

## Additional Facts<sup>1</sup>

*How is "at risk" defined?*

The federal law, No Child Left Behind, defines "at-risk" as follows:

Under Title I, Part D § 1432 (2) (20 USC § 6472 (2)) "the term 'at-risk', when used with respect to a child, youth, or student, means a school aged individual who is at-risk of academic failure, has a drug or alcohol problem, is pregnant or is a parent, has come into contact with the juvenile justice system in the past, is at least 1 year behind the expected grade level for the age of the individual, has limited English proficiency, is a gang member, has dropped out of school in the past, or has a high absenteeism rate at school."

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) rule for defining "at risk" is:

Students will be considered as having characteristics identified as indicative of at-risk students if they have:

- A. A parent or sibling who dropped out of school;
- B. Experienced numerous family relocations;
- C. Poor social adjustment, or deviant social behavior;
- D. Employment of more than twenty (20) hours per week while school is in session;
- E. Been the victim of racial or ethnic prejudice;
- F. Low self-esteem and expectations of teachers, parents, and the community;
- G. A poorly educated mother and/or father;
- H. Children of their own;
- I. A deprived environment which slows economic and social development;
- J. A fatherless home; or
- K. Been a victim of personal or family abuse, which includes substance abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse.

The ruling for Early Childhood Special Education defines "at-risk"/eligibility as:

Beginning with the 2001-2002 school year, school districts have the option of identifying a child as eligible under the category of Young Child with a Developmental Delay (YCDD) or under one of the other eligibility categories that have been historically used for children ages Kindergarten to 21. In order to be eligible under the YCDD category,

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks go to Jo Anne Ralston (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education), Doris Hallford (Department of Social Services, Children's Division), Cindy Hudson (Department of Health and Senior Services, Section for Child Care Regulation) and Stacey Owsley (Head Start State Collaboration Office) for supplying these additional facts.

the child's development must be at or below 1.5 standard deviations or equivalent levels, of the mean in any two areas of development, or at or below 2.0 standard deviations or equivalent levels in one area of development, and the child must need special education and related services. Areas of development that can be used to determine eligibility include physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional or adaptive.

#### The Definition from the Department of Social Services

The Department of Social Services does not have a specific definition for "at risk" since it considers all of the families receiving child care or early childhood services through its programs as "at risk" because they all are either low income or under protective services. There used to be an "at risk" definition for child care that was "at risk of becoming eligible for TANF" which basically means low income.

The Definition from the Early Head Start/Head Start (EHS/HS) perspective:

Each Head Start program must have a formal process for establishing selection criteria and for selecting children and families that takes into consideration all eligible applicants (as federally defined, see below) for Head Start services. In selecting the children and families to be served, the Head Start program considers the income of eligible families, the age of the child, and the extent to which a child or family meets the criteria that each program is required to establish, and who would benefit from the Head Start services.

#### Eligibility (also applicable to Early Head Start programs)

- Head Start grantees must serve at least 55% of their slot allocation with children at or below 100% of the federal poverty guidelines
- Grantees may serve up to 35% of their enrollment with children whose incomes are between 100-130% of poverty (if the agency has implemented policies to ensure that needs of the first category, above, are being met; and selection priority is given to above children, who will be served prior to serving others).
- In addition, 10% of a grantee's enrollment may be with children over income (i.e., no income restrictions)
- Each Head Start program must assure that 10% of its enrollment will be of children with disabilities. (A waiver of this requirement may be granted for a period of up to three years.)
- Certain special pay and allowances paid to members of the Uniformed Services are not to be included in determining Head Start eligibility
- With the 2007 reauthorization of Head Start, homeless children are now categorically eligible

- (1) How many school districts provide pre-school services that are not state funded?
- (2) How many 3- and 4-year olds are in accredited programs?
- (3) What is the capacity and location of programs for 3- and 4-year olds?

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: See figures that follow these pages.

All school districts in the state of Missouri offer kindergarten. Below is information on the length of the day offered and number of children served.

	Districts	Number of Children	
		Half	Full
Half day only	4	4210	
		(Jefferson City, Ft. Zumwalt, Wentzville, Rockwood)	
Half day & Full day	10	4236	597
Full day	510		56601

Department of Social Services: I don't know that it's possible to give numbers for 3- and 4- year-olds in accredited programs. It might be possible to tell you how many children are receiving child care subsidy accreditation enhancement dollars, but the Department's research staff would have to figure out how to break out how many of these children are 3-4- year-olds and that would require some time. And even so, this figure would not begin to get at the total numbers of 3- and 4-year-olds in accredited programs. It is questionable as to whether even the accrediting organizations could answer this question.

Department of Health and Senior Services. Section for Child Care Regulation: The Department tracks capacities of licensed child care programs in the state but that includes all children in care from birth on. I am not able to break these numbers down into 3- and 4- year-old slots.

*What methods are presently used to review and evaluate program performance?*

Early Head Start/Head Start: The monitoring and review for federal Early Head Start/Head Start programs is an extensive process.

Head Start has a comprehensive monitoring system including triennial federal reviews, follow-up, and targeted reviews when required. Monitoring is an integral part of the local grantee's success in meeting over 1700 performance standards which ensure delivery of quality services to children and families. In the future, monitoring reviews will include inter-rater reliability checks to ensure quality and consistency across and within regions. Other changes to the monitoring system that reflect new or revised statutory requirements will be developed over the next several months and will be incorporated into the FY 2009 monitoring protocol.

The Dept Social Services does not evaluate the programs it funds for for 3s and 4s.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - of the Missouri Preschool Project only/Moving on Together (MoT)  
<http://movingontgether.org/sections/overview/index.html>

MOT is a component of the Missouri Preschool Project (MPP) that offers ongoing professional development to all MPP grantees. This professional development program includes on-site technical assistance and regional professional-development meetings. The goal of the program is to support teachers and teaching assistants in providing high-quality early childhood care and education. All MPP grantees, regardless of the program model being implemented, receive the services of MOT.

Also within the MoT component, the ECERS-E (an environmental rating scale) is used to assist the program in setting goals to work toward accreditation and further ongoing program quality improvement. The ECERS-R (another version of the same instrument) is used to assist programs in continuous quality improvement as well as a planning tool for regional professional development meetings, additional on-site technical assistance, and further monitoring and technical assistance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.