



## EARLY LEARNING | LEADING MINDS

Strong Start Kentucky Coalition  
**2019 POLICY PRIORITIES**

**ALL** infants, toddlers and young children in Kentucky will be prepared for each new step in their educational journey.

### HOW?

Increase funding to HANDS, KY's evidence-based, voluntary home visiting program, to support more families with more than one child and until the age of 3.

Increase per-child funding for preschool.

Increase eligibility for public preschool and child care assistance.

Create a dedicated source of grant funding to encourage preschool and child care center partnerships that is separate from the preschool state funds.

Increase reimbursement rates and incentives for serving infants, toddlers & young children in high-quality child care centers.

### WHY?

Supporting families' effort in giving babies and toddlers a safe, nurturing home environment promotes **Healthy Brain Development in the earliest years.**

Encouraging strong learning between teachers and students, as well as more support for specialized needs of children and their families leads to **Learning that Builds the Foundation for Future Success.**

Increasing opportunities for more young children to learn in high-quality, full-day settings in all areas of Kentucky **Helps More Families Enter and Stay in the Workforce.**

**About the Strong Start Kentucky Coalition** The Strong Start Kentucky coalition unites a diverse array of Kentuckians through shared goals to strengthen early care and learning for Kentucky children from birth through third grade. The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence serves as convener to the coalition, which meets quarterly and adopts annual policy priorities. **Learn more and to join:** [prichardcommittee.org/strongstartky/](http://prichardcommittee.org/strongstartky/)



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## Strong Start Kentucky Coalition 2019 POLICY PRIORITIES

### IMPACT ON LEARNING

- Cognitive skill development begins early and rapidly. Research indicates that 85-90% of brain development occurs before the age of 5.
- Research shows children who participate in high-quality preschool programs are 40 percent less likely to drop out of school and 50 percent less likely to be placed in special education.

### IMPACT ON WORKFORCE

- According to the [National Survey of Children’s Health](#), 9.3% of Kentucky families with young children report having difficulty holding down a job because of a lack of affordable child care.
- Lack of child care “costs businesses over \$3 billion a year” according to the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation](#).
- Many child care providers cannot afford child care themselves. [The Early Childhood Workforce Index](#) indicates Kentucky’s child care workers earn a median of \$9.28 an hour, placing their annual earnings squarely under the 150% Federal Poverty Level for a two person household.

### RETURN ON INVESTMENT IS SIGNIFICANT

- **Early Childhood – Returns \$5 for every \$1 invested.** – Cost-benefit analysis conducted by the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) at the University of Kentucky in 2009 estimated that investment by Kentucky in expanded early childhood education would yield a return of \$5 in public and private benefits for every \$1 of public investment. Other research from across the country – such as the Abecedarian and Perry studies – have found the cost-benefit ratio of investing in early childhood ranging from \$2.5:1 to \$9:1.
- Benefits include reduced need for special education, higher rates of educational attainment, reduction in health costs, reduction in the incidence of crime, and less demand for social welfare services.

### THE NEED FOR QUALITY

The Cost of Quality Report (2017) found Kentucky substantially underinvests in supports for both high-quality child care and preschool, including creating and sustaining the early childhood teacher/provider pipeline. There are two objectives in accomplishing this:

- Increase quality learning interactions among teachers and children and,
- Support specialized needs of children and their families.

This would include more training, smaller class sizes, increased salaries and supports from specialists.

	Current Subsidy	Recommended	Subsidy varies by county and we aim for it to vary from lowest to highest quality level
Infants/Toddlers	\$19-25 Per Day	\$31-56 Per Day	
3-4-Year-Olds	\$16-22 Per Day	\$19-35 Per Day	
State Per-Child Rate for At Risk 4 year-olds	Current - \$3,491 Minimum Recommended - \$4,961	State Per-Child Rate for 4 year-olds with Severe/Multiple Disabilities	Current - \$6,634 Minimum Recommended - \$8,793