

**State Pre-Kindergarten Program
(Four Year Old At-Risk) Program Standards and Requirements
2013-2014**

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.

Starting in 2013-14: 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.

NOTE:

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. Four Year Old At-Risk Program Requirement

Teaching staff for the Four-Year Old At-Risk 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.

Assistant Teacher/Teacher Aide Qualifications:

b. Assistant teachers must hold a CDA or equivalent.

Having the ‘highly qualified Paraprofessional’ status for QPA is acceptable as an equivalent. 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 a second teacher in the classroom while still be 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.

2. Curriculum & Assessment requirements:

All State Pre-Kindergarten (Four Year Old At-Risk) programs are required to develop local child outcomes and collect ongoing data on the child outcomes. Upon request, local programs will send annual results to KSDE.

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 Home Practices Survey, and the Classroom Practices 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 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.

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

The core curriculum used in each program may be 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 (Buysse & 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.

The 2013-14 year will be used to develop a process for aligning local assessments and the KELI-4. **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 among 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, 2012
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>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; 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

***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, 2013.** (*Children turning 5 years old on or before August 31, 2013 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. Since funds for this program are available through weighted state aid, 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.

Programs funded in 2012-2013 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. Districts interested in providing the services must develop and submit a **program application**. If the programs selected exceed the number of available slots for students, KSDE will prorate the number of students that each selected school district can count.

The four-year old at-risk children in Four Year Old At-Risk Programs are to be counted in the same manner as kindergarten students with funding based on children in attendance on September 20, 2013. Although at this point in time, children served by Head Start and/or IDEA preschool special education programs **cannot generate funds for this state program, children who meet the criteria for the state pre-Kindergarten (four year old at-risk) program may be physically in the same classroom as children from the aforementioned programs and/or typically developing preschool-aged children and can not be discriminated against attendance solely because they have an IEP.** NEW Consideration: 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, 2014. Salaries may not be encumbered.

Application Deadline

Applications are due March 11, 2013. Applications will be reviewed by KSDE staff. Recommendations will be forwarded to the Kansas State Board of Education for action at the April 2014 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 Gayle Stuber, State Pre-Kindergarten/Four-Year Old At-Risk, Kansas State Department of Education, 120 SE 10th Ave., Topeka, KS, 66612-1182. **The application must be received by Gayle M. Stuber either on email at gstuber@ksde.org or by mail by 5:00 p.m. on March 11, 2013. A signed assurances page must be FAXED to 785-296-6715 ATTN: GAYLE STUBER or mailed to Gayle Stuber at the above address by 5 p.m. on March 11, 2013.**

QUESTIONS? Contact Gayle Stuber at 785-296-5352 or gstuber@ksde.org