

# The Importance of Preschool: Building a Strong Foundation



Students work together  
to build a bridge.



*Not so far away..... in Somerset, KY*

## Memorial Education Center

222 Langdon Street  
Somerset, KY 42501

Amy Smith

Principal

Preschool Coordinator

Pulaski County Schools







\*Serving students from six weeks to Kindergarten

\*Open year round for child care services

\*Structured curriculum in every classroom

\*Training for each staff member



# Why provide support programs?

half day  
preschool

\*before school  
\*wrap-around program  
\*after school

- \*Public preschool regulations require at least a half day program.
- \*Working families need all day care, therefore they have to find additional care for their child.
- \*Currently, 63% of enrolled preschool students in need of care attend our wrap-around, before school, or after school programs.
- \*Collaborative efforts occur between certified teachers and child care staff.
- \*Benefits are provided for all employed staff.

# How do we provide support programs at Memorial?

- PRESCHOOL FUNDING IS DETERMINED BY THE LEGISLATIVE BIENNIAL BUDGET.
- TO PROVIDE SUPPORT PROGRAMS TO STUDENTS NEEDING THE ADDITIONAL CHILD CARE SERVICES, OTHER FUNDS ARE USED:
  - PRESCHOOL PARTNERSHIP GRANTS
  - CCAP
  - TUITION (PARENT PAY)



# **IMPACT OF PUBLIC PRESCHOOL: PREPARING STUDENTS FOR KINDERGARTEN**

**PUBLIC PRESCHOOL INTRODUCES A STRUCTURED  
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT THAT:**

- PREPARES STUDENTS FOR KINDERGARTEN
- PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP
- BUILDS CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM
- PROMOTES LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE SKILLS
- IMPROVES SOCIAL SKILLS
- INCREASES STUDENT ATTENTION SPAN
- **SETS THE FOUNDATION FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND  
STUDENT SUCCESS**

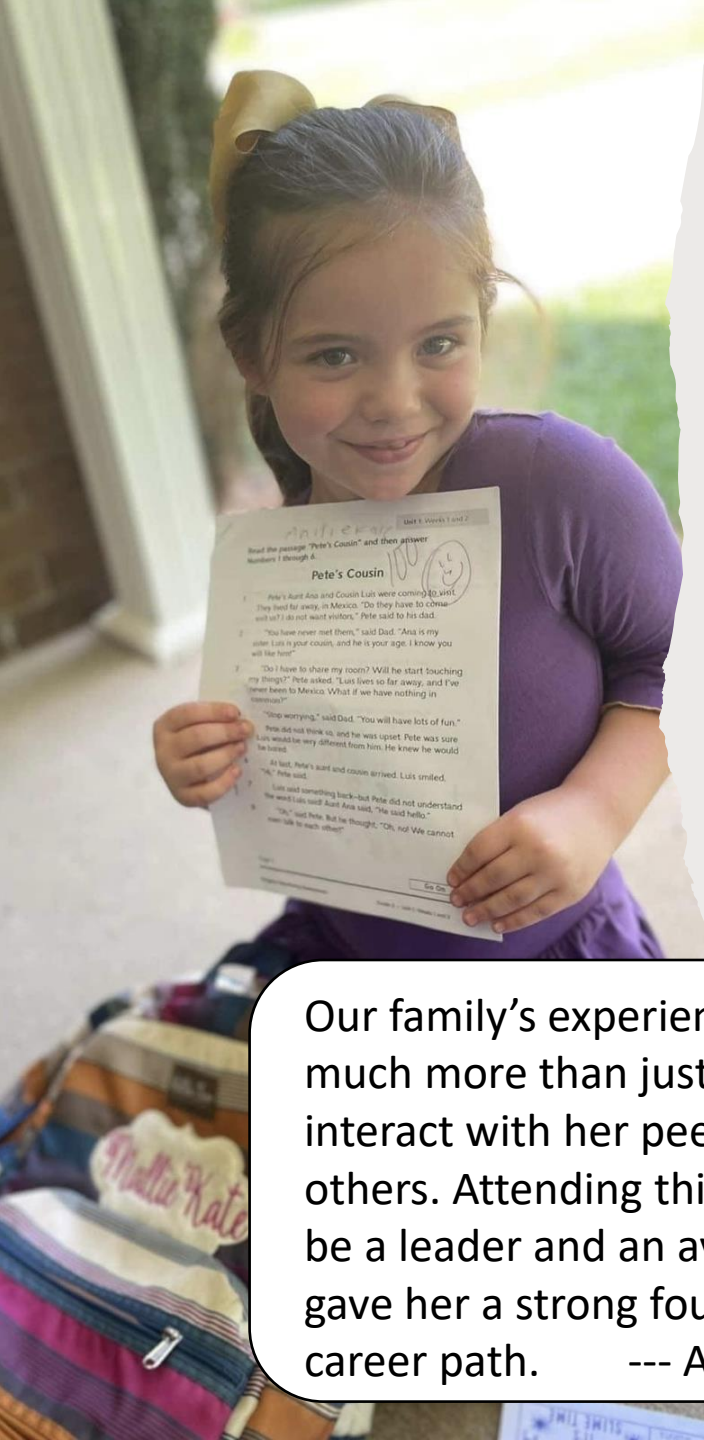
*PARTICIPATION IN AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTING SUCH AS PUBLIC PRESCHOOL IS  
BENEFICIAL TO ALL STUDENTS ENTERING SCHOOL SETTINGS.*



# IMPACT OF PUBLIC PRESCHOOL: DATA ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC PRESCHOOL WITH SUPPORT PROGRAMS

ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM KINDERGARTEN READINESS SCORES  
FOR STUDENTS THAT ATTENDED MEMORIAL  
(both public preschool and support programs):

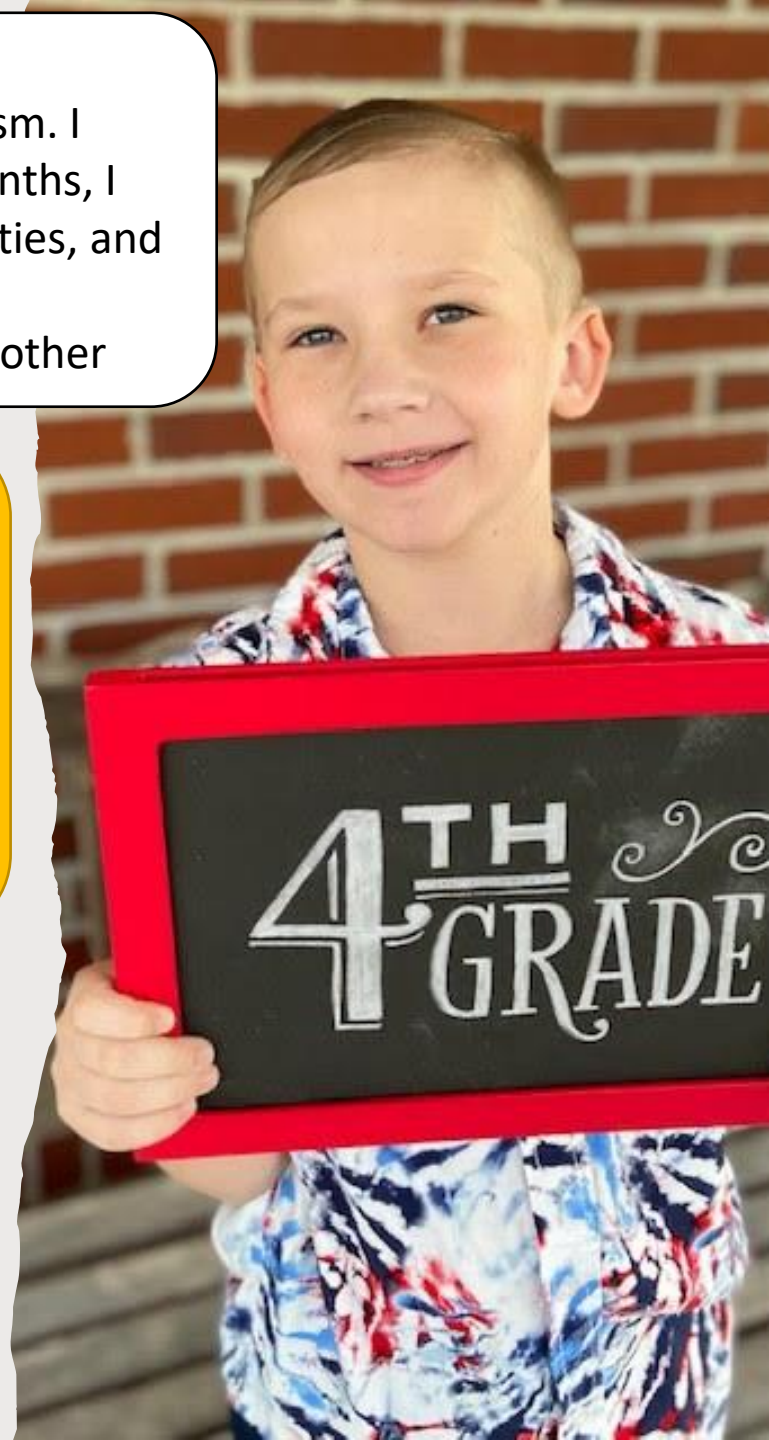
Data from **2017** indicated that **63%** of students who participated in **both programs** were ready/ready with enrichments, compared to **50%** of the **state** and **44.8%** in the **district**. Data from **2018** indicated that **81%** of students who participated in **both programs** were ready/ready with enrichments compared to **51%** of the **state** and **45.6%** in the **district**. The quality and structure of both programs provide support to students for Kindergarten readiness.



“Public preschool changed the course of my child’s education. In 2015, my son was diagnosed with Autism. I turned to Memorial Education Center and in just months, I saw measurable changes in my son’s education, abilities, and confidence. Public preschool is the reason my son is succeeding in his elementary years.” -- Brooke, mother

Early educators continue to be faced with challenges, while attempting to meet individual needs of their students. Support continues and will always be needed if we want our students to succeed. If everyone works together, we can provide instruction that is individualized while establishing programs to promote growth.  
--- Julena, Pre-K and K Educator

Our family’s experience at Memorial Education Center was so much more than just preschool. Our daughter learned to interact with her peers, which has made her empathetic to others. Attending this public preschool program taught her to be a leader and an avid reader. We feel that early intervention gave her a strong foundation for having a successful educational career path. --- Ashley, mother





## NEEDS FOR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF EFFECTIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS IN KENTUCKY

- \*Public preschool programs are required by regulation to provide services to any child that qualifies, with or without disabilities.
- \*Public preschool programs do not have waiting lists, which means a district has to open another classroom if enrollment increases.
- \*Districts have to find funding to cover costs of staff and materials.
- \*Public preschool enrollment continues to increase, since the decline of 2020.
- \*The current funding for 2022-23 is \$84,390,499, which is a decrease in funding of \$2672 from the 2021-22 budget. Since the 2017-18 school year, the budget has increased by only \$1.78M. Costs of salaries, consumables, and other expenses increase significantly each year.

## WHAT CAN POTENTIALLY HAPPEN WITH BETTER RESOURCES FOR PUBLIC PRESCHOOL AND EC PROGRAMS

- \*More students served in quality programs.
- \*Opportunity for hiring and maintaining certified and classified staff.
- \*Better collaborative efforts between EC programs.
- \*Community understanding and increased support.
- \*Increased family engagement when they feel our programs are valued by all stakeholders including the legislature and community members.
- \*Increasing the work force- even in our own school system when we can provide wrap around care for employees.



# Things to remember.....

- \*Let's continue to be innovative and focus on the programs in our state that are effective.
- \*Provide funding that meets the needs of public preschool programs and the collaborative efforts of other early childhood programs.
- \*Include preschool in school level bills and laws being established, instead of just K-12.
- \*Support comes from **ALL** stakeholders: educators, parents, community members, and the legislature.

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**Thank you!**