

Bright Spots Across the Commonwealth

Data-driven strategies are ensuring that more children in Kentucky have a strong start.

Home Visitation

Kentucky's home visitation program serves pregnant mothers and their newborns until children reach three years old. In 2015, Health Access Nurturing Development Services (HANDS) met criteria from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as an evidence-based model.

Building Vocabulary

In Eastern Kentucky, 90% of 3-year-olds and 85% of 5 year-olds enrolled in the Early Steps program exceed vocabulary standards.

Monitoring Growth, Learning, & Development

In Louisville, children who completed four or more Ages and Stages Questionnaire®, a developmental screener, were nearly six times more likely to be ready for kindergarten than those who completed only one, controlling for demographic characteristics and developmental level (OR=5.70, $p=0.06$).¹

Developing Early Literacy

Nearly 30% of Kentucky's Community Early Childhood Councils invest in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. A Shelby County, Tennessee study shows that participation significantly is associated with increased scores in skill areas like language and math development.² In Wayne County, Kentucky, of the 52% of children identified as participants in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, 86% entered kindergarten prepared according to Wayne County Public Schools.

High Quality Public Pre-K and Head Start Across

Kentucky, income-eligible preschool students significantly were more likely to be kindergarten ready. Head Start Students, on average, outscored eligible students who were not enrolled. During Academic Year 2018, 53,000 children were eligible for Public Pre-K and/or Head Start and an additional 19,000 eligible children could have been enrolled.

Transition to Kindergarten

In Northern Kentucky, 60% of children who entered school where they used best practice transition strategies were better prepared compared to the state average of 51.1% and county average of 54% (Boone 56.2%, Campbell 54.6, and Kenton 52.2%).

Blending Funding to Better Serve Families

In Southeastern Kentucky, Public Pre-K collaborated with private child care to coordinate and strengthen services for families. Data indicates that children who participate in Public Pre-K half-day and the extended-day private child care for the other part of the day are better prepared for kindergarten. In 2017, data show 63% of children entered kindergarten prepared compared to 50% of the state and 44.8% in the district.

In 2018, data shows 81% of children entered kindergarten prepared compared to 51% of the state and 45.6% in the district.

Born Learning Bright Spot

The United Way Born Learning Academy is a series of school-based parent workshops that engage expectant parents and families with young children to support early learning and school readiness. Developed in Northern Kentucky, it has been replicated throughout the commonwealth and adopted nationally by United Way Worldwide to increase school readiness. Kindergarten Readiness results during 2015-16 and 2020-21 show that of the nearly 500 children who participated, 53.4% entered school prepared compared to 46.6% of students who did not participate.

Every Child Can Have a Strong Start in the Commonwealth
when Families, Communities and Schools work Together



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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

¹It is important to note that this finding approached statistical significance at the $p<0.06$ level. Given the relatively small comparison and intervention sample ($n=31$ and $n=63$, respectively), these findings should be interpreted with caution. A larger sample size is needed to confirm these results.

²Beckett, J. (n.d.). An investigation of the relationship between the Imagination Library program and kindergarten literacy.