



Kentucky should...

ensure that young children with disabilities have access to high quality child care

Kentucky's economy relies on a strong child care workforce and availability of high quality child care for every child.

Child care deserts and increasing waitlists are causing child care programs to operate at the highest adult-to-child ratios that the state will allow, which makes it more challenging for child care providers to protect the health and safety of the children in the classroom.

This also means that Kentucky child care providers are less likely to enroll children with special needs or disabilities since they typically need more individualized care, and this can require higher staffing costs.

A recent survey by Kentucky Youth Advocates of 439 Kentucky child care directors showed that:

- **54%** reported (n=439) having to expel a child in the past 12 months due to challenging behaviors.
- **71%** reported (n=246) they could serve children with disabilities in their programs if their staff had more training.
- **73%** reported (n=244) they could serve children with disabilities if they had enough income to lower adult-to-child ratios.

Young children are over **3X** more likely to be expelled from child care than from the K-12 education system.

One of the driving reasons behind these expulsions is challenging behaviors associated with disability, mental health needs, or chronic health care conditions.

Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Policy Solution:

Require annual training for child care providers on strategies to support children with disabilities and allow the Kentucky Early Intervention Services (KEIS) and the local public school district access to child care programs for the purpose of diagnosis and therapy services with parent permission.

All children deserve access to a safe, affordable child care program where they can learn and grow surrounded by caring teachers and same-age peers. Families also need to trust that staff are trained and prepared to keep their children safe and healthy.