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Code

Early Childhood

Greater Louisville Project

2021

Data used in this report is reflective of pre-COVID trends throughout our community. The effects of COVID on child development and kindergarten readiness are not yet fully known or understood, but as the report below will show children not participating in a formal setting before kindergarten have the lowest kindergarten readiness scores. In 2020, child care providers were mandated to close from March 20 to June 15th due to COVID and operated at reduced capacity until March 15,

2021. In addition, many providers have closed permanently, or had to close on and off as a result of COVID cases at their site.
(/)*Due to these realities, we know that more children than ever will have spent the last year at home and not in a formal care setting.*

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Introduction

The first five years of a child's life provide the building blocks for lifelong learning and health. While Louisville has a large ecosystem of individuals, businesses, and organizations that support early childhood development, many families across Louisville face barriers to accessing those resources.

This report analyzes one way to evaluate early childhood development—kindergarten readiness—as well as several factors that impact it: the price and availability of child care, adverse childhood experiences, and food security. We chose these data based on community interest and with the aim of illuminating topics for which local data is not widely available.

Wherever possible, we analyze the connection between race, geography, and early childhood development. As a result of institutional racism, residential segregation, discriminatory policies, and many other factors, Louisville's early childhood system does not support all populations equally. In support of A Path Forward (https://apathforward4lou.org/), we focus on Black children in particular. However, structural racism does not just affect Black children, and exclusionary policies affect people based on more identities than their race and ethnicity. While we provide some data that extends beyond race, data for other races and populations in our community is often limited, a problem in its own right.

The Greater Louisville Project created this report in conjunction with the Louisville Urban League (https://lul.org/about/), which has recently convened community members around A Path Forward and has assisted African Americans and other marginalized populations in attaining social and economic equality in Louisville for over 100 years. This report was also produced in conjunction with the Ready for K Alliance (http://www.readyforkalliance.com/), whose vision is that all children enter kindergarten ready to thrive.

Join experts for an open community conversation about early childhood on May 18, 2021. Register for this free, virtual event here. (https://early_childhood2.eventbrite.com)

Kindergarten Readiness

Kindergarten readiness is an important indicator of whether children will succeed in the classroom for years to come. Based on data from KySTATS (https://kystats.ky.gov/Reports/Tableau/ECP_2020), JCPS students who entered school ready for kindergarten in 2016 were over three times as likely to achieve test results at or above their grade level on their standardized K-PREP math and reading tests in the 3rd grade. This is true for both JCPS students as a whole and Black JCPS students in particular.

Kentucky school districts evaluate kindergarten readiness using the BRIGANCE Early Childhood Kindergarten Screen III (https://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/learning/ready4k), which assesses child development across five areas:

- Academic/Cognitive Development
- Language Development
- Physical Development
- Self-Help Skills
- Social and Emotional Skills

The BRIGANCE screener asks children to perform tasks such as identifying letters, numbers, and shapes or using a writing utensil. Parents and caregivers provide information on their child's self-help, social, and emotional skills such as whether their child can dress themselves, communicate their feelings, or take turns with other children. The results of this screening are a strong indicator of a student's future academic performance.

It is important to note that the BRIGANCE screener has limitations. For example, children enrolled in child care are more likely (/)to receive instruction tailored to the BRIGRANCE screener than children in a home setting with their parents or a caregiver.
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While many of the topics and questions represent important developmental foundations, child development includes factors beyond just the questions in BRIGANCE. It is important to consider how results are affected by cultural bias in all tests and screeners, including BRIGANCE. Communicating the developmental milestones in BRIGANCE to all families can ensure that kindergarten readiness truly measures healthy development and not just preparation for the screener.

Examples of questions included in BRIGANCE can be viewed here:

- Example child assessment (academic, language, and physical measures) (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/brigance-academic-language-phyical)
- Example parent report (self-help, social, and emotional skills) (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/brigance-parent-reportshse-scales-english-interactive)

Kindergarten readiness data was acquired through the Kentucky Department of Education and through data requests to JCPS. The data only include students who enter JCPS, so students who attend private school or who are homeschooled are not included in the data. To view more data on kindergarten readiness, you can visit our Kindergarten Readiness page (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/factors/kready/).

Overall Readiness

Since JCPS began tracking kindergarten readiness in 2012-13, overall readiness levels have fluctuated up to five percentage points per year but have remained largely unchanged. Other Kentucky students have seen their scores slightly increase, but overall JCPS readiness levels are higher than the state average.

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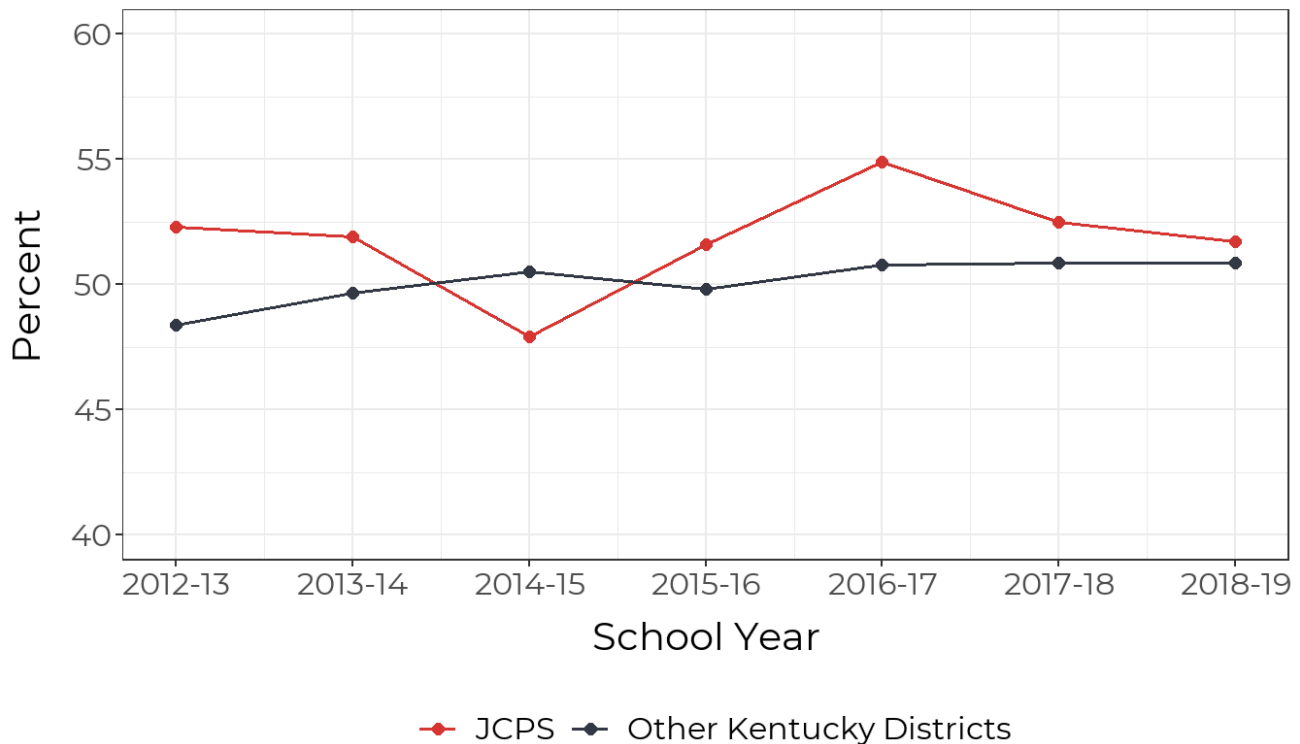
Source: Greater Louisville Project
Data from the Kentucky Department of Education School Report Card

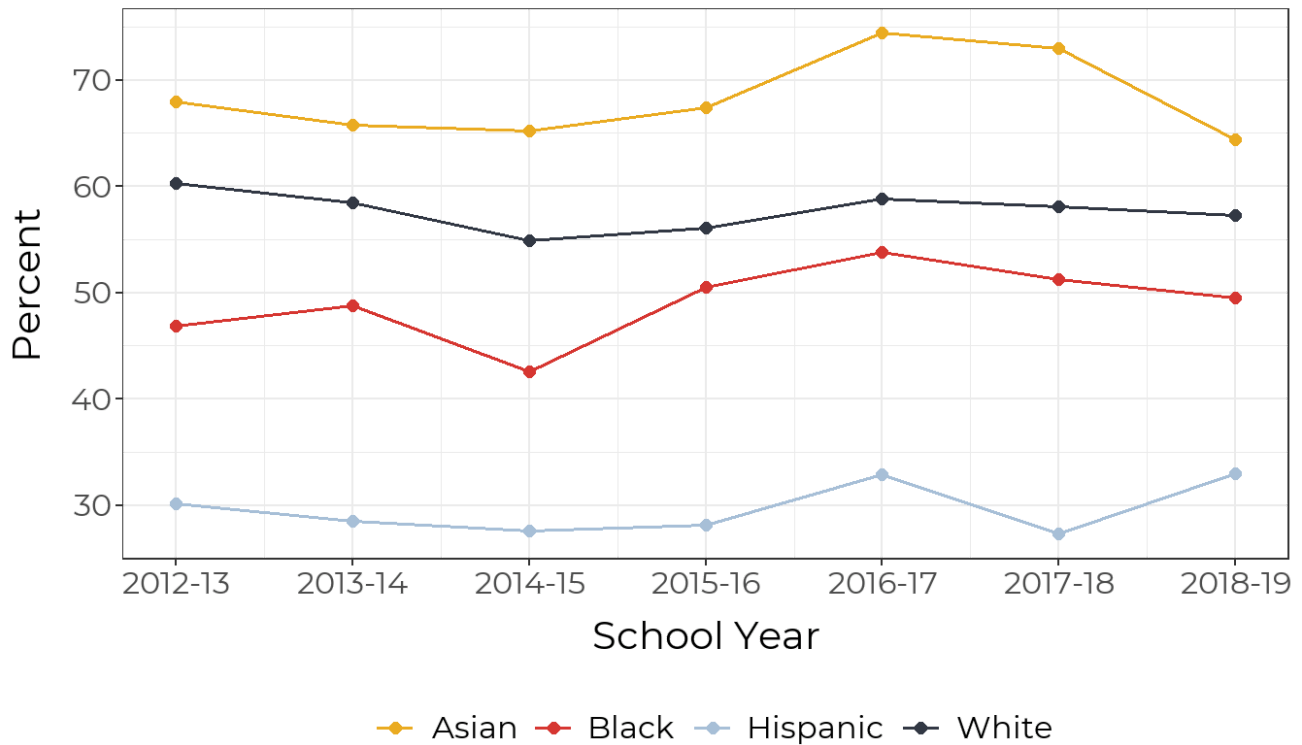(https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/content/uploads/2021/03/kindergarten_readiness_total-1.png)

By Race

Racial disparities in kindergarten readiness have been largely persistent since the 2012-13 school year. The kindergarten readiness gap between Black students and white students shrank from 12 points in 2012-13 to around 5 points in 2016-17 before growing again. As of the 2018-19 school year, scores for the four groups included here are all within five points of their original levels, but vary by up to 30 percentage points between student groups.

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JCPS Kindergarten Readiness by Race

Source: Greater Louisville Project
Data from the Kentucky Department of Education School Report Card

(https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/content/uploads/2021/03/kindergarten_readiness_race-1.png)

By Prior Setting

The largest differences in kindergarten readiness among student groups are based on prior setting.

Children who were enrolled in child care, as reported by their parent or caregiver, prior to entering school are most likely to be kindergarten ready, while children who stayed at home with a parent or caregiver are least likely to be kindergarten ready.

Children whose prior setting was Head Start, a state-funded preschool program, or were in another home setting such as a private sitter or other family member (labeled "Other"), fall in the middle.

Public (state-funded) preschool is available to 4-year-olds who live in a household with an income up to 160% of the federal poverty level and to 3- and 4-year-olds with disabilities. Head Start is available to children age birth to 5 who live in a household with income up to 100% of the federal poverty level. You can find the current federal povery levels here. (https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines)

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Prior Setting by Race

The graph below shows the prior setting of students entering JCPS kindergarten in 2019. About 60% of students were enrolled in child care or preschool outside the home, and around 40% of students were at home with their parents or another caregiver.

Students who are white, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, or of two or more races are more likely than average to be enrolled in child care outside of the home before entering JCPS. Students who are Black are much less likely to be enrolled in
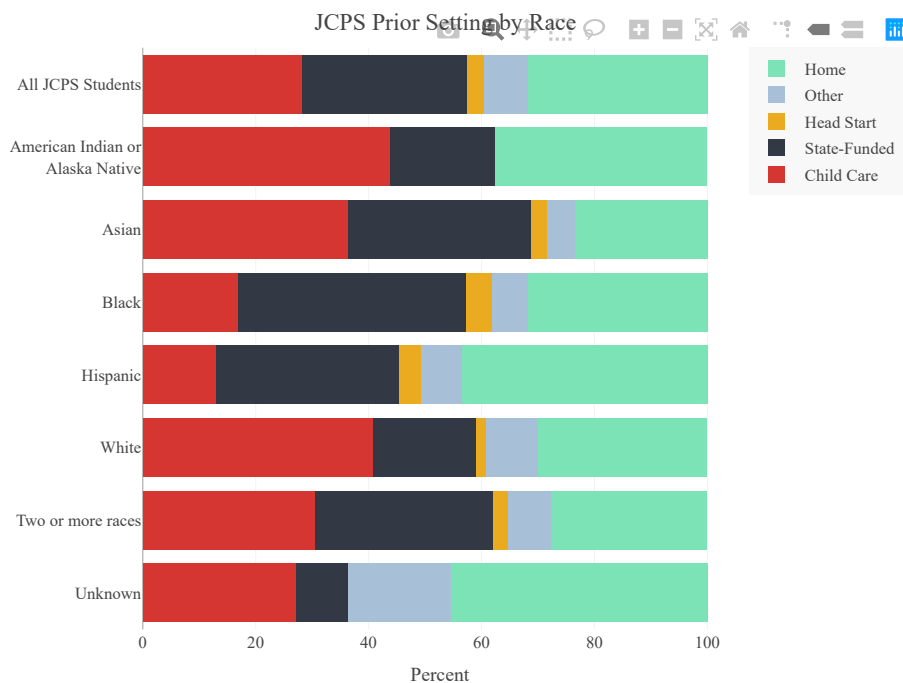
JCPS Kindergarten Readiness by Prior Setting

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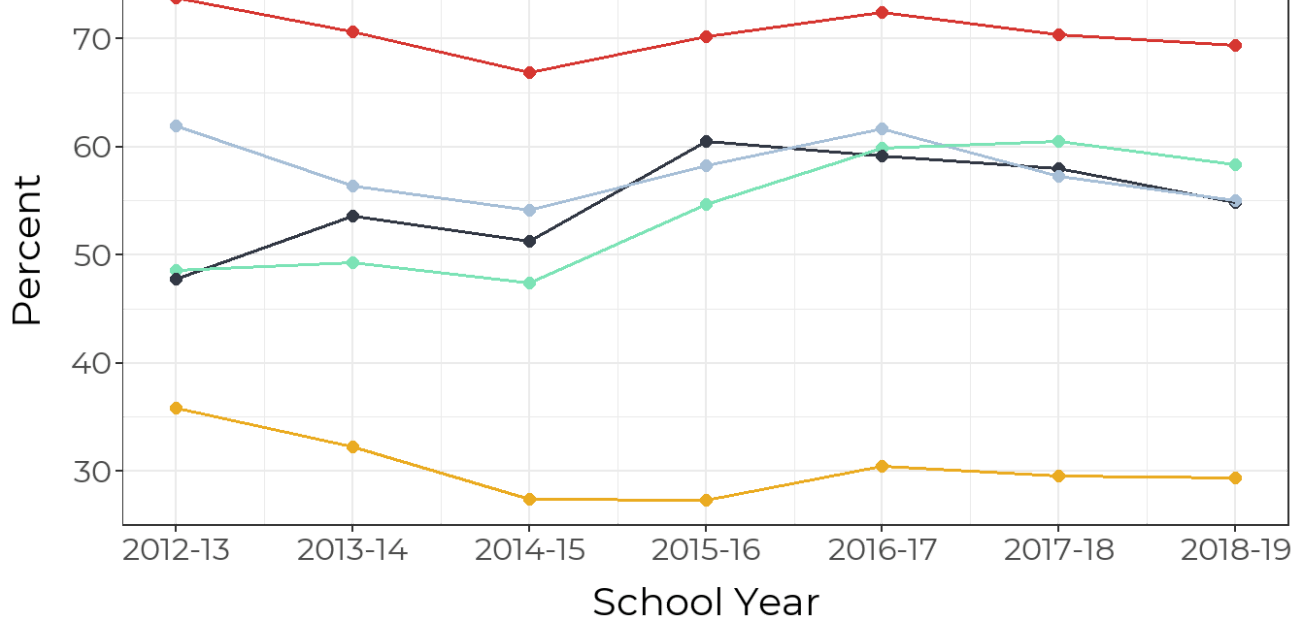
Source: Greater Louisville Project
Data from the Kentucky Department of Education School Report Card

child care, but much more likely to be enrolled in state-funded preschool. Hispanic students and students whose race is not known are much more likely to be in a home setting.

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Prior Setting by Zip Code

Among children who enter JCPS, children in the Highlands and in Eastern Louisville are more likely than average to be enrolled in child care before entering JCPS. Children in West Louisville are most likely to be enrolled in state-funded preschool at JCPS, and children in South Louisville are most likely to be in a home setting.
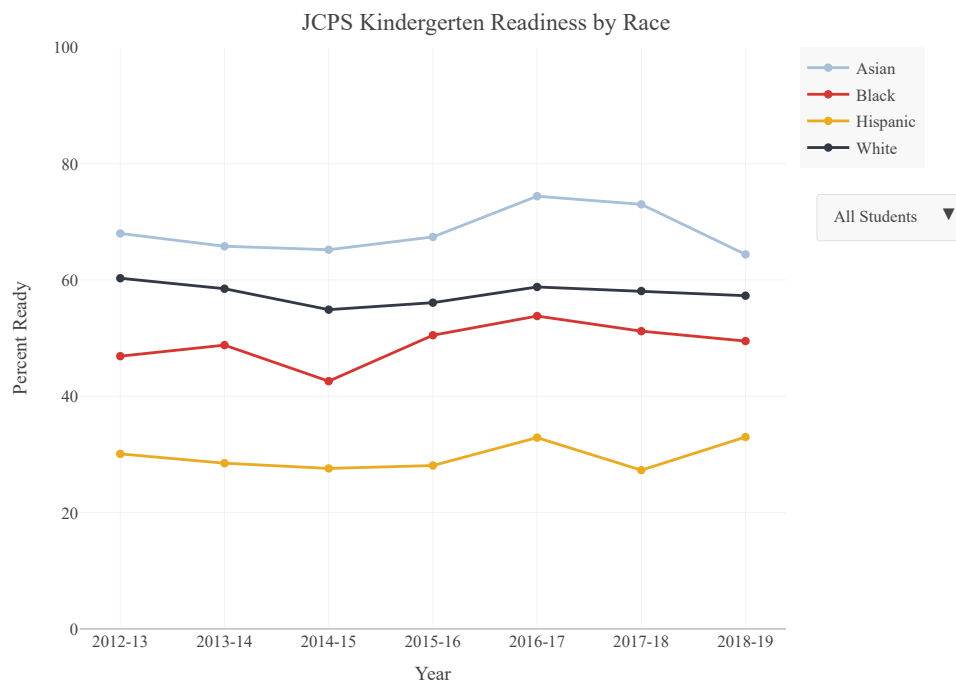
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By Race and Prior setting

Combining the analysis by race and prior setting shows which settings are most effective at ensuring children enter kindergarten ready to thrive. Click on the dropdown box on the right of the graph to view the data for each prior setting.

Among the groups we examine here, the smallest racial disparities exist among children who were previously enrolled in Head Start or state-funded preschool. This is likely due to the fact that families must meet certain income limits to enroll their children in these programs, so children in these programs come from families with common economic situations. Black and Brown children in these settings enter kindergarten with relatively high readiness rates, and they have seen improvements since 2013-14.

Students enrolled in child care settings have the highest kindergarten readiness rates, however, racial disparities for these children are wider than for all children. As will be discussed later, this reflects differences in access to affordable and high-quality child care.

Differences in kindergarten readiness among children who were previously in a home setting with their parents or caregivers (Home) or in another home-based setting (Other) are difficult to interpret because it reflects a wide variety of experiences for children. On average, children who were previously at home with their parents or caregvers enter kindergarten the least ready to learn.

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JCPS Kindergerten Readiness by Race

By Geography

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Student Zip Code   Elementary School   Elementary School Cluster

The data show wide disparities in kindergarten readiness across Louisville. Because some zip codes contain small numbers of students, we combine data over three years to increase the reliability of the data. Kindergarten readiness by zip code ranges from 30% in 40118 to 81% in 40205.

Code

JCPS Kindergarden Readiness by Student's Home Zip Code

Average for the school years 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020
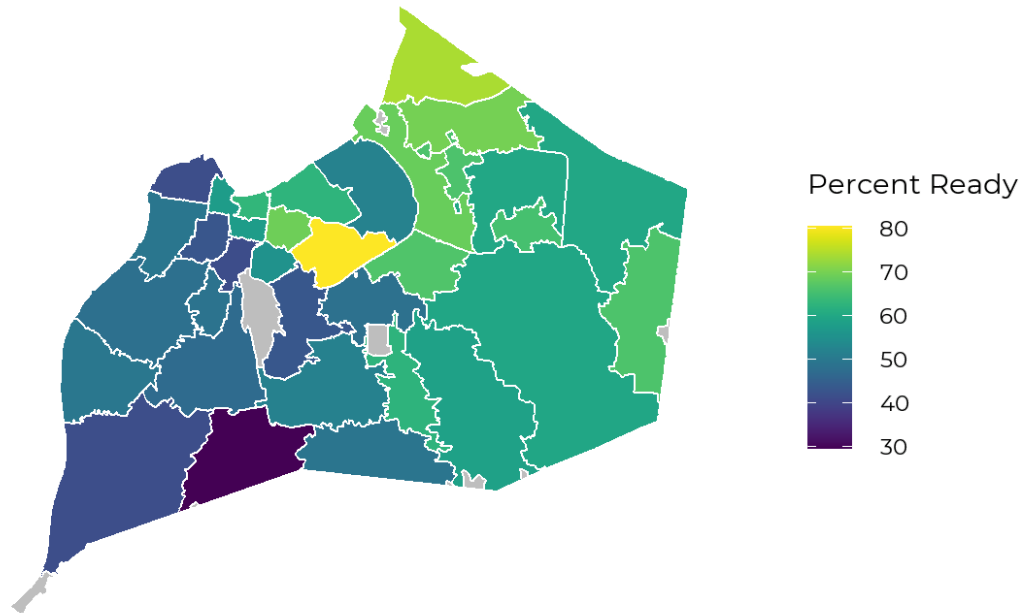
Source: Greater Louisville Project
Data from JCPS

(https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/content/uploads/2021/03/kindergarten_readiness_zip-1.png)

Early Child Care

High quality, affordable, and accessible child care is important for our community. As discussed in the prior setting section above, children in a child care setting enter kindergarten with the highest levels of kindergarten readiness. Additionally, reliable child care is important to ensure that parents and caregivers are able to work. However, child care is not affordable or accessible for many families.

Using data from kynect (https://kynect.ky.gov/benefits/s/child-care-provider?language=en_US), we examine the price and availability of child care using information from child care providers. While providers should update their information anytime it changes, some data is not current, and many child care providers are in flux due to COVID-19. However, the kynect database is linked to the state registration system, and it is the most comprehensive source available at this time.

While our data examines the total licensed capacity of child care providers, the number of available child care slots is smaller. Licensed capacity is based solely on square footage, so many providers choose to serve a smaller actual capacity to maintain higher quality standards, due to issues retaining staff, or due to temporary barriers due to COVID-19.

Price

The median price of child care for one toddler is $8,710 per year, approximately 15% of the median household income for Jefferson County and 22% of the median household income for Black households in Jefferson County for 2019. We report daily rates in the charts below because that is the format provided by kynect. The median annual rate of $8,710 corresponds to a daily rate of $33.50.
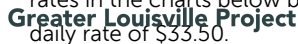
| Summary and Comparison to CCAP | Full-Time Care | Part-Time Care |

The chart below shows the price of child care by age group and provider type compared to the maximum reimbursement rates for the Kentucky's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). The column "Percent of Slots under CCAP" shows the percent of slots that would be fully paid for by CCAP.

Code

Price of Child Care compared to CCAP Reimbursement Rates

Type	Number of Providers	Full-Time Median Daily Price	Full-Time CCAP Reimbursement Cap	Full-Time Slots at or below CCAP Rate	Part-Time Median Daily Price	Part-Time CCAP Reimbursement Cap	Part-Time Slots at or below CCAP Rate
Infant							
Certified	59	$26	$25	44%	$20	$18	34%
Licensed	218	$35	$27	8%	$29	$19	8%
Total	277	$35	–	9%	$28	–	8%
Toddler							
Certified	61	$26	$25	48%	$19	$18	33%
Licensed	237	$34	$27	11%	$27	$19	11%
Total	298	$34	–	12%	$26	–	11%
Preschool							
Certified	60	$24	$24	52%	$20	$17	30%
Licensed	259	$30	$25	17%	$21	$18	24%
Total	319	$30	–	17%	$21	–	24%
School Age							
Certified	56	$21	$20	45%	$17	$14	29%
Licensed	224	$28	$22	18%	$17	$15	22%
Total	280	$28	–	18%	$17	–	22%

Source: Greater Louisville Project. Data from kynect.

Quality (STARS)

| Number of Providers by STARS level | Cost of Quality |

This graph shows the price of child care by providers' Kentucky All STARS quality rating (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dcbs/dcc/Pages/kyallstars.aspx), a measure of quality based on family engagement, classroom quality, and staff qualifications. STARS level one is the default level indicating the provider is in good standing, and providers can choose to be evaluated to potentially earn a higher rating. The data does not distinguish between providers who have gone unrated and providers who earned a level one rating. Providers might not feel the need to confirm their quality with a state evaluation—for example, a school-based child care provider might have a good reputation among parents and not consider a STARS rating to be worthwhile. So, while providers at STARS level one can have varying levels of quality, providers at levels two and above have been evaluated and certified to meet certain standards.

While providers with higher STARS ratings tend to charge higher prices, the difference is small. Many high-quality providers are likely unrated and included in the level one group, resulting in higher prices for level providers than level two providers for infants and toddlers.

Code

Price of Full-Time Child Care by STARS rating

STARS rating	Slots Number	Slots Percent	Providers Number	Providers Percent
1	18763	59%	268	68%
2	1178	4%	16	4%
3	6467	20%	66	17%
4	3781	12%	36	9%
5	319	1%	3	1%
Unknown	1089	3%	6	2%

Source: Greater Louisville Project. Data from kynect.

Location

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Provider map   Providers by Neighborhood   Neighborhoods by Race and Licensed Slots

The map below shows the location of the 395 licensed child care providers throughout the city. Hover over the map to see provider information.

The size of the circle indicates the number of licensed slots, and the color of the circle indicates the provider's Kentucky All STARS quality rating (https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dcbs/dcc/Pages/kyallstars.aspx), a measure of quality based on family engagement, classroom quality, and staff qualifications. STARS level one is the default level indicating the provider is in good standing, and providers can choose to be evaluated to potentially earn a higher rating. The data does not distinguish between providers who have gone unrated and providers who earned a level one rating. Providers might not feel the need to confirm their quality with a state evaluation—for example, a school-based child care provider might have a good reputation among parents and not consider a STARS rating to be worthwhile. So, while providers at STARS level one can have varying levels of quality, providers at levels two and above have been evaluated and certified to meet certain standards.

Providers of all ratings can be found throughout the city. Looking at the distribution of quality ratings by neighborhood, there are no discernible trends. A larger issue is the general access to quality care: there are only three 5-STAR providers in Louisville, and only 107 out of 395 providers have more than one star.

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Hours

Another barrier to child care access is the hours during which providers are open. The vast majority of child care providers are open between 6am and 6pm Monday through Friday, so the availability of child care is limited outside of traditional first shift hours. Black and Brown workers are more likely to work irregular hours, weekends, and second or third shift when childcare is less available.

Code

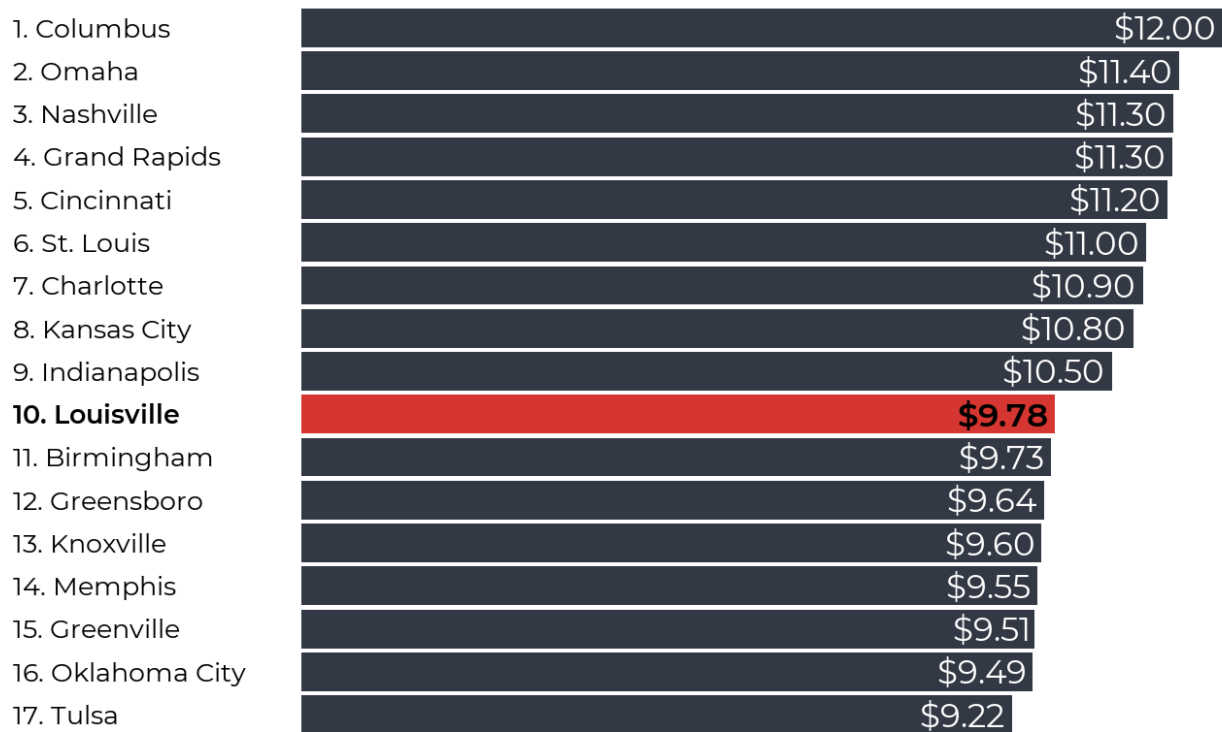### Licensed Child Care Provider Slots by Day and Time

Time of Day
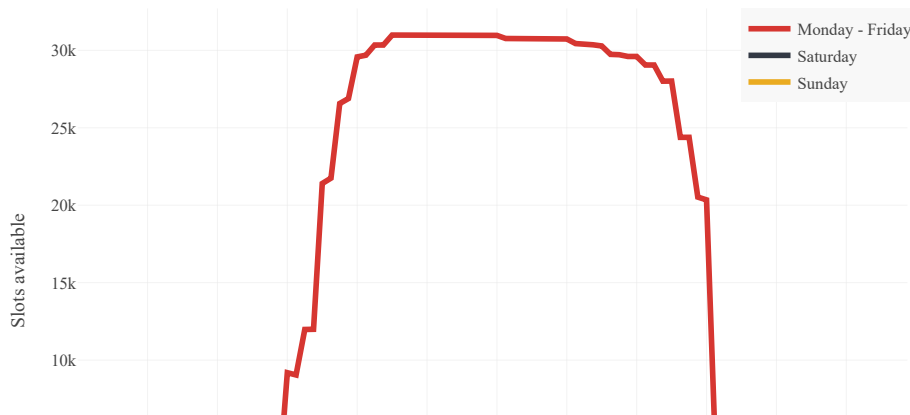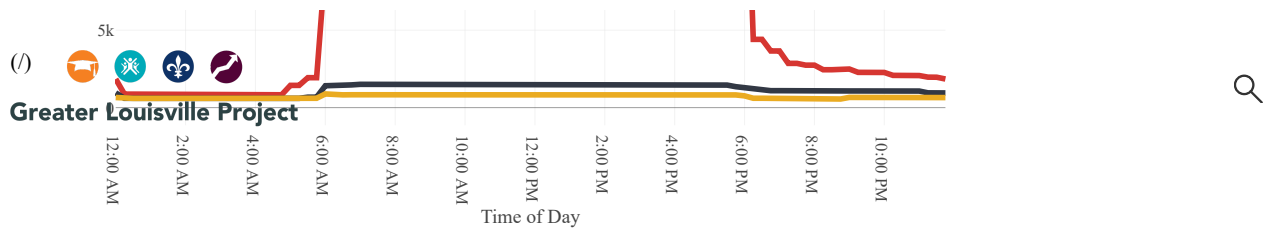
Compensation of Child Care Workers

Ranking | Trend

A major factor restricting the expansion of child care, especially high-quality care, is relatively low wages in the child care field. In 2019, the median hourly wages for Louisville child care workers was $9.78.

Code

Median Wages for Child Care Workers, 2019

1. Columbus — $12.00
2. Omaha — $11.40
3. Nashville — $11.30
4. Grand Rapids — $11.30
5. Cincinnati — $11.20
6. St. Louis — $11.00
7. Charlotte — $10.90
8. Kansas City — $10.80
9. Indianapolis — $10.50
10. Louisville — $9.78
11. Birmingham — $9.73
12. Greensboro — $9.64
13. Knoxville — $9.60
14. Memphis — $9.55
15. Greenville — $9.51
16. Oklahoma City — $9.49
17. Tulsa — $9.22

Hourly Wage

Source: Greater Louisville Project
Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

(https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/content/uploads/2021/03/childcare_wages_ranking-1.png)

Child Health

Child health is important for healthy child development and future success. Physical and mental health are incredibly important in their own right, and they also enable children to enter school ready to learn. This section discusses adverse childhood experiences and food insecurity, two factors that can have detrimental impacts on child well-being.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse childhood experiences are traumatic events that occur in childhood. If you would prefer to skip past this section, click "Child Food Security" in the sidebar.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) include forms of abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction. According to the CDC, (/)"ACEs can have lasting, negative effects on health, well-being, and opportunity." In 2018, 71% of Louisville adults reported experiencing one or more ACEs during their childhood.

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ACEs data was collected by the Kentucky Behavioral Risk Factor Survey using phone interviews throughout 2018. The total number of ACEs a person has experienced is considered their ACE score—to understand the questionnaire and find your ACE score, you can click here. (https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/03/02/387007941/take-the-ace-quiz-and-learn-what-it-does-and-doesnt-mean)

Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Kentucky Behavioral Risk Factor Survey Data – Adverse Childhood Experiences 2015&2018.* Frankfort, Kentucky: Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Kentucky Department for Public Health, [2018].

Impact of ACEs

Louisville adults who have experienced a high number of ACEs report much higher numbers of chronic disease than those who experienced no ACEs. The chart below compares the prevalence of several health conditions among the two groups. The data is based on the health status of current adults based on the number of ACEs they report having experienced as a child.

Compared to adults who experienced no ACEs, adults who experienced a high number of ACEs are 6.5 times as likely to be a current smoker, 2.2 times as likely to report poor health status, 6.3 times as likely to have had a heart attack, and 3.9 times as likely to experience depression.

Impact of ACEs on Adult Health Conditions
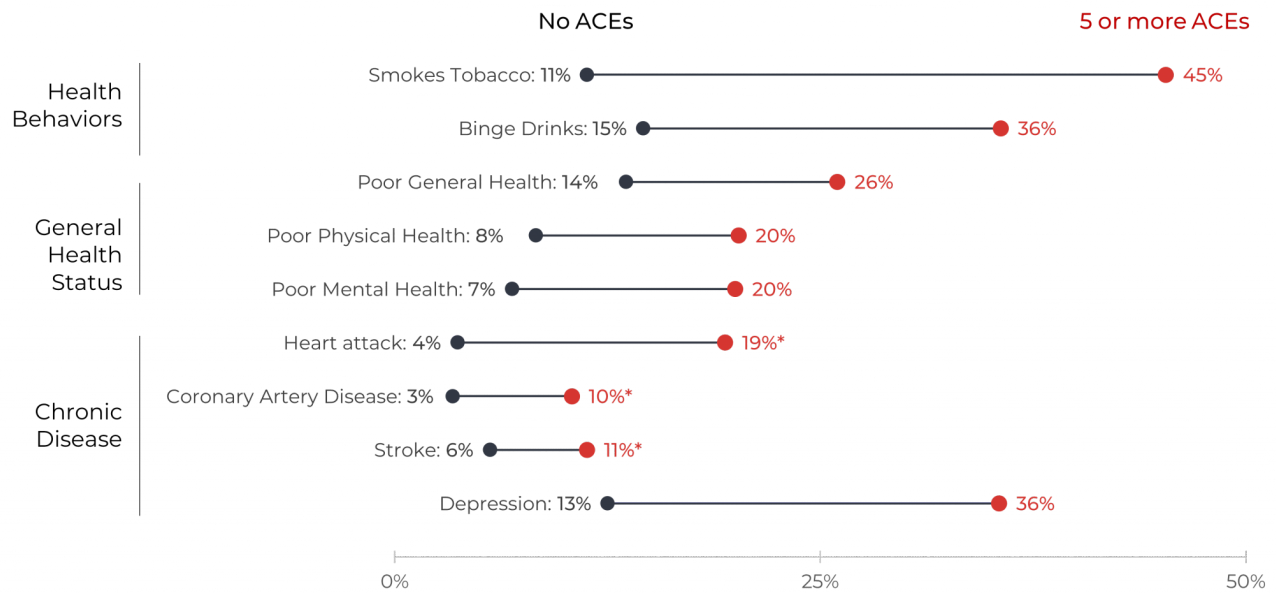
* Due to data limitations, starred data refers to adults with 4 ACEs rather than 5+.
Source: Greater Louisville Project
Data from the Kentucky Behavioral Risk Factor Survey

(https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/content/uploads/2021/03/ACEs-risk-factors.png)

Prevalance of ACEs

ACE Scores	Type of ACEs

The number of ACEs a person has experienced is considered their ACE score. The 2018 KyBRFS survey asked about nine different kinds of ACEs. In 2018, 71% of adults in Louisville reported experiencing at least one ACE when they were a child. Higher numbers of ACEs are associated with greater prevalence of risk factors and chronic disease.
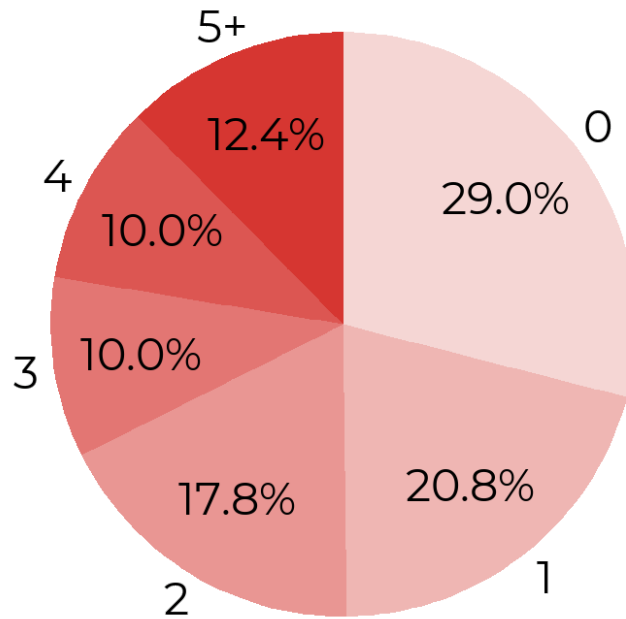
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(https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/content/uploads/2021/03/ace_scores-1.png)

ACE scores for Louisville Adults, 2018

Source: Greater Louisville Project
Data from the Kentucky Behavioral Risk Factor Survey

ACEs by Race

The most recent national data from the National Survey of Children's Health shows that children who are Hispanic or Black are more likely to have experienced one or more ACEs than other children. (https://www.cahmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/aces_fact_sheet.pdf) While we have some local data for children of different races, it is limited and highly variable from year to year. The original ACEs questionnaire mostly measures trauma that occurs in the home, and it excludes many kinds of trauma that are most likely to affect Black and Brown children, such as racial discrimination from peers, experiences with community violence, and family separation.

There are various proposals to create a more comprehensive "expanded" or "culturally-informed" ACEs measure. Some suggestions include adding questions about community experiences, such as witnessing violence or living in unsafe neighborhoods. Proposals also include collecting more data on experiences with racism, including discrimination, stigma, and historical trauma. Racism can not only be a form of trauma; it can amplify other kinds of trauma as well.

Child Food Security

According to Feeding America, "research shows an association between food insecurity and delayed development in young children; risk of chronic illnesses like asthma and anemia; and behavioral problems like hyperactivity, anxiety and aggression in school-age children." Child food security data comes from Feeding America's *Mind the Meal Gap* program.

Trend   Ranking   Breakdown by Program Eligibility

From 2014 to 2018, Louisville saw a slight decline in child food insecurity. However, child food insecurity increased by 40% in Louisville from 2018 to October of 2020.

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(https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/content/uploads/2021/03/child_food_security_trend-1.png)
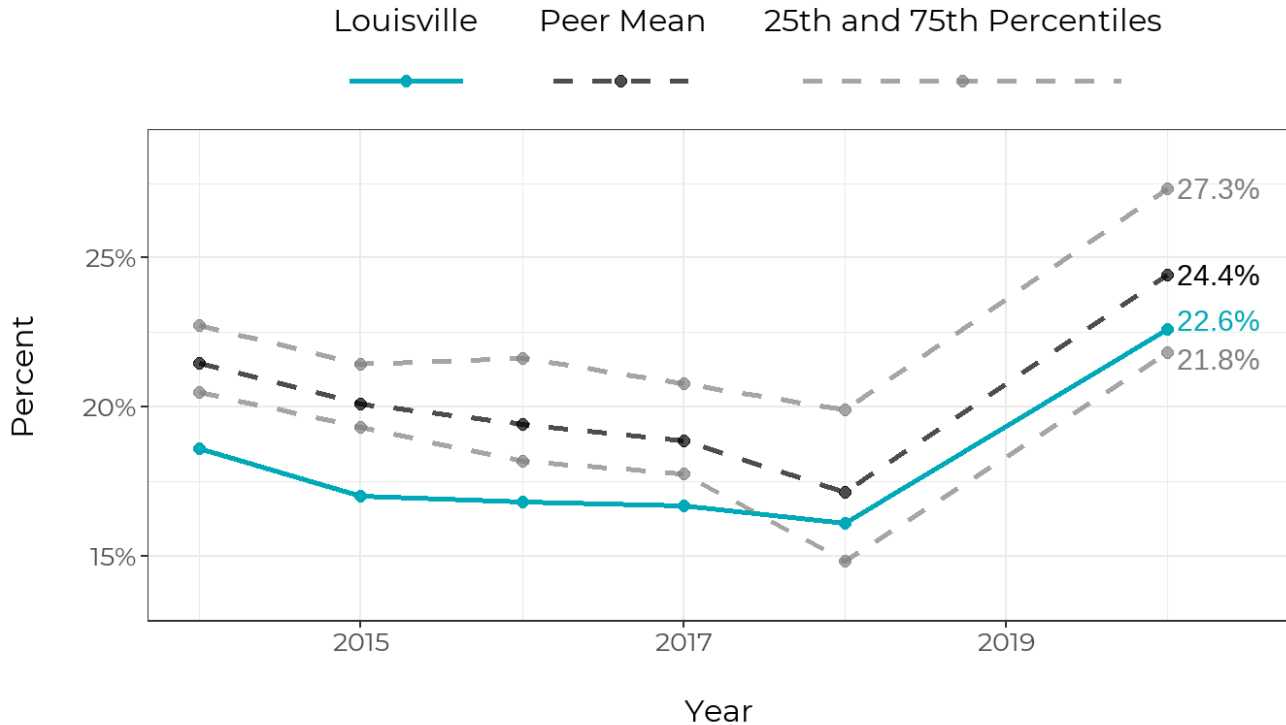
More Early Childhood Data

- Kentucky Department of Education – Detailed JCPS Kindergarten Readiness Results

Child Food Insecurity

Source: Greater Louisville Project
Data from Feeding America

(https://www.kyschoolreportcard.com/organization/5590/academic_performance/assessment_performance/kindergarten_screen?
year=2020)
- Kentucky Department of Education – JCPS Enrollment by Student Demographics
  (https://www.kyschoolreportcard.com/organization/5590/school_overview/students/enrollment)
- Kentucky Youth Advocates – Kentucky KIDS COUNT Data Book, 2020 (https://kyyouth.org/kentucky-kids-count/)
- Kentucky Youth Advocates – Impact of Maternal Incarceration on Kentucky Children (https://kyyouth.org/wp-
  content/uploads/2020/12/BlueprintBrief_ParentalIncarceration_Dec2020.pdf)
- GLP – Kindergarten Readiness Data (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/factors/kready/)
- GLP – Preschool Participation Data (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/factors/preschool/)
- GLP – Child Poverty Data (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/factors/child-poverty/)
- GLP – Child Poverty Data: Ages 0 to 5 (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/factors/child-poverty-under-5/)
- GLP – Digital Divide and Child Internet Access (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/digital-divide/)
- GLP – Low Birthwight (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/factors/low-birthweight/)
- GLP – Housing Justice (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/housing-justice/)

Early Childhood Blog Posts

- Kindergarten Readiness is a Community Effort (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/blog/kindergarten-readiness-is-a-
  community-effort/)
- Child Care Is a Workforce Issue (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/blog/child-care-is-a-workforce-issue/)
- Families can offset pandemic learning loss with simple strategies at home
  (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/blog/learning-strategies/)
- Decode Project Equips Students with Literacy, Mentorship, and Confidence
  (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/blog/decode/)

Community Conversation

- May 18, 2021 (https://greaterlouisvilleproject.org/upcoming-events/)

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