

Pre-K Investments Benefit All Kentuckians

Seniors4Kids Recommendations:

1. EXPAND

Kentucky's preschool programs to include three- and four-year old children



2. COLLABORATE

among schools, community-based programs, private operators, and Head Start to expand preschool while supporting quality child care programs

3. ENSURE

adequate, sustainable funding for quality programs



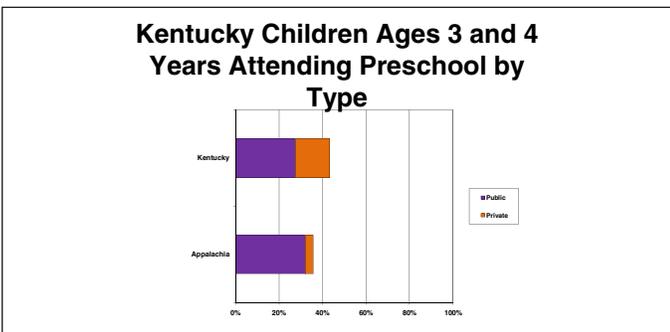
Photo: Sara P. Harmon

Introduction

As decades of rigorous research proves, investing in high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten nets a high return for taxpayers. All Kentuckians reap the rewards when children enter school ready to learn. Older adults care about pre-k and are raising their voices in support of policies that promote educational and lifelong success.

Kentucky Families and Pre-K

According to recently released census data, only 43 percent of Kentucky's three- and four-year-olds attend pre-k or nursery school.¹ In Appalachia, enrollment falls to 36 percent.² When enrolled, the vast majority of three- and four-year-olds in Kentucky attend public pre-k.



Source: Tabulated from U.S. Census Bureau, *2007 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample*, (September 2008)

In spite of bi-partisan support, pre-k spending per child in Kentucky remains below the national average.³ Once a model for other states, the decision to flat-fund the Kentucky Preschool Program for fiscal years 2009 and 2010 may force programs to either reduce access or cut corners on quality.

At the same time, more Kentucky families are experiencing pay cuts or losing jobs because of the country's unprecedented economic crisis.⁴ Even many middle class families find themselves struggling to afford quality pre-k and early care.⁵ By ensuring that all three- and four-year-old children can access high-quality, voluntary pre-k pro-

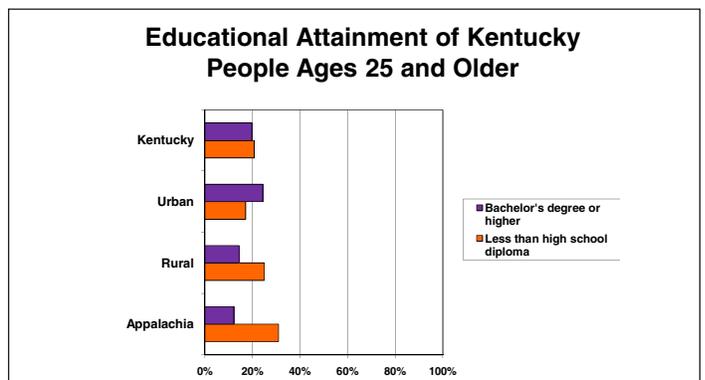
grams, Kentucky legislators can address both the immediate needs of families and produce long-term gains for the public.

Intergenerational Benefits: Successful Students, Responsible Adults

Few public policy options offer a guaranteed return as tangible as that of high-quality, voluntary pre-k. Some of the intergenerational benefits of early childhood education include:

- \$ Greater academic motivation, on-task behavior, capacity for independent work, and time spent on homework
- \$ Fewer referrals for remedial classes or special education
- \$ Lower rates of teen pregnancy
- \$ Higher high-school graduation rates, GED completion, and post-secondary enrollment
- \$ Better earnings and employment rates contributing to state fiscal balance⁶

For Kentucky, these benefits can help ensure future economic competitiveness. Currently, only 20 percent of Kentuckians over the age of 25 earn a Bachelors degree. High-quality pre-kindergarten decreases the number of unskilled adults in the work force. Investing in pre-k is pro-economy and pro-business.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *2005-2007 American Community Survey*, (December 2008)

Older Adults Care About Pre-K

Seniors don't just care about Social Security and Medicare. I joined the Seniors4Kids initiative because the well-being of our entire community matters to me. Our families need many community voices cheering them on to thrive.

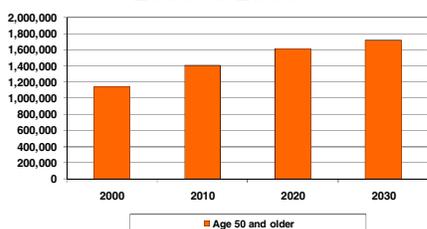
-Deborah Turner, Kentucky Captain4Kids

It is really only enlightened self-interest to ensure that young children get a good start in life so that they can become self-reliant, productive citizens.

-Pat Murrell, Louisville Lead Captain

The number of age 50+ adults in Kentucky is on the rise. They represent a growing and diverse voter constituency across the state. Throughout Kentucky, adults age 50+ are mobilizing widespread bipartisan support to champion the cause of high-quality pre-k as part of Generations United's Seniors4Kids initiative. Kentucky's Captains4Kids recognize the importance of pre-k as a strong foundation to future academic success.

**Projected Older Adult Population
Increases in Kentucky,
2000 to 2030**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Interim State Population Projections 2005*, (April 2005)

First Lady Jane Beshear and Former First Ladies Glenna Fletcher, Phyllis George, Libby Jones and Martha Wilkinson recently noted: "As grandparents, parents, sisters and aunts, we care about Kentucky's future. We want policy makers to understand the importance of investing in Kentucky's children and make high-quality pre-kindergarten available to every 3- and 4-year-old."⁷

It is in the best interest of all Kentuckians that children receive a high-quality pre-school experience. Older adults are raising awareness about the programs, policies, and practices that support pre-k. Their efforts are needed to ensure a sound start to an education that will benefit all generations.

Our Mission

Generations United's Seniors4Kids (www.seniors4kids.org) is a civic engagement initiative that highlights the role older adults play in support of issues that directly benefit children and youth. Currently, the program helps adults age 50+ create statewide networks of community leaders and grassroots volunteers that work to increase access to, and improve the quality of, pre-kindergarten programs.

For more information on Seniors4Kids in Kentucky, please contact:

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**generations
united**

Because we're stronger together®

Generations United (GU) is the national membership organization focused solely on improving the lives of children, youth, and older people through intergenerational strategies, programs, and public policies. GU represents more than 100 national, state, and local organizations and individuals representing more than 70 million Americans. Since 1986, GU has served as a resource for educating policymakers and the public about the economic, social, and personal imperatives of intergenerational cooperation. GU acts as a catalyst for stimulating collaboration between aging, children, and youth organizations providing a forum to explore areas of common ground while celebrating the richness of each generation.

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For further information on intergenerational programs and policies please contact:

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¹ This data differs slightly from other Kentucky reports because this fact sheet uses recently released U.S. Census data. See chart, Kentucky Children Ages 3 and 4 Years Attending Preschool by Type.

² See chart, Kentucky Children Ages 3 and 4 Years Attending Preschool by Type. This fact sheet uses counties designated by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to define Appalachia. See ARC, "Map of Appalachia," http://www.arc.gov/images/aboutarc/region/Appalachian_Region.pdf, (Accessed January 29, 2008.) U.S. Census Bureau data are available for Public Use Microdata Areas 00500-01000 and 02100-02200 covering the following Kentucky counties: Adair, Allen, Barren, Bath, Bell, Boyd, Bracken, Breathitt, Carter, Casey, Clay, Clinton, Cumberland, Edmonson, Elliott, Fleming, Floyd, Green, Greenup, Harlan, Hart, Jackson, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Laurel, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Lewis, Magoffin, Martin, Mason, McCreary, Menifee, Metcalfe, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Pulaski, Robertson, Rockcastle, Rowan, Russell, Taylor, Wayne, Whitley, and Wolfe.

³ W. Steven Barnett, Hustedt, Jason, T. Friedman, Allison H., Stevenson Boyd, Judi, "The State of Preschool 2007", New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, National Institute for Early Education Research, <http://www.nieer.org/yearbook> (Accessed Dec. 30, 2008)

⁴ Kentucky's jobless rate rose to 7% in November 2008. See Office of the State Budget Director, "Economic Brief for Week of December 26", <http://www.osbd.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/3EA60275-8194-4D37-BDB4-7C3EBF406918/0/081226EconBrief.doc> (Accessed Jan. 29, 2009)

⁵ One recent study estimates that it would take a minimum income of \$59,100 to support a family of four in Kentucky. The income eligibility cap for state funded Pre-K in Kentucky is \$31,800. See Pre-K Now, "The Pre-K Pinch: Early Education and the Middle Class," Washington, D.C. Pre-Know, November 2008.

⁶ Pre-K Now, "The Benefits of High-Quality Pre-K", <http://www.preknow.org/policy/factsheets/benefits.cfm> (Accessed Jan 29, 2009)

⁷ "Investing in Kentucky's Children," The Courier-Journal, Dec. 23, 2008.