

## State Pre-Kindergarten Program: 2013-14

### (Four Year Old At-Risk Program)

The Four-Year-Old At-Risk program was implemented in 1998 and is now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year. The purpose of the program was to provide a quality pre-kindergarten learning experience for children who met at least one of 8 criteria. Approximately 7,100 four-year-old children were educated in the program for the 2011-12 school year. No new programs or 'slots' have been added for the last four years. The number of school districts offering the program has been reduced over the years due to consolidation, as well as reduction of funds. The cost of the program is often more than the funds received from the base state aid per pupil formula. However, districts have persevered and ensured that their programs are available to their most needy children.

Children in the Four-Year-Old At-Risk program have been educated in blended classrooms for many years across the state in the 185+ school districts participating in the program. This program is a general education program and has provided a strong and developmentally appropriate learning experience that has prepared many young children for kindergarten. With the policy of non-discrimination that is implemented by the Kansas State Department of Education, a clarification is needed related to the participation in the program of children who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and also meet at least one of the risk criteria.

#### **CLARIFICATION of Participation:**

The major purpose of the Four-Year-Old At-Risk program is to provide a high quality early learning experience for young children in the year before they are eligible to enter kindergarten. The outcome is for children to enter kindergarten ready to succeed. This clarification is based upon current evidence that children who are at-risk benefit from being educated in a high quality early learning program with their peers, including those young children who may need special education services. Therefore, the following information has been clarified for use beginning in 2013-14 and ongoing thereafter.

**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 Four-Year-Old At-Risk classroom and cannot be excluded from participation solely based on their having an IEP.**

Children with IEPs will not generate At-Risk funding, and will therefore, not reduce the number of funded slots requested by a district. However, they will take a 'participation slot' in the classroom, thereby potentially increasing the number of children to be educated through the Four Year Old At-Risk Program. Districts may therefore need to increase their number of at-risk classrooms if more than 20 children in the district fit the at-risk requirements and are appropriate for participation in the Four Year old at-risk program. This clarification does not prohibit districts from creating blended programs that contain students who do not meet at-risk criteria. It only serves to clarify that children with IEPs who meet at least one of the first seven at-risk criteria must be considered for participation and cannot be excluded solely because they have an IEP.

**Name Change Proposal:** The current name for the program—Four-Year-Old At-Risk—was created to describe the focus of the program and the ‘label’ of the children participating in the program. The purpose of the program is ‘preparing children for success in school’ and a name that reflects that purpose would seem to be more appropriate, as well as more non-discriminatory. Therefore, it is proposed that the name, starting in 2013-14 be the **State Pre-Kindergarten Program.**

**Criteria for State Pre-Kindergarten Program**

Criteria	Clarification
1. Poverty (4 year-old at-risk)	1. Qualifies for free lunch program on September 20, 2013
2. Single parent families	2. At the time of enrollment, the custodial parent is unmarried.
3. SRS referral	3. The reason for referral must describe the need for the child to attend the <i>4-year-old At-Risk</i> program and be documented and signed by the Department for Children and Families (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 <a href="http://www.ksde.org">www.ksde.org</a> 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; communication/literacy; social-emotional/behavior; adaptive behavior/self-help skills	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 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).

**\*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.**