



October 9, 2025

Via Electronic Mail

Kentucky General Assembly
702 Capital Avenue
Annex
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Re: Kentucky Mayors Supporting Pre-K for All

Dear Senators and Representatives:

As mayors representing communities across the Commonwealth, we write to urge your support for the Pre-K for All initiative. It would expand Kentucky's voluntary publicly-funded preschool program, so that every Kentucky four-year-old has an opportunity at a strong start.

Leading cities and towns, both large and small, we know firsthand the vital role early childhood education plays in helping our children succeed. We also know it would provide financial relief to families, boost our local economies, and help invest in Kentucky's long-term competitiveness.

American families are struggling to pay the bills and one of the key drivers is a lack of childcare. Pre-K for All can help ease the financial burden and boost household earnings by nearly \$9,000 dollars each year for at least six years. That's \$54,000 more dollars in the pockets of our families, cycling through our local economies, creating and maintaining jobs, and growing our communities.

We've heard it from parents, teachers, and business owners: **pre-K works**. But right now, only 14,000 of Kentucky's 54,000 four-year-olds have access to it.

The research is overwhelming and success is undeniable. Pre-K improves statewide kindergarten readiness, boosts high school graduation rates, and raises overall lifetime earnings. It saves parents money, supports working families, and fuels broader workforce participation. In a state where nearly two-thirds of counties lack sufficient childcare, **Pre-K is not just about education—it's an economic development investment that will keep Kentucky moving forward.**

Consider the data:

- **Improves Kindergarten Readiness:** Over half – 53.8% – of Kentucky's children arrive at kindergarten already behind. Pre-K for All would close this gap and make sure every Kentucky child has a strong start.

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- **Expands the Workforce:** Up to 70,000 Kentuckians are unable to work because they lack childcare. Pre-K for All will let parents reenter the workforce and take advantage of local job opportunities in our cities and towns across Kentucky.
- **Raises Household Incomes:** A long-term study shows that families with access to Pre-K earn nearly **\$9,000 more per year** - gains that persist for years after their child completes Pre-K.
- **Delivers a 10:1 Return on Investment:** Every dollar invested in Pre-K yields ten dollars in return—from better jobs and health outcomes, to reduced criminal justice costs and increased educational attainment.
- **Creates Jobs in Education:** Pre-K for All will generate demand for educators and support staff across the state, creating new careers, and helping attract talent to our towns and cities.
- **Expands Access Across Kentucky:** With 79 of Kentucky's 120 counties having little to no childcare available, this initiative will expand access, create job opportunities, give parents a choice, and lay the foundation for academic success.

As mayors, we are committed to building stronger communities where children thrive, families prosper, and businesses grow.

Our families and communities cannot wait. We urge the General Assembly to make expanding Pre-K access for all Kentucky four-year-olds a top priority in the 2026 Budget Session. Let's give every Kentucky child a great start, support working families, and invest in a stronger, more competitive Kentucky.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your leadership and your commitment to Kentucky's future.

Respectfully,

*The Undersigned Mayors of the Commonwealth of
Kentucky*

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Chuck Charles

Mayor Chuck Charles
City of Ashland, Kentucky

J. Richard Heaton

Mayor J. Richard Heaton
City of Bardstown, Kentucky

Charlie Cleves

Mayor Charlie Cleves
City of Bellevue, Kentucky

Rita Dotson

Mayor Rita Dotson
City of Benton, Kentucky

Bruce Fraley

Mayor Bruce Fraley
City of Berea, Kentucky

Robb Adams

Mayor Robb Adams
City of Carrollton, Kentucky

Dwayne Hatcher

Mayor Dwayne Hatcher
City of Cave City, Kentucky

Paul Meier

Mayor Paul Meier
City of Crestview Hills, Kentucky

Albert Jackson

Mayor Albert Jackson
City of Earlington, Kentucky

Jeff Gregory

Mayor Jeff Gregory
City of Elizabethtown, Kentucky

Layne Wilkerson

Mayor Layne Wilkerson
City of Frankfort, Kentucky

Burney Jenkins

Mayor Burney Jenkins
City of Georgetown, Kentucky

Happy Mobelini

Mayor Happy Mobelini
City of Hazard, Kentucky

Brad Staton

Mayor Brad Staton
City of Henderson, Kentucky

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Jim Eadens

Mayor Jim Eadens
City of Hillview, Kentucky

Jim Phelps Jr.

Mayor Jim Phelps Jr.
City of Hodgenville, Kentucky

Randall Curry

Mayor Randall Curry
City of Horse Cave, Kentucky

Laura Thomas

Mayor Laura Thomas
City of Jackson, Kentucky

Craig Greenberg

Mayor Craig Greenberg
City of Louisville, Kentucky

Kathy O'Nan

Mayor Kathy O'Nan
City of Mayfield, Kentucky

Laura White-Brown

Mayor Laura White-Brown
City of Morehead, Kentucky

Bob Rogers

Mayor Bob Rogers
City of Murray, Kentucky

Tom Guidugli Jr.

Mayor Tom Guidugli Jr.
City of Newport, Kentucky

Tom Watson

Mayor Tom Watson
City of Owensboro, Kentucky

Gary Hunt

Mayor Gary Hunt
City of Owingsville, Kentucky

George Bray

Mayor George Bray
City of Paducah, Kentucky

Jimmy Carter

Mayor Jimmy Carter
City of Pikeville, Kentucky

Brock Thomas

Mayor Brock Thomas
City of Princeton, Kentucky

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David Sellers

Mayor David Sellers
City of Robards, Kentucky

Robby Adkins

Mayor Robby Adkins
City of Sandy Hook, Kentucky

Maria Johnson

Mayor Maria Johnson
City of Shively, Kentucky

Laura Dake

Mayor Laura Dake
City of Versailles, Kentucky

JoEllen Reed

Mayor JoEllen Reed
City of Winchester, Kentucky

Jason Flocker

Mayor Jason Flocker
City of Worthington, Kentucky

Attachments: Letter from Mayor of Lexington Linda Gorton



Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Linda Gorton
Mayor

Aug. 28, 2025

Dear Kentucky Senators and Representatives,

I am joining Mayors across Kentucky who are supporting the Pre-K for All initiative.

The need for voluntary, publicly funded preschool unites Kentucky. I am very concerned that in Fayette County only 41-50% of our children enter kindergarten prepared to learn.

The benefits of Pre-K for All are undeniable, and would have an impact on every Kentucky county. Pre-K for All would grow our labor force, boost take home pay, save families in out-of-pocket child care costs, improve educational outcomes long-term, grow our economy and eliminate child care deserts.

Pre-K for All has a record of success in many states, including Alabama, Georgia, Iowa, Oklahoma and West Virginia.

As Kentuckians, we have a history of pulling together to improve our children's education. Pre-K for All is important enough for us to do it again. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Linda Gorton
Mayor



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