

New Eligibility Requirement for Kentucky State-Funded Preschool Guidance for School Districts

Note: This guidance has been updated to reflect the budget language effective date and in response to feedback from the field, with further explanation for at risk students and students with disabilities.

What Changed?

As a result of [House Bill 235](#), changes were made to the Kentucky State-Funded Preschool Program. A new minimum age requirement for state-funded preschool students will take effect **July 15, 2014**, moving from October 1 to August 1. Beginning in school year 2014-15, children who are 4-years-old by August 1 are age-eligible for the state-funded preschool program. In addition, the income eligibility requirement will change from 150 percent of poverty in 2014-15 to 160 percent of poverty in 2015-16.

School Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Preschool	Age 4 on or before 8/1/2014	Age 4 on or before 8/1/2015	Age 4 on or before 8/1/2016	Age 4 on or before 8/1/2017	Age 4 on or before 8/1/2018
	Date of Birth: 8/2/2009-8/1/2010	Date of Birth: 8/2/2010-8/1/2011	Date of Birth: 8/2/2011-8/1/2012	Date of Birth: 8/2/2012-8/1/2013	Date of Birth: 8/2/2013-8/1/2014
Kindergarten	Age 5 on or before 10/1/2014	Age 5 on or before 10/1/2015	Age 5 on or before 10/1/2016	Age 5 on or before 8/1/2017	Age 5 on or before 8/1/2018
	Date of Birth: 10/2/2008-10/1/2009	Date of Birth: 10/2/2009-10/1/2010	Date of Birth: 10/2/2010-10/1/2011	Date of Birth: 10/2/2011-8/1/2012 *	Date of Birth: 8/2/2012-8/1/2013 *

What options are there for children turning four after August 1?

Districts should support families of non-eligible young children with existing strategies and resources, including referrals to child care and Head Start, tuition options for preschool if space is available, and child development materials such as the Early Childhood Parent Guides.

Preschool eligibility for state-funded preschool may be determined up to four months prior to the start of school (704 KAR 3:410). Some districts have already started the enrollment process for 2014-15. What about at-risk children turning 4 by October 1 who are enrolled four months in advance of 2014-15? Can they still attend preschool next year? Yes, if eligibility is determined

under the guidelines in 704 KAR 3:401 and by July 15, 2014 (the effective date of the budget language). However, it should be explained to parents that students have only one year of eligibility for preschool. In 2015, when students are age-eligible for both programs, the student must transition to Kindergarten or a private setting. Districts should inform families of enrollment options and the repercussions of enrollment decisions.

Income eligible students who turn 4, between August 2 and October 1, 2014, who choose not to attend preschool in 2014-15, will be eligible for both preschool and kindergarten in the 2015-16 school year. Parents may choose the best enrollment option for their child; districts will not receive funding for both.

How about preschool children with disabilities?

School districts are required to provide instruction to children, aged 3-21 with disabilities based on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Kentucky special education regulations (707 KAR 1:002-1:380). Existing practice regarding incoming three year olds will not change. If a current preschool student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) turns 5 between August 2 and October 1, 2014 he or she would be eligible for both preschool and kindergarten. In this case, the Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) would determine the placement, based on individual student need. The student could be eligible for an additional year of preschool. It is recommended that children in this scenario transition to kindergarten with similar aged peers.

What about children turning four between August 1 and October 1, 2014. Will they be eligible for state-funded preschool AND kindergarten in 2015-16?

Some children will turn 5 between August 1 and October 1, 2015, meaning they will be eligible for state-funded preschool AND kindergarten in the 2015-16 school year. However, districts cannot simultaneously enroll these children in both programs; a decision must be made to enroll in one program or the other. Decisions must be made locally, and schools should work closely with families to meet the learning needs of each child entering school. Children develop at different rates across the learning continuum, and schools must be ready to meet children where they are developmentally.

What about Head Start and school district full utilization agreements?

Each year school districts and Head Start providers agree to fully utilize Head Start funds and avoid supplanting federal funds being used to provide services to children with state funds. Since Head Start is required to follow the date used by school districts to determine eligibility, some partnerships may need to adjust full utilization agreement numbers based on the number of four year olds currently served with birthdates between August 1 and October 1.

What about income eligibility for preschool?

School districts must determine income eligibility of 4-year-old students. Beginning in school year 2015-16, children who meet 160 percent of federal poverty income requirement will be eligible for preschool. School districts should update recruitment processes and materials to reflect this change, as well as enrollment applications.

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Preschool	150% of federal poverty and resident of district	160% of federal poverty and resident of district	160% of federal poverty and resident of district	160% of federal poverty and resident of district	160% of federal poverty and resident of district

How will the preschool students be identified in Infinite Campus/Kentucky’s Student Information System (KSIS)?

KDE is in the process of updating the data standards to detail how preschool students should be identified and tracked in Infinite Campus. Updates to requirements will be communicated with districts through KSIS alerts and notifications, KSIS newsletters, and KSIS training. These changes will be reviewed in detail during the 2014-15 KSIS Beginning of Year (BOY) training being scheduled this summer. There will be new procedures for enrolling preschool students based on new requirements. This will include examples and scenarios and will be posted on the School Readiness web page by June 30.

Any questions, please contact Bill Buchanan, School Readiness Branch at (502) 564-7056, ext. 4702 or via e-mail at bill.buchanan@education.ky.gov.