North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten (NC Pre-K) Program Requirements and Guidance

Effective SFY 2018-19

Issue Date: September 2018

NORTH CAROLINA DCDEE
Division of Child Development and Early Education
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NORTH CAROLINA NC Pre-K
Prekindergarten Program

NC Pre-Kindergarten (NC Pre-K)
Program Requirements and Guidance

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Section 1: Introduction

The NC Pre-K Program is administered by the Division of Child Development and Early Education in the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. Detailed information for the NC Pre-K Program can be found on the Division's website located at *https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/*.

The NC Pre-K Program is designed to provide high-quality educational experiences to enhance school readiness for eligible four-year-old children. The program requirements are built on the premise that to be successful academically in school, children need to be prepared in all five of the developmental domains outlined by the National Education Goals Panel and the *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*. Each of these domains is critical to children's well-being and school success. Research shows that children who experience high quality care and education, and who enter school well prepared, are more successful in school and later in their lives. The five domains, as reflected in the *NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development* standards are:

- Approaches to play and learning
- Emotional and social development
- Health and physical development
- Language development and communication
- Cognitive development

The requirements are designed to ensure that a high-quality pre-kindergarten classroom experience is provided for eligible four-year-old children in each local NC Pre-K Program and that, to the extent possible, uniformity exists across the state.

Guidance

Program *Guidance* is included in some sections of this document. The purpose of this *Guidance* is to provide additional clarification to the (policy) requirements, when needed, and to encourage best practices in serving children in the NC Pre-K Program. The *Guidance* is intended to direct local NC Pre-K Committees, Contracting Agencies and NC Pre-K Programs to adopt policies and implement practices that address critical components of providing a high-quality pre-kindergarten program that meet the needs of all children.

The NC Pre-K Program is governed by the NC Child Care Rules, the *NC open meetings law*, the *NC public records law*, the NC State Board of Education Policy (*Educator Licensure and Teacher Evaluation*), the ***NC Pre-K Program Requirements & Guidance Manual, the NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development*** and the ***NC Pre-K Program Fiscal and Contracts Manual***. These documents may be downloaded from the Division of Child Development and Early Education website (*click here*).

NC Child Care Law and Rules (*click here*) apply to all licensed programs that serve children in the North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten (NC Pre-K) Program. The NC Pre-K Program Rules in G.S. 110, Article 7 and Chapter 9 shall apply except as provided in Section .3000 NC Pre-Kindergarten Services (*click here*).

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3001 Scope
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a)-(f);
Eff. November 1, 2012;
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

NC Child Care Rule .3000 is referenced throughout this document when a rule applies to a specific policy requirement (see example below). Please note, not all policy requirements are in the NC Child Care Rules.

Example of Child Care Rule:

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3003 Program Attendance Policy
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a);
Eff. November 1, 2012
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

Exceptions

Requests for exceptions to payment rates may be submitted to the Division per guidance found in *Section 6* of this document. No exceptions will be issued for any NC Child Care Rule, including Rule .3000, NC Pre-Kindergarten Services. Other policy requests may be submitted by the local NC Pre-K Contract Administrator in writing to Lorena Gonzalez at lorena.gonzalez@dhhs.nc.gov at the Division of Child Development and Early Education.

NC Pre-K Contracting Agency (Contractor)

The NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS), Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) enters into a contractual agreement with a responsible county or regional NC Pre-K Contracting Agency (Contractor) to carry out the provisions of the NC Pre-K Program. Please refer to the *NC Pre-K Program Fiscal and Contracts Manual* for specific contractual and budget requirements that pertain to the local NC Pre-K Contracting Agency and its subcontractors.

There are 91 local NC Pre-K Contracting Agencies that implement the operation of the NC Pre-K Program at the county/regional level. The NC Pre-K Contracting Agency is operated by public and nonprofit organizations such as, but not limited to, local partnerships, school systems and Head Start agencies. Each local County/Region NC Pre-K Committee is responsible for selecting a contracting agency to implement the NC Pre-K Program. See *Section 2: The County/Region NC Pre-K Committee* of this document for information about the Committee's purpose and responsibilities.

Each local NC Pre-K Contracting Agency has a Contract Administrator, Program Contact and Fiscal Administrator that oversees the operation of the NC Pre-K Program. All three positions can be held by one staff person or by a different staff person in each position. There can also be additional NC Pre-K staff that complete responsibilities for the NC Pre-K Program such as, but not limited to, data entry into the NC Pre-K Reporting Systems (Plan, Kids and APP).

See *Appendix F* for an **Annual Timeline** to use as a guide for planning, implementing and monitoring NC Pre-K services.

Section 2: The County/Region NC Pre-K Committee

This section addresses the local NC Pre-K Committee structure and responsibilities.

A. Purpose of the NC Pre-K Committee

The NC Pre-K Program is built upon a system of existing local school boards and districts, private child care providers and other entities that demonstrate the ability to provide high-quality pre-kindergarten services for eligible four-year-old children.

The NC Pre-K Program requires that every county (or region) that participates in providing services for NC Pre-K must establish and maintain a County/Region NC Pre-K Committee. The purpose of the NC Pre-K Committee is to:

1. Select a contracting agency;
2. Review Contract annually to include revisions and/or updates based on changes to NC Pre-K due to legislation;
3. Develop operational policies and procedures;
4. Ensure collaboration and shared responsibility for developing, approving and implementing the local plan for delivering NC Pre-K services at the county/regional level;
5. Ensure NC Pre-K services are implemented based on the existing early childhood service delivery system and that service providers in the county/region, with the ability to provide NC Pre-K services, can express interest and be considered to serve as NC Pre-K sites (i.e., standardized site selection process);
6. Provide ongoing, collaborative advice about local policies and procedures in the implementation of NC Pre-K services; and
7. Provide oversight for the local program (both programmatic and fiscal).

B. Committee Structure and Meetings

Co-Chairs

The County/Region NC Pre-K Committee must be co-chaired by the school superintendent (or designee) for the local education agency (LEA) and the board chair (or designee) for the local Smart Start Partnership. If a designee is assigned, it must be documented in writing and the designee must have the same decision-making authority as the school superintendent or local partnership board chair. The NC Pre-K Contract Administrator and the NC Pre-K Program Contact (individuals named in the NC Pre-K Plan) may not serve as a co-chair or facilitator of the NC Pre-K Committee. These individuals work for the contracting agency and may serve as resource members to the NC Pre-K Committee.

If there is more than one LEA or local Smart Start Partnership in a county or region, one superintendent and one local Smart Start board chair may be designated to serve as the co-chairs. All superintendents (or designees) and local Smart Start board chairs (or designees) in a county or region must be members of the Committee.

Membership

The co-chairs are responsible for appointing the Committee members and convening the Committee per the ***NC Pre-K Program Requirements & Guidance Manual***. The co-chairs of the NC Pre-K Committee may only serve as co-chairs and not as another Committee representative.

Guidance

Examples of designees appointed to a co-chair role on the local NC Pre-K Committee:

- An individual is assigned as the designee for the local school system's Superintendent to serve as one of the co-chairs of the Committee. This individual is the local school system's Director of the Exceptional Children's Program. This individual may only serve as the co-chair of the Committee and another individual would need to be appointed to be the public school's exceptional children's preschool program representative on the Committee.
- The Executive Director of the local Partnership serves as one of the co-chairs of the Committee. The local contracting agency for NC Pre-K is operated by the local public school system. This individual may only serve as the co-chair of the Committee and could not also serve as the child care resource and referral agency or another child-serving agency representative on the Committee.

Appointments of Committee members shall be made annually. Co-chairs may designate another functioning early childhood committee or board (e.g., local Smart Start Board) in their county/region that has the appropriate membership to serve in the capacity of the NC Pre-K Committee. If an existing early childhood committee is designated to serve in this capacity, the existing early childhood committee must officially adjourn from its meeting and requirements, then officially reconvene as the NC Pre-K Committee operating under the NC Pre-K Requirements, with the required co-chairs and membership to perform NC Pre-K functions.

Committee membership must be kept current in the online NC Pre-K Plan and shall consist of the following:

1. Co-Chairs (Local Public School and Smart Start Partnership)
2. Licensed child care center (4- or 5-star license) representative,
3. Head Start program representative,
4. Parent of preschool-age child(ren) representative (especially a child who is at-risk),
5. Child care resource and referral agency or another child-serving agency representative,
6. Department of Social Services or another child care subsidy funding agency representative, and
7. Public school exceptional children's preschool program representative.

The NC Pre-K Contract Administrator and the NC Pre-K Program Contact (individuals named in the NC Pre-K Plan) may not serve as a member of the NC Pre-K Committee. These individuals are employed by the contracting agency and should serve only as a resource to the NC Pre-K Committee.

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In addition to the mandated members, the following are strongly encouraged:

1. County cooperative extension agency representative,
2. Local interagency coordinating council representative,
3. County/regional departments of health and mental health representative(s),
4. Early childhood professional organization representative(s),
5. Local business community representative(s),
6. Military representative,
7. Early childhood representative from a university, community college/higher education,
8. Child Care Health Consultant or health professional representative and/or
9. Homeless agency representative.

Laws Informing the Committee's Responsibilities

The Committee is a public body subject to the *NC open meeting law* that mandates each official meeting of a public body shall be open to the public and any person is entitled to attend such a meeting (G.S. Chapter 143, Article 33C) and *NC Public Records Law* that mandates public records and public information are the property of the people (G.S. Chapter 132) and must operate in accordance with their obligations under those statutes.

Committee Meetings

The Committee, under the direction of the co-chairs, should set a meeting schedule and establish protocol that allows the Committee to fulfill its functions including the adoption of a Conflict of Interest Policy. **Each committee member must also sign a Conflict of Interest Policy statement annually that verifies each has read and agrees to the Conflict of Interest Policy.**

The Committee must maintain minutes of all meetings that document the following:

1) meeting attendees (including members who are present/absent),
2) items discussed,
3) items that are voted on, orally or by written ballot, by who voted and what was discussed, and
4) actions taken or decisions made by the Committee.

In addition to the regular meetings, the **Committee must meet prior to May 31st** to advise planning and document approval of the NC Pre-K plan for the following year.

See *Appendix A* for sample Conflict of Interest Statements, *Appendix B* for a sample Committee Meeting Agenda and *Appendix C* for sample Committee Meeting Minutes**.**

Guidance

The Local NC Pre-K Committee must meet prior to May 31st to:

- **Select a contracting agency:**
  - ❑ Approve by vote the NC Pre-K Contracting Agency for the next school year
- **Review Contract including revisions based on changes to NC Pre-K due to legislation:**
  - ❑ Approve by vote the Contract and budget allocations for the next school year
- **Adopt a Conflict of Interest Policy:**
  - ❑ Committee members approve by vote the Conflict of Interest Policy
  - ❑ Committee members must sign the Conflict of Interest Statement annually
- **Set a regular meeting schedule:**
  - ❑ Approve by vote a Committee meeting schedule for the next school year
- **Conduct annual planning for NC Pre-K and approve an implementation plan:**
  - ❑ Review NC Pre-K County/Regional Plan to include child placements at NC Pre-K sites
  - ❑ Review the Assurances and Requirements
  - ❑ Committee members must sign Section 1 of the County/Regional Plan
- **Review and approve annually by vote all required written plans for the following:**
  - ❑ Prevention of suspension/expulsion of children with challenging behaviors
  - ❑ Transportation
  - ❑ Transition
  - ❑ Family Engagement
  - ❑ Working with children/families with Limited English Proficiency
- **Maintain minutes of Committee meeting that document the following:**
  - ❑ Meeting attendees to include members who are present/absent, staff and guests
  - ❑ Items discussed that are not voted upon
  - ❑ Items discussed that are voted upon to include who voted, orally or by written ballot, and who abstained from voting
  - ❑ Actions taken or decisions made by the Committee

C. Committee Authority and Responsibilities

Actions Requiring Full Committee Approval

The County/Region NC Pre-K Committee is the decision-making body for the local NC Pre-K Program and is authorized to do the following:

1. Conduct annual planning for NC Pre-K and approve an implementation plan. All Committee members must sign the Section 1 document that validates each member has read and agrees to the Assurances and Requirements. The Section 1 document can be found in the NC Pre-K Plan as part of the NC Pre-K County/Region Plan Document. The completed/signed Section 1 document must be submitted, along with a copy of the Committee meeting minutes, to the Division of Child Development and Early Education by **May 31st.**

2. Select or change the contract administrative agency (the Contractor).

   Items 1 and 2 require Committee approval and signatures of all members **must be submitted** to the Division of Child Development and Early Education.

3. Approve distribution of funding.
4. Review and approve the provider reimbursement strategy (i.e., payment rates to providers and other related costs).
5. Approve provider transportation charges to/from the NC Pre-K Program.
6. Approve costs that may be charged to cover the full/partial costs of meals when children do not qualify for free/reduced priced lunch.
7. Approve adding new sites or non-voluntary termination of sites in the County/Region Plan.
8. Approve requests to increase or decrease the budget when it involves NC Pre-K fund requests to serve additional children.

   Items 3 through 8 require Committee approval but **do not require the signatures** of all Committee members.

The minutes of all Committee meetings shall be kept on file and shall indicate members present/absent, discussions/questions, decisions made and the results of all votes.

Actions Not Requiring the Full Committee

In cases where decisions must be made before the Committee can be convened, the Contract Administrator and/or Committee co-chairs may do the following on behalf of the Committee:

9. Approve increases or decreases in the budget involving other resources accessed (but not state NC Pre-K funds).
10. Approve moving child placements across NC Pre-K sites.

    Items 9 and 10 require signatures of the Committee co-chairs. A report of all actions must be reported back to the Committee.

Guidance

The NC Pre-K Committee has the option to discuss and vote to allow the Contractor to move children across NC Pre-K sites without co-chair signatures. The co-chairs and the Committee may agree to transfer this decision-making authority to the Contractor. The decision to transfer the authority to the Contractor for this action must be presented, discussed and voted on during a public Committee meeting and be consistent with NC's open meetings law. Please consult your attorney if you have any questions related to this law.

D. Additional Functions – Committee and Contractor

The Committee serves in an advisory role to the Contract Administrator in the development, implementation and **annual review** of local policies, plans, procedures and practices for the NC Pre-K Program, including the following:

1. Developing and implementing a coordinated process for recruiting, identifying and placing four-year-old children who are at-risk, including but not limited to Health Check Coordinators, local Pediatricians/Health Care Providers (County Health Department) and other local agencies and organizations such as programs addressing homelessness;

2. Participating in public/private collaborative efforts to offer professional development services to early childhood programs in the community, including the mentoring of BK licensed teachers in nonpublic schools and working with the children/families with Limited English Proficiency;

3. Demonstrating and documenting how programs are accessing resources other than those provided by the NC Pre-K Program;

4. Documenting agreements with other community agencies regarding the provision of services to young children with disabilities;

5. **Developing and implementing a written plan to prevent the suspension and/or expulsion of children with unique needs/challenging behaviors** and to ensure their families have access to appropriate resources and supports to maintain their child's placement in NC Pre-K. The written plan for children with unique needs/challenging behaviors should be developed by the Committee and Contractor and should include the components found in *Section 3: The NC Pre-K Child – Subsection F. Children with Unique Needs/Challenging Behaviors* of this document;

6. **Developing and implementing a written transportation plan** showing how the transportation services for all children will be implemented to and from the NC Pre-K sites. In developing the written plan, the Committee and Contractor should identify community resources that are available and work with the school system, as feasible. Legislation allows for transportation of any NC Pre-K child to any NC Pre-K site on public school buses. If, after careful review, it is determined that transportation cannot be provided without creating a participation barrier the Contractor must maintain a written record of what was decided through the Committee process;

8. **Developing and implementing a written transition plan** showing how the needs of participating children will be implemented as they transition into Pre-Kindergarten and then into Kindergarten. The written plan for transition activities should be developed by the Committee and Contractor and should include these components:
   a) Specify how children will transition into the NC Pre-K classroom
   b) Specify how children will transition into Kindergarten
   c) Reflect the diversity and uniqueness of children, families and communities
   d) Be revised as ongoing transition efforts are expanded;

8. **Developing and implementing a written family engagement plan** to implement strategies designed to develop partnerships with families and build reciprocal relationships that promote shared decision-making. The written plan for family engagement activities should be developed by the Committee and Contractor and should include the components found in *Section 5: The NC Pre-K Classroom – Subsection I. Family Engagement* of this document;

9. **Developing and implementing a written plan for working with children and families with limited English proficiency** to include resources in the community to support children and families with limited English proficiency**.** The written plan for limited English proficiency services should be developed by the Committee and Contractor to implement strategies for working with children and families with limited English proficiency. The written plan should support the children and families in the NC Pre-K classrooms to be engaged and informed throughout the school year;

10. Providing all families of participating children with information about access to health insurance such as NC Health Check (Medicaid for Children) and the importance of a medical and dental home for their children;

11. Identifying and using community resources to develop a plan for obtaining child health assessments within the required timeframe;

12. Developing a plan for consultation services from a qualified health consultant for all sites;

13. Implementing policies for ensuring that qualified eligible teachers and teacher assistants are compensated at the appropriate levels; and

14. Implementing inclement weather policies in collaboration with local providers that include options to extend the NC Pre-K instructional day past 6.5 hours or have children attend on a day that was originally scheduled as a teacher workday, vacation day or weekend day. All sites should follow the same make-up schedule unless there are clear barriers that prevent this for a certain site(s).

Medical and Dental Home

The Committee and Contractor should work with all NC Pre-K sites as well as with community health care resources (e.g., *N.C. Health Check and Health Choice Outreach* or *Child Care Health Consultants*) to assist families in securing health insurance, a medical home (primary health care provider) and dental home (dentist) for their child. At a minimum, the Contractor should work with sites to give families information about the N.C. Health Check (Medicaid for Children) health insurance program and about the importance of a medical and dental home. The Contractor should ensure that this information is available for all families of children served by the NC Pre-K Program. The information may be distributed: 1) at a county-wide event, 2) at the site level and/or 3) directly to families. In addition, the Contractor may also choose to give families a list of local primary health care providers.

To view information for NC Healthy Start for Children go to:
http://www.nchealthystart.org/resources/child-health-insurance/

To view "The Right Call Every Time: Your Medical Home" Brochure, go to:
http://www.nchealthystart.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/MH_The_right_call.pdf

Child Health Assessment

The plan to support sites in meeting the child health assessment requirement would include notifying all families at the time of application to the NC Pre-K Program that the child's health assessment is required before being enrolled or within 30 days after a child enters the NC Pre-K Program. Please refer to *Section 5: The NC Pre-K Classroom – Subsection A. Child Health Assessments* for the components that need to be included with the child health assessment. The Contractor and sites should work with the parent/family to coordinate appropriate resources, such as for transportation, public health department, public school health nurse, Child Care Health Consultants and other health care/medical consultants in the community to help families meet this requirement.

Plan for Health Consultation Services

The plan for health consultation services for all NC Pre-K sites should address the provision of services to sites from a qualified health consultant (either a licensed pediatric health professional or a health professional with specific training in health consultation for early childhood programs). Such a plan may include defined policies and practices to ensure health promotion and prevention of infection and injury and inclusion of children with special health care needs.

E. Reporting Program Progress

The Contractor must report to the County/Region NC Pre-K Committee throughout the year on the implementation of the County/Region Plan including:

1. Program progress (recruiting, child identification and eligibility, enrollment and attendance);
2. Site updates (child placement, compliance history, NC Pre-K compliance);
3. Site staff education levels, staff salaries and progress toward goals (administrators, teachers, assistants);
4. Professional development activities including working with Limited English Proficiency learners;
5. Efforts to collaborate with other agencies (i.e., referrals for families with children with special needs and/or other behavioral, social, emotional and challenging needs);
6. Strengths and barriers to service delivery;
7. Efforts to implement plans related to the prevention of suspension/expulsion, transportation, transition, family engagement, limited English proficiency, helping families access health insurance, a medical and dental home, helping ensure child health assessments are completed and consultation from qualified health professionals; and
8. Fiscal and budget reports, including funds received and funds paid to subcontractor(s).

F. NC Pre-K Standardized Site Selection Process

1. A **Site Selection Sub-Committee** that consists of 3 or more non-conflicted members will be appointed by the local NC Pre-K Committee. The site selection sub-committee may be a subset of the current NC Pre-K Committee. Each appointed member of the site selection sub-committee must read, understand and sign a *Conflict of Interest Statement*.
2. A **NC Pre-K Site Application** must be completed by each new or previously funded (not currently funded) site interested in applying for consideration to be a NC Pre-K site. Approved NC Pre-K sites are not required to resubmit an application for each funding cycle unless non-compliance is noted by documented evidence through monitoring results.
3. A **NC Pre-K Site Selection Rubric (Rubric)** must be completed by the site selection sub-committee members for each potential NC Pre-K site applicant using information from the NC Pre-K Site Application. The Rubric is used as a comparative tool to

standardize the site selection process when recommendations are made to the local NC Pre-K Committee for sites to participate in the NC Pre-K Program.

4. **Additional Locally Determined Indicators** found in the 5th section of the Rubric is to be used by the site selection sub-committee to list other indicators to potentially assign up to eight (8) additional points to the Rubric score for a total of 100 possible points. All sites within a county must be compared using the same Additional Locally Determined Indicators to ensure fairness across the site selection process. The site selection sub-committee may decide to use only a portion or none of the 8 points for additionally locally determined indicators. In this case, the total points on the Rubric score would be less than 100 points.

5. The **NC Pre-K Site Application Decision Tree** is used by the site selection sub-committee to guide them through the process of recommending sites to the local NC Pre-K Committee once a Rubric has been completed for each potential NC Pre-K Site applicant.

6. The local NC Pre-K Committee makes the final site selection decisions based on the performance and compliance history of existing, already approved NC Pre-K sites, the rankings from the Rubrics for any sites that completed a NC Pre-K Site Application and recommendations from the site selection sub-committee.

See *Appendix D* for a sample Site Selection Sub-Committee Conflict of Interest Statement.

Guidance

Site Selection materials may be downloaded from the DCDEE website under the NC Pre-K Tab (*click here*). These materials include:

- NC Pre-K Site Application
- NC Pre-K Site Selection Rubric
- Instructions for Using the Rubric
- NC Pre-K Teacher Education Worksheet,
- NC Pre-K Site Application Decision Tree
- NC Pre-K Site Selection Sub-Committee Conflict of Interest Statement
- FAQs

Section 3: The NC Pre-K Child

A. NC Pre-K Child Application and Enrollment Eligibility

The Contractor is responsible for maintaining documentation to support the child's enrollment that must be used to complete the NC Pre-K Program Eligibility Scorecard. See page 3-6 for items and documentation needed to verify child eligibility. This documentation must include a complete and signed application with supporting documents that provide verification for the eligibility of each child enrolled in the NC Pre-K Program.

Local Contractors are responsible for determining NC Pre-K Child Enrollment Eligibility. Responsibility for determining eligibility can be delegated to the local NC Pre-K sites/ subcontractors, however the local Contractor is ultimately responsible for insuring that eligibility determinations by subcontractors are accurate and in accordance with NC Pre-K Eligibility Guidelines. This responsibility is part of the process that determines NC Pre-K contracts issued by DCDEE are Financial Assistance contracts. Characteristics and requirements of Financial Assistance contracts are described in the *NC Pre-K Fiscal & Contracts Manual*.

Determination of child eligibility does not guarantee placement in the NC Pre-K Program. Placement is also determined by availability of NC Pre-K funds that are appropriated each year by the NC General Assembly during the legislative session.

Age Requirements

1. To be enrolled, a child must be four-years-old on or before **August 31st** of the current program year.
2. Children who are not age eligible (less than 4 years or eligible for kindergarten) cannot be served with NC Pre-K funds.

Child Ethnicity and Race

The NC Pre-K Statewide Evaluation requires the collection of demographic characteristics for children receiving services, which includes ethnicity and race.

Ethnicity refers to cultural factors, including nationality, regional culture, ancestry and language.

Race refers to a person's physical characteristics, such as bone structure, skin and hair/eye color.

On the child's application, the family must indicate either "Yes" or "No" for whether the child is "Hispanic or Latino." This information determines the child's ethnicity.

The family must also choose one or more options listed for race (e.g. American Indian, Black or African American, Asian, White, etc.). More than one option for race may be chosen from the list if the child is multi-racial.

NC Pre-K Contracting Agency staff must check this information for accuracy during the application and eligibility process. A child application should be considered **incomplete** without this information. If this section is incomplete on the application, contact the family to verify the child's race and ethnicity prior to processing the application.

Income Requirements

A child that meets the age requirements is eligible for NC Pre-K if the child is from a family whose gross income is at or below 75% of the State Median Income level.

Income verification must take place using one or more of the following documents:

1. Pay Stubs (weekly-submit 2 consecutive pay stubs; bi-weekly-submit 2 consecutive pay stubs; monthly-submit at least 1 full month's pay stub)
2. Tax Records (W-2's; 1040EZ-line 4; 1040-Adjusted Gross line 37; 1040A-Adusted Gross line 21)
3. Self-employed individuals – If tax records are not provided use:
   - Total income from 1099's, bank statements for business, itemized expense receipts, etc. (or minus 20% if no expense documentation is provided)
4. Award letters from the Social Security Administration
5. Award letters from the Employment Security Commission
6. Employer written statements signed by the employer (on letterhead, if available)
7. Signed statements when the individual claims to have no verifiable countable income

***Note: Contact your NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant for eligibility scenarios that are not included in this section.**

Guidance

- For a child in the custody of DSS, income of the foster parents is not considered when determining eligibility. If the child has income such as Social Security death or disability benefits, that income would be counted.
- Legal Custody is considered to have the same kinship to the child as a caregiver (could be long or short-term). If the child lives with a relative or non-relative and not their biological parent or step-parent, but the parents still have their parental rights, only count the NC Pre-K child and any other siblings in the family size. Income of the adults would not be counted.
- Legal Guardianship is awarded by the courts when the biological parent or step-parent no longer has parental rights of the child or the biological parent or step-parent is deceased. Count the adults, the NC Pre-K child and other siblings in the family size. The adults' income and any income received by the child, such as Social Security benefits, would be counted.
- For a child with a living parent or legal guardian, all the adults' income is counted from all sources to include retirement income and disability benefits.

Additional Eligibility Criteria

Children of Eligible Military Families

Any age eligible child who is a child of either of the following shall be eligible for the program, without regard to income: 1) an active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States, including the North Carolina National Guard, State military forces or a reserve component of the Armed Forces, who was ordered to active duty by the proper authority within the last 18 months or is expected to be ordered within the next 18 months or 2) a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, including the North Carolina National Guard, State military forces or a reserve component of the Armed Forces, who was injured and/or is receiving military disability retirement or was killed while serving on active duty.

When prioritizing children of eligible military families, the military member's Leave and Earnings statement should be used when determining income. The statement will identify base pay as well as additional categories such as housing allowances and/or hazardous duty pay. Most counties in North Carolina with military installations only use the base pay amount when prioritizing children of military applicants. It is important to be consistent and handle all military applicants the same in your county.

Children who have a parent or legal guardian in the military often experience increased stress levels. Contract Administrators are strongly encouraged to identify resources in the community and help make connections for families to support children in these circumstances.

Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness

NC Pre-K Programs are strongly encouraged to serve any age eligible child whose family is experiencing homelessness.

What is Homelessness?

In January of 2002, Congress authorized the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to help people experiencing homelessness. The federal law includes the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program that entitles children who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence to a free, appropriate education and requires schools to remove barriers to their enrollment, attendance and success in school.

Examples of living situations that may qualify under the McKinney-Vento Act include, but are not limited to:

- Living with a friend, relative or other person/family because of a loss of housing
- Staying in a motel or hotel because of a loss of housing or fleeing domestic violence
- Living in an emergency shelter, transitional housing or domestic violence shelter
- Living in a car, park or public place, an abandoned building or bus station
- Living temporarily in substandard housing
- Living in a campground or an inadequate trailer home
- Living in a runaway or homeless youth shelter
- Youth who are living on their own, even if their families want them to come home

Guidance

The Division of Child Development and Early Education has partnered with NC State Coordinators of Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY), local liaisons and our partner agencies to ensure that information on the full range of child care services is available for families experiencing homelessness.

Barriers that Limit Access to Early Childhood Programs

- Lack of documents needed to enroll in early care programs
- Lack of transportation to early care and education programs
- Lack of awareness regarding homelessness situations among early care and education providers
- Lack of flexibility in policies for required documentation families must provide for enrollment

DCDEE Next Steps to Increase Access to Services for Homeless Children and their Families:

- Partner with *(EHCY)* State Coordinator, *Local Liaisons* and Head Start Collaboration Director
- Collaborate with *Yay Babies* to convene a Homeless Focus Group Meeting for partner agencies to develop a statewide action plan
- Provide training and technical assistance for early care and educators on early identification of homeless children and families, trauma-informed care and community resources
- Provide outreach to families at shelters, motels and food banks
- Provide training to staff who assist homeless families in applying for child care subsidy and consumer education to ensure that they have a basic understanding of homelessness
- Develop a residency questionnaire or integrating questions about housing into existing forms, data systems or family interviews that prompt families to answer key questions about their living situation
- Raise awareness of this issue among partner agencies and develop priorities for serving homeless families
- Priority access for child care

Click *here* for more information on Supporting Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness.

Source: *DCDEE Website, Child Care and Development Fund, Supporting Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness.*

Additional Eligible Children

In addition, up to 20% of age eligible children enrolled may have family incomes more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the state median income if the child has one of the risk factors identified below:

- Identified developmental disability;
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) as indicated by the family and/or child speaking limited or no English in the home;
- An educational need as indicated by the child's performance results on an approved developmental screening or in an existing Individualized Education Plan (IEP);
- A chronic health condition as indicated by the diagnosis from a professional health care provider; and/or
- Child and family are identified as homeless.

Priority to Serve the Unserved Population

Contract Administrators are strongly encouraged to serve children who have received no prior early education services outside the home in a group setting. In addition, continuity of care should be taken into consideration for eligible four-year-old children moving into a NC Pre-K classroom who have been previously enrolled in that site.

Guidance

Clarification for Additional Eligibility Criteria

- Developmental disabilities are identified through screenings followed by targeted tests and measures administered by education and/or health professionals. They may include but are not limited to cerebral palsy, sight or vision impairment, orthopedic impairment or autism.
- An educational need must be supported by the results from an approved developmental screening instrument. NC Pre-K approved developmental screening instruments can be found in *Section 5*.
- Developmental screenings and a complete developmental evaluation are two different activities. The developmental screening is to alert educators, families and administrators that there could be a **potential delay** in any category measured by the developmental screening.
- Developmental screening documentation provided by appropriately trained screening professionals (e.g., teachers, preschool coordinators) must be scored, signed/dated and indicate the specific delay.
- Children with IEP's have already received an initial developmental screening and do not need to be re-screened. Screening is the first step in determining if a child needs to be referred for a full evaluation (after discussing with the family and Site Administrators/Principals).
- Limited English proficiency is identified when the family and/or child speaks limited or no English in the home. Contractor Administrators are strongly encouraged to identify resources in the community to support children and families with limited English proficiency.
- Chronic health conditions must be documented in writing by a professional health care provider. These are conditions that the health care provider has diagnosed, and verified by the health care provider's signature, as having the potential to interfere with a child's development and learning. The Health Assessment form can be used to consider more evidence before an "over income child" is accepted for the NC Pre-K Program. This additional evidence can increase the strength of the decision to approve a child for eligibility (i.e., the more indicators that the Committee and Contractor have for an eligibility decision strengthen the decision). The professional health care provider would need to provide a written statement on the Health Assessment form, signed and dated, describing how the child would benefit from participating in a high-quality childhood program such as NC Pre-K.
- Homelessness is identified when a family does not have a permanent living arrangement and who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. Examples of living arrangements for a family that is homeless can include, but are not limited to, staying in a motel/hotel, living in a car/park/public place, living in an emergency shelter or domestic violence shelter, living temporarily in substandard housing or living in a campground/inadequate trailer home.
- Children/families may apply who are income eligible. However, the availability of child placements in NC Pre-K sites does not meet the demand for NC Pre-K services. The local Contractor must work with the local NC Pre-K Committee to determine a policy for prioritizing child needs. For example, a child with one or more documented developmental delay(s) or a family that is experiencing homelessness may be designated as a high priority and would be considered for a NC Pre-K placement.

B. NC Pre-K Program Eligibility Scorecard

The purpose of the Scorecard is to determine eligibility for NC Pre-K services based on the information submitted on the child's application. The child's application must be used to complete the Scorecard. See page 3-8 for items and documentation needed to verify eligibility and *Section 7: Evaluation and Monitoring, Subsection C. Program and Fiscal Monitoring of Local NC Pre-K Programs* of this document for monitoring requirements.

NC Pre-K Program Scorecard

Date Completed: _____

Child's Name: _____ **Birth Date:** _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **Zip:** _____ **Phone: (___)** _____

Determining Eligibility Factors

1) Will the child be four years of age on or before **August 31st** of the program year?
___ **No (Child is not eligible)** ___ **Yes (Move to question 2)**

2) What is the annual family gross income? _____ What is the family size? _____

Is either parent(s) - Check all that apply:
(These are not eligibility requirements but this information will help DCDEE to leverage federal funding)

☐ **Employed** ☐ **Seeking employment** ☐ **In post-secondary education**

☐ **In high school or in a GED program** ☐ **In job training** ☐ **Other**_____

3) Does the family's countable income fall at or below 75% of the State Median Income (SMI)**?**
___ **No (Go to question 4)** ___ **Yes (Child is eligible; complete Tables A and B)**

4) Does the child have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?
___ **No (Complete Tables A and B and move to question 5)**
___ **Yes (Child is at risk; complete Tables A and B and move to question 5)**

TABLE A		
Check one box for each:	**Yes**	**No**
Child has identified developmental disability	☐	☐
Child of eligible military family	☐	☐
Child has Limited English Proficiency	☐	☐
Child has chronic health condition(s)	☐	☐
Child has identified educational need(s) and/or IEP	☐	☐
Child and family are identified as homeless	☐	☐

TABLE B (TANF/MOE only)	Check one
130% of poverty and below	
131 - 185% of poverty	
186 - 200% of poverty	
201 - 250% of poverty	
251 - 300% of poverty	
Above 300% of poverty	

5) (Please complete this question if you have answered question 4)
Have one or more boxes in Table A been checked "Yes"?
___ **No** (Child is not eligible)
___ **Yes** (Up to 20% of children in families with family incomes above 75% of the state median income may be deemed eligible and enrolled in NC Pre-K if the child has other designated risk factors. Children of eligible military families may be served without regard to income and are NOT required to be included in the allowed 20% of over-income families.)

C. Eligibility for Families at or below 75% of State Median Income

Income eligibility for NC Pre-K is determined by family size and gross income

Table 1. 75 % STATE MEDIAN INCOME	
Family Size	**75 Percent State Median Income**
1	$27,300
2	$35,700
3	$44,100
4	$52,500
5	$60,900
6	$69,300
7	$70,875
8	$72,450
9	$74,025
10	$75,600
11	$77,175
12	$78,750
Effective October 1, 2016	

D. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families/Maintenance of Effort

When a child is determined eligible for NC Per-K services, a percentage of the poverty category must be determined (see Table 2), entered on the **NC Pre-K Program Eligibility Form** (Scorecard) and in NC Pre-K Kids and APP. **This information will be used for the purposes of meeting TANF/MOE requirements and will not affect eligibility determination.** See *Section 7: Evaluation and Monitoring, Subsection E. Monitoring Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Maintenance of Effort (MOE)* of this document.

Table 2. Determining Percent of Poverty Category for TANF/MOE Reporting							
Family Size	**Federal Poverty**	**130%**	**150%**	**185%**	**200%**	**250%**	**300%**
1	$12,060	$15,678	$18,090	$22,311	$24,120	$30,150	$36,180
2	$16,240	$21,112	$24,360	$30,044	$32,480	$40,600	$48,720
3	$20,420	$26,546	$30,630	$37,777	$40,840	$51,050	$61,260
4	$24,600	$31,980	$36,900	$45,510	$49,200	$61,500	$73,800
5	$28,780	$37,414	$43,170	$53,243	$57,560	$71,950	$86,340
6	$32,960	$42,848	$49,440	$60,976	$65,920	$82,400	$98,880
7	$37,140	$48,282	$55,710	$68,709	$74,280	$92,850	$111,420
8	$41,320	$53,716	$61,980	$76,442	$82,640	$103,300	$123,960
9	$45,500	$59,150	$68,250	$84,175	$91,000	$113,750	$136,500
10	$49,680	$64,584	$74,520	$91,908	$99,360	$124,200	$149,040
11	$53,860	$70,018	$80,790	$99,641	$107,720	$134,650	$161,580
12	$58,040	$75,452	$87,060	$107,374	$116,080	$145,100	$174,120
***Based on 2017 Federal Poverty Levels**					**Revised: January 2017**		

E. Definitions and Recommended Documentation for Verification

During the application process, at a minimum, the items and documentation identified in the chart below must be collected for each child and family. This information will serve two purposes: (1) to determine NC Pre-K eligibility and (2) for the State to determine TANF (Temporary Aid to Needy Families) and CCDF (Child Care and Development Fund) Maintenance of Effort (MOE) matching contributions. See *Section 7: Evaluation and Monitoring, Subsection E. Monitoring Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Maintenance of Effort (MOE)* of this document.

Data Element	**Parent, guardian or caregiver statement substantiated by parent, guardian or caregiver signature is required for family size and kinship (e.g., signed and dated NC Pre-K Child Application)**
Child's Name	Provided by parent, guardian or caregiver on the signed NC Pre-K Child Application
Birth Date	Copy of child's birth certificate, medical records, immunization records or recorded in Family Bible
Child's US Citizenship	Parent, guardian or caregiver verification indicating "yes" or "no" on the signed NC Pre-K Child Application for US Citizenship (**NOTE**: US citizenship is not required for NC Pre-K eligibility – Data is used by DCDEE for TANF determination)
Child's Ethnicity and Race	Parent, guardian or caregiver verification indicating "yes" or "no" on the signed NC Pre-K Child Application for Child's Ethnicity and choosing one or more options for the Child's Race (**NOTE:** Ethnicity and race are not required for NC Pre-K eligibility – Data is used by DCDEE for the NC Pre-K Statewide Evaluation that requires the collection of demographic characteristics to include ethnicity and race.)
County	County of child's residence as documented on the signed NC Pre-K Child Application
Military Status	Military Member's leave and earnings statement
Kinship **(signature required)**	Kinship is established when the child in care lives with an adult relative or with a non-relative who has legal guardianship. If child is living with non-relative(s) or other adults that have legal guardianship, there must be a legal document verifying they have legal guardianship presented at the time of application. 1. A parent that includes a biological mother or father, a legal mother or father or adoptive parent(s) after issuance of the final order of adoption. 2. Alleged mother or father or other alleged maternal or paternal relative. 3. A biological or half biological relative or adoptive relative limited to brother, sister, grandparent, great-grandparent, great-great-grandparent, uncle or aunt, great-uncle or aunt, great-great-uncle or aunt, nephew, niece or first cousin. Spouses of anyone in the above groups, even after the marriage has been terminated by death or divorce. 4. A step relative limited to stepparent, stepbrother and stepsister. 5. Other adults who have court ordered legal guardianship of a child. Foster parents **do not** have legal guardianship. Guardianship remains with the Department of Social Services.
Family Size **(signature required)** **(Number in Family: parents, stepparents, guardians and all minor siblings)**	Include the following individuals living in the child's home: 1. The NC Pre-K child plus all minor brothers and sisters, half-brothers, half-sisters, stepbrothers and stepsisters. 2. Parents and stepparents of these children. Minor siblings include anyone up to age 18 and still attending high school when the application is submitted to determine eligibility. 3. Incarcerated or institutionalized individuals are not counted in family size. 4. If a child is living with a relative such as a grandparent, aunt, uncle, etc., or another individual and these adult(s) are caregivers or have legal custody, then the family size consists of the NC Pre-K child, plus all minor brothers and sisters, half-brothers, half-sisters, stepbrothers and stepsisters living in the same household. The adults are not counted, nor are the children of these adults counted in family size. **5.** If a child is living with a relative such as a grandparent, aunt, uncle, etc., or another individual and these adult(s) have legal guardianship, then the family size consists of the NC Pre-K child, plus all minor brothers and sisters, half-brothers, half-sisters, stepbrothers and stepsisters living in the same household. The adults and children of these adults are counted as well in family size.

Family Income **<u>Weekly</u>** **Multiply by 4.33 then by 12** **<u>Bi-weekly</u>** **Multiply by 2.165 then by 12** **<u>Semi-monthly</u>** **Multiply by 2 then by 12** **<u>Monthly</u>** **Multiply by 12**	Count parent, stepparent or guardian's regular gross income (documentation required). **Regular gross income may include** regular employment, income earned through sales commissions averaged over several months, regular employment through a temporary employment agency, temporary unemployment pay, child support payments, alimony payments, workman's compensation and retirement/disability benefit income. **Excluded from regular gross income** are parent, stepparent and child Supplemental Security Income, adoptive assistance, foster care payments, Pell grants/scholarships and irregular income (e.g., over-time, Work First, Food Stamps, student loans). **If legal custodian, or other caregiver,** only count the child's income including Social Security Income and Child Support Payments. Do not count Supplemental Security Income. **If legal guardian,** count the adult's income and child's income including Social Security Income and Child Support Payments. Do not count Supplemental Security Income.
Income Documentation	Income verification must take place using one or more of the following documents: 1. Tax Records ((W-2's; 1040EZ-line 4; 1040-Adjusted Gross line 37; 1040A-Adusted Gross line 21) 2. Pay Stubs (weekly – submit 2 consecutive pay stubs; bi-weekly - submit 2 consecutive pay stubs; monthly - submit at least1 full month's pay stub) 3. Award letters from the Social Security Administration 4. Award letters from the Employment Security Commission 5. Employer written statements signed by the employer (on letterhead, if available) 6. Self-employed individuals – If tax records are not provided use total income from 1099's, bank statements for business, itemized expense receipts, etc. (or minus 20% if no expense documentation is provided) 7. Signed statements when the individual claims to have no verifiable countable income *Best practice – If a family member has started a new job, the agency should request additional pay stubs to determine eligibility accurately.

F. Children with Unique Needs / Challenging Behaviors

Challenging behavior shall mean any repeated pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with, or is at risk of interfering with, optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults. It is behavior that interferes with children's learning, development, success at play or is harmful to the child, other children or adults, that puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure. (*http://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/*)

When a child demonstrates challenging behaviors that prevent his or her progress in any developmental domain, as referenced in the *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*, that impede the child's access to and participation in the assigned NC Pre-K classroom learning activities, the following shall apply:

(1) The Site Administrator shall notify the NC Pre-K Contract Administrator and the local school system's Preschool Exceptional Children Program for assistance if a child's cognitive, language and communication, emotional, social, health and physical needs exceed the program's capacity to address as indicated by one or more of the following:

(A) developmental needs assessments;

(B) home visits;

(C) consultations with the family members;

(D) daily recorded classroom teacher observations; and/or

(E) modified instructional plans and differentiated lessons based on the child's individual goals.

(2) The NC Pre-K Contract Administrator, Site Administrator, teacher and family members in consultation with the school system's Preschool Exceptional Children Program and other available community and state resources, such as Birth-through-Kindergarten licensed mentors and evaluators, Healthy Social Behavioral specialists, child care health consultants, mental health specialists, social workers and other local child developmental experts, shall develop a coordinated support plan to support the NC Pre-K child's placement and participation in the NC Pre-K Program.

(3) The Division of Child Development and Early Education shall be notified when support plans recommended by the local school system's Exceptional Children Program require an alternative placement and support services for a child.

(4) A site administrator shall not suspend or expel a child from a NC Pre-K Program until the site administrator has completed the requirements of Subparagraphs (1), (2), and (3) of this Paragraph.

(5) Unless the operator determines the child poses a risk of harm to himself or herself or others, and has completed the requirements of Subparagraphs (1), (2), and (3) of this Paragraph, no child shall receive less than the 6.5-hour NC Pre-K day. Risk of harm to oneself or others includes:

(A) physical aggression such as hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, throwing objects pinching, pushing and biting;

(B) destroying property;

(C) tantrum behaviors that might include behaviors such as kicking, screaming, pushing an object or person, stomping feet or head banging;

(D) verbal aggression including yelling, threats and screaming;

(E) persistent or prolonged crying that is loud or disruptive or crying that interferes with the child's engagement in activities; and/or

(F) touching other children's private areas and removing clothing from themselves or others.

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3017 Children With Unique Needs And Challenging Behaviors
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a); Eff. October 1, 2017

Guidance

If efforts to access the consultation needed to develop a coordinated plan of support prove unsuccessful, the NC Pre-K Contract Administrator shall contact the Division of Child Development and Early Education for guidance.

Teachers shall observe the child to identify what may be triggering the behavior, plan/record instructional modifications/differentiated strategies and document daily progress made by the child. Teachers shall document additional modifications needed based on daily observations along with any other resources that may be identified to support the NC Pre-K child.

Teachers should plan and implement appropriate strategies to include, but not be limited to, the assistance of local Behavioral Specialists through the CCR&R and Smart Start Network. These and other strategies to support the child should be documented including the child's progress for at least six to eight weeks before contacting the local school system's Preschool Exceptional Children Program. The documentation will be shared with the Preschool Exceptional Children Program during consultation.

Teachers, Site Administrators and NC Pre-K Contract Administrators shall document and keep on file every effort made to support the child so they can remain in the NC Pre-K Program. The NC Pre-K teacher must complete the Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement and Developmental Needs Report. The Site Administrator must submit the report to the NC Pre-K Contract Administrator for review of what has been implemented and provide further guidance to support the child, family and teacher.

See *Appendix E* for the Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement and Developmental Needs Report. You may also *click here* to access the report on the DCDEE website to complete the form electronically.

Teachers shall **maintain continuous collaboration** with the specialist(s) working with the child to discuss strategies implemented in the classroom and seek additional research based on effective practices to support the child with or without an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

RESOURCES

Growing Up Well: Supporting Young Children's Social-Emotional Development and Mental Health in North Carolina (July 2012). *Click here* to download the report.

Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Setting, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S Department of Education (2014). *Click here* to download the Policy Statement.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (September 2015). *Click here* to download the Information Memorandum.

Click here for the North Carolina Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Policy Statement Summary.

Click here for the Division of Child Development and Early Education Suspension and Expulsion Policy Statement

Click here for additional federal resources.

Implementing Policies to Reduce the Likelihood of Preschool Expulsion – Examines factors associated with expulsion from Pre-K. *Click here* to download this resource from the *NC Early Learning Network – EC Preschool Coordinator Resources: Quality Practices*.

Section 4: The NC Pre-K Site

A. Facility Requirements

Programs serving NC Pre-K children shall maintain a four or five-star rated license.

For new centers, a temporary license will be issued for six months with the expectation of the program achieving a four or five-star license at the end of the temporary time period.

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3002 Facility Requirements
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a);
Eff. November 1, 2012
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

Guidance

New Facility - If the program does not achieve at least a four-star license at the end of the temporary time period then a Provisional license may be issued for any length of time up to, but not exceeding, 12 consecutive months to allow a specific time period for the program to correct violations that do not cause conditions hazardous to the health and safety of the children in care at the facility. A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) must be included that describes what the facility operator must do to comply with requirements.

NC Pre-K Facility with Reduction in Star Rating - If a four or five-star rated license center participating in the NC Pre-K Program drops below 4 stars for any reason, then a Provisional license may be issued for any length of time up to, but not exceeding, 12 consecutive months to allow a specific time period for the program to correct violations that do not cause conditions hazardous to the health and safety of the children in care at the facility. A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) must be included that describes what the facility operator must do to comply with requirements.

If the operator is unable to move the facility back to a four or five-star rated license by the end of the Provisional time period, the NC Pre-K Contract Administrative Agency in collaboration with the local NC Pre-K Committee may deny eligibility to participate in the NC Pre-K Program.

B. Official NC Pre-K Day and Year

NC Pre-K sites must provide a NC Pre-K Program for a minimum of 6.5 hours per day for 10 months (36 weeks) of instructional days per school calendar year.

The 6.5-hour day refers only to the instructional portion of the day for children. Transportation is not a part of the 6.5-hour day. Time adjustments should be made in the schedule for transportation time to ensure that children have a minimum of 6.5 hours of instructional time each day.

Guidance

Official Day and Year Requirements

Whenever possible the hours of operation should be consistent with the school system in the geographic location of the NC Pre-K site. Additionally, the site's schedule should generally follow the local public school calendar. Variations from this guidance should be addressed between the Contractor and NC Pre-K site. Hours of operation must be consistent with a minimum of a 6.5-hour instructional day for a 10 month or 36 week NC Pre-K year, including year-round public schools.

Home Visits/Staggered Entry

Days that are set aside for home visits and for staggered entry at the beginning of the school year may be included as part of the school calendar year. Throughout the school year a home visit may also count as an attendance day when used for instructional purposes or for a child who is unable to come to school due to special circumstances (e.g. extended illness, hospitalization and recovery).

Staff Professional Development

Licensed administrators, teachers and teacher assistants in nonpublic and public schools must participate in professional development consistent with the NC State Board of Education policy. This policy can be found on the Department of Public Instruction's website at *http://www.ncpublicschools.org/licensure*.

Administrators, teachers and teacher assistants in nonpublic school settings working toward NC Pre-K qualifications must participate in a minimum of six documented semester hours per year.

Staff are required to work on all teacher work days (up to 5) included in the school calendar. If additional teacher work days are offered the NC Pre-K requirements would not require that the NC Pre-K staff work those additional days.

Guidance

A Professional Development Day could be a day that the staff attends trainings/workshops relevant to their position as the NC Pre-K Lead Teacher, Teacher Assistant, Site Administrator or Principal. In some counties, the staff of private facilities have attended the trainings set up for the NC Pre-K staff in public school sites. These days could also be spent working in their classrooms preparing materials for their children.

C. Program Attendance Policy

Attendance

Child attendance must be taken daily and submitted monthly for reimbursement. A child must attend a minimum of 50% of the site's operational days to be reimbursed fully for the month of attendance. The NC Pre-K Plan and NC Pre-K Kids systems will calculate the attendance days and payment. During August/May or September/June, the first and last month of the operating year, a child must attend at least one day to be reimbursed for the entire month. This also applies to the first month of operation when classrooms are started during the school year due to expansion funds. For all other months, the NC Pre-K Plan and NC Pre-K Kids systems will calculate a partial payment for a child who has attended between 25% and 50% of the attendance days in a month. This has been implemented to resolve attendance issues during months when the total number of attendance days may be reduced due to tracking out and/or holidays. (See the *NC Pre-K Program Fiscal and Contract Manual* for detailed requirements on the payment process.)

Child Absences

When a child enrolled in the NC Pre-K Program is absent for more than three consecutive days, the Site Administrator shall contact the child's parent to discuss the absences and determine whether the parent wishes the child to remain in the NC Pre-K Program. The Site Administrator shall document each attempt to contact the family and include decisions the child's parent makes regarding the child's continued participation in the program. The Site Administrator shall contact the local NC Pre-K Contractor to share information related to the child's absence and to collaboratively determine what further actions may be necessary to maintain the child's attendance in the program. The Site Administrator shall not terminate a child's participation in the NC Pre-K Program before determining if barriers to the child's attendance exist and can be remedied through assistance such as access to transportation or additional educational activities in the case of a child's illness or disability.

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3002 Facility Requirements
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a);
Eff. November 1, 2012;
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

Attendance Exceptions

Exceptions for an individual child's attendance can be requested for certain conditions such as illness, hospitalization, military leave, a family emergency, crisis requiring family travel or for natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding or other conditions that require the NC Pre-K site to close due to damages such as a fire. These requests should be sent in writing to the NC Pre-K Contractor who will determine whether the exception is approved for the child's absence.

Contractors need to keep supporting documentation on file for the attendance exception detailing the circumstance for the reason(s) why the child was absent (e.g., written justification from a medical professional, email communications with the family regarding a family emergency, etc.). Documentation will be used for monitoring purposes by the state.

An education service that goes beyond a phone call must be provided to the child in these circumstances and may include a hospital visit, home visit, etc.

Contractors and Site Administrators should work with families to support a child's attendance and participation in the NC Pre-K Program. Every effort should be made to maintain the child's placement and participation in NC Pre-K.

Guidance

Inclement Weather/Snow Day-Make-Up

NC Pre-K sites should follow the local contracting agency's written policy for inclement weather make-up days. Options should include adding other days or hours to meet the NC Pre-K minimum 6.5 hours per day for 10 months (36 weeks) of instructional days per school calendar year. The written policy for inclement weather make-up days should provide guidance to sites in finding a scheduling solution that will provide the NC Pre-K children equivalent instructional time in all NC Pre-K classrooms, as well as meeting the needs of public schools, private sites and Head Start programs.

D. Nutrition

NC Pre-K sites must provide breakfast or a morning snack and lunch during the regular school day that meets the "Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care Programs" from the USDA requirements. The partial/full cost of meals may be charged when families do not qualify for free/reduced price meals. This fee must be approved by the local NC Pre-K Committee.

Child care requirements that were adopted by the NC Child Care Commission and become effective on December 1, 2012 require that only unflavored skim or low-fat milk be served to children two years old and older. Chocolate milk is not allowed. In addition, staff must role model appropriate eating behaviors by consuming only food or beverages that meet the USDA requirements in the presence of children. Changes to the nutrition standards were adopted and can be found in the NC Child Care Rule NCAC 09 .0900 General Nutrition Standards.

Effective July 1, 2012, changes occurred to General Statute 110-91(2) h.1. General Nutrition Requirements to give parental exceptions that allow a parent or guardian of a child enrolled in a child care facility to provide food and beverages to their child that may not meet the nutrition standards adopted by the NC Child Care Commission and to opt out of any supplemental food program provided by the child care facility. Effective December 1, 2012, child care rules were ratified to implement the law. Child Care Rules .0901(c) and 1706 (b) state when children bring their own food for meals and snacks to the program, if the food does not meet the nutritional requirements of NC Child Care Rule NCAC 09 .0900 General Nutrition Standards, the operator must provide the additional food necessary to meet those requirements unless the child's parent or guardian opts out of the supplemental food provided by the program as set forth in G.S. 110-91(2) h.1. A statement acknowledging the parental decision to opt out of the supplemental food provided by the program signed by the child's parent or guardian shall be on file at the facility. Opting out means that the operator will not provide any food or drink so long as the child's parent or guardian provides all meals, snacks and drinks scheduled to be served at the program's designated times. If the child's parent or guardian has opted out but does not provide all food and drink for the child, the program shall provide supplemental food and drink as if the child's parent or guardian had not opted out of the supplemental food program.

Please *click here* for the DCDEE Nutrition Opt Out Form.

Guidance

Sites should inform families about the importance of good nutrition to encourage families to choose healthy food options for their children. Families and program staff can also be referred to the "USDA Choose My Plate" website for additional information and resources to support good nutrition (*http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html)* as well as the website for the NC Program "Eat Smart, Move More" (*http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/*).

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .0900 Nutrition Standards
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-91(2); 143B-168.3;
Eff. January 1, 1986; Amended Eff. December 1, 2012; July 1, 2010; July 1, 1998; October 1, 1991; November 1, 1989

E. Transportation Fees

Contractors may choose to use some of the NC Pre-K administrative allocations for transportation services. They may also use funds from other sources such as Smart Start or private funding.

When all other options have been exhausted, families with children participating in NC Pre-K may be charged a nominal amount for transportation to/from the NC Pre-K site if approved by the NC Pre-K Committee. However, children who are at-risk should not be denied services based on the family's inability to pay.

F. Wrap-around Services

Families may also be charged for the cost of wraparound services provided before or after the NC Pre-K day, during holidays or during summer months. NC Pre-K funds may not be used for such costs.

Guidance

While NC Pre-K funding cannot be used for wraparound services (time periods before or after the NC Pre-K day), sites should attempt to meet the needs of families and children for full-day child care. When wraparound services are provided before and/or after the regular school day, during holidays or summer months, the provider may charge a fee for that service from a participating family. Instructional staff's (teacher and teacher assistant) 40-hour-work week should not include before and/or after care services. Families should be referred to the local DSS office to apply for child care funds to support wraparound care services.

G. Religious Activities

(a) During the NC Pre-K portion of the day, no subcontractor (service provider) may use its NC Pre-K funding to pay for any of the following:

(1) Religious worship, instruction or proselytization.

(2) Equipment or supplies to be used for any of the activities specified in paragraph (a) (1) of this section.

Guidance

Teachers should understand each child's cultural background. A family's cultural background includes their beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviors that have a significant impact on the child's development and learning. It is important to respect each child's culture (*NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development*).

Teachers may help children explore the similarities and differences among family traditions, holiday celebrations and cultural values. The aim is for children to understand that "families are different" and to be very sensitive to children who celebrate differently from the majority of the children. (National Association for the Education of Young Children | NAEYC).

Children may learn about other cultures, but there must not be practicing of any religion. Learning about religion is considered social studies, while practicing religion is considered worship.

Section 5: The NC Pre-K Classroom

A. Child Health Assessments

A health assessment is required to be on file at the NC Pre-K site within 30 days after a child enters the NC Pre-K Program and the assessment may be no more than 12 months old at the time of program entry. The health care provider is responsible for making appropriate referrals as indicated by the health assessment. The health assessment shall include the following:

(1) physical examination;
(2) updated immunizations;
(3) vision screening;
(4) hearing screening; and
(5) dental screening.

The health assessment shall be done by a licensed physician, the physician's authorized agent who is currently approved by the NC Medical Board or comparable certifying board in any state contiguous to NC, a certified nurse practitioner or a public health nurse meeting the Departments Standards for Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment Program. See also *General Statute 110-91(1) – Medical Care and Sanitation*.

Site-level administrators shall review all health assessment results at the time of the child's entry into the program to determine whether the assessment includes specific instructions for identified health needs that may require physical, occupational or other therapies to support the child's development and learning goals.

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3005 Child Health Assessments
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a);
Eff. November 1, 2012
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

Guidance

Acceptable Health Assessment Forms

Forms that capture and report all the required health information per NC Child Care Rule .3005 and are signed/dated by a health care provider will meet the requirements of the rule.

The *DCDEE Child Medical Report* form collects all the required health information to include the vision, hearing and dental screenings.

The NC Department of Instruction *NCDPI Health Assessment Transmittal Form* (HAForm2016), revised January 2016, collects all required health information except for the dental screening. If the HAForm2016 is used, a separate dental screening verification will also need to be completed by a health care provider.

A child's last allowable Medicaid health assessment will meet this requirement.

All components of the health assessment can be completed during the child's physical including the vision, hearing and dental screenings.

Working with Families

If a child's health assessment is not in place on the first day of attendance, the family/parent should be given written notice to have the assessment completed within 30 calendar days in accordance with NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3005 (a).

Contractors and sites should make every effort to assist families in obtaining a health assessment for their child and should enlist help from other community organizations and agencies.

B. Developmental Screening

All children enrolled in the NC Pre-K program shall receive a screening assessing the development of each child, across all domains, to ensure the child is growing and developing according to developmental milestones, unless the child has an existing Individualized Education Program (IEP). The developmental screening shall be conducted by a health care, community or school professional trained in administering the screening tool. Children shall be screened within 90 days after the first day of attendance in the NC Pre-K Program or within six months prior to the first day of attendance. The screenings shall be used for the purpose of identifying children to be referred for further evaluation and testing based on concerns in one or more developmental domains.

Site-level administrators shall review all developmental screening results and shall share results with families when results indicate a need for further evaluation of the child in one of the domains of development: health and physical, emotional and social, cognitive, language/communication and approaches to play and learning. The site-level administrator will work with the family to contact the local school system's Exceptional Children Program or other qualified resources to determine if a child is eligible for special education, related services or other supports for modifications in the classroom.

Children shall be screened using one of the approved screening instruments listed below:

1. Ages & Stages Questionnaires, Third Edition (ASQ-3) or
   Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) – *Click Here*
2. Brigance Early Childhood Screen II (3-5 Years) or
   Brigance Head Start Screen or
   Brigance Preschool Screen – II, (under 4 years 11 months) or
   Brigance K & 1 Screen – II (5 years 0 months and older) or
   Brigance Early Childhood Screens III (3-5 Years or K & 1) – *Click Here* or
   Brigance Head Start Screens III – *Click Here*
1. Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, Third Edition (DIAL-3) or
   Fourth Edition (DIAL-4) – *Click Here*
2. Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS) – *Click Here*

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3006 Developmental Screening
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a);
Eff. November 1, 2012
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

Guidance

Any professional conducting developmental screenings must be trained in the use of the selected screening instrument. Oversight of the screening process should be provided by professional(s) with specialized training and expertise in early childhood assessments. Coordination with community service providers is recommended to avoid duplicate screening of children.

The NC Pre-K Site Administrator should use the developmental screening to identify children at risk who need further observation and /or a full evaluation based on screening results related to one or more domains of development (health/physical, emotional/social, cognitive, language/ communication and approaches to play and learning). Screening results, family input and observational information should be used to inform decisions about contacting the local school system's Exceptional Children Program or other qualified resources for further developmental evaluation to determine if a child is eligible for special education, related services or other supports for modifications in the classroom.

C. Early Learning Standards and Curricula

NC Pre-K programs shall use North Carolina's Early Learning and Development Standards (and subsequent editions), as developed by a group of state and national early childhood experts. The Early Learning and Development Standards can be found on the Division of Child Development and Early Education's website at *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*.

Teaching staff must use these early learning standards to guide and inform their planning and facilitation of comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, high-quality prekindergarten learning experiences for children and in their work with families.

Each NC Pre-K classroom staff shall use an approved curriculum that aligns with the *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*. "Curriculum" means a curriculum that has been approved as set forth in the NC Child Care Rules by the NC Child Care Commission as comprehensive, evidence-based and with a reading component.

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .0102 Definitions
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-88; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7 (a);
Eff. January 1, 2013

NC Child Care Commission Approved
Early Childhood Curricula 2017

1. ***Balanced Learning,*** Primrose Schools® Franchising Company, 2016 (Approved for use in Primrose Schools® early childhood programs)
2. ***Big Day for Pre-K,*** Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015 (Approved with the stipulation that programs not implement the letter of the week and teach literacy in the context of play and children's everyday experiences), *hmhco.com*
3. ***Connect4Learning,*** Kaplan Early Learning Company, 2016, *kaplanco.com*
4. ***Curiosity Corner,*** *2nd Edition,* Success for All Foundation, 2014, *successforall.org*
5. ***Frog Street Pre-K,*** Frog Street Press, Inc., 2013, *frogstreet.com*
6. ***Galileo Pre-K Online,*** Assessment Technology, Inc., 2016, *ati-online.com*

7. ***High Reach Learning Pre-K***, Communicorp, Inc., 2010 (Approved for use in Child Care Network early childhood programs)
8. ***High/Scope Preschool Curriculum,*** High/Scope Press, 2002-2016, *highscope.org*
9. ***Life Essentials: Ready, Set, Go,*** Essential Brands, Inc., 2015 (Approved for use in Kiddie Academy early childhood programs with the stipulation that programs not implement the letter of the week and teach literacy and math in the context of play and children's everyday experiences)
10. ***Mother Goose Time Preschool Curriculum,*** Experience Early Learning™, Published annually, *mothergoosetime.com*
11. ***Passports,*** Communicorp, Inc., 2010 (Approved for use in Child Care Network early childhood programs)
12. ***Starfall,*** Starfall Education Foundation, 2013, *https://store.starfall.com/learn-more-prek-curriculum*
13. ***The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, 6th Edition,*** Teaching Strategies, Inc., 2016, *teachingstrategies.com*
14. ***The Investigator Club Prekindergarten Learning System, NC Edition,*** Robert Leslie Publishing, 2017, *investigatorclub.com*
15. ***The World at Their Fingertips,*** Bright Horizons Family Solutions, 2011-2016 (Approved for use in Bright Horizons Family Solutions early childhood programs)
16. ***Tools of the Mind, 7th Edition***, Metropolitan State College of Denver, 2012, *toolsofthemind.org*
17. ***Young Achievers,*** The Children's Courtyard, 2016 (Approved for use in The Children's Courtyard early childhood programs)

Below is a list of curricula that may still be used by NC Pre-K Programs currently using the curriculum to meet NC Child Care Rule requirements. **New programs, and programs purchasing a new curriculum, may not use the curricula listed below**.

1. ***Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming Systems: Curriculum for Three to Six Years,*** Paul Brookes Publishing Co., Inc., 2002
2. ***Beyond Centers and Circle Time® Curriculum Pre-K Theme Series,*** Kaplan Early Learning Company, 2007
3. ***The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, 4th Edition,*** Teaching Strategies, Inc., 2002
4. ***The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, 5th Edition,*** Teaching Strategies, Inc., 2010
5. ***The Creative Curriculum® System for Preschool,*** Teaching Strategies, Inc., 2010
6. ***The Empowered Child™, Childtime, 2nd Edition,*** 2007
7. ***Explorations with Young Children: A Curriculum Guide from the Bank Street College of Education,*** Gryphon House, 1992
8. ***Fireflies,*** Funshine Express, Published monthly
9. ***F.L.E.X® Learning Program,*** Goddard Systems, Inc., 2012
10. ***High Reach Learning,*** High Reach Learning, Inc., 2009
11. ***High/Scope Preschool Curriculum,*** High/Scope Press, 2002
12. ***HighScope Preschool Curriculum,*** HighScope Press, 2012
13. ***Investigator Club Prekindergarten Learning System, NC Edition,*** Robert Leslie Publishing, 2007-2012
14. ***Journey on the Learning Care System®,*** LaPetite Academy®, 2011-2012
15. ***Kids R Kids,*** Kids 'R' Kids International, Inc., 2012

16. ***Learn Every Day: The Preschool Curriculum,*** Kaplan Early Learning Company, 2012
17. ***Links to Learning,*** Nobel Learning Preschool Curriculum, 2006
18. ***Links to Literacy,*** Kaplan Early Learning Company, 2005
19. ***Little Treasures,*** The Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2011
20. ***Opening the World of Learning*™ (OWL),** Pearson Early Learning, 2005
21. ***Passports,*** HighReach Learning, Inc., 2007
22. ***Primrose,*** Primrose Schools, 2012
23. ***Read It Once Again,*** Read It Once Again, 2003-Present; Ongoing publishing
24. ***Scholastic Big Day for Pre-K,*** Scholastic, Inc., 2009
25. ***Tools of the Mind, 6th Edition,*** Metropolitan State College of Denver, 2009-2011
26. ***Tutor Time LifeSmart*™,** 2005

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3007 Early Learning Standards and Curricula
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a);
Eff. January 1, 2013
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

D. Formative Assessments

Classroom staff shall be required to conduct on-going formative assessments to gather information about each child's growth and skill development, and how each child processes information and solves problems during the learning process. Classroom staff shall use this information to plan and deliver instruction, and review each child's progress with his or her family, based on each child's development and learning needs. All formative assessments used by the NC Pre-K Program must be approved by the NC Child Care Commission.

NC Child Care Commission Approved
Early Childhood Formative Assessments 2017

1. ***Balanced Assessment,*** Primrose Schools® Franchising Company, 2016 (Approved for use in Primrose Schools® early childhood programs)
2. ***Big Day for Pre-K,*** Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015 (Approved for use with Big Day for Pre-K Curriculum with the stipulation that early childhood programs not use the Early Childhood Inventory), *hmhco.com*
3. ***COR Advantage,*** HighScope Press, 2014, *highscope.org*
4. ***Galileo Pre-K Online,*** Assessment Technology, Inc., 2012, *ati-online.com*
5. ***GOLD* ™,** Teaching Strategies, Inc., 2010-2017, *teachingstrategies.com*
6. ***Mother Goose Time Formative Assessment,*** Experience Early Learning™, Published annually (Approved for use with *Mother Goose Time* curriculum), *mothergoosetime.com*
7. ***Preschool Child Observation Record (COR), 2nd Edition,*** HighScope Press, 2003
8. ***The Creative Curriculum® Developmental Continuum for Ages 3-5,*** Teaching Strategies, Inc., 2001
9. ***The Investigator Club Prekindergarten Assessment and Intervention System, NC Edition,*** Robert Leslie Publishing, 2017 (Approved for use with *The Investigator Club* curriculum, NC edition, with the stipulation that programs not use the performance assessment cards in the Pre-Kindergarten Assessment and Intervention System), *investigatorclub.com*

10. ***The World at Their Fingertips Formative Assessment/Portfolio System,*** Bright Horizons Family Solutions, 2012 (Approved for use in Bright Horizons Family Solutions early childhood programs)
9. ***Work Sampling System Preschool - 4, 4th Edition,*** Pearson, 2001
10. ***Work Sampling System, 5th Edition,*** NCS Pearson, Inc., 2013 (Approved with the stipulation that programs purchase the P-3 and P-4 Combined Classroom Kit), *pearsonclinical.com*
11. ***Young Achievers,*** The Children's Courtyard, 2016 (Approved for use in The Children's Courtyard early childhood programs)

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3008 Formative Assessments
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7 (a), (b);
Eff. March 1, 2013
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

Guidance

The NC Pre-K teacher should:

- Collect ongoing assessment data for each child by gathering information about what children know and do, how they interact with other children/adults and how they process information/solve problems.
- Use the assessment information to tailor instruction to the individual needs of each child.
- Discuss the assessment information with the teacher assistant as you plan for each child.
- Review child's progress with his/her family.

E. Staff-to-Child Ratio and Class Size

The classroom shall not exceed a maximum staff-to-child ratio of one to nine with a maximum class size of 18 children, with at least one teacher and one teacher assistant per classroom. A classroom of nine children or less shall have at least one teacher.

Classrooms that provide for inclusive settings for children with disabilities may require an adult to child ratio lower than 1 to 9. For LEA administered public school exceptional children's preschool classrooms, ratios must be in compliance with the North Carolina Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities, Section1508-Class Size: School Age and Preschool at: *http://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/policies/nc-policies-governing-services-for-children-with-disabilities/*.

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3009 Staff-to-Child Ratio and Class Size
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a);
Eff. November 1, 2012
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

Guidance

Inclusive classrooms are encouraged by the NC Pre-K Program. The value of inclusive settings ensures that the strengths, unique learning needs and abilities are addressed for each child. Inclusive classrooms may require an adult to child ratio lower than 1 to 9.

F. Mixed-Age Classrooms

Children may be placed in a NC Pre-K classroom that do not meet age eligibility requirements, but these children **cannot be funded** using NC Pre-K dollars and must not be reported in the NC Pre-K Kids system. When choosing to operate a mixed-age classroom, it is important to ensure developmentally appropriate practices for each child including appropriate staff to child ratios. Consult with the NC Pre-K State Office and/or your DCDEE Child Care Consultant when considering this option.

Guidance

Mixed Age Classrooms

The NC Pre-K Program is designed to provide high quality educational experiences to enhance school readiness for eligible four-year-old children. At times, younger children may be enrolled in the NC Pre-K classroom along with the four-year-old children. Before grouping children of mixed ages, the following should be considered:

- The optimum age range
- Proportion of older to younger children
- Teaching and curriculum strategies should maximize the educational benefits for the group.
- Planned activities should be age appropriate and should effectively meet the developmental needs of all children in the classroom, as determined by on-going formative assessment, regardless of age.

If children younger than three years of age are being considered for a mixed age classroom, please contact your NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant and DCDEE Child Care Consultant for further guidance.

G. Rest Time

A rest/quiet period is required for each child every day, the length of which shall be determined per the individual needs of each child.

During rest time, the staff/child ratio is considered in compliance if at least one staff is in the classroom with children while resting and is visually supervising all children. The second person needed to meet the 1 to 9 ratio must be on the premises, within calling distance of the classroom to remain in compliance.

At least one alert staff member is always in the classroom, actively supervising the children with no lapses. Additional staff must be onsite and can be called to assist in the event a need arises during rest time.

Guidance

Preschool-aged children should be provided with a regular time every day that they are encouraged, but not forced, to nap or rest. The nap/rest time should be regularly scheduled so that it happens at about the same time each day. Preschoolers have often (but not always) outgrown their need for sleep during the day but still benefit from a quiet rest time where they can relax, do quiet activities and/or participate in additional one-on-one interactions with instructional staff to address differentiated instructional goals. The nap/rest schedule must be reasonable for most of the children in the group. For those children who are early risers or non-nappers, accommodations must be made to meet their needs such as:

- Children can read books quietly or play quietly with toys on their mat or cot.
- Children can read or play quietly in another part of the classroom away from sleeping children.
- Children can go outside where they can participate in free play or specific activities, if they are supervised by the required number of staff.

The teacher and assistant should:

- Provide learning opportunities for children who are awake (e.g., read stories, implement differentiated instruction for an individual child or a small group of children).
- Write notes and/or call families to discuss their child's progress or concerns.
- Plan instruction to meet the interest of the children (e.g., lesson plans or create activities or games).
- Review assessment data and determine the short and long-term goals for each child.

H. Indoor and Outdoor Learning Environments

Classrooms shall provide high-quality indoor and outdoor learning environments that support the implementation of *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*, as well as the chosen curriculum. The outdoor classroom is considered an extension of the learning environment. Both indoor and outdoor environments shall address curricular objectives by encouraging child-initiated, teacher-supported, active learning experiences. During the NC Pre-K day, classrooms serving NC Pre-K children shall provide outdoor time, either as part of a small group, whole group, or individual activity, for no less than 45 minutes per day when permitted based on weather conditions.

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3002 Facility Requirements
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a).
Eff. November 1, 2012;
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

Guidance

These effective practices briefs provide a guide for administrators, teachers and families to help teachers plan and implement strategies to ensure that instruction and practices for children are age appropriate and the pre-kindergarten environment demonstrates high quality.

- *What to Listen for in a High Quality, Language Rich, Learning Environment* - Describes the importance of a rich, oral language environment and the connection to later literacy learning
- *What to Look for in a High Quality, Pro-social, Learning Environment* - Describes high-quality early learning environments and strategies to promote development of "pro-social" skills
- *What to Look for in a High Quality, Literacy Rich, Learning Environment* - Describes high-quality literacy rich environments and strategies to promote literacy development
- *Play in the Early Years* - Describes play as an essential element of developmentally appropriate, high-quality early education programs that enhance success in school

  These resources can be found at the *NC Early Learning Network – EC Preschool Coordinator Resources: Quality Practices* (*click here*)

I. Family Engagement

NC Pre-K classrooms shall provide meaningful opportunities for families to be engaged in their child's education.

NC Pre-K Contractors in consultation with the local Committee shall develop a comprehensive plan for family engagement to implement strategies in local NC Pre-K classrooms. Strategies should be designed to develop partnerships with families and build reciprocal relationships that promote shared decision making. The following are examples of meaningful opportunities for families to be engaged in their child's education:

(1) Allowing NC Pre-K program teachers the opportunity for home visits;

(2) Formal and informal parent/teacher conferences;

(3) Classroom visits and options for parents and families to participate in classroom activities;

(4) Parent education;

(5) Allowing family members the opportunity for involvement in decision making about their own child and about their child's early childhood program; and

(6) Opportunities to engage families outside of the regular school day.

A log of activities, opportunities or communications made for family engagement must be on file at the NC Pre-K site.

Guidance

Teachers should:

- Provide ongoing opportunities for families to be engaged in their child's learning.
- Schedule events outside of the regular school day to meet the needs of working families.
- Provide times for families to be involved in planning events for the class (e.g., field day, parties, make-n-take activities, workshops).
- Locate outside resources to support families (e.g., community agencies, incorporate appropriate take-home activities into your newsletter or monthly calendars – See NC Foundations for Families at *http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/providers/pv_foundations.asp*

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3010 Family Engagement
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a);
Eff. November 1, 2012
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

Section 6: The NC Pre-K Staff

A. Site-Level Administrator Licensure and Credentials

Administrators of NC Pre-K sites shall have:

(1) A NC Principal's License, or

(2) A North Carolina Early Childhood Administrator Credential (NCECAC) Level III, or

(3) hold a Bachelor's Degree in any field with 18 semester hours in early childhood education and child development, and complete six semester hours in child care administration or nine semester hours in business administration or a combination of child care administration and business administration.

(4) If the site-level administrator does not meet Subparagraphs (a)(1), (2), or (3) of this Rule, the following shall apply:

(A) provisional approval shall be given for four years from the time the site began participation with the NC Pre-K program for the administrator to attain a NC Principal's License, or a NCECAC III, or complete a Bachelor's Degree in any field with 18 semester hours in early childhood education and child development, and complete six semester hours in child care administration or nine semester hours in business administration or a combination of child care administration and business administration; and

(B) progress toward this requirement shall be considered a minimum of six documented semester hours per year in early childhood education, child development, child care administration and business administration course work.

When the site administrator is unable to work due to illness, other health related conditions, disability, death, or natural or man-made disasters, the interim site-level administrator shall be employed not to exceed 12 weeks and have the following:

(1) NCECAC I Credential or;

(2) the equivalent as follows:

(A) NC Early Childhood Credential plus three years of experience as a director, co-director, or assistant director; and

(B) Early Childhood Administration I (EDU 261) and Early Childhood Administration II (EDU 262); or

(C) six semester hours of child care administration coursework; or

(D) nine semester hours of business administration coursework; or

(E) a combination of Subparagraphs (B), (C), or (D) of this Paragraph that equals nine semester hours.

(3) NC Principal's License.

In determining whether to approve an extension request, the Division shall consider the following:

(1) the number of children and families who may lose services if the classroom is not approved for the extension;

(2) the effect upon children and families if children are relocated to another Pre-K site;

(3) documentation of the Pre-K program's efforts to secure a permanent site-level administrator for the vacancy;

(4) availability of funding sources other than Pre-K funds to support affected children;

(5) reasons for the vacancy, including:

(A) maternity leave;

(B) death, disability, or illness; and

(C) natural or man-made disasters.

Administrators of NC Pre-K sites shall not serve as the NC Pre-K teacher or teacher assistant.

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3011 NC Pre-K Site-Level Administrator Qualifications History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a); Eff. November 1, 2012
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017.

B. Teacher Education, Licensure and Credentials

All teachers shall hold or be working toward a North Carolina (NC) Birth through Kindergarten (B-K) Continuing License or B-K or Preschool Add-on License issued by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Teachers working toward the required education and license shall meet one of the following requirements:

(1) a North Carolina B-K Initial License; or

(2) a North Carolina K-6 license and a Provisional Preschool Add-on license;

(3) another North Carolina or another state's license and a NC Provisional B-K license; or

(4) a BA/BS degree in B-K, child development, early childhood education, or an early childhood education related field, and be eligible for a NC Lateral Entry B-K License.

Pre-K teachers with a NC Lateral Entry B-K License shall make progress toward the B-K Continuing License by:

(1) obtaining a Plan of Study issued by an accredited college or university with a North Carolina Department of Public Instruction approved teacher education program;

(2) submitting to the Division college or university transcripts verifying the completion of a minimum of six semester credit hours per year in accordance with Subparagraph (1) of this Rule;

(3) Completing the three-year North Carolina State Board of Education Beginning Teacher Support Program in accordance with NC GS 115C-296(e) and North Carolina State Board of Education Policy LICN-004; and

(4) achieving the NC B-K Initial or Continuing License issued by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction within three years.

Pre-K teachers with a NC Provisional B-K or Preschool Add-on License shall make progress toward the B-K Continuing License by:

(1) obtaining a Plan of Study issued by an accredited college or university with a North Carolina Department of Public Instruction approved teacher education program;

(2) submitting to the Division college or university transcripts verifying the completion of a minimum of six semester credit hours per year in accordance with Subparagraph (1) of this Paragraph;

(3) Completing the three-year North Carolina State Board of Education Beginning Teacher Support Program in accordance with NCGS 115C-296(e) and North Carolina State Board of Education Policy LICN-004; and

(4) achieving the NC B-K Initial or Continuing License issued by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction within five years.

Teachers not meeting the annual minimum semester hours shall submit a written request to the Division of Child Development and Early Education Early Educator Support, Licensure and Professional Development Unit requesting an extension to complete the requirement. Teachers shall submit a written request to the Division of Child Development and Early Education Early Educator Support, Licensure and Professional Development Unit. The written request shall include the reason for not meeting the provisions of this Rule, a list of the required coursework and semesters hours to be completed as prescribed by the Plan of Study, a timeline for completing the required semester hours, and documentation supporting course enrollment and expected completion dates.

In determining whether to approve less than the annual minimum required semester hours, the Division shall consider reasons, including:

(1) maternity or family leave;

(2) death, disability, or illness; and

(3) natural or man-made disasters.

Teachers shall maintain the B-K or Preschool Add-on Continuing License in accordance with *NC State Board of Education Policy LICN-005*.

Teachers with expired B-K Continuing licenses shall meet the provisions set forth in *NC State Board of Education Policy LICN-005*.

The site-level administrator shall maintain documentation available for review by the Division, of the progress toward the required standard as specified in this Rule.

All NC Pre-K lead teachers employed by nonpublic schools must be enrolled with the Early Educator Support, Licensure & Professional Development Unit of the Division of Child Development and Early Education. Enrollment requirements may be found on the Division of Child Development and Early Education website at *http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/general/mb_eeslpd.asp*.

NC Pre-K Contractors, Program Contacts, and Site Administrators are advised to use the *NC Pre-K Teacher Employment Eligibility Determination Chart* and the corresponding *Instructions* document as an initial guidance tool in determining eligibility for prospective and returning NC Pre-K Lead Teachers at nonpublic NC Pre-K sites. The NC Pre-K Teacher Employment Eligibility Determination Chart should be used prior to employment offers, enrollment in the EESLPD Unit for services, and teacher placement in the NC Pre-K Plan.

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3012 NC Pre-K Teacher Education, Licensure and Credentials History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a);
Eff. November 1, 2012
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017.

Guidance

Initial BK License (formerly SP I) – Issued to a teacher with 0-2 years of verified teaching experience who have completed a state approved teacher education program from a regionally accredited college/university or completed another state's approved alternative route to licensure and earned a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college. Teachers will also complete the Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) and upon completion of the BTSP Program, teacher is recommended for a Continuing BK license (*click here*).

Continuing BK License (formerly SP II) – Issued to a teacher with 3 or more years of verified teaching experience. Continuing BK Licensure is valid for 5 years from date of issuance and must be renewed at the end of the 5 years by the teacher having completed 8 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) or 80 contact hours. In addition, the license is renewed only if the teacher has rated a proficient or higher on 3 of the 5 NC Professional Teacher Standards including the rating for Standard IV (Pedagogy) (*click here*).

Lateral Entry BK License – Issued to a teacher with a BA/BS degree in birth-through-kindergarten, child development, child and family development, early childhood education or a related field (child and family studies, human development and family studies, human growth and development, human growth and family studies and psychology) with at least a 2.50 GPA. Upon completion of the BK requirements, a teacher is recommended for an Initial BK or Pre-K Add-on License (formerly SP I) (*click here).*

Provisional BK or Pre-K Add-on License – Issued to a teacher with another North Carolina license, for example, a teacher with K-6 license who is approved for a Provisional BK or Pre-K Add-on License. Upon completion of BK requirements, teacher is recommended for an Initial BK or Pre-K Add-on License (formerly SP I) (*click here*).

Professional Development Plan – Teachers must maintain a professional development plan by participating in professional development activities that align with the expectations of the NC Professional Teaching Standards in the areas of leadership, diverse learners, content knowledge, facilitating learning, reflective professional practice and child outcomes. This plan is required for any NC licensed educator who must maintain a valid NC B-K License to remain employed in a NC Pre-K or Developmental Day classroom.

Teaching Experience – One year of full time (at least 30 hours/week) teaching experience in a public or nonpublic setting is given for each increment (step) on the state salary schedule. Experience is determined by the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) at the time the license is issued (*click here*). Teachers would be placed at the "0" level of experience until the DPI Licensure Section computes "years of experience" that are denoted on the teacher's BK license. Teacher's salary would move to the appropriate step of the NC Department of Public Instruction Teacher Salary Schedule (*click here*).

Guidance

NC Pre-K teachers who are employed by a nonpublic school holding a NC BK Continuing License must:

- Submit certificates and/or college transcripts of required professional development by **May 15th** of each year of the 5-year renewal cycle to support the renewal of the continuing license with the completed *Annual Professional Development Log*. All documentation must be received by December of the 5th year of the renewal cycle. Training and/or coursework completed must support the birth-through-kindergarten licensure area that aligns with the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards in the areas of leadership, diverse learners, content knowledge, facilitative learning, technology and professional practice. The training/coursework must equal a minimum of 8 units of credit (CEUs) or 80 contact hours. One unit is equal to 10 clock hours, or one quarter hour or two-thirds of a semester hour of IHE (college or university) credit. **Note: classroom teaching experience is no longer accepted for licensure renewal**.
- Complete 3 renewal credits (3 CEUs or 30 contact hours) in birth-through-kindergarten content that aligns to Standard 3 of the NC Birth-through-kindergarten Teacher Education Standards. *http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/pdf_forms/NCPre-K_NC_BK_Speciality_Standards.pdf*
- Complete 5 renewal credits (5 CEUs or 50 contact hours) in general birth-through-kindergarten content that aligns with the NC Birth-through-kindergarten Teacher Education Standards *http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/pdf_forms/NCPre-K_NC_BK_Speciality_Standards.pdf* and NCFELD and is supported by the teacher's Professional Development Plan.

NC Pre-K teachers holding **less than** a NC BK license (NC Lateral Entry or Provisional BK or Provisional Pre-K Add-on license) and employed by a nonpublic school must:

- Obtain a Plan of Study from an accredited college/university with an approved BK licensure Program *http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/pdf_forms/NCPre-K_ApprovedBKProgramsNC.pdf* or complete the online application for a Plan of Study from the RALC (Nash Regional Alternative Licensing Center).
- Submit unofficial transcripts to the EESLPD Unit within **10 workdays of the close of each semester to support the Plan of Study.** A minimum of 6 semester hours must be completed annually based on the teacher's individual Plan of Study.
- **Complete a minimum of 6 hours of coursework prior to June 30th. All coursework required by the Plan of Study must be completed within *three* years of the issuance of the Lateral Entry BK License and 5 years of the issuance of a Provisional BK or Pre-K Add-on License.**

Enrollment and Affiliation Requirements: Nonpublic NC Pre-K Teachers

Nonpublic NC Pre-K Lead Teachers employed in nonpublic schools must enroll with the NC Pre-K EESLPD Unit by completing and submitting the *EESLPD Enrollment Application* along with all required supporting documentation.

Teachers that hold a NC Educator's License must register on NCDPI's Online Licensure System and affiliate with the NC Health and Human Services (State LEA) in Wake County only. Contact the BK Licensure Specialist for the East or West regions for guidance regarding the enrollment process with the EESLPD Unit and the NCDPI Online Licensure System. See the map for our BK Licensure Specialist (*click here*).

Personal Identifying Information

To protect a teacher/educator's personal identification information, the EESLPD Unit will **only accept** documents by fax (919-715-0920) and the US Postal Service (2201 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2200). Initial enrollment application forms and official transcripts are **only accepted** through US standard or certified mail. Certified mail is recommended for all initial enrollment packets. Copies of all documents submitted to the EESLPD Unit should be kept for each teacher at the site level and by the teacher.

Bilingual staff

Sites that serve children and families who do not speak English or have limited English proficiency are encouraged to hire staff that are fluent in the child's native language.

C. Teacher Assistant Education and Credentials

All teacher assistants shall:

(1) have a high school diploma or GED and shall hold, or be working toward, an Associate Degree in birth-through-kindergarten, child development, early childhood education, or an early childhood education related field or a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. Teacher assistants working toward the minimum of an Associate Degree or CDA shall make progress by completing a minimum of six documented semester hours per year; or

(2) meet the employment requirements outlined by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and have one of the following:

(a) six documented semester hours of coursework in early childhood education, or

(b) two years of work experience in an early childhood setting.

The site-level administrator shall maintain documentation available for review by the Division of the progress in accordance with this Rule.

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3013 NC Pre-K Teacher Assistant Education and Credentials History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a); Eff. November 1, 2012
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017.

Guidance

NC Pre-K Teacher Assistants Who Hold AA/AAS or Higher Degrees

1. Teacher assistants working in private (nonpublic) programs who hold an AA/AAS degree or higher (BA/BS, MA/MS, EdD/PhD) in the following **ECE or ECE related fields**, birth-through-kindergarten, child and family development, child and family studies, human development and family studies, human growth and development, and human growth and family studies will meet the education requirement for approval as a NC Pre-K Teacher Assistant.

2. Teacher assistants working in private (nonpublic) programs who hold an AA/AAS degree or higher (BA/BS, MA/MS, EdD/PhD) **in another related field**, such as child care administration, early childhood teacher associate, early childhood education/special education, elementary education, psychology, school age children, special education, and sociology and have received the **DCDEE Status Letter** issued by the **Workforce Education Unit** verifying qualification as a lead teacher for the star rated license ***may meet*** the education requirement for approval as a NC Pre-K Teacher Assistant.

Note: Under DCDEE rule and policy, these degrees will only meet the educational requirements for **prospective and returning NC Pre-K Teacher Assistants** who hold at least an AA/AAS degree or higher.

For more information or questions about a prospective or returning NC Pre-K Teacher Assistant's qualifications, contact the **Workforce Education Unit** at (919) 527 – 6600.

D. Substitute Staff

When a member of the NC Pre-K teaching staff is unable to work, due to illness, other health related conditions, disability, death or natural or man-made disasters, a substitute staff person shall be provided to maintain the staff-to-child ratio as specified in Rule .3009 of this Section and shall be able to implement the curriculum and formative assessments in accordance with Rules .3007 and .3008 of this Section. Substitute staff shall be at least 18 years of age and meet the following minimum qualifications:

Short Term Vacancies

When teachers are absent from the NC Pre-K classroom for 15 or fewer attendance days, substitute staff shall meet one of the following:

(A) Nonpublic Schools (Private Child Care/Pre-K Settings): Substitutes in private settings shall have a high school diploma or a GED and completed one course in early childhood education or child development, such as the North Carolina Early Childhood Credential; or

(B) Public School Settings: Substitutes shall meet the requirements of the substitute policy consistent with the local education agency (LEA).

Long Term Vacancies

When teachers are absent from the NC Pre-K classroom for 16 or more attendance days:

Substitute staff shall hold at least an Associate Degree in birth-through-kindergarten, child development, early childhood education or an early childhood education related field.

Substitutes for teacher assistants must be at least 18 years of age and have a minimum of a high school diploma or a GED.

Substitute staff shall not exceed 12 weeks without approval from the Division of Child Development and Early Education NC Pre-K Unit. Upon written request of the NC Pre-K Contract Administrator, the Division may grant an extension of the 12-week vacancy. The request shall include why an extension beyond 12 weeks is needed and a timeline for employing a permanent teacher or assistant teacher. In determining whether to approve substitute staff to work beyond 12 weeks, the Division shall consider the following:

(1) the number of children and families who may lose services if the classroom is not approved for the extension;

(2) the effect upon children and families if children are relocated to another Pre-K site;

(3) documentation of the Pre-K program's efforts to secure a permanent teacher for the vacancy;

(4) availability of funding sources other than Pre-K funds to support affected children;

(5) reasons for the vacancy, including:

(A) maternity leave;

(B) death, disability, or illness; and

(C) natural or man-made disasters.

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3014 NC Pre-K Substitute Staff
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a);
Eff. November 1, 2012
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

E. NC PRE-K TEACHER AND TEACHER ASSISTANT STANDARDS

NC Pre-K teachers and teacher assistants shall provide child-directed and teacher-directed instructional day-to-day learning activities for children enrolled in the NC Pre-K program for at least 32.5-hours a week. In addition to these day-to-day instructional experiences, the Pre-K program shall provide adequate additional time for the teacher and teacher assistant staff for planning, scheduling and conducting home visits, meeting with children's families, or attending required professional development activities as set forth in Rule .3016. These related activities shall take place outside of the 32.5-hour work week of direct teacher-child contact.

Guidance

NC Pre-K lead teachers and teacher assistants are not to exceed working 40 hours per week. All 40 hours worked per week must be focused on the NC Pre-K classroom that the lead teacher and teacher assistant is assigned to at the NC Pre-K site. 32.5 hours each week are for direct contact with children in the classroom or outdoor learning environment. The remaining 7.5 hours each week are for instructional staff to complete related instructional activities.

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3015 Instructional Staff Standards
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88: S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a);
Eff. November 1, 2012
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

F. Professional Development Requirements

North Carolina licensed administrators, teachers, and teacher assistants employed by public and nonpublic schools shall participate in professional development consistent with the level of education and type of educator licensure required for employment in accordance with 10A NCAC 09 .3011, .3012, and .3013. The policy can be found on the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's website at *http://www.ncpublicschools.org/profdev/*.

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3016 Professional Development Requirements
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a);
Eff. November 1, 2012
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

Guidance

NC Pre-K teachers and Site Administrators who are employed by a nonpublic school are required to complete a series of mandated professional development prerequisite sessions that support the teacher licensure process upon enrollment with the Early Educator Support, Licensure and Professional Development (EESLPD) Unit and, as required annually, based on changes and updates to the teacher licensure and evaluation policy approved by NC State Board of Education.

When planning professional development, NC licensed teachers are required to follow their professional development plans that are developed based on their formally assessed teaching practices conducted by assigned mentors and evaluators. Professional development for NC licensed educators is based on BK licensure type and level, per NC State Board of Education policy.

Staff is required to work all the work days (up to 5) included in the school calendar. If additional teacher work days are offered the NC Pre-K requirements would not require that the NC Pre-K staff work those additional days.

DCDEE will offer professional development opportunities for teachers, teacher assistants and administrators to the extent feasible and when funds are available. Contractors, subcontractors including principals, directors and classroom staff may be required to participate in targeted professional development specified by DCDEE based on identified program needs.

G. Compensation for Instructional Staff

Compensation includes all salary, wages, health and/or retirement benefits paid to eligible NC Pre-K teachers and teacher assistants working in public and nonpublic school NC Pre-K Programs as defined in this Section. Compensation may also include other benefits such as child care services discounts, disability insurance, educational scholarships, holiday pay, longevity pay, sick leave, vacation, other types of personal leave and/or other employer sponsored benefits (dental insurance, vision insurance).

Teacher Eligibility

a. Teachers who are employed by **public school** NC Pre-K Programs will receive salaries based on the NC Public School Teacher Salary Schedule (*click here*) and receive health and retirement benefits offered through the NC State Health Plan and NC State Retirement System.

b. Teachers who are employed by **nonpublic school** NC Pre-K Programs and currently hold either NC Birth-Kindergarten (BK), Preschool Add-On, Provisional BK, Provisional Preschool Add-on, Lateral Entry BK licensure are eligible to receive a compensation package that aligns with the NCDPI Teacher Salary Schedule (*click here*). All Site Administrators are encouraged to offer competitive salaries and commensurate benefits to those offered by public schools.

Teacher Assistant Eligibility

1. Teacher assistants who are employed by **public school** NC Pre-K Programs will receive salaries based on the NC Public School Salary Schedule for Non-Certified Staff (*click here*) and receive health and retirement benefits offered through the NC State Health Plan and NC State Retirement System.

2. There are no specific salary recommendations for teacher assistants who are employed in **nonpublic school** NC Pre-K Programs. However, to promote quality and continuity Site Administrators are encouraged to offer compensation commensurate with that of teacher assistants employed by public schools found in the State Salary Guide under the NC Department of Public Instruction's website (*click here*).

Compensation Packages for Nonpublic School Programs

1. Compensation packages may include salary only, or salary plus any variety of benefits. Examples of benefits in addition to salary/wages include:

    - Child Care discounts
    - Disability Insurance
    - Educational Scholarships
    - Health Insurance
    - Holiday Pay
    - Longevity Pay
    - Retirement Plans
    - Sick Leave
    - Vacation Pay
    - Other: Dental, Vision, or other employer determined benefits

2. Local NC Pre-K Contract Administrators should work with each local Site Administrator, as needed, to develop a written compensation plan that includes salary/wages and a list of potential benefits. There is no minimum or maximum compensation target that must be met; however, local nonpublic school NC Pre-K Site Administrators are encouraged to provide a compensation package for lead teachers and teacher assistants commensurate with compensation provided in local public school settings, based on available state and local fiscal resources.

Guidance

Salary Schedule Resources - NC Department of Public Instruction's Teacher and Teacher Assistant Salary Schedules may be found at *http://www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/finance/salary/*

From this page, select the current Salary Schedules. Schedules are included for all public school positions (11 sections). The **Teacher Salary Schedules** are located in the first section of the manual. The **Teacher Assistant Pay Grade** is located under the *last* section of the manual titled **Non-Certified Salary Ranges – Subsection, Curriculum Support**. Within this section are several pages of personnel classifications and one **Pay Grade Chart**. The **Teacher Assistant** position is listed in this chart, toward the bottom, at **Grade 56** with a corresponding minimum and maximum monthly salary range. There are other types of non-certified personnel positions listed in the same chart.

Best Practice - It is recommended that local NC Pre-K Contract Administrators contact the local public school's personnel or human resources office for salary schedules and any other information that would inform compensation discussions with local NC Pre-K Site Administrators, teachers and teacher assistants employed by nonpublic schools. Local programs are also encouraged to ***consider*** referring to the *Public School Teacher and Teacher Assistant Salary Schedules* for prior years and/or *NC Institute for Child Development Professionals* Salary Scales (See Tab Compensation/Benefits, Salary Scales for Teachers, Teacher Assistants) to use as the minimum benchmark for compensating teachers and teacher assistants.

Labor Laws - Programs providing NC Pre-K services should refer to state labor laws pursuant to the North Carolina Wage and Hour Act (*http://www.nclabor.com/wh/wh.htm*) and to federal and labor laws pursuant to the Fair Labor Standards Act (*http://www.dol.gov/whd/flsa/*) regarding questions about wage and hour rules and employment classifications (i.e., exempt versus nonexempt) of NC Pre-K instructional staff based on educational degrees and credentials.

Work Week - Compensation should be based on a 40-hour work week for 36 weeks (10-month school year) (1,440 hours: includes 6 ½ hours direct child contact. *See Section 6. E. Instructional Staff Standards* of this document and 10A NCAC 09 .3015 Instructional Staff Standards.

How to convert an annual salary to an hourly wage:

- Add total number of paid days for the NC Pre-K year. This number would include actual NC Pre-K work days, usually 180, plus any paid holidays, vacation, teacher work days or professional development days.
- Calculations are based on a 40-hour work week with 8-hour days. ***Sample calculations***:

Hourly wage = Annual Salary ÷ Days ÷ 8

Hourly wage = $33,000 ÷ 200 ÷ 8 = $20.63/ hour (includes 20 paid holiday/vacation days)
$33,000 ÷ 180 ÷ 8 = $22.92/ hour (includes 0 paid holiday/vacation days)
$40,000 ÷ 190 ÷ 8 = $26.32/hour (includes 10 paid holiday/vacation days)
$40,000 ÷ 180 ÷ 8 = $27.78/hour (includes 0 paid holiday/vacation days)

H. Payment Rates by Site Type

Head Start Programs and **Head Start programs administered by a Public School sites** - **Maximum NC Pre-K Rate $400 regardless of Lead Teacher and Substitute Lead Teacher qualifications.**

Public Schools - Maximum NC Pre-K Rate $473 regardless of Lead Teacher and Substitute Lead Teacher qualifications.

Private Programs
Lead Teacher Rates

Highest Degree	Teacher License	Grouping	Actual NC Pre-K Rate
BA/BS or higher	BK License	BK or higher	$650
BA/BS or higher	NC Lateral Entry BK License	BK or higher	$650
BA/BS or higher	BK Standard Prof II	BK or higher	$650
BA/BS or higher	BK Standard Prof I	BK or higher	$650
BA/BS or higher	Provisional BK License	BK or higher	$650
BA/BS or higher	Provisional Pre-School Add-on	BK or higher	$650
BA/BS or higher	Pre-School Add-on	BK or higher	$650
BA/BS or higher	Other State Teacher's License	BK or higher	$650
BA/BS or higher	Other NC Teacher's License	BK or higher	$650
BA/BS or higher	Holds no License and is working towards BK License	Less than BK	$600

Long-term Substitute Lead Teacher Rates

Highest Degree	Teacher License	Grouping	Actual NC Pre-K Rate
BA/BS or higher	Holds no License	Less than BK	$600
AA / AAS	None	Less than BA/BS and less than BK	$550

RATE EXCEPTIONS

DCDEE may grant exceptions to Contractors on a case by case basis for the above rates. An 'exception' is defined as requesting a reimbursement payment for other than the approved caps: $473 per month in public schools, $400 per month in Head Start programs or paying a rate other than $650/$600, whether lower or higher, in private sites. A lower rate can be negotiated in public schools or Head Start programs without review by DCDEE. Requests for rate exceptions should be sent to Lorena Gonzalez, Senior Manager, Early Education Branch at lorena.gonzalez@dhhs.nc.gov.

Teachers should only be listed in the NC Pre-K Plan as having a BK license or other license if the NC Pre-K Contract Administrator has verified the actual license. Verification is defined as "having a copy of the license on file." Licenses include a NC Lateral Entry BK license, a NC Provisional BK or Preschool Add-on license, a NC BK Initial license, a NC BK Continuing license or another NC or other state's license (that will qualify teacher for a Provisional BK Add-on license).

Retroactive Payments

Payment should be made at the higher BK rate of $650 per month if the teacher's license has been verified. If the effective date precedes the issue date of the license, the reimbursement rate may be adjusted by the contracting agency when submitting revised attendance sheets and summary sheets for the months in question, including the reason for the prior month adjustment. Submit this to the attention of the DCDEE Business Office. The purpose of the adjustment to the reimbursement rate will be to retroactively reimburse the NC Pre-K classroom(s) based on the effective date of the teacher's license being an earlier date than the issue/received date. For a teacher holding an expired NC or other state's license the higher reimbursement rate ($650) is recommended, as long as the teacher's enrollment with the EESLPD Unit is verified through the NC Pre-K Plan. The expired license will be submitted to the NCDPI Licensure Section with a request to reinstate.

If the license is not reinstated by the NCDPI, the Site Administrator will be notified that the teacher will no longer qualify as the lead teacher of the NC Pre-K classroom. A qualified teacher or substitute would need to be hired for the classroom.

Guidance

Exception rates that were approved during the previous NC Pre-K Program year will roll over into the next year's NC Pre-K Plan unless the Contract Administrator submits a written request to Lorena Gonzalez @ lorena.gonzalez@dhhs.nc.gov.

Only new exception rates will have to be approved. Local Contract Administrators will need to send a request to lorena.gonzalez@dhhs.nc.gov that provides the following information. Exception rate requests may be submitted at any time; however, the request needs to be submitted as early as possible in the year so that the correct rates will be in the NC Pre-K Plan when children are entered into NC Pre-K Kids.

Required Information for Exception Rate Requests:

- Why the rate is being requested **and** that it has been approved by the local Committee (e.g., to meet legislative mandate for teacher salary increase, salary increase for licensed teachers in public and/or private sites due to licensure status, etc.).
- How this will impact the number of children served (e.g., maintain contracted numbers, decrease/increase in contracted numbers and why this is needed).
- Copy of local NC Pre-K Committee meeting minutes supporting the request.
- Any other pertinent information that may help to clarify/confirm request for a rate exception.
- Once the exception rate request is received, Lorena Gonzalez will respond with an approval or a request for additional information with a copy to Melva Henry, NC Pre-K Contract Administrator at melva.henry@dhhs.nc.gov, who will adjust the newly approved rate(s).
- After Melva Henry enters the new rate(s) in the NC Pre-K Plan she will confirm the change with the local contracting agency or seek additional information, as needed, to complete the approval.

Sample 1 (NC Pre-K and Other Funding to Increase Rates):

_____ County in consultation with the local NC Pre-K Committee would like to request an exception to the NC Pre-K approved rates as follows:

Requested Rates (2015-16):	Slots	Total Rate	NC Pre-K	Smart Start	Total Budget
ABC County Public Schools:	126	647	627	20	815,220
DEF County Public Schools:	95	558	538	20	530,100
GHI Development Center:	36	633	613	20	227,880
					1,573.200

Attached is a copy of the documentation submitted with our survey to support the rate increase. Should you have any questions or need further explanation, do not hesitate to contact me.

_____, Local NC Pre-K Contract Administrator

Sample 2 (NC Pre-K Funds Only to Increase Rates for All Site Types):

The local _____ County NC Pre-K Committee in consultation with our agency, _____, are requesting the following rate changes to offset increases in teacher salaries for SFY 2017-18:

Private Child Care: $650 to $678
Head Start: $300 to $312.80
Public School: $473 to $475.37

Current enrollment will be maintained. Funds will not be used to increase the number of NC Pre-K students served.

_____, Local NC Pre-K Contract Administrator

Sample 3 (NC Pre-K Funds to Increase Rates for Public Schools):

_____ County NC Pre-K Committee is requesting a rate exception for public schools from $473 to $478. The expansion funds will be used to cover this difference in rates. The Committee meets again on September 24th and would like to resolve the rate issue at that time. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information. Thank you.

_____, Local NC Pre-K Contract Administrator

Section 7: Evaluation and Monitoring

A. ECERS-R Assessments

All NC Pre-K licensed programs in public schools and private child care facilities shall have an assessment completed every three years using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ECERS-R) assessment tool as a part of the rated license reassessment process. This will be conducted at the time of the star rated license reassessment. At least one NC Pre-K classroom shall be selected for an assessment during the reassessment process.

NC Pre-K classrooms must score **a minimum of 5.0**. Classrooms that score below 5.0, shall be reassessed the following year and a minimum score of 5.0 must be achieved in order to continue to be approved as a NC Pre-K site.

See also NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .3002 Facility Requirements
History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-88; S.L. 2011-145, s. 10.7(a);
Eff. November 1, 2012
Readopted Eff. October 1, 2017

Guidance

Guide to the NC Pre-K ECERS-R Assessment Process

1. The DCDEE Child Care Consultant will request the ECERS-R assessment from the NC Rated License Assessment Project (NCRLAP) as part of the rated license assessment.
2. At least one of the classrooms selected for the ECERS-R assessment must be a NC Pre-K classroom. If a NC Pre-K classroom is not chosen as part of the random selection process, the NCRLAP assessor will return another day (within two weeks) to complete an ECERS-R assessment for at least one NC Pre-K classroom.
3. When all the ECERS-R assessments for the facility have been completed, the NCRLAP will email the assessment reports to the DCDEE Child Care Consultant.
4. The DCDEE Child Care Consultant will contact the facility director/administrator and the NC Pre-K Site Administrator (if different from the facility director/administrator) to schedule a visit to deliver and review the assessment reports, including the NC Pre-K ECERS-R assessment.
5. After the visit, the DCDEE Child Care Consultant will email a copy of the NC Pre-K ECERS-R assessment report to the local NC Pre-K Contract Administrator to share the assessment report, items discussed, recommendations and available technical assistance opportunities related to the NC Pre-K ECERS-R assessment that may include the NC Pre-K Early Educator Support, Licensure and Professional Development mentor and evaluator.
6. If a NC Pre-K Program has a rated license assessment, it is not necessary to request a standalone ECERS-R assessment for a new NC Pre-K classroom since the classroom was not in operation at the time of the rated license assessment. NC Pre-K ECERS-R assessments are conducted as part of the rated license assessment process; therefore, a separate ERS request should not be submitted to NCRLAP for an expansion of a new NC Pre-K classroom. If the classroom is still open at the program's three-year reassessment, then it will be included in the random selection process.

If the NC Pre-K classroom scores less than 5.0 on the ECERS-R assessment:

An Improvement Plan is required when the classroom ECERS-R score does not meet the minimum assessment score (5.0) on any classroom assessment.

- The classroom will have one year to make improvements.
- The DCDEE Child Care Consultant will contact the local NC Pre-K Contract Administrator and the NC Pre-K Site Administrator to set up a meeting to discuss the assessment report and to develop an Improvement Plan. The Improvement Plan and timeline will be developed jointly with the DCDEE Child Care Consultant and Supervisor (if necessary), the local NC Pre-K Contract Administrator, the NC Pre-K Site Administrator, lead teacher, teacher assistant and the lead teacher's NC Pre-K EESLPD mentor and/or evaluator. Other resources, such as the local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, Smart Start Partnership, Public School or Head Start agency may also be included, as applicable.
- A copy of the final Improvement Plan must be maintained by the local NC Pre-K Contractor, NC Pre-K site and the DCDEE Child Care Consultant.
- Follow-up assessments will be conducted to ensure the minimum rating is met during the following school year. The DCDEE Child Care Consultant will request the follow-up assessment from the NCRLAP. The classroom must achieve at least a 5.0 on the follow-up assessment to continue to be approved as a NC Pre-K site.
- A classroom may be exempt from the Improvement Plan requirements if the classroom location or teacher has changed since the ECERS-R assessment occurred. However, the classroom may be subject to a new assessment.

B. Child Maltreatment Investigations

The Division of Child Development and Early Education will notify local Contract Administrators of any administrative action issued at a NC Pre-K site. Administrative action may be issued as the result of violations of child care requirements and/or a substantiation of child maltreatment.

The Division of Child Development and Early Education does not share information about pending child maltreatment investigations, as they are confidential. At the conclusion of an investigation, if child maltreatment is not determined, information about the investigation shall remain confidential. Only information about violations of child care requirements and any administrative action issued as a result of an investigation can be shared. At the conclusion of an investigation, if child maltreatment is substantiated, visit information, including violations of child care requirements and any administrative action issued will be available.

The NC Pre-K site in question may continue operating the NC Pre-K classroom until the administrative action corrective action plans are complete. If the allegation of child maltreatment is substantiated, NC Pre-K funds may be terminated where there is maltreatment that jeopardizes the health and safety of children enrolled in the program.

In some cases, NC Pre-K Program payments will continue through the appeals process. However, NC Pre-K funds will be terminated when the participating NC Pre-K site child care facility license has been suspended or revoked. Any substantiation of child maltreatment, or any administrative action resulting in a change of the license status, may impact future participation in the NC Pre-K Program.

C. Program and Fiscal Monitoring of Local NC Pre-K Programs

The Division of Child Development and Early Education, local Contract Administrators and Site Administrators are required to monitor for program/policy and fiscal/contract compliance for the NC Pre-K Program.

Monitoring by the Division of Child Development and Early Education

DCDEE Child Care Consultants will monitor for compliance of the NC Child Care Rules, which includes Section .3000, NC Pre-Kindergarten Services. Results of DCDEE facility licensing monitoring visits will be shared with the Site Administrator, the local NC Pre-K Contractor and sent to the Division of Child Development and Early Education to be placed in the program's Master File. DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants will monitor for program compliance with the NC Pre-K Program Requirements (Policy) that inform the work of the local contracting agency and the local NC Pre-K Committee, and for requirements not in the NC Child Care Rules. The NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants will provide technical assistance, as needed, to ensure compliance.

Monitoring Tools

Monitoring tools developed by the Division of Child Development and Early Education must be used at the local level for self-review and verification of compliance with the operating requirements.

1. **NC Pre-K Site Monitoring Tool (Site Tool) – Completed by the Site Administrator (or designee, not the classroom teacher) –** The Site Tool is designed to provide a checklist of those components of the program that must be reviewed for compliance annually at the site and classroom level**.** The Site Monitoring Tool must be submitted to the local Contractor by November 15th of the program year. A copy will be maintained on file at the child care facility, along with supporting documentation, for review by the DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant. Classroom teachers are required to self-monitor per the "Rubric for Evaluating NC Teachers".

2. **NC Pre-K Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool (Contractor Tool) – Completed by the local Contractor (or designee) –** The Contractor Tool is designed to provide a checklist of those components of the program that must be reviewed for compliance annually at the local Contractor level for all program/policy requirements. An electronic survey of the Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool will be submitted to DCDEE by February 15th of the program year. A copy of the Contractor Tool will be maintained on file at the contracting agency, along with supporting documentation, for review by the DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant**.**

3. **NC Pre-K Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet (Fiscal Worksheet) – Completed by the local Contractor (or designee)** – The Fiscal Worksheet is designed to provide a checklist of those components of the program that must be reviewed for compliance annually at the local Contractor level for all fiscal requirements. An electronic survey of the Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet will be submitted to DCDEE by January 15th of the program year, prior to the fiscal monitoring process. DCDEE Administration Section staff will contact selected Contractors to schedule a date/time to conduct a desk audit or an on-site visit. A copy of the Fiscal Worksheet will be maintained on file at the contracting agency, along with supporting documentation, for review by the DCDEE Administration Section staff.

Guidance

The required Site Monitoring Tool, Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool and Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet are organized by specific program, policy or fiscal requirements. The tool/worksheet lists specific documentation required to support the cited requirement/standard and tracking columns are included for self-monitoring. Supporting documentation, listed under the "source" column, must be available for review by the local Contractor and by DCDEE personnel during monitoring and technical assistance visits. To download monitoring tools please go to: *http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/general/mb_ncprek.asp*

Site Administrator Responsibilities:

1. Each Site Administrator must monitor each NC Pre-K Program classroom during the 6.5 hour instructional day on a regular basis. A NC Pre-K Site Monitoring Tool must be completed for each NC Pre-K site and all NC Pre-K classrooms.

2. When a particular standard or requirement has not been met based on monitoring with the Site Tool, each site should establish a written plan to meet compliance. The plan should define who is responsible for accomplishing the task, a timeline and information to indicate progress toward meeting the requirement.

3. By November 15th of the program year, the Site Administrator completes, signs (Section F. Assurance Statement), dates an original copy of the completed Site Tool, attaches written action plans for items not met and submits the materials to the local NC Pre-K Contractor. NOTE: If a site or classroom becomes a NC Pre-K site or classroom after October 1st, a Site Tool should be completed and submitted to the local Contractor within 90 days of the first attendance day at that site/classroom.

4. Information collected with the Site Tool will be used by the local Contractor to confirm, record and report local site compliance to DCDEE using the NC Pre-K Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool (Contractor Tool).

5. A copy of the Site Monitoring Tool should be available at each NC Pre-K site and shared with the DCDEE Child Care Consultant during compliance visits, as requested, and with the DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant, as requested, during technical assistance visits/calls with the contracting agency.

Local Contractor responsibilities:

1. Local Contractors monitor NC Pre-K sites/classrooms and complete the NC Pre-K Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool (Contractor Tool).

2. When a particular standard or requirement has not been met based on monitoring with the Contractor Tool, each Contractor should establish a written plan (that may include exceptions from the state office) to meet compliance. The plan should define who is responsible for accomplishing the task, a timeline and information to indicate progress toward meeting the requirement. In addition, any non-compliance with fiscal requirements based on monitoring with the NC Pre-K Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet may result in corrective action, including reimbursement for unallowable expenditures.

3. The local Contractor (or designee) ensures that:

   a. By November 15th of the program year an original copy of the NC Pre-K Site Monitoring Tool from each NC Pre-K site is on file. (See NOTE in item 4, above.)

   b. By January 31st of the program year, at least one annual site visit will be made to each NC Pre-K Program site/classroom. During the visit, the Site Tool should be discussed and validated by the local Contractor (or designee). For sites/classrooms that have not met specific requirements, written plans for compliance should be attached to the Site Tool and reviewed/monitored for completion. This may require additional classroom visits by the Contractor (or designee). In addition, the Contractor will follow up with the site/classroom on concerns if any are identified by the DCDEE Child Care Consultant during the annual licensing visits to the program and/or by the DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant.

   c. By February 15th of the program year, the Contract Administrator must complete, sign and submit to DCDEE the electronic survey for the NC Pre-K Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool. The Contractor Tool monitors compliance of the NC Pre-K Program Requirements to include results from the Site Monitoring Tools for all local NC Pre-K sites. This information will be reviewed by the DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant. Any written action plans, timelines, exceptions from the state office and other information to support progress toward requirements not met are to be kept on file at the contracting agency for discussion with the DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant during technical assistant visits/calls.

   d. By January 15th of the program year, the Contract Administrator must complete, sign and submit to DCDEE the electronic survey for the NC Pre-K Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet. The Fiscal Worksheet monitors compliance of the NC Pre-K Program fiscal and contract requirements. The information from the Fiscal Worksheet will be reviewed by the DCDEE Administration Section staff.

e. Selected Contractors will be contacted by the DCDEE Administration Section staff to schedule a date/time between February and April of the program year to conduct a desk audit or on-site monitoring visit. The DCDEE monitoring staff will discuss the items from the visit/review (fiscal, policy and contract) with the Contract Administrator and DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants. A formal close-out letter will be sent to the contracting agency by May 31st of the program year following the visit/review providing details of the monitoring visit.

f. The Contract Administrator must complete any fiscal corrective actions identified by DCDEE in the formal close-out letter within 30 days. **Any corrective actions for fiscal non-compliance must be completed within 90 days of notification by the state office.**

4. Results are reported to the local NC Pre-K Committee prior to **June 15th** of the program year. Information included in the tool/worksheet should be considered in planning for the upcoming program year.

Guidance

Although local Contractors are responsible for insuring that income eligibility is determined correctly, documentation may be stored at the individual NC Pre-K sites as long as the Contractor can obtain the eligibility documentation when it is requested by DCDEE NC Pre-K and/or Administration Section staff. It is important for the Contractor to have verification on file that was used in determining child eligibility, such as the NC Pre-K Program Scorecard (Section 3, page 3-4).

State level responsibilities:

1. Visits by DCDEE Child Care Consultants will be made to NC Pre-K classrooms during annual licensing visits to ensure classrooms are in compliance with all NC Child Care Rules, including Rule .3000, NC Pre-Kindergarten Services. These visits may occur at any time during the program year. The DCDEE Child Care Consultant will report information gathered from these visits to the local Contract Administrator.

2. NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants will monitor program and policy requirements as defined in the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and ensure that documentation is on file to include the NC Pre-K Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool, along with supporting documentation. NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants will provide technical assistance and training to local NC Pre-K contract administrative agencies and committees. In addition, the NC Pre-K state office, teacher mentor and evaluation staff will follow NC State Board of Education Licensure Policy and Procedures to carry out the provisions of teacher evaluation.

3. Reporting and monitoring information may also be obtained through the NC Pre-K County Plan (NC Pre-K Plan), the NC Pre-K Reporting System (NC Pre-K Kids), the NC Pre-K APP (Application, Prioritization and Placement) and the NC Educator Effectiveness System (teacher evaluation). These systems include extensive information about children, staff and programs. Child information will include the necessary information required to support the State's Maintenance of Effort (MOE) for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).

4. DCDEE Administration Section staff will schedule monitoring visits from February through April of the program year to review results, including action plans that are collected and documented on the NC Pre-K Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet by the county/region Contractor. DCDEE Administration Section staff will verify that all requirements have either been met or plans for achieving compliance are in place. If specific fiscal or contract requirements have not been met as specified in the formal close-out letter, DCDEE Administration Section staff will confirm that the Contractor (or designee) submits final monitoring results, including supporting plans for items not met, to DCDEE within 30 business days of the formal close-out letter. This may require additional follow-up (email communication, telephone calls, technical assistance visits) by DCDEE personnel to provide support in areas not fully implemented.

5. An original copy of the tool/worksheet will be maintained by the state office as evidence that program, policy and fiscal requirements are in compliance.

Guidance

For fiscal monitoring purposes, it is best practice for a copy of the NC Pre-K Program Scorecard to be kept in each child's enrollment file/record verifying his/her eligibility for NC Pre-K services. At the time of the fiscal monitoring visit, the Scorecard may be needed to facilitate review of a child's record to verify the Contractor determined eligibility correctly for the child to receive NC Pre-K services.

D. Monitoring Timeline

Local NC Pre-K Contractors should conduct ongoing monitoring visits throughout the year, not limited to the schedule listed below.

When	What	Who
By November 15th	Local NC Pre-K sites complete all items related to the **NC Pre-K Site Monitoring Tool**, including action plans and timelines, as applicable and submit the original **Site Monitoring Tool** to the local Contract Administrator by November 15th. A copy of the **Site Monitoring Tool** should be maintained on file at the NC Pre-K site for **DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants** to review as needed. (New sites and/or classrooms started after October 1st, should complete a **Site Monitoring Tool** and submit within 90 days of the first attendance day.)	**Site Administrator** (or designee) (site director or public school principal) *All child developmental screenings not completed by October 31st, should be noted in the action plan.
November 15th through January 31st	Contractors make on-site visits to all local NC Pre-K Program sites/classrooms. The **Site Monitoring Tool** should be discussed and validated by the local Contractor during these visits. Schedule follow-up visits as needed. Contractors should complete all items related to the **NC Pre-K Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool**, including action plans and timelines, as applicable by January 31st.	**Local Contract Administrator** (or designee)
By January 15th	Contractors complete the electronic survey for the **NC Pre-K Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet** to include explanations for compliance and Contract Administrator's signature and submit to DCDEE by January 15th.	**Local Contract Administrator** (or designee)
By February 15th	Contractors complete the electronic survey for the **NC Pre-K Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool** to include explanations for compliance and Contract Administrator's signature and submit to DCDEE by February 15th.	**Local Contract Administrator** (or designee)
February through April	The **Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet** and supporting documentation will be reviewed by the **DCDEE Administration Section Staff**. Selected contracting agencies will be contacted to conduct on-site visits between February and April.	**DCDEE Administration Section Staff**
February through April	The **Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool** and supporting documentation will be reviewed by the **DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants.** Guidance/technical assistance will be provided as needed through on-site visits/calls between **February and April**.	**DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants**
By May 31st	**DCDEE Administration Section Staff** will send out formal close-out letters by May 31st to contracting agencies that were selected for monitoring through on-site visits. The formal letter will provide details of the monitoring visit, including any findings that may require corrective action.	**DCDEE Personnel** (Administration Section Staff and NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants)

NOTE: DCDEE Child Care Consultants conduct annual compliance visits to NC Pre-K Programs using the **NC Child Care Rules**, including **Rule .3000-NC Pre-Kindergarten Services**. These visits may occur at any time during the program year.

E. Monitoring Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant funds services and assistance to income-eligible families who have a child living in the home. The TANF block grant, administered by the State Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), has an annual cost sharing requirement referred to as the Maintenance of Effort requirement (MOE). Every federal fiscal year, each state must spend a certain amount of its own money to help eligible families in ways that are consistent with the purpose of the TANF program.

The NC Pre-K Program, designed to provide high-quality pre-kindergarten experiences that may allow parents to work, may count as MOE. See *NC Pre-K Program Fiscal and Contract Manual*.

Local NC Pre-K Programs are subject to monitoring visits by the DHHS Division of Budget and Analysis. The Division of Budget and Analysis, in conjunction with the State NC Pre-K Program, will select administrative programs for monitoring visits. Monitoring visits are not audits but reviews of randomly selected child records to ensure that funds to be counted as MOE meet the basic guidelines as outlined in the *NC Pre-K Program Fiscal and Contract Manual*.

Local NC Pre-K Programs should inform eligible NC Pre-K families, at the time of their enrollment into the program, that they should update the program if any of the following information changes during the NC Pre-K Program year. Families should be informed that NC Pre-K services would continue for their child and would not be affected by the information update/change.

1. Name changes
2. Child's living arrangement changes related to who has legal custody and/or guardianship of the child

APPENDICES

BEDROCK COUNTY NC PRE-K COMMITTEE
Conflict of Interest Policy

The Bedrock County NC Pre-K Committee has adopted the following conflict of interest policy:

Bedrock County NC Pre-K staff persons are obligated to always act in the best interest of the organization. This obligation requires that any Committee member, in their performance of NC Pre-K duties, seek only the furtherance of the NC Pre-K mission. At all times, Committee members are prohibited from using their job title, the organization's name or property, for private profit or benefit.

A. The officers or agents of the Bedrock County NC Pre-K Committee should neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors/vendors. This is not intended to preclude bona-fide Bedrock County NC Pre-K fund-raising activities.

B. No officer or agent of the Bedrock County NC Pre-K Committee shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a purchase or contract with a vendor where, to their knowledge, any of the following has a financial interest in that purchase or contract:

    1. The officer or agent;
    2. Any member of their immediate family;
    3. Their partner;
    4. An organization in which any of the above is an officer, director or employee;
    5. A person or organization with whom any of the above individuals is negotiating or has any arrangement concerning prospective employment.

C. Disclosure - Any possible conflict of interest shall be disclosed by the person or persons concerned.

D. Committee Action - When a conflict of interest is relevant to a matter requiring action by the Bedrock County NC Pre-K Committee, the interested person(s) shall call it to the attention of the Bedrock County NC Pre-K Committee and said person(s) shall not vote on the matter. In addition, the person(s) shall not participate in the final deliberation or decision regarding the matter under consideration. When there is a doubt as to whether a conflict exists, the matter shall be resolved by vote of the Bedrock County NC Pre-K Committee, excluding the person(s) concerning whose situation the doubt has arisen.

E. Record of Conflict - The official minutes of the Bedrock County NC Pre-K Committee shall reflect that the conflict of interest was disclosed and the interested person(s) did not vote on the matter.

I agree to adhere to this policy and hereby disclose any potential conflict that I might have as a Committee member:

Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Signature: _____

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

NC PRE-K PROGRAM COMMITTEE

The standard of behavior of the NC Pre-K Committee is that all members scrupulously avoid conflicts of interest between the interests of the NC Pre-K Program and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding potential and actual conflicts of interest, as well as perceptions of conflicts of interest.

The Committee understands that the purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity of the NC Pre-K Program's decision-making process, to enable our parents to have confidence in our integrity, and to protect the integrity and reputations of the Committee members. Upon or before appointment, Committee members will make a full, written disclosure of interests, relationships, and holdings that could potentially result in a conflict of interest. This written disclosure will be kept on file and will be updated as it is appropriate.

During meetings or activities, Committee members will disclose any interests in a transaction or decision where the Committee member, family and/or significant other, employer, or close associates will receive a benefit or gain. After disclosure, the Committee member will be allowed to participate in the discussion but will not be permitted to vote on the motion.

I understand that this policy is meant to supplement good judgment, and I will respect its spirit as well as its wording.

Sign: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

BEDROCK COUNTY NC PRE-K COMMITTEE

Conflict of Interest Policy Form

I submit the following information in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy of the Bedrock County NC Pre-K Committee. I understand that completing this form does not exempt me from declaring conflicts of interest as they arise in accordance with that policy.

1. Listed below are the organizations serving preschool children and/or their families with which I am associated in an official capacity, either in a supervisory or membership role.

2. Listed below are any employment, contractual or professional interests that I (or an immediate member of my family) have in any business, firm or corporation, of whatever nature, that may attempt to secure funding or a contract from the NC Pre-K Committee and/or the Bedrock County Partnership for Children.

3. Subsequent to filing this disclosure, I agree to disclose acquisition of any interest in addition to those listed above by amendment hereto within thirty days of such acquisition.

4. I acknowledge that I have read the NC Pre-K Committee's Conflict of Interest Policy and agree to abide by its provisions, including possible exclusion from voting and/or participation in deliberation under conflict of interest circumstances described in the policy.

_____ _____
Signature of Committee Member Date

_____
Printed Name

Bedrock County Partnership for Children
NC Pre-K Committee Meeting
May 10, 2017 @ 1:00pm
Sample Agenda

Call to Order & Welcome ..... Betty Jones, Co-Chair
Committee Member Introductions ..... Committee Members
Agenda Overview ..... Betty Jones, Co-Chair
Approval of Minutes ..... Committee Members

<u>Action Items:</u>

- ❑ Selection of NC Pre-K Contracting Agency
- ❑ Approval of Contract / Budget Allocation
- ❑ Adoption of Conflict of Interest Policy Statement / Committee Signature
- ❑ Review NC Pre-K County / Regional Plan for Bedrock County
- ❑ Review Assurances and Requirements / Section 1 Committee Signature
- ❑ Approval of Annual Written Plans
- ❑ Approval of Committee Meeting Schedule (next school year)

Other Agenda Items ..... Betty Jones, Co-Chair
Questions and Comments ..... Committee Members
Adjournment ..... Betty Jones, Co-Chair

Bedrock County Partnership for Children
NC Pre-K Committee Meeting
May 10, 2017 @ 1:00pm
Sample Committee Meeting Minutes

The Bedrock County Partnership for Children's local NC Pre-K Committee Meeting was called to order at 1:00pm by Betty Jones, NC Pre-K Committee Co-Chair, with a quorum present and maintained throughout the meeting.

Members Present:
Members Absent:
Staff/Guests Attending:

Welcome and Introductions
Betty Jones welcomed everyone to the meeting and Committee members introduced themselves and provided information for their title/agency.

Agenda Overview and Approval of Minutes
Betty Jones presented the meeting agenda and asked the Committee to review the February 23, 2017 minutes. A request was made by Betty Jones for any corrections. No corrections were needed for the February 23, 2017 minutes. Betty Jones requested a motion to approve the minutes without any corrections. Wilma Gates approved the motion and Barney Lee seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Selection of Contracting Agency
Betty Jones entered a motion that Bedrock County Partnership for Children serve as the Contractor for the NC Pre-K Program in Bedrock County for the next school year. There being no questions/discussion, Wilma Gates approved the motion that the NC Pre-K Contracting Agency be approved as presented for the next school year and Fred Avery seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Contract and Budget Allocation
The Contract and budget allocation for 2017-18 school year was presented to the Committee by John Davidson, NC Pre-K Contract Administrator. Each member received a copy and time was given for questions/discussion. A question was presented by Fred Camden, DSS Committee Representative, regarding additional funding/allocations. John Davidson responded that this would be dependent on the legislative session and their recommendations. There being no more questions/discussion, Betty Jones requested a motion that the budget be accepted as presented for the next school year. Wilma Gates approved the motion and Barney Lee seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Bedrock County Partnership for Children Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2017
Page 2

Conflict of Interest Policy
Betty Jones provided each Committee member with the Conflict of Interest Policy statement for the next school year and made a motion for it to be accepted without any changes to the policy. Each member reviewed the document. Barney Lee approved the motion for it to be accepted again for the next school year with no changes to the Conflict of Interest Policy. Fred Avery seconded the motion with no discussion. All voted in favor. Each Committee member will complete/sign this document today and return to Suzanne Swain, NC Pre-K Program Contact.

County/Regional Plan
Suzanne Swain provided each Committee member with the County/Regional Plan for the next school year. Each member reviewed the document. Betty Jones asked if there were any questions from the Committee members. There was none and Betty Jones made a motion for the County/Regional Plan to be accepted for the next school year. Wilma Gates approved the motion and Fred Avery seconded the motion with no discussion. All voted in favor.

Assurances / Requirements and Section 1 Document
Suzanne Swain reviewed all items covered in the Assurances and Requirements section of the County/Regional Plan for the next school year. Each member reviewed the document. Suzanne Swain asked if there were any questions from the Committee members regarding their responsibilities prior to the signing of the Section 1 document. There was none and Betty Jones made a motion for the Section 1 document to be accepted for the next school. Barney Lee approved the motion and Fred Avery seconded the motion with no discussion. All voted in favor. Each Committee member will complete/sign the Section 1 document today and return to Suzanne Swain, NC Pre-K Program Contact.

Annual Written Plans
John Davidson distributed the written plans for transition, transportation, family engagement, Limited English Proficiency and Prevention of Suspension/Expulsion to each Committee member. After discussion of the five written plans that were presented, Betty Jones motioned that the Plans be accepted again for the next school year with no revisions. Wilma Gates approved the motion and the motion was seconded by Barney Lee. All voted in favor.

Committee Meeting Schedule
Betty Jones requested a motion that the local NC Pre-K Committee for Bedrock County meet quarterly on the same schedule used in the previous school year. Fred Avery approved the motion for the same schedule to be used for the next school year and it was seconded by Barney Lee. All voted in favor.

With there being no other Committee business, Betty Jones adjourned the meeting on May 10, 2017 at 4:00pm.

Minutes taken and submitted by Patricia Cumberland.

Sample Committee Meeting Minutes

NC Pre-K Committee Meeting
March 9, 2015 at 1:30 PM

Members Present: Barbara Frye (Co-Chair), Demetria Craven, Leslie Evans, Denise Hill, Andi Ives, Maria Layne-Stevens, Jeannie Zarate

Members Absent: Amy Pendergrass (Co-Chair), Deborah Cassidy, DeWarrena Cornelius, Joyce Fairley, Mary Skrabec

Staff Present: Jennifer Noble, Executive Director, Partnership for Children
Terry Beasley, Director of NC Pre-K
Robin Armstrong, Provider Specialist, NC Pre-K
Patra Gorham, Program Specialist, NC Pre-K
Judy Newlin, Provider Specialist, NC Pre-K

Others Present: Angela Davis, Jenine Gatewood, Tammy Gatling, Jennifer Smith

Welcome and Introductions
Barbara Frye called the meeting to order at 1:35pm and acknowledged that a quorum was present. Quorum was maintained for the duration of the meeting. Introductions were made by all persons present. Terry Beasley introduced Jenine Gatewood as the NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant.

Public Comments
Barbara Frye opened the floor for public comments. There were no public comments.

<u>Action Items</u>

Approval of Minutes:
The January 12, 2015 minutes were reviewed. Upon motion by Denise Hill and a second provided by Andi Ives, the minutes were approved.

Approval of Lead Teacher Salary:
Terry Beasley and the NC Pre-K Lead Teacher Compensation Sub-Committee recommended that the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance be accepted as standard practice in all nonpublic NC Pre-K Programs for all Birth-Kindergarten (BK) certified lead teachers. All BK certified lead teachers will be paid a minimum benchmark according to the number of years of experience on the 2012-2013 Public School Teacher Salary Schedule to begin with the 2015-2016 school year. The Committee requested more information about the option for teachers to opt-out of the required salary.

After much discussion, Barbara Frye called for a motion to approve the recommendation that all BK certified lead teachers will be paid a minimum benchmark per the number of years of experience on the 2012-2013 Public School Teacher Salary Schedule to begin with the 2015-2016 school year. A motion was made by Andi Ives and was seconded by Denise Hill to approve the NC Pre-K Lead Teacher Compensation recommended from the Sub-Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of NC Pre-K Mid-Year Child Placement:
Terry Beasley shared the 2014-2015 NC Pre-K mid-year child placement review.

- Anticipated Unallocated Funds $95,268.00
- Estimated Additional Slots 36
- Rate per slot $650.00
- Estimated Monthly Cost $23,400.00

X 4 months (March 2015 – June 2015)

- Total Cost for Estimated Additional Slots $93,600.00
- Remaining Unallocated Funds $1,668.00

The recommendation from the NC Pre-K staff is based on waitlist evaluation and the ability of the Contractor to fill slots at approved 2014-15 NC Pre=K sites. The staff recommends:

- Open a classroom of 18 children at XYZ Childcare Center that has a wait list of 22 children in corresponding zip codes.

AND

- Open a classroom of 18 children at ABC Childcare Center that has a wait list of 19 children in the corresponding zip codes.

A motion was made by Andi Ives and a second was provided by Leslie Evans to approve the NC Pre-K staff recommendations to open a classroom of 18 children at XYZ Childcare Center and a classroom of 18 children at ABC Childcare Center. The motion passed unanimously.

<u>NC Pre-K Status Updates/Discussions</u>

Site Selection Process:
Terry Beasley shared that all private sites that are currently in compliance with monitoring will not be required to go through the site application process this year, but this does not guarantee that all selected sites will receive child placements. Ms. Beasley asked Committee members to recommend possible non-conflicting Site Selection Sub-Committee members to the Partnership. There will be an advertisement placed in the newspaper and the application will be available on our website. The proposed deadline for the site application will be April 15, 2015. There will an orientation session for all new sites that would like to apply.

NC Pre-K Applications:
738 child applications have been received and processed for the 2015-2016 school year.

Adjourn
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:37pm
Barbara Frye, NC PreK Committee Co-Chair

Next Committee Meeting scheduled for April 13, 2015 at 1:30pm
Patra Gorham, Program Specialist

Local NC Pre-K Advisory Committee
Non-Conflicted Site Selection Sub-Committee
Conflict of Interest Statement

Local NC Pre-Kindergarten (NC Pre-K) Programs are expected to offer families a variety of settings to choose from in order to provide a high-quality pre-kindergarten experience that will meet the needs of each individual child. The goal of using a non-conflicted NC Pre-K Site Selection Sub-Committee is that a diverse group of stakeholders will recommend sites as acceptable for NC Pre-K placements and advise the local NC Pre-K Committee as they work to fulfill contractual site selection obligations. The slate of choices that are recommended by the Site Selection Sub-Committee should reflect geographic and demographic diversity provided in public and private early education settings. The final selection of sites is determined by the local NC Pre-K Committee.

The items listed below are for consideration as NC Pre-K Committees make decisions about appropriate membership on the local Site Selection Sub-Committee. The local Site Selection Sub-Committee must consist of 3 or more members and may be a "Non-Conflicted" subset of your current NC Pre-K Committee. This information may help Committees to determine when potential members may or may not have a conflict of interest. It is important to avoid any conflict of interest as well as a perception of conflict of interest. If the NC Pre-K Contract Administrator is a private non-profit agency, a Conflict of Interest policy has already been submitted to the Division of Child Development and Early Education as part of their contract. It may be helpful to reference this policy as the Site Selection Sub-Committee considers how to address potential conflicts of interest. Please consider the following best practices:

1. There should be members of the Sub-Committee that represent various stakeholders in the community as well as subject matter experts in the field of child development and early education. Members may include representatives from the local Health Department, Child Care Resource & Referral Agency, County Department of Social Services, Community College and/or other community volunteers. Members may *not* include current or applying providers (public or private) or their representatives.
2. It is the duty of every Site Selection Sub-Committee member to disclose and avoid both conflicts of interest and appearances of conflict of interest.
3. Individuals who may benefit directly or indirectly from decisions made by the Site Selection Sub-Committee may participate in discussions and offer input but should abstain from voting when the site involved is under consideration.
4. Members should not solicit or accept gifts, entertainment, favors or other items of more that nominal monetary value from anyone representing an NC Pre-K Program site or site applicant. Current NC Pre-K contract templates specify this prohibition from offering or accepting gifts.
5. Members should not use their position on the Sub-Committee, the NC Pre-K Program name or any property belonging to the NC Pre-K Program for private profit or benefit.
6. Meetings may begin with the following question: Does any Sub-Committee member have any known conflict of interest or appearance of conflict with respect to any matters coming before the Sub-Committee today? If so, please identify the conflict or appearance of conflict and refrain from any undue participation in the matter involved.

I have reviewed the Conflict of Interest Statement above and I agree to adhere to all the items listed.

_____ _____

NC Pre-K Site Selection Sub-Committee Member Date

Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement and Developmental Needs Report

This report is required for use with a child who demonstrates persistent challenging behaviors (Hemmeter, Fox, & Snyder, 2014, p.24) that prevent his/her progress in any developmental domain (see NC Early Learning and Development Progressions http://earlylearningprogressions.fpg.unc.edu/) and impede the child's access to and participation in the NC Pre-K Program. The intention of this report is to document family communications about the challenging behavior and behavioral regulation strategies implemented in the classroom, and to inform the NC Pre-K contract administrators prior to referral to the Exceptional Children Preschool Program.

Teachers, Site Administrators and NC Pre-K Contract Administrators shall document and keep on file every effort made to support the child.

The NC Pre-K Contract Administrator, Site Administrator, teacher and the family, in consultation with the school system's Preschool Exceptional Children Program and other available resources, shall work together to develop a coordinated plan to support the NC Pre-K child's placement in the NC Pre-K Program. Every effort shall be made to maintain the child's enrollment and participation in the NC Pre-K program.

If efforts to access the consultation needed to develop a coordinated plan of support prove unsuccessful, the NC Pre-K Contract Administrator shall contact the Division of Child Development and Early Education for guidance.

What is challenging behavior? Any repeated pattern of behavior, or perception of behavior, that interferes with or is at risk of interfering with optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults that interferes with children's learning, development, and success at play, is harmful to the child, other children, or adults, that put a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure. Challenging behavior is thus defined on the basis of its effects. While some children's challenging behaviors are developmentally or culturally normative and effectively addressed by adult vigilance and the use of appropriate guidance procedures, other children need more targeted evidence-based practices (Tier II) to prevent and/or address challenging behaviors that are persistent or unresponsive to universal evidence-based approaches (http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/explore/glossary.htm).

Examples of persistent challenging behaviors for preschool children may include:
(1) physical aggression such as hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, throwing objects forcefully, pinching, pushing, and biting;
(2) climbing on things in the classroom that are not permitted;
(3) destroying property, destroying what another child is working on regardless of the other child's response;
(4) taking toys away from other children forcefully;
(5) running that poses a safety risk for the child or others or elopement from the classroom;
(6) tantrum behaviors that might include behaviors such as kicking, screaming, pushing an object or person, stomping feet, or head banging;
(7) verbal aggression including yelling, threats, screaming at another person, calling children bad names, and saying bad words;
(8) ordering an adult to do something (e.g., "leave me alone");
(9) persistent or prolonged crying that is loud or disruptive or ongoing crying that interferes with the child's engagement in activities;
(10) inappropriate use of materials (e.g., jumping off chairs, slamming materials, throwing objects);
(11) statements that are noncompliant (e.g., "I'm not going to do it") or clear and explicit verbal or physical refusal to follow directions; or
(12) inappropriate touching, stripping, and other behaviors that are hurtful, disruptive, or dangerous to self or others (Hemmeter, Fox, & Snyder, 2014, p. 24).

Hemmeter, M.L., Fox, L., & Snyder, P. (2014). Teaching pyramid observation tool (TPOT) for preschool classrooms manual research edition. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.

Early Childhood Behavioral Engagement and Developmental Needs Report

Site Administrators and teachers must complete and submit this form to the NC Pre-K Contract Administrator to review what has been implemented and provide further guidance to support the child, family and teacher. The documentation will be shared with the Preschool Exceptional Children Program during consultation. Attach the teacher's planned modifications/individualized strategies and documented progress for the child. This form can be completed electronically.

NC Pre-K Site:
Child's Name:
Teacher's Name:
Site Administrator's Name:

Submission Date:
County:
Teacher's Contact Information:
Site Administrator's Contact Information:

Actions	Dates	Contacts/Results	Next Steps (Who, what, when)
Documentation of challenging behavior: When does it occur, what happens right before it occurs, what happens after, how often does it occur, and how long does it last			
Designated observer conducts assessment of current classroom practices in preventing challenging behaviors and promoting social-emotional development; Identifies new strategy to implement			
Documented teaching strategies implemented to maintain child's participation in the NC Pre-K Program (e.g., teacher's planned modifications or individualized strategies and recorded progress of the child for at least 6 weeks)			
Documented communications with families about child's behavioral concerns; Face to face, phone calls, emails, texts etc. that are not routine and are specifically conducted to address topic of child's behavioral concerns			
Documented collaboration with specialists due to child's challenging behaviors (e.g. local school system's Preschool Exceptional Children's Program, local Smart Start, Child Care Resources & Referral, Triple P, mental health consultant, psychologist, or other professionals)			
Documented teacher's professional development to support classroom practices (e.g., completed Foundations: Social-Emotional training, visited other classrooms, mentored by others, etc.)			
Outcomes of attempts made to maintain child's participation in the NC Pre-K Program (provision of additional staff, conducted a Functional Behavioral Assessment and implemented a Behavior Improvement Plan, referral to the Preschool Exceptional Children's Program, transferred to another appropriate setting, etc.)			

NC PRE-K PROGRAM ANNUAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Month	Contractor Responsibilities	Helpful Resources	Contact Information
July	• NC Pre-K database systems ready (APP, Kids, Plan) • Begin review/update of the following Sections in the NC Pre-K Plan: ✓ Committee Section ✓ Contact Information ✓ Site & Classroom ✓ Budget • Finalize data entry into: ✓ NC Pre-K APP (Child Eligibility/Placement) • Upload child data into: ✓ NC Pre-K Kids (Create site/classroom/child forms) • Begin data entry into: ✓ NC Pre-K Plan (Instructional Staff and Classroom Approvals) Local Committee meeting, if needed	NC Pre-K APP NC Pre-K Kids NC Pre-K Plan	NC Pre-K Program Requirements; NC Pre-K Plan- NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants Click here for Regional Map NC Pre-K APP and Kids- Jeanne Barnes @ jeanne.barnes@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6601 NC Pre-K Plan/Budgets/Contracts- Melva Henry @ melva.henry@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6561 EESLPD Unit-Teacher Licensure- B-K Licensure Specialists Click here for Regional Map Attendance Reports/FSR's- Trevon Simon @ trevon.simon@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6542
August	• NC Pre-K Programs/Sites open • NC Pre-K Contracting Agency staff orientation/training • Local NC Pre-K Site/Classroom staff orientation/training • NC Pre-K APP & Kids – Continue child eligibility and placement process • NC Pre-K Plan – Complete following items: ✓ Site year end dates are entered ✓ All classrooms have a lead teacher/ teacher assistant assigned ✓ Number of children and payment rates entered for each classroom on Budget Screen • July FSRs and attendance reports mailed to DCDEE by 10th business day of month or request for advance is due		

September	• NC Pre-K Plan – Continue completion of following items: ✓ All classrooms have an approved lead teacher/ teacher assistant assigned ✓ Number of children and payment rates entered for each classroom on Budget Screen ✓ Section II Principal/Director signatures obtained – Mailed to DCDEE ✓ Print copy of Section III and retain for your files • August FSRs and attendance reports mailed to DCDEE by 10th business day of month or request for advance is due	Site Monitoring Tool NC Pre-K Kids NC Pre-K Plan	NC Pre-K Program Requirements; NC Pre-K Plan; Site Monitoring- NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant Click here for Regional Map NC Pre-K APP and Kids- Jeanne Barnes @ jeanne.barnes@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6601 NC Pre-K Plan/Budgets/Contracts- Melva Henry @ melva.henry@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6561 EESLPD Unit-Teacher Licensure- B-K Licensure Specialists Click here for Regional Map Attendance Reports/FSR's- Trevon Simon @ trevon.simon@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6542
October	• Train local program administrators on site monitoring responsibilities and due dates • NC Pre-K Expansion Budget Templates due (tentatively, if applicable) • September FSRs and attendance reports mailed to DCDEE by 10th business day of month or request for advance is due		
November	• Site Monitoring Tool due to local Contractor by November 15th • Begin site monitoring visits after completed Site Monitoring Tool is received • Validate Site Monitoring Tool results (verify Plans of Study, transcripts, license/credentials, classroom lesson plans/daily schedules) • October FSRs and attendance reports mailed to DCDEE by 10th business day of month or request for advance is due • Local committee meeting, if needed (pending NC Pre-K expansion funds)		

December	• Continue site monitoring visits • NC Pre-K Plan – Other Estimated Resources due (online) • Survey link emailed from DCDEE with electronic Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet and Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool • Begin completing electronic Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet • November FSRs and attendance reports mailed to DCDEE by 10th business day of month or request for advance is due	Site Monitoring Tool Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet NC Pre-K Kids NC Pre-K Plan	NC Pre-K Program Requirements; Site Monitoring; Contractor Monitoring- NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant Click here for Regional Map NC Pre-K APP and Kids- Jeanne Barnes @ jeanne.barnes@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6601 NC Pre-K Plan/Budgets/Contracts- Melva Henry @ melva.henry@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6561 Fiscal Monitoring- Ed Skeens @ ed.skeens@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527- 6520 Attendance Reports/FSR's- Trevon Simon @ trevon.simon@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6542 Fiscal Year Close-Out Sonya Beatty @ sonya.beatty@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6513
January	• Continue site monitoring visits • Electronic Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet submitted to DCDEE by January 15th • Begin completing Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool • NC Pre-K Plan – Certified Other Resources due by January 15th • NC Pre-K Contract Documents due for SFY 2016-17 contracts • Child Find Activities Begin • December FSRs and attendance reports mailed to DCDEE by 10th business day of month or request for advance is due • Local committee meeting (Plan for next program year – See Section 2 of the NC Pre-K Program Requirements for reporting program progress)		
February	• Electronic Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool submitted to DCDEE by February 15th • Fiscal year close-out Instructions sent from DCDEE • NC Pre-K Contract Budget Templates due • January FSRs and attendance reports mailed to DCDEE by 10th business day of month or request for advance is due		

March	• DCDEE fiscal and programmatic monitoring on-site visits begins • February FSRs and attendance reports mailed to DCDEE by 10th business day of month or request for advance is due • Local committee meeting (review site/contractor monitoring results, adjust program policies, set up site selection as needed and as aligned with multi-year contracts)	Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool NC Pre-K Kids NC Pre-K Plan	NC Pre-K Program Requirements; Contractor Monitoring- NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant Click here for Regional Map NC Pre-K APP and Kids- Jeanne Barnes @ jeanne.barnes@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6601 NC Pre-K Plan/Budgets/Contracts- Melva Henry @ melva.henry@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6561 Fiscal Monitoring- Ed Skeens @ ed.skeens@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527- 6520 Attendance Reports/FSR's- Trevon Simon @ trevon.simon@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6542
April	• DCDEE fiscal and programmatic monitoring on-site visits continue • March FSRs and attendance reports mailed to DCDEE by 10th business day of month or request for advance is due		
May	• Formal close-out letters for monitoring results will be mailed from DCDEE by May 31st • NC Pre-K 2018-19 Contracts ready for contractor's signatures • April FSRs and attendance reports mailed to DCDEE by 10th of month or request for advance due • NC Pre-K Plan: ✓ Other Estimated Resources due by May 15th (online) ✓ Section I Committee Member signatures due to DCDEE by May 31st (including May Committee meeting minutes) • Local committee meeting: ✓ Obtain Committee member signatures for Section I and Conflict of Interest statements ✓ Approve next SFY's contract/ budget ✓ Specify contracting agency as administrator of the NC Pre-K Program for the 2018-19 school year		

June	• May and June FSRs and attendance reports due per DCDEE close-out procedures for May and June expenditures (reimbursement requests received after this date will not be guaranteed)	NC Pre-K Kids NC Pre-K Plan	Attendance Reports/FSR's- Trevon Simon @ trevon.simon@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6542 NC Pre-K Plan/Budgets/Contracts- Melva Henry @ melva.henry@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6561 Fiscal Year Close-Out Sonya Beatty @ sonya.beatty@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-527-6513

September-May

DCDEE Child Care Consultants conduct compliance visits to NC Pre-K Programs and classrooms using the NC Child Care Rules, including Rule .3000. DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants monitor local NC Pre-K Program contracting agencies and committees using the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance Manual. These visits may occur at any time during the program year.

Glossary of Terms

Allocation – State NC Pre-K Program funds that are allocated by DCDEE to NC Pre-K contract agencies for direct services, administration or start-up (when available). See *NC Pre-K Fiscal and Contract Manual* for more information.

At-risk – A term applied to students who have not been adequately served by social service or educational systems and who are at risk of educational failure due to lack of services, negative life events or physical or mental challenges, among others.

Birth-through-kindergarten License (BK) – Birth-Kindergarten programs are designed to prepare educators to work with children, birth through age five, with and without disabilities.

Birth-through-kindergarten Teaching Standards (Competencies) – Standards and indicators for teacher education programs. The BK Standards are a subset of Standard III of the NC Professional Teaching Standards (teachers know the content they teach) and Standard IV (teachers facilitate learning for their students).
http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/pdf_forms/NCPre-K_NC_BK_Speciality_Standards.pdf

Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC) – Health professionals with practical knowledge and skills related to child health, child development and health/safety in child care settings.
http - //www.healthychildcarenc.org/consultant_list.htm

Continuing License (formerly SP II) – The Continuing license, which is valid for five years, allows the teacher to serve on an on-going basis. A Continuing license must be renewed every five years.

Contract – A mutually binding legal relationship between the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS), Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) and the responsible county entity (Contractor) selected to administer the NC Pre-K Program by the County/Region NC Pre-K Committee (Committee) to provide NC Pre-K classroom services to eligible children and receive payment based on the NC Pre-K children's attendance and the approved payment rate for the classroom. NC Pre-K contracts with DCDEE are Financial Assistance contracts.

Contract Administrator - The person, designated by the County/Region NC Pre-K Committee, to oversee the NC Pre-K contract.

Contracting Agency (Contractor) – The responsible county/regional agency entering into a purchase of service contract with the NC DHHS NC Pre-K Program to deliver a service for the NC Pre-K Program. The term includes public and non-profit organizations such as, but not limited to, local partnerships and public school systems.

County/Region NC Pre-K Committee – A Committee of local early education professionals and representatives whose focus is to provide high quality pre-kindergarten education services for eligible at-risk children age who are four years old by August 31st of the program year. The Committee must be chaired and convened by a school superintendent in a county/region or designee and the board chair for the local Smart Start Partnership for Children or designee. The Committee determines the NC Pre-K Contracting Agency, approves the County/Region Plan and advises the Contractor during the contract period. The Committee also has the responsibility to select the non-conflicted sub-committee members for the standardized site selection process.

Curriculum – A plan of instruction that details what students are to know, how they are to learn it, what the teacher's role is and the context that learning/teaching will take place in the classroom.

Developmental Screening – A brief developmental assessment procedure designed to identify children who should receive more intensive diagnostic assessment. Developmental screening identifies children in need of further developmental evaluation, enabling early intervention.

Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) – Also referred to as the "Division". It is a state agency of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services that oversees the early care and education system that serves approximately 250,000 children in more than 7,000 licensed early education/child care facilities in North Carolina.

Direct Services Funds – Direct services funds are NC Pre-K funds paid to the local Contracting Agency for the NC Pre-K services rendered to eligible children under the contract. Direct services funds that are received by the Contractor must be passed to the local early childhood provider for payment of direct services for eligible children unless the Contractor is a provider of the direct services. These funds are a fixed payment rate per child per month of service delivered. Providers may choose to use this funding for items pertaining to NC Pre-K services such as salary/benefits for teaching staff, equipment, supplies, curriculum and related materials, developmental screening tools/assessment efforts, staff to conduct developmental screenings and staff training. Since the NC Pre-K Program funds do not cover the full cost of operating a quality Pre-k program, the funds are generally used to offset a portion of the cost to administer the NC Pre-K Program. The calculation is based on the number of children attending times the monthly classroom rate of payment.

Eligible Child – A child who meets the established criteria to participate in the NC Pre-K Program as defined in the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document.

Equipment – Tangible, nonexpendable, personal property having a useful life of at least two years and acquisition cost of $500 or more per unit.

Early Educator Support, Licensure and Professional Development (EESLPD) Unit – The EESLPD Unit is the statewide education agency that facilitates the NC Birth-through-kindergarten (BK) Licensure process for Early Childhood lead teachers in nonpublic schools (NC Pre-K and Developmental Day classrooms) to attain and maintain a NC BK Initial or Continuing license.

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (**ECERS-R) –** A classroom assessment tool designed to assess group programs for preschool-kindergarten aged children from 2 through 5 years of age.

Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) State Coordinators – State plans must include procedures that ensure children experiencing homelessness have access to public preschool programs the same as is provided to other children. State coordinators must gather comprehensive state information and remove policy barriers to enrollment, retention and school success in Early Childhood Education. State coordinators serve on the State Intervention Coordinating Council (under IDEA, Part C).

Expulsion – An action taken by a program removing a child from his/her regular class for disciplinary purposes for the remainder of the school year. This practice would only be used as a last resort for a NC Pre-K child and only after consulting with the DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Unit about alternative resources and supports to maintain the child's placement.

Family Engagement Plan – A written plan specifying the process by which early childhood education programs encourage family participation, decision making and collaboration related to their children's education each program year.

Formative Assessments – A process used by instructional staff to gather information, etc., as well as to inform instruction, communicate with families and inform professional development. Classroom staff are required to conduct ongoing, regular formative (or instructional) assessments to gather information about each child's growth and skill development.

Individual Education Program (IEP) – The legal document that defines a child's special education program. An IEP includes the disability under which the child qualifies for Special Education Services, the services the team has determined the school will provide, his/her yearly goals/objectives and any accommodations that must be made to assist his/her learning.

Initial License (formerly SP I) – The Initial license, which is valid for three years, allows the teacher to begin practicing the profession on an independent basis in North Carolina. Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, to be issued an initial license, an individual must complete an approved teacher education program or qualify for an initial lateral entry license. All Standard Professional I licenses shall be deemed to be Initial licenses effective July 1, 2016.

Lateral Entry BK License – Issued to a teacher with a BA/BS degree in birth-through-kindergarten, child development, child and family development, early childhood education or a related field (child and family studies, human development and family studies, human growth and development, human growth and family studies and psychology). The teacher must have at least an overall 2.5 GPA. Upon completion of BK requirements, teacher is recommended for an initial BK license. This licensure type will no longer be an option for educators after 2018-19. See Residency Licensure.

Legal custodian – The caregiver of a child appointed by the court to fulfill the obligations that would normally be handled by the parents (could be long or short-term).

Legal guardian – A court-ordered relationship where an adult is appointed by the court to care for a minor child ("ward") and to make decisions about the child's education, support and maintenance. Legal Guardianship is awarded when both biological parents are deceased, or their parental rights have been terminated by the court.

Limited English Proficiency Plan – A written plan specifying strategies for working with children and families with limited English proficiency. The written plan should include resources in the community to support children and families with limited English proficiency and to support the children and families in the NC Pre-K classrooms to be engaged and informed throughout each program year.

Local Liaisons – Local liaisons play a critical role in the implementation of the Mckinney-Vento Act. Local liaison responsibilities include identifying homeless children and youth and ensuring that homeless students can enroll immediately and participate fully in school.

NC Child Care Rules – Chapter 110 of the North Carolina General Statutes governs Child Care Facilities. The legislative intent and purpose of these General Statues is to recognize the importance of the early years of life to a child's development with respect to the early care and education of children.

NC Early Childhood Administrator Credential (NCECAC) or its equivalent – Administrators must meet requirements in two component areas to earn qualification as a Level I, II or III Administrator. These components are outlined on the *DCDEE Child Care Administrator Education and Equivalency form*. Early Education/Child care Administrators of star-rated programs must submit this form to the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education to be evaluated for qualification as a Level I, II or III Administrator. Site Administrators/Directors of programs with a NC Pre-K classroom(s) must hold a Level III Administrator qualification.

North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development (NCFELD) – A resource to be used by parents/families, teachers, caregivers, early interventionists, home visitors and other professionals who support and promote children's development and learning.

NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) – Charged with implementing the state's public school laws and the State Board of Education's policies and procedures governing pre-kindergarten through 12th grade public education.

NC Department of Public Instruction, Licensure Division – North Carolina Department of Public Instruction/Licensure Division is authorized by the North Carolina State Board of Education to carry out the policy established for educator licensure in North Carolina. *http://stateboard.ncpublicschools.gov/*

NC Department of Public Instruction's Online Licensure System – A one-stop shop for educators, licensees and the general public that enables the North Carolina public to verify an Educator's License. Educators and applicants can submit license applications, renew a license and change their addresses, among other services. Click *here* to access the system. NC Pre-K lead teachers are required to use this system for all educator licensure actions.

NC Rated License Assessment Project (NCRLAP) – Established in 1999 to better define the quality of child care in the state and to assist parents in choosing child care. NCRLAP is responsible for setting up the policies and procedures for the implementation of all rating scale assessments for licensed child care providers, as well as responsibility for the oversight of the hiring and training of rating scale assessors.

Not-for-profit Agency – Any corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization that (a) is operated primarily for educational, service, charitable or similar purposes in the public interest; (b) is not organized primarily for profit; and (c) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve or expand its operations.

Preschool or Pre-K/K Add-On License – The Preschool Add-On license is available to individuals who currently hold a clear license in Elementary Education, Special Education or Family and Consumer Education/Child and Family Development. The Preschool Add-On license qualifies individuals to be employed in Pre-Kindergarten classrooms.

Professional Development Plan – A formal document aligned with the NC Professional Teaching Standards that is developed by the BK licensed teacher in collaboration with the assigned mentor/evaluator and Site Administrator. This document is informed by the teacher's ongoing self-assessment coupled with the assigned mentor/evaluator's formative assessment of classroom practices.

Provisional BK or Preschool Add-On License – Issued to a teacher with another North Carolina teaching license or another state's teaching license. Teacher is required to complete a minimum of 6 semester hours annually based on the teacher's individual Plan of Study towards either a BK or Preschool Add-On license. All coursework required by the Plan of Study must be completed within five years of the issuance of the Provisional license.

Residency Licensure – A one-year license, renewable twice, that meets both of the following requirements:

a. Is requested by the local board of education and accompanied by a certification of supervision from the recognized educator preparation program in which the individual is enrolled.

b. The individual for whom the license is requested meets all the following requirements:

   1. Holds a bachelor's degree.
   2. Has either completed coursework relevant to the requested licensure area or passed the content area examination relevant to the requested licensure area that has been approved by the State Board.
   3. Is enrolled in a recognized educator preparation program.
   4. Meets all other requirements established by the State Board, including completing preservice requirements prior to teaching.

Site – Designation for a licensed child care program that houses one or more NC Pre-K classrooms.

Site Selection – A county/regional process for awarding NC Pre-K slots and student selection by a local NC Pre-K Contractor. *Click here* for more information.

State Median Income (SMI) – Median household income in a given year is the income for a household that is at the midpoint of all household incomes reported in the state. It is not an average. Instead, it represents the middle income or the point at which half of all households earn more, and half of all households earn less. For NC Pre-K eligibility, the family income must be at or below 75% of the current state median income level.

Suspension (In Program) – Instances in which a child is temporarily removed from his/her regular classroom for disciplinary purposes but remains under the direct supervision of NC Pre-K personnel. Direct supervision means that NC Pre-K, or other related personnel are physically in the same location as children under their supervision.

Suspension (Out of Program) – Instances in which a NC Pre-K child is temporarily removed from his/her regular school for disciplinary purposes to another setting (e.g., home). This includes part-day or full-day instances. Local NC Pre-K Contractors are required to work with the DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Unit to help support children in the NC Pre-K classroom or find acceptable alternative community resources to address the child's needs.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families/Maintenance of Effort (TANF/MOE) – The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant funds services and assistance to income-eligible families who have a child living in the home. The TANF block grant, administered by the State Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), has an annual cost sharing requirement referred to as the Maintenance of Effort requirement (MOE). Every federal fiscal year, each state must spend a certain amount of its own money to help eligible families in ways that are consistent with the purpose of the TANF program. The NC Pre-K Program, designed to provide high-quality pre-kindergarten experiences that may allow parents to work, may count as MOE.

Transition Plan – A written plan specifying how NC Pre-K children will transition into the NC Pre-K classroom and then into kindergarten each program year.

Transportation Plan – A written plan specifying how the transportation needs will be met for participating NC Pre-K children each program year.

Unique Needs – Children who demonstrate significant delays in their emotional or social development, sensory function or behavior.

Workforce Online Reporting and Knowledge System (WORKS) – The Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) WORKS system functions as a single portal of entry for the North Carolina child care workforce. This system will collect, report and track child care workforce education and professional development information needed to support education requirements, as required by North Carolina Child Care Rules.

Lead Teachers who hold or are eligible to hold a NC Birth-through-Kindergarten license as a condition of employment, e.g., at NC Pre-K or Developmental Day programs, are required to work with two different state agencies to maintain educator licensure; 1) the Division of Child Development and Early Education (EESLPD and WORKS) and 2) the NC Department of Public Instruction's (NCDPI) Licensure Division (Online Licensure System and NC Educator Effectiveness System or NCEES). These affiliations will ensure that the teacher's education, BK licensure, professional development and other requirements are met and maintained.

Yay Babies – NC statewide focus group that began by bringing together state agencies, CCR&R, professional organizations, advocates for children, the homeless, and other stakeholders to raise awareness about priorities for serving homeless families.