

Early Childhood Fact Sheet



Early Experiences Matter

Early childhood experiences lay the foundation for a child's future academic success. A child's health and physical well-being, along with the development of cognitive, communication and social-emotional skills, all can be influenced by the community, educational environment, family and the individual child.

Effective policies, targeted and appropriate levels of funding, and collaborative systems of support enhance a child's ability to thrive in learning environments.

Our goal is that each student enters kindergarten at age 5 socially, emotionally and academically prepared for success.

What is the role of the Kansas State Department of Education Early Childhood Team?

The Early Childhood Team at the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) supports local agencies providing early learning opportunities and collaborates with internal and external partners to strengthen early childhood in Kansas. Early childhood spans birth to age 8 (third grade). Key responsibilities of the KSDE Early Childhood Team include:

- **Support for the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) and local ICCs.** This council is responsible for advising and assisting the Kansas governor and legislature on matters that impact Kansas families with children ages birth to 5 who have, or are at risk for, developmental delays.
- **Kansas Parents as Teachers (KPAT):** The evidence-based affiliate model provides parents with the skills and knowledge they need to help make informed decisions regarding their child's education. KSDE serves as the State Office to support local programs in implementing the KPAT model.
- **Preschool programming:** The Preschool-Aged At-Risk (State Pre-K 4-Year-Old At-Risk) Program and the Kansas Preschool Pilot fund local preschool programs. Both require licensed teachers to deliver evidence-based curriculum to prepare children for kindergarten entry. Section 619 of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) defines the federal preschool program

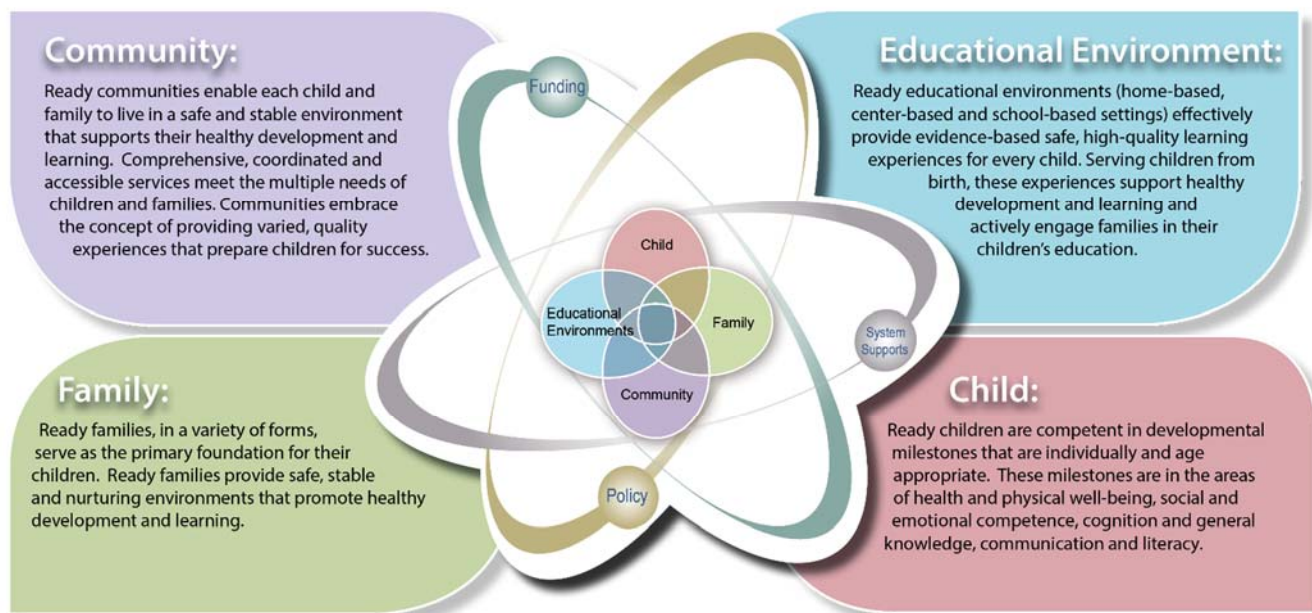
which guarantees a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to children with disabilities age 3 through 5.

- **Kansas Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot Tool:** To advance kindergarten readiness in Kansas, all Kansas kindergarten classrooms are utilizing a new tool to better understand students' development. The Ages & Stages Questionnaires, Third Edition (ASQ-3) and the Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ: SE-2) provide a snapshot of children's developmental milestones.
- **Support efforts to strengthen the Kansas early childhood system:** In 2019, Kansas has the opportunity and new federal grant funding to engage in a collaborative effort to shape our state's future direction for early childhood. KSDE serves as the lead agency for a one-year planning grant authorized by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to support the development of a comprehensive needs assessment and strategic plan for early childhood in Kansas. Funding also will support activities to maximize parental choice and knowledge of early care and education options; the sharing of best practices among early childhood providers; and improvement of the overall quality of early childhood services.

How to promote strong early childhood in your community

- Engage with other early childhood stakeholders (i.e. Head Start, home- and center-based child care, Parents as Teachers, health providers, local ICCs, Family and Consumer Science teachers, local library personnel, etc.) to support kindergarten readiness.
- Teachers and administrators respect the integrity of effective, developmentally appropriate programs for young children.
- Retention isn't considered a viable option for any child. Kansas Statute 72-3118 (c) states that children who are age 5 on or before Aug. 31 are eligible to attend kindergarten.
- Teachers and administrators are informed about age-appropriate assessment strategies and techniques, and are involved responsibly in their use.
- All children are welcomed, and teachers plan for children to learn in inclusive environments.
- The curriculum is aligned to the Kansas Early Learning Standards and across grade levels starting at birth.
- All direct service staff, including paraprofessionals and assistant teachers, receive quality training as reflected in professional development plans.
- All families are invited, welcomed and valued as integral partners in their child's education.
- Utilize the Kansas School Readiness Framework to inform continuous quality improvement efforts.

Kansas School Readiness Framework



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