

KENTUCKY EARLY CHILDHOOD FUNDING

COMPARING THE FY 2026 ENACTED BUDGET TO THE BUDGET PROPOSED IN HOUSE BILL 500 AS RELEASED ON JANUARY 27, 2026, AT LEGISLATURE.KY.GOV
SHOWING MILLIONS OF DOLLARS

HANDS (HEALTH ACCESS NURTURING DEVELOPMENT SERVICES)

	FY 2026 HB 6	FY 2027 HB 500	FY 2028 HB 500	2026 to 2027 Change	Additional 2027 to 2028 Change
TOBACCO SETTLEMENT APPROPRIATION	\$6.0	\$5.3	\$4.9	-\$0.7	-\$0.4

HANDS Note

The Prichard Committee has called for increased HANDS investment, adding \$12 million from the General Fund for that successful voluntary home visitation program. The current House Bill 500 does not include that investment.

CHILD CARE

	FY 2026 HB 6	FY 2027 HB 500	FY 2028 HB 500	2026 to 2027 Change	Additional 2027 to 2028 Change
CCAP: Families at or below 160% of Poverty	\$10.6	\$10.2	\$9.9	-\$0.4	-\$0.3
CCAP: Reimburse providers at 80th percentile	\$28.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	-\$28.0	\$0.0
CCAP: Cover child care workers	\$15.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	-\$15.0	\$0.0
CCAP: Transition for families no longer eligible	\$1.5	\$0.0	\$0.0	-\$1.5	\$0.0
CCAP: Innovations Grants	\$2.0	\$0.0	\$0.0	-\$2.0	\$0.0
Employee Child-Care Assistance Partnership	\$2.0	\$1.9	\$1.9	-\$0.1	-\$0.1
GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION	\$59.1	\$12.1	\$11.7	-\$47.0	-\$0.4

Child Care Assistance Note

CCAP (the Child Care Assistance Program) covers child care fees for some of Kentucky's children, mainly those with low family incomes. The federal government provides most of the funding. Kentucky has long invested \$10.6 million per year in CCAP from the General Fund. For FY 2026, the state added an additional \$46.xxx million in support. The current House Bill 500 reduces those investments by \$47 million. The Prichard Committee is gravely concerned by this proposed reduction. High quality, affordable early care settings are essential for children's development and for family participation in the workforce.

Child Care Quality And Access Note

The Foundation for Action recommendations of the Kentucky Collaborative for Child Care under the leadership of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce include new investments in child care quality and access. The Prichard Committee actively supports those recommendations but cannot yet specify the financial costs of those improvements.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

	FY 2026 HB 6	FY 2027 HB 500	FY 2028 HB 500	2026 to 2027 Change	Additional 2027 to 2028 Change
GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION	\$84.5	\$84.5	\$84.5	\$0.0	\$0.0

Early Literacy And Numeracy Note

The Prichard Committee has called for \$51 million in new annual investment in professional learning for early educators in child care and preschool settings, designed to extend Kentucky's Read to Succeed and Numeracy Counts initiatives into early learning. The current House Bill 500 does not include that investment.