

Afterschool in Kentucky: School-Age Child Care

February 2024

A robust child care system that provides a continuum of high-quality care and learning opportunities from birth through school-age is essential for meeting the needs of kids and families today. Yet, in Kentucky, the number of families without access is on the rise.

The need for affordable, high-quality child care does not end on the first day of kindergarten.

When people think of child care, they often think of very young children (i.e., babies, toddlers, and preschoolers)—not a 3rd grader who rides the bus to school each day. But, in today's world, where **69% of elementary-school-age children (ages 6-12) in the U.S. have all available parents in the labor force**,¹ school-age child care is an absolute necessity.

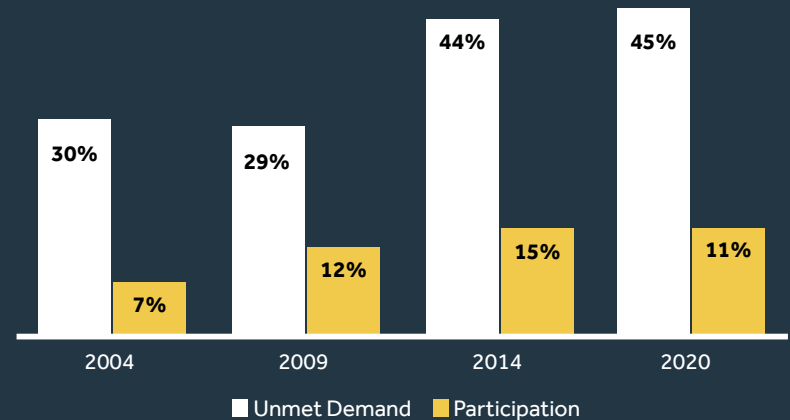
School-age youth spend **80% of their waking hours** outside of school, with **1 in 5 kids alone and unsupervised** when the school day ends.² During out-of-school time, which covers before and after school as well as school vacation weeks and summers, working parents depend on school-age child care to provide a safe and enriching environment. In Kentucky, **80% of parents with a child enrolled in an afterschool program report that the program helps them keep their job or work more hours**.³



The number of families in Kentucky without access to school-age child care is on the rise.

Over the past 20 years, **demand for afterschool and summer programs has skyrocketed while access has shrunk**.⁴ Between 2014 and 2020, as high levels of parents reported barriers to enrollment related to cost, program supply, and transportation access, Kentucky saw a decrease in afterschool program participation for the first time ever since 2004.⁵

Currently, **for every child in Kentucky in an afterschool program, 4 more are waiting to get in**.⁶ This means that there are now more than **280,000 children** in Kentucky who would be enrolled in an afterschool program if one were available to them.⁷ When it comes to summer, **only 16% of school-age youth in Kentucky participated in a structured summer experience in 2019**, which includes summer learning programs, sports programs, summer camps, summer school, summer jobs, or internships.⁸



Public funding for school-age child care is at historic levels, but most Kentucky providers and families can't access it.

Since 2020, states have received unprecedented amounts of federal COVID-relief funding targeted towards expanding access to afterschool, summer learning, and child care, which includes school-age care.⁹ Yet, **less than 1 in 5** afterschool and summer program providers (17%) have received any COVID-relief funding.¹⁰

There are two major sources of long-term funding and supports for school-age child care in Kentucky.

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is a federal program that supports low-income working families by providing access to affordable, high-quality child care for children under age 13. Most of the funding is directed towards providing families with subsidies to purchase care,¹¹ but there are also opportunities for states to offer grants directly to providers, such as to address critical shortages in school-age care (see [Utah's School-Age Program Grant 2020](#) for an example).

The Employee Child Care Assistance Partnership (ECCAP) Program is a state pilot program, based on HB 499, that seeks to incentivize employers to contribute to their employees' child care costs (including costs associated with school-age care) by providing state matching funds directly to an eligible child care provider based on the employer's contribution and the employee's household income.

Both programs are designed to serve families with children up to **age 13**, or through **age 18** if the child is mentally or physically incapable of self-care or is under court supervision.

But too many eligible families in need of affordable school-age care can't find a program that accepts subsidy payments.

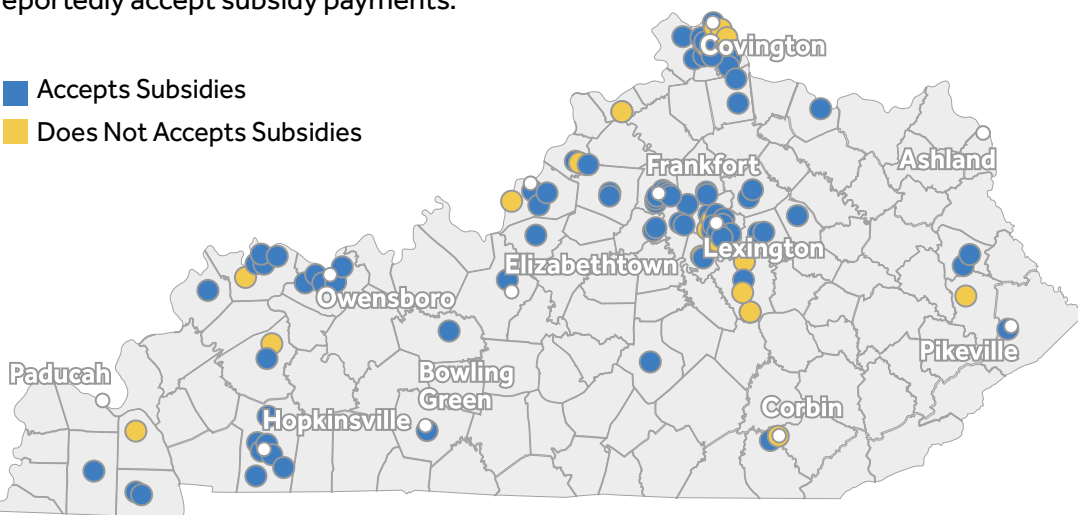
Under Kentucky's current system, afterschool and summer programs can only accept CCDF subsidy payments or ECCAP state matching funds if they operate as a licensed child care center and have a quality rating under Kentucky's early care and education rating system, Kentucky All STARS.¹²

As of May 2023, Kentucky had **less than 200 licensed stand-alone school-age child care centers** with a Kentucky All STARS rating.¹³ In addition to these stand-alone school-age child care centers, there are approximately 1,000 early care and education providers that are licensed to serve the school-age population.¹⁴ But due to state data limitations, it is unknown how many ECE providers currently serve school-age youth and in what capacity.

Stand-alone school-age child care centers in Kentucky with a Kentucky All STARS rating

Of the 193 stand-alone school-age child care centers shown on the map, 156 (81%) reportedly accept subsidy payments.

- Accepts Subsidies
- Does Not Accepts Subsidies



Based on data provided by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Community Based Services, Division of Child Care on Kentucky's supply of regulated child care providers, as of May 3, 2023.

Map: Kentucky Out-of-School Alliance (KYOSA) • Created with Datawrapper

The time is now to make a change!

Afterschool and summer programs are a smart investment. Research spanning several states shows that for **every \$1 invested** in afterschool programs **saves at least \$3** by:¹⁵

- Increasing kids' earning potential
- Improving kids' performance at school
- Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency

In Kentucky, support for public funding for afterschool programs is high, with **83% of parents across the political spectrum in favor of funding for programs** that provide afterschool opportunities.¹⁶ Scan the QR code to learn more about school-age child care in Kentucky, our current priorities, and what you can do to help expand access.

SCAN
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Learn
More!



References for February 2024 Fact Sheet - *Afterschool in Kentucky: School-Age Child Care*

- ¹ Children ages 6 to 12 with all available parents in the labor force | KIDS COUNT Data Center. (n.d.). Datacenter. aecf.org. Retrieved from: <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/5053-children-ages-6-to-12-with-all-available-parents-in-the-labor-force?loc=1&loct=2#detailed/1/any/false/1095>
- ² Afterschool Alliance. (2020). *This is Afterschool: Inspiring Learning, Providing Safety, Promoting Smart Choices, and Supporting Working Parents*. Retrieved from: <https://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/National-One-Page-2020.pdf>
- ³ Afterschool Alliance. (2020). *Kentucky After 3PM*. Retrieved from: <https://kyoutofschoolalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/KY-AA3PM-2020-fact-sheet.pdf>
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Afterschool Alliance. (2020). *Kentucky After 3PM, Summer: Time for a Game-Changing Summer, with Opportunity and Growth for All of America's Youth*. Retrieved from: <https://kyoutofschoolalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/KY-AA3PM-Summer-2021-Fact-Sheet.pdf>
- ⁹ To view a list of all federal COVID-relief funding streams that can be used to create or expand afterschool and summer learning programs for school-age youth, including examples of how states have used those funds, visit <https://afterschoolalliance.org/covid/partnerships.cfm>.
- ¹⁰ Afterschool Alliance. (2023). *This is Afterschool in Kentucky*. Retrieved from: <https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/challenge-2023/KY-Afterschool-Fact-Sheet-2023.pdf>
- ¹¹ In Kentucky, CCDF subsidies are provided through the [Child Care Assistance Program \(CCAP\)](#).
- ¹² See [922 KAR 2:160](#) and [922 KAR 2:165](#).
- ¹³ Based on KYOSA's analysis of data provided by the Kentucky Division of Child Care (KY DCC) on all regulated child care providers, as of May 3, 2023.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Afterschool Alliance. (2023). *This is Afterschool in Kentucky*. Retrieved from: <https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/challenge-2023/KY-Afterschool-Fact-Sheet-2023.pdf>
- ¹⁶ Afterschool Alliance. (2020). *Kentucky After 3PM*. Retrieved from: <https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/challenge-2023/KY-Afterschool-Fact-Sheet-2023.pdf>

