Education & Lifelong Learning

Desired Outcome: Parents are engaged with their children, and have the skills and support needed to effectively parent. Children are ready for kindergarten, having benefited from high-quality childcare settings. They have access to excellent schools; succeed academically; develop the social and life assets needed for success and happiness; and graduate ready for college or a career. After graduation, adults are able to find work in the Valley should they wish to; have access to continuing professional development opportunities; and can contribute as the next generation of Aspen residents.

Learn more about Education & Lifelong Learning as a key social sustainability theme for the community.

Navigate to view each dashboard measure

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES
- % of kindergarteners who participated in some form of preschool
- Licensed childcare capacity for children under 5
- % of 3rd graders reading at grade level
- % of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- High school student life readiness
- % of adults with sufficient access to opportunities to learn
% of kindergarteners who participated in some form of preschool

What is it? Why is it important?
The percent of kindergarteners who participated in some form of preschool represents all Aspen School District families who have used any amount of pre-school. Participation includes a child attending one day, a child attending preschool daily, and all options in between. Beyond enrolling children in licensed programs, pre-kindergarten day care arrangements may include staying at home with children or enlisting a nanny for care, among others. Research shows that children who attend preschool prior to kindergarten enrollment have better life outcomes, including higher college attendance, higher scores of academic success, and lower likelihood of teen pregnancy.¹

What does the data/trend say?
The Aspen School District began consistently collecting data on preschool enrollment in 2015. A relatively high number (97% on average from 2015-17) of families reported preschool experience of some form prior to kindergarten enrollment.²

“Research from a variety of disciplines concludes that educational outcomes are strongly associated with what children experience during their first five years of life (including whether they are ready to or have access to adequate health care, nutrition and housing).”³

![Figure 1. Aspen School District Kindergarteners who Attended Some Form of Preschool (2015-17)](chart)

Targets & Alerts
No target/alert is set for this measure.

Data Sourcing & Considerations
Data is provided by the Aspen School District kindergarten enrollment forms (parent-reported) and includes Aspen Elementary School and Aspen Community Charter School.⁴ Enrollment begins the spring before school starts and continues throughout the school year. Data presented is collected in late October. Data before 2015 is not included as it was collected at a different time and captured students who enrolled at different points in the enrollment period.

Sources:
Licensed childcare capacity for children under 5

What is it? Why is it important?
Licensed childcare capacity is the amount of state-regulated center spots available for children under 5 years in Pitkin County. Pitkin County population counts are used to give a sense for childcare need. However, the demand for licensed childcare includes families who live beyond the county. Many factors impact the need for childcare, including employment, family instability, single parenting, nonstandard work hours, and part-time work. Childcare enables and enhances parents’ abilities to work, earn income, and provide basic needs for their families. Investment in high-quality child care and early education strengthens families and creates more productive and livable communities long-term. Kids First aims to maintain and increase childcare capacity for local families in need.

What does the data/trend say?
From 2013 to 2016, children under 5 years old in Pitkin County averaged at 718, while area capacity is averaged at 351 spots (from 2013-2017) (Figure 1). This fulfills nearly half (49%) of the potential childcare need in the county annually. Similarly, Colorado licensed childcare spots account for roughly 45% of children birth to age 6 with working parents. Figure 2 features local childcare needs and preferences from the 2016 Kids First Survey. Of respondents, 65% prefer childcare in licensed centers compared to the 48% currently served. This may indicate an increased need for licensed childcare.

Figure 1. Pitkin County Childcare Capacity & Under 5 Population (2013-2017)

Desired Childcare Capacity
Under 5 Population in Pitkin County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Desired Care</th>
<th>Under 5 Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In January 2017, 6 infant, 8 toddler, and 20 preschool spaces were added.

Figure 2. Kids First Survey Results on Under 5 Childcare Needs and Arrangements (2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred Needs &amp; Arrangements</th>
<th>Respondent choices (% of total respondents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Licensed childcare center</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home with parents</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives, neighbors, or friends</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At-home licensed provider</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot find regular spot</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents: 322; respondents may choose &gt;1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
% of 3rd graders reading at grade level

What is it? Why is it important?
The percent of third graders reading at grade level is data collected from annual tests. Given state-mandated changes, different test instruments are used over the period. Reading comprehension is a widely-used indicator of long-term student success. In the education realm, third grade represents the change in educational focus from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” Third grade reading ability is strongly correlated to other economic outcomes for individuals, including earning potential and general productivity.¹

What does the data/trend say?
Figure 1 shows that in 2017, 64% of third graders in the Aspen School District (ASD) were reading at grade level.² From 2013-2017, the percentage averages at 73%.

State data (not featured) on third grade proficient and advanced reading percentage is measured on a different basis. Between 2012 and 2014, Aspen consistently scored higher than relative Colorado comparisons at an average of 92% proficient and advanced third graders reading level.³

Targets & Alerts
No target/alert is set for this measure.

Data Sourcing & Considerations
Figure 1 data is provided by ASD and includes Aspen Elementary School and Aspen Community School. Test data is collected at the end of the third-grade school year by the district. Demographic breakdowns are not provided as student group numbers are so small that individual students may become identifiable. There are discrepancies between the ASD and Colorado Department of Education data mentioned in the feature (above).

Sources:
**% of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent of students with IEPs</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What is it? Why is it important?**

“An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet a child’s individual needs.” 1 IEPs are federally-mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for applicable students. The percent of students with IEPs refers to those special needs students with individually developed plans for their school success, including goals and support needed. The proportion of students in special education is higher in Aspen than in some districts, because the district is known for the quality of its special education programs.

**What does the data/trend say?**

From 2011-2017, the percentage of Aspen School District students with IEPs has shown relative consistency around the average of 11% (Figure 1). 2 Though the percentage varies slightly from year to year, the overall average percent change is close to 0%.

**Targets & Alerts**

This measure is not a candidate for a target.

**Data Sourcing & Considerations**

Figure 1 data is provided by the Aspen School District. Demographic breakdowns are not provided as student group numbers are so small that individual students may become identifiable.

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High school student life readiness

What is it? Why is it important?

High school student life readiness means a student is prepared academically and socially for life beyond K-12 education. High school graduation rates and district ACT scores are represented as readiness. Graduation rates show Aspen School District (ASD) students who receive a four-year “on-time” diploma. From 2012-17, Colorado required students to take the ACT for state college admissions. ACT tests can be taken multiple times and data presented was collected at the end of the school year. High school completion and college readiness assessments enable individuals to better job opportunities, higher incomes, and higher education.

What does the data/trend say?

Figure 1 shows graduation rates for ASD, Colorado resort communities (Eagle County & Telluride School Districts), & the State of Colorado. From 2010 to 2017, ASD graduation rates are 94.9% and completion rates (not featured) are 96.3% on average. Compared to resort communities in the state, ASD rates are consistently higher except for 2011 and 2016. The historical Aspen average (2010-17) is 94.9%. Figure 2 shows that on average, ASD composite scores are 4.22 points or 12% higher than the state composite average. ASD consistently scores higher in each category, historically stronger in English and increasingly stronger in Reading.

Figure 1. High School Graduation Rate, by School District (2010-2017)

Figure 2. Aspen School District Average ACT Scores by Category (2012-2016)

Targets & Alerts

No target/alert is set for this measure.

Data Sourcing & Considerations

Aspen High School is the only high school in Aspen School District (ASD). District and state graduation data is sourced from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE); figures include potential drop-outs. United States data is from the National Center for Educational Statistics. Figure 2 data is from ASD. Reported scores include most of the ASD junior population. In 2017-18, Colorado changed testing requirements from the ACT to the SAT. From 2017, the ACT was taken on an elective basis and not representative of the student population as before.

% of adults with sufficient access to opportunities to learn

What is it? Why is it important?

This measure refers to adults' perceptions of whether they have sufficient access to learning opportunities. The population group includes City of Aspen residents who responded to the Annual Citizen Survey. Access is the ability to participate in learning opportunities. This may be affected by the quantity and quality of facilities, programs, openings, scheduling, topics/content, and cost. A sustainable education system fosters sufficient quality educational opportunities for all ages including adults. Adult learning facilitates knowledge, intellectual discourse, and engagement. Learning opportunities encourage social connection and a culture of enlightenment, critical thinking, and learning.

What does the data/trend say?

A total of 287 responses were received for the Figure 1 survey question. Two hundred and forty-five respondents (85%), agree that they have sufficient access to learning opportunities. Of the remainder, 21 people (7%) disagree that they have sufficient access, while 20 people (7%) answered that they don't know and 2 people (1%) answered that they strongly disagree. Figure 2 shows a sample of Aspen public educational offerings available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Public Education Opportunities</th>
<th>Since</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colorado Mountain College</td>
<td>2-year, 4-year, and transfer degrees; certificates</td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Aspen Center for Physics</td>
<td>Lectures and sessions</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Aspen Institute</td>
<td>Programs, classes, and fellowships</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ideas Festival</td>
<td>Lectures, conversations, videos</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Aspen Citizens Academy</td>
<td>Civic education course</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Community Listens</td>
<td>Communication skills training</td>
<td>XXXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roaring Fork Leadership</td>
<td>Leadership development</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Targets & Alerts

The City normally sets an 85% satisfaction level on surveys. If a rating falls below 85% it would signal an alert. In this measure, the target is that 85% of respondents will “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with the statement. The 2017 survey data combined average meets the target at 85%.

Data Sourcing & Considerations

Data is sourced from the City of Aspen 2017 Annual Citizen Survey. The Citizen Survey was mailed out to 1,750 randomly selected registered voter households in the City of Aspen in August 2017. See survey for precise methodology.