does it propose a method for teaching children particular knowledge and skills.

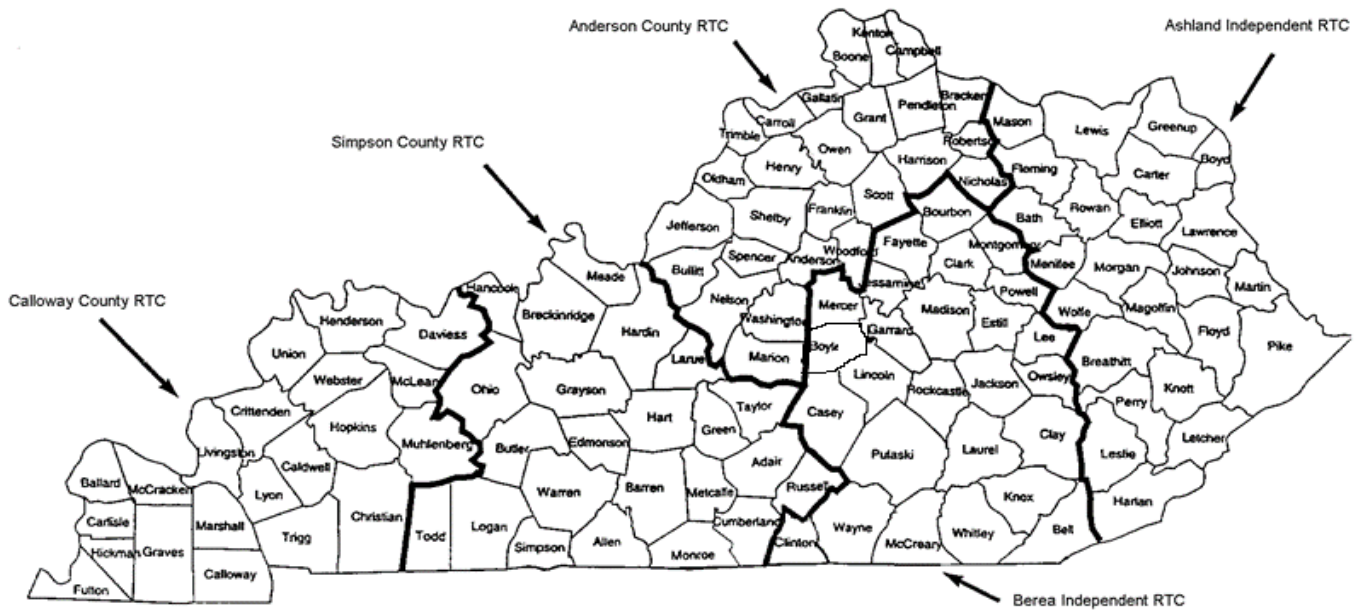
To assist families in understanding *Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards*, *Parent Guides* are also available that describe what the standards mean and how families can support their child's growth and development at home. The *Parent Guides* are available in English and Spanish.

Kentucky's Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide is the second document of the *Building a Strong Foundation for School Success* series. It provides recommended guidelines and practices in all areas of assessment: screening, diagnostic, classroom/instructional, program evaluation and professional development. *Kentucky's Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide* supports early childhood programs to identify those assessments that best meet the program goals, address the early childhood standards, honor family and cultural preferences, and support quality practices in assessment. To assist programs in choosing a cornerstone assessment tool that best fits their program needs, the *Assessment Guide* includes crosswalks of the recommended classroom/instructional instruments with the *Kentucky Early Childhood Standards*.

Kentucky's Early Childhood Quality Self Study describes research-based recommended policies and practices that contribute to program quality and to successful outcomes for children in early care and education programs. *Kentucky's Early Childhood Quality Self Study* helps program personnel identify adult behaviors, environment characteristics, program structural factors, and personnel considerations that are supporting contributors to high quality learning environments for children birth to five years of age. Used together with the other two documents in the *Building a Strong Foundation for School Success* series, the *Quality Self Study* will improve the overall quality of early care and education programs in Kentucky and ultimately achieve positive outcomes for young children.

Kentucky Early Childhood Data System (KEDS)

[KEDS](#) is the state's system for assisting early childhood programs in reporting children's progress towards meeting the Kentucky Early Childhood Standards and the Office of Special Education Program (OSEP) Child Outcomes, while using recommended practices for the authentic assessment of young children.



Training Resources

The early childhood regional training centers (RTCs) provide statewide preschool training and technical assistance to preschool and entry-level primary (kindergarten) teachers and staff in local school districts, Head Start and private programs (see map for districts served by each RTC):

- Anderson County RTC (Lawrenceburg)
Pamela Fox, Director (502) 839-2513, E-mail: pamela.fox@anderson.kyschools.us
- Ashland Independent RTC
Lisa Henson, Director, (606) 327-2706
E-mail: lisa.henson@ashland.kyschools.us
- Berea Independent RTC
Sonia Michael, Director (859) 986-1929 or (800) 343-2959
E-mail: sonia.michael@berea.kyschools.us
- Calloway County RTC (Murray)
Nancy Lovett, Director (270) 809-5316, e-mail: nlovett1@murraystate.edu
- Simpson County RTC (Franklin)
Shelia Baugh, Director (270) 586-2008, e-mail: shelia.baugh@simpson.kyschools.us

Contact Information:**Division of Program Standards
School Readiness Branch**

Karen Kidwell, Division Director

karen.kidwell@education.ky.gov

Sally Shepherd, Branch Manager

Sally.shepherd@education.ky.gov

Rebecca Atkins-Stumbo, Primary Consultant

rebecca.atkins-stumbo@education.ky.gov

Melody Cooper

melody.cooper@education.ky.gov

Andrena Cox

Andrena.cox@education.ky.gov

Lorrie Devers

Lorrie.devers@education.ky.gov

Annie Rooney-French, Consultant

annie.rooney-french@education.ky.gov

Bretta Renner, Administrative Support

bretta.renner@education.ky.gov

19th Floor, Capital Plaza Tower

500 Mero Street

Frankfort, KY 40601

(502) 564-7056

FAX (502) 564-1984

**Kentucky Preschool Program
Questions/Answers****1. Who is eligible for state-funded preschool services?**

Answer: State preschool funding under the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) targets two groups of children: four-year-old children who are at risk of educational failure and three- and four-year-old

children with disabilities. "At risk of educational failure" are children whose families meet federal poverty guidelines up to 150% of poverty.

2. Doesn't the state preschool program overlap with Head Start?

Answer: Many of the children who are eligible for Head Start are also eligible for state preschool, and vice versa, although the two programs do not have identical eligibility requirements. Despite the overlap in eligibility, the state preschool program was not designed to replace Head Start. Rather, local school districts are required to work with the local Head Start program to maximize federal Head Start funding to serve as many state and Head Start eligible children as possible. The district enrolls the additional four-year-old children who would have been on a Head Start waiting list. Although the state preschool funding must flow to the school district, the district may contract the state-funded children to Head Start or operate a collaborative program.

3. How can a school district encourage parents to actively participate in the preschool program?

Answer: Parent support for the preschool program positively affects the child's development and is extremely important in assuring a high quality preschool. Most successful parent participation programs match the design of the program to the needs of parents and families. They involve parents in planning and designing their own activities and maintain a healthy balance between addressing the needs of the parent and the child. Kentucky preschool programs include parent input in the design of parent education activities as well as in the evaluation of the program to identify areas of improvement.

4. How is early literacy supported in preschool programs?

Answer: Early literacy in a preschool program is based upon a supportive environment that encourages development through a variety of activities throughout the day. Research has identified several areas for literacy and language development for three- and four-year old children: oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge. The *Kentucky Early Childhood Standards* address these components and should be used for planning appropriate experiences.

Several examples of establishing a language rich environment are:

- Engaging children in language games such as rhyming games and those which “play” with sounds
- Promoting literacy related activities during choice time
- Encouraging writing experimentation
- Reading and rereading stories while engaging children in the process by asking questions
- Sharing books and modeling reading behavior
- Writing materials in learning centers

If the child's home language is different from English, the teacher works with the family to create an environment which will support the home language as well as introduce the child to the sounds, vocabulary, and the structure of the English language.

5. We have a four-year old child with disabilities who will be turning five by October 1. His family doesn't think he is ready for primary school. May we keep him in the preschool program next year?

Answer: No, except under certain circumstances. The Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) needs to meet to discuss the child's IEP (Individual Education Program) and placement. Under federal requirements, the committee is to first look at where the child would be if he did **not** have a disability: that is, the regular classroom, or first-year primary program for this child. If the child's IEP can be carried out in this setting with aids and supplemental services, then the committee should plan for the transition of the child to primary (kindergarten). However, if the committee determines that the regular education setting is

not appropriate to carry out this child's IEP, then the committee should consider alternatives. One of those alternative settings can be a preschool classroom. In considering preschool as an alternative instructional setting, the committee must consider and address these issues:

- The child will be enrolled as a **primary** student placed in preschool, not a preschooler; this will be year one of the primary school for the child.
- The child will not be reported on the State Preschool enrollment count or on Head Start enrollment for funding purposes. This child will be counted for funding purposes in average daily attendance as an entry-level primary ("E-1") student. The funds generated through SEEK would then be used to support the cost of the child's program internally or by contract if an outside agency is involved.
- The child will be eligible for the same length of day as available to all other five-year old students in the school district, for five days a week. If the preschool class schedule does not provide this amount of time, then the committee needs to provide services in addition to the preschool class, or request a shortened school day to the Division of Exceptional Children Services. Additional services might include a home visit or placement with a group including other five-year olds on the fifth day.
- The preschool class must have space for the child. Even though the child is not on State Preschool or Head Start enrollment, he/she will be a member of the class in terms of maximum class size (20).
- The parents and the primary school staff need technical assistance and support in preparing to transition the child to primary at whatever point is determined appropriate by the ARC.

6. **According to KRS 156.160 (1)(g) each child must have an eye examination upon entering school. What happens to children of families who do not meet the January 1 deadline to complete the eye examination? Are there penalties for non-compliance? Will these children be able to return to school?**

Answer: It is not the intent of KRS 156.160(1)(g) to remove children from school. Like the requirement for school physical examinations, the law requiring the eye exam prescribes no penalties for parents. Local district policy should determine how parents or guardians will be given the guidance and assistance needed for the examination. School health coordinators, Head Start programs, Family Resource and Youth Service Centers, local health departments and local ophthalmologists and optometrists should be enlisted in the effort to see that all children receive the required eye exam.