



EARLY LEARNING | LEADING MINDS

Strong Start Kentucky Coalition - 2021 POLICY PRIORITIES

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

HOW?

HANDS Program

Increase and sustain funding – regardless of fund source - 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.

Public Preschool

Increase eligibility to 200% of federal poverty level.

Increase per-child funding for public preschool, as well as create a dedicated source of grant funding – separate from public preschool appropriation - to encourage partnerships between public preschool and private childcare.

Child Care Assistance

Increase eligibility to 200% of federal poverty level.

Increase reimbursement rates and incentives for serving infants, toddlers & young children in high-quality center and home-based childcare.

WHY?

Supporting families’ effort in giving babies and toddlers as 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:** <https://www.prichardcommittee.org/strongstartky/>



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IMPACT ON LEARNING

- Cognitive skill development begins early and rapidly - [with over 85% of brain development](#) occurring before the age of 5.
- [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

- [13% of Kentucky families](#) with young children have job insecurity due to lack of affordable childcare.
- [50% of Kentucky children](#) live in a childcare desert without adequate access to high-quality early learning opportunities. Moreover, since 2013, Kentucky has lost more than 45% of its regulated child care providers.
- Lack of childcare [costs businesses over \\$3 billion a year](#).
- Many child care providers cannot afford child care themselves. [Kentucky's childcare professionals](#) earn a median of \$9.28 an hour, under the 150% Federal Poverty Level for a two-person household.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT IS SIGNIFICANT

- Early childhood [returns \\$5 for every \\$1 invested](#) - including reduced need for special education, higher rates of educational attainment, reduction in healthcare costs, reduction in the incidence of crime, and less demand for social welfare services.

THE NEED FOR QUALITY

[Kentucky substantially underinvests](#) in supports for both high-quality childcare and preschool. Increased investment would support higher levels of quality, including more provider training, smaller class sizes, increased salaries and supports from specialists.

Child Care Assistance Program - CCAP	Current Subsidy Per-Child – Weighted Average	Recommended – Lowest to highest Quality (2017 Cost of Quality Study)
Infants/Toddlers	\$26 Per Day	\$31-56 Per Day
3-4-Year-Olds	\$23 Per Day	\$19-35 Per Day

Public Preschool Program	Current Rate Per-Child	Recommended – Lowest to highest Quality (2017 Cost of Quality Study)
All Other Eligible	\$3,625 Annually	\$4,961-6,964 Annually
Severe/Multiple Disabilities	\$6,889 Annually	\$8,793-12,779 Annually

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