3-K for All & Pre-K for All Policy Handbook for New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs)
Introduction

Since the Pre-K for All expansion launched in 2014, New York City has tripled the number of children in free, full-day, high-quality pre-K. Approximately 70,000 four-year-olds are enrolled. Through your efforts, enrollment is high across every community, with strong participation among low-income families. Building on the success of Pre-K for All, the City has launched 3-K for All — free, full-day, high-quality early education for every three-year-old. By 2020, 3-K for All will expand to a total of 12 school districts. The 3-K for All initiative is part of a broader effort to strengthen a continuum of early care and education programs for New York City children.

The 3-K for All & Pre-K for All Policy Handbook for New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) will assist your program by (1) clearly articulating pertinent policies, and (2) highlighting operational guidance and promising practices on a variety of topics to support leaders, teachers, and staff in operating high-quality 3-K and pre-K classrooms. By providing programs with a structured resource for accessing key policy requirements of the State, City, as well as the 3-K for All and Pre-K for All program, we hope that this guide will serve as an important resource for your program. The updated handbook is comprehensive and includes 36 chapters across a myriad of topics.

Please note that the 3-K for All & Pre-K for All Policy Handbook for NYCEECs is inclusive of all content and replaces the Pre-K for All Policy Handbook, Version II and 3-K for All Addendum. The general guidance provided throughout this Policy Handbook is applicable to both 3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs. The term “program” is used to refer to 3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs. In instances where additional guidance may be provided for 3-K for All programs, a section will appear at the end of the chapter entitled, “Additional Guidance for 3-K for All.”

This resource comes as part of the larger initiative to support programs in delivering high-quality early childhood education. This initiative includes the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards, which define the New York City Department of Education’s vision for high-quality early childhood education in NYC. While similarly establishing a set of expectations for 3-K and pre-K programs to advance program quality and positive outcomes for students, the Program Quality Standards differ from the Policy Handbook. The Policy Handbook outlines legal, contractual, and policy requirements that you must satisfy whereas the Program Quality Standards describe the high-quality practices every 3-K and pre-K program should advance. Programs are expected to work toward fully implementing all content of the Policy Handbook and the Program Quality Standards.

Finally, please note that the Policy Handbook only applies to 3-K for All and Pre-K for All classrooms in New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs). The Handbook was not developed for Charter Schools; however, it can be utilized as a guidance tool in navigating policies on instructional programming. In general, New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) and Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) policies for 3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs are aligned; the Handbook includes notations in cases where the policies differ for NYCDOE and ACS-contracted providers.

We want to thank you for your partnership. Delivering free, full-day, high-quality early childhood education to children across the City would not have been possible without our ongoing collaboration.

We value your input and feedback and want this to be an effective resource for your program. If you have any questions or feedback, please either contact your Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) Field Office or send an email to EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov.
How to Use:

- Each chapter in the 3-K for All and Pre-K for All Policy Handbook is structured in the following way:

  * Introductory Statement
  * Policy Overview
  * Policy Details
  * Call Out Box
  * Additional Guidance for 3-K for All
  * Frequently Asked Questions

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**Enrollment**

New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) are required to actively participate in the Pre-K for All admissions process and welcome families who have received offers.

3-K for All classrooms should refer to the Additional Guidance for 3-K for All enrollment portion of this chapter.

**What You Need to Know**

**Overview**

New York City offers every four-year-old child a free, full-day, high-quality pre-K seat through the Pre-K for All programs. All families with children born in 2015 are eligible to begin pre-K in September 2019. This includes students with disabilities and students whose home language is a language other than English. Families may apply to full-day programs at District Schools, New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs), and Pre-K Centers using the same application via the pre-K admissions process operated centrally by the Office of Student Enrollment (OSE).

You are required to follow all processes outlined by OSE. Staff should be familiar with all aspects of the application, admissions, and enrollment process and assist families as necessary.

3-K for All classrooms should refer to the Additional Guidance for 3-K for All enrollment portion of this chapter.

Half-day pre-K classrooms do not participate in the Pre-K admissions process operated centrally by OSE. Progress in half-day classrooms is manages for complying with all half-day enrollment policies outlined by OSE.

For more information on half-day enrollment policy, please contact OSE at OSEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov.

**Outreach**

There is no designated outreach period. To develop interest and maintain enrollment in your program, you are responsible for recruiting families and informing them of the services offered at your site. You should continuously communicate with families in your community about the benefits and features of your program.

You are responsible for:

- Collaborating with the Outreach Team, the NYCDOE Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE), and OSE as necessary throughout the outreach period.

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**Enrollment Resources for Families**

- **Pre-K Finder:** Families can use the Pre-K Finder tool to sort the most up-to-date information on pre-K programs.
- **Pre-K Directory:** Families can use the Pre-K Directory for detailed information on all Pre-K programs. The Pre-K Directory is available online and in print in English and nine other languages. The Directory is posted online and hard copies are available at Family Welcome Centers, schools, and libraries.

**Pre-K Quality Snapshot:** The Pre-K Quality Snapshot is a tool that provides families with information about program quality. By providing a concise overview of different elements of each Pre-K program’s quality, families now have more information about pre-K programs in an even more accessible format to help them make informed decisions for their children.

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**Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Enrollment**

3-K for All programs must participate in the centralized admissions process and welcome families who have received offers.

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**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. Is the 3-K for All and Pre-K for All application available in multiple languages?

Yes, the online application is available in ten languages: English, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu. Interpretation services are available in 200+ languages when families apply over the phone or in person at a Family Welcome Center.
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I. Health and Safety

a. Licenses, Certifications, and Permits

b. Safety and Security: Plans and Procedures

c. Staff Health Requirements

d. Student Health

e. Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting

f. Toileting
Licenses, Certification, and Permits

Programs must comply with the licensing and permitting requirements of their licensing agency, the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB), and the Fire Department of New York (FDNY).

⚠️ What You Need to Know

**Licenses and Permits**

Your program is required to have the appropriate operating permit/license from your site’s licensing agency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider Type</th>
<th>Licensing Agency/Permit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Centers (Article 47 Providers)</td>
<td>NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 47 Child Care Services Permit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Family Day Care (GFDCs)</td>
<td>NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Group Family Day Care License</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Based Providers (Article 43 Providers)</td>
<td>NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 43 School-Based Filing Certificate for Children Ages 3 through 5</td>
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**Department of Building Certificates (Article 47 only)**

Your program must receive one of the following from the NYC Department of Buildings certifying that your program may be used as a Child Care Center:

- A Certificate of Occupancy; or
- A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy; or
- A Letter of No Objection.

If your program has a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy, you must ensure that you update your certificate before the expiration date (normally within 90 days).

If for any reason your Certificate of Occupancy, Temporary Certificate of Occupancy, or Letter of No Objection is cancelled, revoked, or expires, the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) may immediately suspend your program’s services.

**Procedures to follow if Your License or Permit Is Suspended or Revoked**

Under no circumstances may students attend a program that does not have all required licenses or permits. If your licensing agency suspends or revokes your license or permit, your program’s services are also suspended or revoked.

In the event your applicable DOHMH, OCFS, or DOB license or permit is suspended, deemed void, or revoked, including loss of facility for any reason, you must immediately:

1. Inform your DECE Field Office within one day
2. Remedy any violations
3. Obtain a new license or permit at the current site within one day.

4. In the event of an unforeseen emergency, your program must inform the DECE Field Office within one day. The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) may approve a temporary move to a licensable facility but is not required to do so.

If you wish to move from the facility or room stated in your contract, you must receive prior approval from your licensing agency and the DECE. If you are granted permission to move facilities or rooms, you must notify all participating families in writing at least 60 calendar days in advance. The DECE will determine if the new location meets the standards of the program (i.e., demand, health and safety, etc.).

**FDNY Inspections**

You will receive an annual FDNY inspection from your local fire department. Your annual FDNY inspection results will be sent directly to the DOHMH. If an inspection reveals a violation, a copy of the report will be provided to you by FDNY to correct the violation within the required period of time. A copy of the report must be sent *immediately* to your designated DECE Field Office.

**Reporting of Violations**

**Fire and Building Code Violations**

You must disclose all fire and building code violations issued with respect to space used by your program (e.g., *Pre-K for All* classrooms or 3-K classrooms) to your designated DECE Field Office and your licensing agency immediately. This includes all common areas of facilities used by students in your program (e.g., cafeterias).

You must *immediately* start to correct any building and fire code violations and complete corrections within the time stipulated in the building and fire code.

**Licensing Agency Violations**

Article 47 and Article 43 programs must report any safety violation designated as a “public health hazard,” and GFDCs must report any safety violation designated as an “imminent danger” to their designated DECE Field Office immediately after receiving notice of the violation.

You must *immediately* start to correct any violations and complete corrections within the required timeframe set by DOHMH or the New York State OCFS. If a safety violation designated as a “public health hazard” is not corrected immediately, the program may not be allowed to continue providing services under the provisions of the program's contract.

**Insurance**

You must obtain and maintain all required insurance, as stated in your *3-K for All* and/or *Pre-K for All* contract and/or EarlyLearn NYC contract.

Please contact your designated DECE Field Office or ACS Operations Manager if you have any questions regarding insurance requirements.
Posting DOHMH Performance Summary Cards (Article 47 only)

As of February 1, 2018, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene now issues and requires all group child care programs to publicly post a performance summary card. Your program’s card was sent to you in the mail. The goal of these cards is to help programs understand and improve their performance on the Health Department’s health and safety inspections, and to provide families with an understanding of programs’ health and safety compliance.

The performance summary card displays important information about your program, including the number of years in operation at its present location. Starting in 2019, the performance summary card will contain additional information about your program’s performance over a 12-month period, including a comparison of your program’s inspection results with citywide inspection results.

You must post the card. If you fail to post or post incorrectly, the Health Department will issue a summons. If you have had any suspensions in the past three years, the Health Department will mail you a separate suspension summary card that you must post with the performance summary card.

Please carefully review the information provided by the Department of Health:

- The card and letter you received in the mail
- An FAQ document posted on the Department of Health’s website, nyc.gov/health/childcare

For more information about performance summary cards or complying with the New York City Health Code’s group child care program requirements, visit nyc.gov/health/childcare, or call 311.

If families have questions about your performance summary card, you can:

- Explain that the Department of Health routinely inspects all child care centers, and is now displaying the results of those inspections on performance summary cards.
- Address any specific concerns and discuss any steps you have taken to improve your health and safety performance.
- Offer families additional resources for exploring program quality, including the Pre-K Quality Snapshot contained in the Pre-K Finder.
Safety and Security: Plans and Procedures

Programs must ensure a safe learning environment for both students and staff by having comprehensive safety and security policies, procedures, and staff trainings.

Please review the Emergency Preparedness section for specific procedures for handling health emergencies at your program.

What You Need to Know

Safety Plans

Safety plans establish policies and procedures for the safe operation of your program. You are responsible for developing your safety plan, tailored to the needs and context of your program, in accordance with New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) policy and the requirements of your licensing agency (e.g., Department of Health and Mental Hygiene).

Safety plans must be submitted to your designated Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) Field Office for review and approval. Once approved, plans must be updated annually and kept in an accessible location at your facility where they may be used by staff for reference and be available for inspection.

NYCDOE Early Childhood Safety Plan

You must complete a NYCDOE Early Childhood Safety Plan utilizing the [NYCDOE Template](#). You must provide the information requested within each section of the safety plan. Topics include, but are not limited to:

- The establishment of an emergency chain of command
- The development of daily security procedures
- The screening of visitors to the building
- Emergency equipment
- Emergency preparedness drills
- Shelter-in plans
- Evacuation plans
- CPR training

Each section of the NYCDOE Early Childhood Safety Plan provides you with guidelines and directions necessary to complete the plan. Please familiarize yourself with the document before entering the required information.

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1 If your site only includes classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC, you do not need to develop an NYCDOE Early Childhood Safety Plan. EarlyLearn NYC – Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide services.
Child Care (Article 47)\(^2\) and School-Based (Article 43)\(^3\) Providers

In addition to completing an NYCDOE Early Childhood Safety Plan, you must develop a written safety plan that meets the requirements of Article 47.11 of the NYC Health Code. The plan must account for the individual needs of the students enrolled in your program.\(^4\)

At a minimum, the safety plan must include a table of contents and cover the following topics:

- Staffing, including organizational chart, child supervision policy, staff-to-student ratios, and staff schedules
- Maintenance, inspections, and safety
- Fire safety
- Health Care Plan, including process for a daily health check and procedures for first aid, emergency response and medication storage and administration (e.g., epinephrine auto-injectors)
- Child abuse prevention, identification and reporting procedures
- Supervision (nap, bathroom, meal time, transportation)
- Food safety
- Plan to respond to DOHMH Corrective Action Plan (if applicable)
- Employee orientation and ongoing staff training plan
- Age-specific emergency evacuation plans
- Family orientation guide
- Facility accountability procedures, including missing child procedures
  - Including how you will ensure students are only picked up by their parent/legal guardian or persons that the parent/legal guardian has designated in writing.
- Infant sleep safety (required only for providers with an infant/toddler license)

Please see “Safety Plan Requirements – Article 47.11 of the NYC Health Code” at the end of this chapter for a detailed list of the safety plan requirements included in Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

Group Family Day Care Providers\(^5\)

In addition to completing an NYCDOE Early Childhood Safety Plan, you must:

- Develop a written Emergency Plan using the template provided by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). The Emergency Plan must include the following information:
  - How students and adults will be made aware of an emergency.
  - A designation of primary and secondary evacuation routes.
— Methods of evacuation, including where students and adults will meet after evacuating the program/home and how attendance will be taken.

— A plan for the safe evacuation of students from the premises for each shift of care provided (day, evening, night).

— The designation of primary and secondary emergency relocation sites to be used in the case of an emergency, which prohibit re-entry into the premises, and how the health, safety, and emotional needs of students will be met in the event it becomes necessary to evacuate to another location.

— A plan for shelter-in, including how the health, safety, and emotional needs of students will be met in the event it becomes necessary to shelter in place.\(^4\)

— A plan for the notification of students’ parents/legal guardians in the case of an emergency.

• Develop an Emergency Evacuation Diagram using the template provided by OCFS.

— The Emergency Evacuation Diagram must be posted in a visible location.

Safety Plan – Communication and Training

Once you complete your safety plan(s), it is important that your pre-K staff become familiar with the safety plan(s) and are trained appropriately.

• All staff must be informed of and trained on the safety plan(s) as part of your orientation for new staff, at the beginning of each school year or as new staff are hired.

• Current staff must be trained annually on the safety plan(s).

• All staff must be informed any time changes are made to the safety plan(s).

• Prior to the start of the school year, families must be provided with a summary of the safety plan(s), including procedures for emergency evacuation and communications (e.g., emergency evacuation locations and emergency contact plans).

• The safety plan(s) must be provided to families upon request.

For more information, please see “Safety Plan Requirements – Article 47.11 of the NYC Health Code” at the end of this chapter.

Monitoring and Securing your Program

It is your responsibility to ensure that your facility is secure and that unauthorized adults are not allowed entry. This will foster a safe learning environment for students and staff.

• You are required to secure all entrances to your facility to prevent unauthorized visitors from gaining unconstrained access to students and staff.

— Panic bars must be installed on all exterior doors to prevent students from exiting while also allowing emergency access (Article 47 providers only).

\(^4\) Shelter-in-place procedures involve selecting a small, interior room, with no or few windows, and taking refuge there. This is a precaution aimed to keep students and staff safe while remaining indoors due to a dangerous situation outside.
• You must develop policies and procedures for verifying allowed entry and tracking the arrival and dismissal of all visitors (e.g., maintenance personnel and volunteers) other than parents/legal guardians and/or authorized escorts. In order to ensure a safe check-in/check-out system, you must do the following:

  — Designate one or more staff to supervise this process.
  — Maintain a record of arrival and departure times of all guests.
  — Secure all entrances to your facility with pass key identification or another system.
  — Develop policies and procedures on how to handle an unauthorized adult who attempts to enter your facility.
  — Address how to handle an unauthorized adult who refuses to leave the facility and tries to enter a classroom. In these situations, you should always contact the NYPD by calling 911 and providing your program name and address.

• Adults allowed in your facility are limited to:

  — Staff
  — Parents and/or legal guardians
  — Authorized escorts (e.g., family friend, babysitter, or relative)’
  — Special Education Itinerant Teachers (SEITs) and related service clinicians providing services pursuant to a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP)
  — Visiting instructors (e.g., music teachers, art teachers, and community members)
  — Student teacher trainees or observers
  — Credentialed NYCDOE and other public inspectors (e.g., coaches, support personnel, DOHMH staff, etc.)
  — Persons providing services to the center (e.g., maintenance personnel, delivery personnel, etc.)
  — Other individuals as appropriately determined by the program director

It is strongly recommended that when scheduling services involving outside personnel (e.g., maintenance and delivery services), you schedule visits outside of school hours. If this is not an option, outside personnel must always be under direct supervision and within the line of sight of a cleared employee.

Please see the Security Clearances chapter for additional information.

Arrival and Dismissal

Your Pre-K for All program must develop arrival and dismissal protocols that ensure the safety of pre-K students. Arrival and dismissal serve as important opportunities for staff to interact and engage with families outside of regularly scheduled family engagement activities.

It is beneficial to allow families to drop off and pick up their child in the classroom. You should determine if this is possible at your site and, if so, develop the appropriate policies and procedures.

’Parents or guardians must submit documentation informing the program that an escort is authorized in order for escorts to be allowed on-site.
Missing language: During arrival and dismissal, your program staff must:

- Maintain line of sight of pre-K students at all times (unless they are within line of sight of their parent/legal guardian).

- Ensure that pre-K students are only released to a parent/legal guardian or authorized escort.
  
  — You must maintain a list of authorized escorts for each student enrolled. The following information must be maintained for each authorized escort: name, relationship to the student, address, and contact information. You are required to track authorized escorts by utilizing the Emergency Contact Card (Blue Card).

A Daily Attendance Record Form must be filled out to include at minimum each student’s name and arrival/departure time. (This is required for Article 47 providers and recommended for Article 43 and Group Family Day Care providers.) It is strongly recommended that programs require the signature of the parent/guardian or authorized escort on the form.

**Emergency Preparedness**

To ensure your pre-K program is prepared to handle emergency situations, it is important that you develop age-appropriate plans and drills. You may wish to consult with your local police precinct and/or local fire department for assistance when developing emergency preparedness plans.

**Shelter-In Plans**

Shelter-in emergency procedures take effect if a dangerous incident occurs outside of your facility (e.g., severe storms, release of hazardous materials). During a shelter-in, students and staff remain inside the building.

- You are required to develop a shelter-in plan that ensures no one (other than emergency personnel) is able to enter or exit your facility should a situation arise where this may be required.

- It is strongly encouraged that you conduct shelter-in drills during the school year. If you choose to do so, the drill must be age-appropriate and take into consideration the emotional response of students.

**Lockdown Plans**

Lockdown emergency procedures take effect when there is a dangerous incident inside of your facility (e.g., intruder, bomb threat, missing child, etc.).

- You are required to develop a lockdown plan to ensure staff and students are aware of safe places to go inside classrooms or in common spaces should a situation arise where this may be required.

- There are two types of lockdown procedures:
  
  — Soft lockdown (i.e., implies there is no imminent danger)
  
  — Hard lockdown (i.e., implies that imminent danger is known and no one will engage in any building sweep activity, except first responders)

- You are required to conduct lockdown drills at least twice per year. The drills must be age-appropriate and take into consideration the emotional response of students.
**Emergency Evacuation and Fire Plans**

- You are required to develop and maintain on-site evacuation procedures to ensure that staff and students are aware of their roles during an evacuation, relocation sites, and the routes they should take in the event there is a hazard to students and staff inside or outside of the building.
  
  — Plans and procedures must not be made available to the public or posted online as this may present a risk to overall safety for staff and students.

- Fire drills must be conducted monthly and logged for fire department inspection. The drills must be age-appropriate and take into consideration the emotional response of students.

  — Fire drills should be held at different times of the day over the course of the school year.

- Fire plans must also be submitted for approval to the local fire department station responsible for the area in which your program is located. Submitted plans or updates, as applicable, must be available on site by November 1st of each school year.

- Evacuation procedures should implement recommendations from the local fire department responsible for the area in which you are located.

- Fire plans and evacuation procedures are to be posted in all instructional rooms.

**Health Emergencies**

At the time of enrollment, you must obtain written consent from all students’ parents/legal guardians authorizing your program to obtain and/or provide emergency health care for each student. In the event of a medical emergency, your program must:

- Obtain and/or provide necessary emergency care.

  — In cases where a family has provided an individualized health care plan indicating specific emergency medications (i.e., an epinephrine auto-injector, asthma inhaler and/or nebulizer) to be administered for the student, your program must follow the procedures in the plan.

- Notify the student’s family.

- Arrange for any needed transportation of a student at your program in need of emergency health care.

- Maintain an onsite log of illnesses, accidents, epinephrine auto-injector administrations, and injuries sustained by children in the program, in a form provided or approved by DOHMH.

- Report the medical emergency to the DOHMH and your DECE Field Office within 24 hours.

*For more information on serving students with severe allergies, refer to the Meal Services chapter of the Handbook. For more information on medication administration, refer to the Student Health chapter of the Handbook.*

**Emergency Communications**

You must call 911 in any emergency situation where a child is in immediate danger.

- You are required to call 911 immediately after the administration of epinephrine to a student in your program.

- You are required to call 911 immediately if a staff member has administered an asthma inhaler or nebulizer to a student and the student’s breathing does not return to normal functioning.

You must establish and maintain a system for communicating with families during an emergency. You must:

- Maintain a current Emergency Contact Card (Blue Card) for each student as of the first day of enrollment.
• Inform families how you will be communicating with them and/or emergency contacts in the case of an emergency.

• Immediately contact the family or designated emergency contact person in the event of an emergency involving a student.

You must report any serious student injuries or illnesses that occur in your program to DOHMH and your DECE Field Office within 24 hours. You must follow this protocol after any 911 call made from your program.

• Use forms provided by DOHMH to record and report required information to DOHMH.

• Use a DECE Occurrence Report to record and report required information to your DECE Field Office.

Developmentally Appropriate Evacuation, Shelter-in, and Lockdown Training and Drills

The best time to plan for an emergency response is before it occurs. This is particularly important for pre-K students. When students understand what is expected of them, responding to an emergency becomes second nature and automatic. Preparedness reduces stress and can result in a quicker, more coordinated emergency response. Below are strategies for preparing pre-K students for emergencies.

• Prepare students for drills ahead of time so they know what to expect during a safety drill.
  — Practice the safety drill with a classroom bell and have a discussion with the students to prepare them for the “very loud bell.”
  — When practicing for a safety drill, break the safety drill down into small steps and explain each step one at a time. Once they have mastered a step, add the next step.

• Integrate discussions, activities, and lessons before and after safety drills to help students understand safety protocols. Some examples include:
  — Have ongoing conversations with students about what it means to be safe. Use examples from their own experiences (e.g., “I wear a seat belt when I ride in a car,” “I wait for the signal to cross the street.”).
  — Develop a story narrative that students can understand using picture prompts to teach safety drills.
  — After a drill occurs, allow children the opportunity to talk about the experience and express their feelings through group discussion, drawings, or in center activities.
  — Read emotionally responsive books about being safe.

• Pre-K booklist suggestions:
  - *I Will Keep You Safe and Sound*, by Lori Haskins Houran
  - *Safe, Warm and Snug*, by Stephen Swinburne
  - *Bear Feels Scared*, by Karma Wilson

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *When do I have to update my safety plan?*

All safety plans should be reviewed on an ongoing basis (at least once per year) and must be updated in accordance with changed circumstances, conditions, activities, or as required by the NYCDOE, DOHMH, and/or OCFS. Should updates be made to your safety plan, you must submit updates to the DOHMH and/or OCFS upon renewal of your Child Care or Group Family Day Care license.
Events that would cause you to update your safety plan include, but are not limited to:

- Facility changes
- Changes in student medication requirements
- Health and safety violations
- Hiring of new staff

If your program includes classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC, you must get your safety plan approved and/or passed by the parent committee and the Board.

**Safety Plan Requirements — Article 47.11 of the NYC Health Code**

Written safety plans must establish policies and procedures for operating a safe program, including teaching and other staff duties, facility operation and maintenance, fire safety, general and activity-specific safety, emergency management, staff and child health and medical requirements, staff training, and family orientation. Your written safety plan must be maintained on site, contain, at minimum, a table of contents and the following components:

- Staff organization chart, and job descriptions.
- Schedules and designated staff for facility inspection, cleaning and maintenance, schedule for boiler/furnace and HVAC system maintenance, maintenance of adequate water pressure, protection of the potable water supply from submerged inlets and cross-connections in the plumbing system.
- Schedule for the annual lead paint survey, inspection of window guards, indoor and outdoor equipment inspection and replacement schedule, evaluation of injury prevention procedures, equipment and structures, identification of procedures for transportation vehicle maintenance.
- Food protection procedures, identity of individuals certified in food protection, schedule of sanitation procedures of food preparation areas and identification of approved food sources.
- Evacuation plan of buildings and property, assembly, supervision, and accounting for children and staff.
- Fire prevention and electrical safety policies and coordination with local fire officials.
- Fire alarm and detection systems and their operation maintenance and routine testing.
- Type, locations, and maintenance of fire extinguishers and inspection and maintenance of exits.
- Health care plan.
- Actions to be taken for children’s needs for medication administration, provision of basic pediatric first aid, and handling and reporting medical emergencies and outbreaks.
- Actions to be taken to protect children upon receipt of reports of alleged and confirmed teaching and other staff criminal justice or child abuse histories.
- Storage of epinephrine auto-injectors, including its storage location, which must be readily accessible to trained staff but not students; procedures to check for expiration dates; procedures for use of the epinephrine auto-injectors. The name and title of the staff member responsible for the epinephrine auto-injector’s inspection and maintenance must be included in the plan.
• Description of staff schedules as they relate to supervising children, including arrangements for general supervision, supervision during and between on-site activities, recreational and trip supervision for specific outdoor and off-site activities, supervision during sleeping and rest hours, transportation, and in emergencies.

• Maintenance of a medical log to be kept onsite and made available upon request, of illnesses, accidents, epinephrine auto-injector administrations, and injuries sustained by children in the program, in a form provided or approved by the Department of Health.

• Employee orientation procedures, which must include procedures for: ensuring that children are supervised at all times, developing a behavior management system, recognizing and reporting child abuse, providing first aid and emergency medical assistance, reporting child injury and illness, fire safety and fire drills, child and staff evacuation procedures, activity-specific training for assigned activities, and a process for documenting staff attendance at trainings.

• Age-specific plans for removal of children from the premises for each shift of staff, where the primary emphasis must be placed on the immediate evacuation of children in premises that are not fireproof.

• Emergency evacuation procedures must be posted in conspicuous places throughout the facility. The emergency evacuation plan shall include the following:
  — How children and staff will be made aware of the emergency.
  — Primary and secondary routes of egress.
  — Methods of evacuation, including where children and staff will meet after evacuating the building, and how attendance will be taken.
  — Roles of the staff and chain of command.
  — Notification of authorities and the children’s parents/legal guardians.

• Procedures for child supervision and accountability related to daily attendance records for the arrival and departure of children, transportation, securing and monitoring the facility, and off-site activities. For off-site activities, detail the role of the trip coordinator and child accountability system(s).

• Family orientation procedures, which must include: curriculum outline, tour of premises, reporting and management of illnesses, injuries and other incidents, evacuation plan, lost child plan, lightning plan, fire safety and fire drills, evacuation procedures, activity specific training for assigned activities, and trips (if provided).

Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Safety and Security: Plans and Procedures

Programs must ensure a safe learning environment for all 3-K for All students and staff by having comprehensive safety and security policies, procedures, and staff trainings.

Arrival and Dismissal

3-K for All families must be allowed to drop off and pick up their child in the classroom. While this is a strong recommendation for Pre-K for All classrooms, it is a requirement for 3-K for All students due to safety considerations and the positive benefits 3-K for All students receive from the in-person transition.

You must develop a monitoring system that allows families to drop off and pick up their child in the classroom while ensuring that any direct access to other students is under the supervision of a staff member who has been cleared by the State Central Registry (SCR) and the Personnel Eligibility Tracking System (PETS), as applicable.
In developing arrival and dismissal policy and procedures, you should keep in mind that the NYCDOE strongly recommends that your program require families to sign in and out every day. You should also consider:

- Whether families will enter your program via the main entrance or a separate designated entrance.
- The proximity of your 3-K for All classroom(s) to the main entrance or designated entrance.
- Whether families need to be escorted by a cleared (PETS and SCR) staff member to ensure that they do not have unsupervised contact with other students.

**Emergency Preparedness**

You are required to develop evacuation, lockdown, and shelter-in protocols to ensure the safety of Pre-K for All students, 3-K for All students, and staff. In developing these procedures, you must take into consideration the age and developmental level of students in 3-K for All classrooms.

In developing your evacuation plans you should consider how to evacuate 3-K for All students in an expedient manner. Strategies to consider include:

- An adult-to-child ratio of 1:4 during an evacuation
- Locating 3-K for All classrooms near an easily accessible exit
- Locating 3-K for All classrooms on the 1st floor
Staff Health Requirements

*Pre-K for All* staff members must meet the health requirements of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE).

What You Need to Know

Staff Health Overview

Your program is required to:

- Collect all medical documentation from staff certifying that they have met the health requirements, as required by your licensing agency.
- Maintain staff health records in a secure, on-site location.

Staff Health Requirements

**Child Care (Article 47)** and **School-Based (Article 43)** Providers

Prior to beginning employment:

- Each prospective staff member and volunteer with a regular presence in the classroom must present a certificate from a licensed health care provider certifying that:
  - On the basis of medical history and physical examination, the staff member is physically and mentally able to perform his or her assigned duties.
  - The staff member has received immunizations in accordance with the recommendations of the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and requirements of the NYC Health Code](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/recs/schedules/nyc.html). The staff member or volunteer must be immunized against and in compliance with requirements for:
    - Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
    - Varicella (chicken pox)
    - Tetanus and diphtheria (Td) or tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap)

While employed:

- Each staff member and volunteer with a regular presence in the classroom must submit an updated physical/certificate, provided by a licensed health provider, at minimum every 2 years.
- DOHMH may require testing for tuberculosis at any time of any persons in a child care service when such testing is deemed necessary for epidemiological investigation.

If any staff member on-site has a case of measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR), scarlet fever, meningitis (all types), or poliomyelitis, or if the staff member has a case of any other communicable disease referenced in Section 43.11 and 47.11 of the NYC Health Code they may be excluded from work. Such staff shall not be permitted to return to program without a written statement of recovery from a health care provider.

For information on staff immunization exemptions and substitutions please see FAQ #1.

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8 Child Care (Article 47) - Programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

9 Child Care (Article 4e) - Programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.
Group Family Day Care (GFDC) Providers

Prior to the start of the school year, GFDC providers must ensure that all staff, volunteers with a regular presence in the classroom, and household members who regularly associate with students meet the applicable health requirements.

• All staff, volunteers with a regular presence in the home, and household members must complete the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Staff, Volunteer, and Household Member Medical Statement. Such medical statement must be completed prior to employment and must be dated within 12 months preceding the date of the application or the hiring date.
  — Only a licensed health care provider (e.g., physician, physician’s assistant, or nurse practitioner) may complete and sign the Medical Status section.
  — A registered nurse is not authorized to sign the Medical Status section but can sign the TB Test Information.
  — A health care professional may use an equivalent form as long as all required information is included.

• For all staff, contracted volunteers, and household members, the Medical Form must provide:
  — Satisfactory evidence that the individual is physically fit to provide child day care and has no diagnosed psychiatric or emotional disorder, which would preclude such an individual from providing day care.
  — An indication that the individual is free from communicable diseases unless his or her health care provider has indicated that the presence of the communicable disease does not pose a risk to the health and safety of children.

• For staff only, the Medical Form must also provide:
  — The results of a Mantoux tuberculin test or other federally approved tuberculin test performed within the 12 months preceding the date of application or hiring.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are there any immunization exemptions and substitutions available for staff working at child care (Article 47) and school-based (Article 43) providers?

The following immunization exemptions and substitutions are available for staff working at child care (Article 47) and school-based (Article 43) providers:

• Persons born on or before December 31, 1956 who have a history of measles or mumps disease shall not require such vaccines.

• A history of having varicella, measles, or mumps disease (documented by a health care provider) shall be accepted in lieu of varicella, measles, or mumps vaccines.

• A history of having rubella disease shall not be substituted for the rubella vaccine.

• A laboratory test demonstrating detectable varicella, measles, mumps, or rubella antibodies shall also be accepted in lieu of varicella, measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine.

An employee may be exempted from an immunization requirement for any medical reason that would make the immunization inadvisable/detrimental to their health.
Student Health

Programs must comply with all federal, state, and local laws regarding student health, as set forth below.

What You Need to Know

Student Health Overview

New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) must comply with all student health requirements of their licensing agency, the NYCDOE Office of School Health (OSH), and the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE). Your program must understand and follow the requirements of these policies.

Immunization Requirements

All students must be immunized in accordance with the New York Public Health Law §2164 and New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) regulations.

- Prior to allowing a student to attend your program, you must ensure that he or she has:
  - Obtained all required immunizations, as set forth below; or
  - Obtained, at a minimum, the provisional immunizations to enroll; or
  - Received an exemption for any missing immunizations.

- A student may not attend your program if immunization information has not been provided for that student. Your program must maintain documentation showing that each child in attendance has received all required immunizations, has received all the provisional immunizations necessary to enroll, has received all applicable immunization exemptions, or has submitted an immunization exemption request and is waiting on a determination.

Students living in temporary housing and students who recently transferred from another state or country may receive flexibility in meeting immunization requirements. Please see below for more details.

- As of April 2016, immunization requirements for entering three and four-year old students include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immunization</th>
<th>Doses Required</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DTaP (diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis) OR DTP (diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis)</td>
<td>4 doses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPV (inactivated poliovirus) OR OPV (oral poliovirus)</td>
<td>3 doses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMR (measles-mumps-rubella)</td>
<td>1 dose</td>
<td>On or after 1st birthday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hib (Haemophilus influenza type b)</td>
<td>1 to 4 doses</td>
<td>Number of doses depends on the child’s age at first dose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td>3 doses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicella</td>
<td>1 dose</td>
<td>On or after 1st birthday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV)</td>
<td>1 to 4 doses</td>
<td>Number of doses depends on the child’s age at first dose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influenza</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>New requirement will be implemented effective Fall 2018; more information will be forthcoming from DOHMH and DOE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• You must collect immunization records at pre-registration.
  — If the family is not able to provide the immunization records at pre-registration, you can collect the immunization records in September before the student starts school.

• Families may provide immunization information by using one of the following:
  — A completed new Child and Adolescent Examination Form (CH-205)
  — A printed record from the DOHMH Citywide Immunization Registry signed by a licensed medical provider (should include the official physician stamp)
  — A print out of an electronic medical record signed by a physician or health practitioner
  — A signed yellow immunization card

• If a family is unable to locate their child's immunization records, please inform them that their licensed medical provider can obtain the immunization record from the DOHMH's Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR). Families may also request immunization records by completing the Immunization Record Request Application.

Provisional Immunization Requirements

• Students who have not yet received all required immunizations may attend your program if documentation shows the student meets the Provisional Immunization Requirements.

• Once the student starts, subsequent vaccines must be administered in accordance with the Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) “catch up” schedule for the student to be considered “in process” and remain in attendance.

• You are responsible for ensuring that students who have not yet received all required immunizations meet the Provisional Immunization Requirements and receive subsequent vaccines in accordance with the “catch up” schedule.

• Students who are not immunized in accordance with the Provisional Immunization Requirements must be excluded from school until they comply with the requirements.

Students living in temporary housing and students who recently transferred from another state or country may receive flexibility in meeting immunization requirements. Please see below for more details.

Immunization Exemptions

Section 2164 of the New York Public Health Law permits the following two exemptions to the mandatory immunization requirements:

• Religious Beliefs
  — If the parent or legal guardian holds genuine and sincere religious beliefs which are contrary to the requirement that the child be immunized.
    • The parent or legal guardian must submit a personally written letter stating the basis for the request.
    • You must forward the letter and any supporting documentation to EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov. The request will be reviewed and your program will be notified of its approval or denial.
    • Families will be notified, in writing, of the approval or denial of the request. Copies of the written decision will be sent to your program.
• If a student is not offered an exemption, families may appeal the denial. If a family requests an appeal, please email EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov. During this appeal process, the student may be permitted to remain in attendance at the program.

The New York Public Health Law does not authorize the granting of exemptions based upon personal, moral, secular, scientific or philosophical beliefs.

• Medical

— If a New York State licensed physician certifies that such immunizations may be detrimental to the child’s health.

• Parents must submit the Medical Request for Immunization Exemption Form signed by a New York State licensed physician or other health practitioner certifying the specific immunization(s) detrimental to their child's health and the length of time the immunization(s) is detrimental to the child.

• Your program must forward the letter and any supporting documentation to EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov. The request will be reviewed and your program will be notified of its approval or denial.

• Families will be notified, in writing, of the approval or denial of the request. Copies of the written decision will be sent to your program.

• If a student is not offered an exemption, families may appeal the denial. If a family requests an appeal, please email EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov. During this appeal process, the student may be permitted to remain in attendance at your program’s discretion.

A program that fails to maintain documentation showing that each child in attendance has received each vaccination required or is exempt from such a requirement pursuant to the requirements above will be subject to citations and/or fines for each child not meeting such requirements by their licensing agency.

Students In Temporary Housing

Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act, a student living in temporary housing may not be denied admission or enrollment because he or she lacks documentation verifying that immunizations have been received. If a student living in temporary housing does not have the documentation, you must assist the parent to obtain documents and/or obtain the necessary immunizations. If you do not receive documentation or the student has not received all required immunizations within 90 school-days, staff should contact EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov.

Please see the Students In Temporary Housing chapter of the Handbook for more information.

Students Transferring From Another State Or Country

If there is some evidence of immunizations, you may permit a student transferring from another state or country to attend your program for up to 30 school days. Written confirmation of immunizations from a licensed medical provider must be received within the 30 days or the student must be excluded from your program.

Child and Adolescent Health Examination Form (CH-205)

All students must provide documentation of a comprehensive medical examination that has been conducted by a licensed medical provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician’s assistant with physician signoff). The medical examination must have taken place within one year of school entry.
Per DOHMH policy, the CH-205 form should be completed by the child’s medical provider and returned prior to a student’s first day in attendance. Scheduled medical appointments will not be accepted in lieu of an updated CH-205.

CH-205 forms are supplied to families as part of the registration packet that is provided when a family comes to your program to accept the enrollment offer. At pre-registration, you should request that families have the child’s medical provider complete the form prior to the start of the school year.

Accommodations for Qualified Students with Disabilities: §504 Compliance

Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) protects students with disabilities against discrimination by requiring publicly funded early childhood programs to provide eligible students reasonable and appropriate accommodations so they may participate in school activities on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers. Under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a student with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities is eligible to receive accommodations.

It is important that your program follows all the necessary steps for ensuring that students who qualify receive the appropriate accommodations. The DECE expects programs to follow all requirements of the ADA as well as any applicable regulations of their licensing agency (e.g., DOHMH or NYS Office of Children and Family Services). In addition, if a student with a disability in your program requires the administration of medication during the school day as a reasonable accommodation to facilitate his or her participation in your program, your program is required to give medication (by a certified staff member, as applicable).

For more information, please see the Medication Administration section below.

Consistent with the DECE enrollment policy, every family with an offer should be welcomed by you and your staff and allowed to present documentation for registration. A student with an offer may not be turned away.

Collection of Medical Documentation

If a child’s family voluntarily provides information regarding a medical condition or mobility issue that their child has, please ask them to complete and submit the applicable form(s) listed below. The forms must be completed in part by the child’s physician. Completed forms should be submitted to your program and stored in a secure location.

- Medication Administration Form (MAF)
- Allergies/Anaphylaxis Medication Administration (AAMAF)
- Asthma Medication Form (AMAF)
- School Diabetes Medication Form (DMAF)
- Request for Provision of Medically Prescribed Treatment (Non-medication)
- Request for Section 504 Accommodations with HIPAA Authorization

Medication Administration

Epinephrine Auto-Injector Requirements

The NYC Health Code Articles 43 and 47 were updated in June 2018 and include new requirements that providers maintain epinephrine auto-injectors as a stock medication. Under these new regulations, programs must:

- Maintain on site at least two epinephrine auto-injectors with retractable needles in each dosage appropriate for students who may be in your program.
In fall of 2018, DOHMH will send two auto-injectors to all Article 43 and 47 programs to be maintained as a stock medication. Additional information regarding these deliveries will be provided by DOHMH in Fall 2018.

- Have a staff person trained to administer the epinephrine auto-injector on site at all times when children are present. The training must be given by a New York State-approved training provider; a list of approved trainers will be available through DOHMH. You will need to train at least two staff members to meet this requirement.

- Designate at least one staff member to be responsible for the storage, maintenance, control, disposal, and general oversight of each epinephrine auto-injector.

**Serving Students with Serious Health Conditions**

Your program must be prepared to serve children with serious health conditions, including asthma and severe allergies. You must take the following steps to be ready to serve students with these conditions:

- Upon enrollment, work with the parent/legal guardian of any student with a serious health condition to develop an individualized health care plan that includes emergency response procedures, such as the administration of emergency medication.

- Obtain signed consent from the student’s parent/legal guardian to administer emergency care, including administration of emergency medication as needed, along with a signed CH-205 medical form from the student’s physician (the form should document the need for any emergency medication).

- Ensure program staff members are appropriately trained to obtain emergency health care and administer emergency medication if needed:
  
  — Article 43 and Article 47 program staff members may administer asthma inhalers, nebulizers, and epinephrine auto-injectors to students with prescriptions for these emergency medications if they have been trained by the student’s parent/legal guardian to do so. Medication Administration Training is not required to administer these medications.

  — You must follow the requirements of your licensing agency to administer any medication.

- Maintain any prescription emergency medication (provided by the student’s parent/legal guardian) on site in accordance with your approved Health Care Plan and your licensing requirements.

Please review the policies of your licensing agency regarding the administration of emergency medication. Programs must meet the student health and medication administration requirements as stated in the regulations of their respective licensing agency, as follows:

- Day Care Centers: Article 47, NYC Health Code

- School-Based Instructional Programs: Article 43, NYC Health Code

- Group Family Day Care Homes: Part 416, NYS Regulations and Policies

**Staff must immediately call 911 after the administration of epinephrine.**

**Staff must immediately call 911 if the child’s breathing does not return to normal functioning after the administration of an asthma inhaler or nebulizer.**

After calling 911 due to a medical emergency, you must immediately notify the student’s family. You must also notify DOHMH and your DECE Field Office within 24 hours. A DECE Occurrence Report must be completed to reflect that a call to 911 was made. The report should include:

- Date and time the call was made

- Name of the person who made the call
- **Reason for the call**
- **Name of the student involved in the incident**

Additionally, your DOHMH representative should also be notified after calling 911.

For more information on serving students with severe allergies, refer to the Meal Services chapter of the Handbook. For more information on handling medical emergencies, refer to the Safety and Security: Plans and Procedures chapter of the Handbook.

**Sites with Licensed Medical Personnel On-Site**

If your site has access to an on-site medical professional you are expected to serve students with medical needs, including those who may require medication administration during the school day. As needed, sites must update the portion of their health care plan regarding policies and procedures related to the administration of medications.

Licensed medical professionals include the following:

- Physician
- Registered nurse
- Nurse practitioner
- Licensed practical nurse
- Emergency medical technician

**Sites without Licensed Medical Personnel On-Site**

If your site does not have access to an on-site medical professional you are expected to provide reasonable accommodations to students with medical disabilities, which may include administering medication if administering such medication is a reasonable accommodation that enables a student to participate in the program.

To become approved to administer medication, you must:

1. Have at least one staff member complete a Medication Administration Training (MAT) course approved or administered by DOHMH or the State Office of Children and Family Services. Reach out to a NYC Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCRR) to schedule an approved training.

2. Update your health plan to reflect the administration of medication.

3. Obtain the services of a health care consultant who can review and approve your health plan.

   — Please contact a CCRR to obtain this service.

4. Submit the updated health plan to the DOHMH Bureau of Child Care for approval.

   — Approval to administer medication must be granted and reflected on the Child Care Connect website before your site can administer medication.

*All programs funded by EarlyLearn NYC must be approved by DOHMH to administer medication.

Pursuant to Article 47 of the New York City Health Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), if administration of medication to a child will reasonably accommodate him or her so that she or he may participate, sites are required to administer that medication to the child.
If you have additional questions or are unsure if your site can serve a student’s particular medical needs, please contact the DECE at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov. Under no circumstances may you refuse enrollment to any student with an offer to your program.

**Medication Administration Policy and Procedures**

In your health care plan, you must include a policy statement regarding medication administration for students. Your medication administration policy must state that:

- Your program will administer medication as necessary to a student with a disability who requires the administration of medication during the school day as a reasonable accommodation that enables the student to participate in your program.

- A child’s parent, or other adult authorized in writing by the child’s parent, can administer medication to their child while the child is enrolled at your program.

In your medication administration policy, you may choose whether to administer medication to students who do not require medication as a reasonable accommodation or on an emergency basis. This policy should be made clear to families at the start of the school year. In all cases, programs must obtain a statement in writing from the family and the child’s doctor that indicates the medicine to be administered and the schedule of administration. This includes medications such as painkillers (e.g., Ibuprofen, Acetaminophen) and antibiotics.

If you have additional questions or are unsure if your site can serve a student’s particular medical needs, please contact the DECE at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov. Under no circumstances may you refuse enrollment to any student with an offer to your program.

**Students Requiring Accessibility Accommodations**

Consistent with Section 504 and ADA requirements, your program may not exclude students with disabilities from your program. You must make reasonable modifications to your facility to integrate students with disabilities into your program. Sites that are fully accessible are expected to serve all students and should provide additional accommodations as necessary. Sites with partial accessibility must implement appropriate accommodations to allow students with limited mobility to have access to the facility.

- A fully accessible building is a building that is constructed post-1992, which complies with all of the ADA’s design requirements and has no barriers to access for persons with mobility impairments.

- A partially accessible building allows for persons with mobility impairments to enter and exit the building, access relevant programs, and have use of at least one restroom, but the entire building may not be accessible.

For more information on accessibility and appropriate accommodations, please visit the NYCDOE’s website.

If a student who requires an accessible site receives an offer to your program and your program is not fully accessible but his/her parent believes that a reasonable accommodation would allow the student to attend your program, you must contact the DECE at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov.

If you have additional questions or are unsure if your site can serve a student’s particular needs please contact the DECE at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov. Under no circumstances may you refuse enrollment to any student with an offer to your program.

**First Aid and CPR Compliance**

Pursuant to the NYC Health Code, all programs must have at least one staff member certified in CPR and one staff member certified in First Aid on the premises during all hours when students are present. CPR and first aid certificates must be appropriate to the ages of the children in care and be maintained on file for review.
You are required to have and maintain a first aid kit, completely stocked for emergency treatments of cuts and burns. The kit must be:

- Easily accessible for use;
- Kept out of reach of children; and
- Inspected periodically.

Procedures for providing basic first aid must be included in your health plan.

Program leaders are responsible for ensuring that staff, volunteers, and other individuals providing emergency services are proficient in CPR and first aid and receive all necessary trainings. You can contact your licensing agency for a list of approved providers and course information.

For more information on trainings, see the Professional Learning and Staff Trainings chapter of the Handbook.

If a student is injured at your program, the student’s family must be informed by telephone immediately. Additionally, a written occurrence report must be submitted to the designated DECE Field Office and DOHMH within one school day of any significant injury.

### Student Health Records

Your program must remain in compliance with the confidentiality requirements of the NYC Health Code and Chancellor’s Regulation A-820. As such, you must ensure that students’ medical records (paper or electronic) are:

- Secured and locked in the director’s office, separate and apart from students’ program records.
- Not made available for inspection or copying by any person other than a parent, other persons who present a written authorization from a parent, authorized DOHMH staff, or to comply with a court order or lawfully issued subpoena.

### Frequently Asked Questions

1. **May children self-administer medication?**

Students may not independently self-administer medications or assist in the administration of their own medications except under direct supervision of designated staff.

2. **May programs without on-site medical personnel administer insulin injections?**

If a child with a disability requires, as a reasonable accommodation, medication that must be administered by injection, vaginally, or rectally, your program must:

- Become approved by your licensing agency to administer medication; and
- Work with the child’s parent or legal guardian and health care provider to agree on a plan for MAT certified program staff to administer the necessary medication(s).

If you have additional questions or are unsure if your site can serve a student’s particular needs, please contact the DECE at [Early Childhood Policy](mailto:EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov).
3. Under what circumstances during the school year must programs renew parental consent and update a medical provider’s written instructions for children who require medication to be administered during the school day?

For all children who may require medication to be administered during the school day, you must require that the parent or legal guardian renew written consent and that the medical provider submits updated written instructions:

• At least once every six months.

• When any changes in the child’s medication instructions require you to obtain new written instruction from the medical provider.

• If the child no longer needs the medication.
Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting

Programs must take steps to prevent child abuse and report all cases of suspected abuse or maltreatment to the State Central Register (SCR) and other agencies, as appropriate.

💡 What You Need to Know

Overview

New York State Social Services Law (SSL), your contract, and Chancellor’s Regulations A-750, A-420, and A-421, which are incorporated into your contract by reference, require that program staff report suspicions of child abuse, maltreatment, corporal punishment, and verbal abuse.

Please see Table 1 at the end of this chapter for definitions of child abuse, maltreatment, corporal punishment, and verbal abuse.

Reports must be made to the New York State Central Register (SCR), the New York City Office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation (SCI), the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE), and/or other agencies, as appropriate.

Please use this resource to understand reporting requirements and procedures for making reports to the SCR, SCI, DECE, and other agencies, as set forth below.

In addition, programs should communicate and coordinate with the DECE when students who are involved with or receiving child welfare services are absent for inadequately explained reasons.

If a student is the victim of suspected criminal activity, personnel must immediately contact the New York City Police Department.

Child Abuse Prevention

Programs are required to establish a positive classroom culture and a written student behavior management policy that complies with the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) and Administration of Children’s Services (ACS) Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance in Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC Programs (see Appendix B). This policy must reflect that all acts of abuse or maltreatment are prohibited.

Please see the Student Behavior chapter of the Handbook for more information.

You are also responsible for arranging, providing (if necessary), and verifying that staff complete the required training on Child Abuse and Maltreatment Identification, Reporting, and Prevention.

Please see the Staff Trainings and Professional Learning chapter of the Handbook for more information.

Individuals who are Subject to Reports

The following individuals are subject to reports of suspected child abuse, maltreatment, corporal punishment, and verbal abuse:

- **Parent/guardian/custodian**: The child’s parent or any person responsible for the child’s care, including any person continually or at regular intervals found in the same household of the child.

- **Staff**: Employees involved with your program, including teachers, teaching assistants, and administrators.

- **Non-program staff**: Staff at your site who are not directly engaged in your program’s services.
• **NYCDOE Staff**: Visiting employees of the NYCDOE (e.g., DECE coaches, social workers, and operations analysts).

**Child Abuse Reporting Requirements**

**Article 47 Day Care Centers** & **Group Family Day Cares (GFDSC)**

- If the **parent/guardian/custodian** is the subject of the report. Make a report to the:
  - State Central Register (SCR) for suspected child abuse or maltreatment as defined in Table I at the end of this chapter.
  - Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) if a report is made to SCR.

- If a **staff** member is the subject of the report, make a report to the:
  - State Central Register (SCR) for suspected child abuse or maltreatment as defined in Table 1 at the end of this chapter.
  - Special Commissioner of Investigation (SCI) for suspected corporal punishment or verbal abuse as defined in Table 1 at the end of this chapter. *(Not required for staff of classrooms funded directly through EarlyLearn NYC)*
  - Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) if a report is made to SCR and/or SCI. *(Not required for staff of classrooms funded directly through EarlyLearn NYC)*
  - Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) if a report is made to SCR.

- If a **non-program staff** member is the subject of the report, make a report to the:
  - State Central Register (SCR) for suspected child abuse or maltreatment as defined in Table 1 at the end of this chapter.
  - Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) if a report is made to SCR. *(Not required for staff of classrooms funded directly through EarlyLearn NYC)*
  - Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) if a report is made to SCR.

- If a **NYCDOE staff** member is the subject of the report, make a report to the:
  - Special Commissioner of Investigation (SCI) for suspected corporal punishment or verbal abuse as defined in Table 1 at the end of this chapter. *(Not required for staff of classrooms funded directly through EarlyLearn NYC)*
  - Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) if a report is made to SCI.

*If a report is made at an EarlyLearn NYC program, staff must inform their Team Leader directly after reporting to SCR, and then provide the Team Leader with a completed ACS 1150 Child Abuse and Maltreatment Report within 24 hours.*

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11 Child Care (Article 47) - Programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

12 Group Family Day Care - Programs operating with a NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Group Family Child Care License.

13 EarlyLearn NYC - Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide services.
Article 43 School-Based Programs

- If the parent/guardian/custodian is the subject of the report, make a report to the:
  - State Central Register (SCR) for suspected child abuse or maltreatment as defined in Table 1 at the end of this chapter.
  - Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) if a report is made to SCR.

- If a program staff member is the subject of the report, make a report to the:
  - Special Commissioner of Investigation (SCI) for suspected corporal punishment or verbal abuse as defined in Table 1 at the end of this chapter.
  - Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) if a report is made to SCI.

- If a non-program staff member is the subject of the report, make a report to the:
  - Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) when a report is made regarding a student for suspected child abuse, maltreatment, corporal punishment, or verbal abuse as defined in Table 1 at the end of this chapter.
  - Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) when a report is made regarding child-care aged students for suspected child abuse or maltreatment as defined in Table 1 at the end of this chapter.

- If a NYCDOE staff member is the subject of the report. Make a report to the:
  - Special Commissioner of Investigation (SCI) for suspected corporal punishment or verbal abuse as defined in Table 1 at the end of this chapter.
  - Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) when a report is made to SCI.

Reporting Procedures

Reporting to the New York State Central Register (SCR) and Documenting Such Reports

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) maintains the SCR, which is a hotline that receives telephone calls alleging child abuse or maltreatment within New York State. The SCR gathers information from the calls and relays the information to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) for investigation.

Program staff members are mandated reporters for child abuse and maltreatment and, as such, staff must make a report to the SCR under the following circumstances:

a) When they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming before them in their professional capacity as program personnel is abused or maltreated, and

b) When a parent comes before them as program personnel and states from personal knowledge facts, conditions, or circumstances, which, if correct, would render the child an abused or maltreated child.

Reporters are not required to possess certainty or to interview the child before a report is made. Reporters are required to have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or maltreatment and to make a report in good faith.

To make a report, the mandated reporter must call SCR in Albany, New York by telephoning 800-635-1522. While on the phone with the SCR representative, in addition to providing information about the alleged child abuse or maltreatment, the mandated reporter must ask for the “Call I.D.” number. The “Call I.D.” number

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44School-Based (Article 43) - Programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 43 School-Based Filing Certificate for Children Ages 3 through 5. These programs are regulated by Article 43 of the NYC Health Code.
must be retained and used by the mandated reporter to complete both the New York State Office of Children and Family Services Form LDSS 2221-A and an incident occurrence report for the DECE, as described below.

When making the oral report to the SCR operator, the mandated reporter must provide the following information:

- The child’s full name, if known
- Information about the child’s current whereabouts or suspected threats to the child’s safety
- Whether the child receives special education services or accommodations for a disability, if known
- The child’s needs related to language, if known
- Details of the suspected abuse or maltreatment
- The reporter’s name, title and professional contact information (calls to SCR may not be made anonymously and good faith reporters are entitled to immunity by law)
- The name, title and contact information of all other staff who have knowledge of the allegation

After making a report to SCR, the staff member that makes the report must adhere to the following guidance:

- On the same day the report is made, inform the program director that a report was made and provide the director with the “Call I.D.” number. If the call was not accepted by the SCR, the staff member must provide the director with the date and time the call was made.
  — You do not have to notify the program director if the program director is the subject of the report.
- If the child has visible signs of trauma, photographs must be taken using the protocol described in the next section of this chapter (see below).
- Within 48 hours of making the report, complete and submit the LDSS-2221A form (via mail or fax) to the NYC Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) Borough Office where the residence of child named in the report is located. To locate the appropriate ACS Borough Office, visit the ACS webpage.
  — The mandated reporter must also request a copy of the finding after investigation by checking the “Yes” box on the LDSS-2221A form where it says “the Mandated Reporter Requests Finding of Investigation.”
- A copy of the LDSS 2221-A form must also be submitted to the operations analyst in the program’s designated DECE field office.

Photographing Injuries When Child Abuse or Maltreatment is Suspected

- As the program director, once you are aware of the suspected child abuse or maltreatment and a report has been made to SCR, you must immediately direct a designated staff member at your program to take photographs of any visible injuries or signs of trauma, in accordance with the procedures described below.
- Photographs must be taken in a private setting in a way that best serves the interest and privacy of the student.
  — Photographs must be taken with a device purchased with DOE funds, which must be labeled “Property of NYC Department of Education.” Photographs may not be taken with a personally owned device.
  — Additional training for NYCEEC staff members on this protocol will be made available. Once the training becomes available, the staff member in your program who has been designated to take these photographs will be required to participate in the training.
— No photographs may be taken and no examination may be conducted of a student’s genital, perineal or breast areas.

• The assigned staff member designated to take the photograph, must send an email with the photographs attached to the borough-specific designated ACS email inbox indicated below, using a NYCDOE-owned device, in accordance with procedures developed by the DOE.

— The email must contain: the SCR “Call I.D.” number; the student’s name; the student’s OSIS number; the number of photos attached; the sender’s name; and the program name and address.

    Bronx: DOEPhotosBronx@acs.nyc.gov
    Brooklyn: DOEPhotosBrooklyn@acs.nyc.gov
    Manhattan: DOEPhotosManhattan@acs.nyc.gov
    Queens: DOEPhotosQueens@acs.nyc.gov
    Staten Island: DOEPhotosStatenIsland@acs.nyc.gov

• The designated staff member must print a copy of the photograph. The photograph must be stored together with the LDSS-2221A written report in a secure place accessible only to the program director and the assigned staff member who took photographs. The report and the photograph are confidential documents and may not be released to the subject of the report, parent, or family and may only be released to those authorized to receive such information in accordance with the Social Services Law. After the photograph has been transmitted to ACS and a copy of the photograph has been made, the designated staff member must save the confirmation of receipt email from ACS, delete the photograph from the NYCDOE-owned device, and delete the email and attached photograph that had been transmitted to ACS.

• If SCR declines the report of suspected child abuse or maltreatment, the program director must notify the designated staff member that the report was declined. The designated staff member must ensure that all photographs related to the allegation are deleted from the NYCDOE-owned device. No copies of such photographs shall be made or retained.

The program director is responsible for notifying the student’s parent/guardian when a report has been made about their child, when the report names an adult other than the students’ parent/guardian, such as a program staff member. Parent/guardians must be notified within 24 hours after the report is made to SCR. In addition to reporting allegations of child abuse against staff members to SCR, staff misconduct should also be addressed in accordance with any other applicable protocols and procedures (for example, contacting the NYPD and/or the Special Commissioner of Investigation may also be appropriate).

For assistance or support in notifying the family, please contact the Family Engagement team at prekfamilyengagement@schools.nyc.gov.

After reporting to SCR, you are required to report to the DECE within one school day of making the report. These reports should include the Call ID numbers from reports to SCR in addition to the required information.

See “Reporting to the Division of Early Childhood Education” below for more details.

Reporting to the Special Commissioner of Investigations (SCI)

SCI has broad authority to investigate fraud, misconduct, conflicts of interest, and other alleged wrongdoing within the NYCDOE and the vendors with which it contracts. In particular, SCI investigates allegations of corporal punishment and verbal abuse as to NYCDOE-contracted vendors, including Pre-K for All program providers, and their employees.¹⁵

¹⁵SCI does not have jurisdiction to investigate day care center staff who do not provide services to the program, nor does SCI have jurisdiction to investigate staff at ACS EarlyLearn NYC programs.
To make a report to SCI, the program director or staff member must call 212-510-1500. The reporter must:

- Provide a written narrative; and
- Obtain and maintain a record of the complaint number as evidence that the report was made.

A written narrative should include the following details:

- The name of the person(s) who allegedly abused/maltreated the child(ren), including job title;
- The name of the child(ren) allegedly placed at harm or risk of harm;
- The circumstances of the incident(s);
- Whether there were any injuries and/or harm to the children, or risk of either;
- Where the alleged abuse/maltreatment took place;
- Whether/which adults were present at the time;
- When the alleged abuse/maltreatment occurred, including date and time;
- How the incident(s) transpired; if the reporter did not witness the incident/abuse first hand, the statement should address how the reporter became aware of the suspected abuse.

After making a report to SCI, the staff member that makes the report must provide the program director with the complaint number before leaving at the end of the school day (except when the report names the program director).

The program director is responsible for notifying the child’s parent/guardian when a report has been made about their child, when the report names an adult other than the child’s parent/guardian, such as a Pre-K for All staff member. Parents/ guardians must be notified within 24 hours after the report is made to SCI.

For assistance or support in notifying the family, please contact the Family Engagement team at prekfamilyengagement@schools.nyc.gov.

After reporting to SCI, you are required to report to the DECE within one school day of making the report. These reports should include the Call ID numbers from reports to SCI in addition to the required information (see Reporting to the Division of Early Childhood Education below for more details).

**Reporting to the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE)**

Consistent with the Pre-K for All provider contract, in the event of an alleged incident of child abuse or maltreatment, corporal punishment, or verbal abuse involving or related to students or staff, the program director must report the allegation to the DECE. Reports to the DECE should be made after making all required reports to the SCR and/or SCI, and within one school day of the alleged incident or receipt of the allegation.

The program director must provide a written report of the allegation using the DECE Occurrence Report form, available on the PreKIDS Vendor Portal, and submit the form to the operations analyst at your designated DECE Field Office. The information submitted on the DECE Occurrence Report should match the information provided in all other required reports. Please ensure you have completed the form to the fullest extent possible. If the report names the program director, program staff should report the allegation directly to the DECE by emailing reportabusedece@schools.nyc.gov.

**Reporting to the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)**

DOHMH must receive notice of all reports of suspected child abuse or maltreatment that have been made to SCR within 24 hours of the report. After making a report to SCR the program director must:

- Report the incident to DOHMH
• Submit to DOHMH a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) demonstrating the actions taken or planned to safeguard the wellbeing of children while the staff member is under investigation.

• Ensure all aspects of the CAP are implemented.

Upon receiving notice of a substantiated child abuse and maltreatment allegation, Article 47 programs are responsible for submitting an additional CAP to the Bureau of Child Care-Safety Assessment Unit at the DOHMH within 5 days. Article 47 sites should refer to section 47.21 (a-e) when developing the CAP.

In addition, further corrective action may be required after an ACS-OSI investigation is completed.

Students Receiving Child-Welfare Services

The DECE encourages program directors to carefully monitor the attendance of students receiving child welfare services and to promptly inquire regarding the absences of such children in order to ensure their safety and well-being. Students involved in child welfare services include:

• Children for whom the parent/legal guardian has been the subject of a report made by your program to State Central Register (SCR) and the case remains open, and

• Students for whom the parent/legal guardian has been the subject of a report made by your program to SCR and the case was substantiated, and

• Students in foster care.

Your program should monitor the status of cases you have called into SCR. The staff member who initially made the report may receive updates on the case via SCR by calling the Office of Safety First at 718-KID-SAFE with the “Call I.D.” number associated with the report.

If you are unsure of the status of a case you have called into the SCR, please proceed under the assumption that the case remains open.

Tracking and Responding to Absences

Program directors are encouraged to develop systems for tracking and responding to the absences of students receiving child welfare services in accordance with the following guidance:

• Assign a site-based staff member to monitor the attendance of students involved in child welfare.

• Consistent with your contract, unless a family has notified you in advance regarding the reason for an absence, you must call the student’s family on the first day of the student’s absence and on each day of additional absence to determine the reason for absence. For students involved in child welfare, you are encouraged to make several attempts to contact the family on each day of absence.

• All outreach and communication attempts to the families of students involved in child welfare should be recorded in detail, including:
  — Date and time of communication
  — Staff member who made the communication
  — Method of communication (e.g. e-mail, phone)
  — Result of communication
• For a student with an **open** child welfare case, please notify reportabusedece@schools.nyc.gov immediately if you are unable to make contact with the family on the **first day** of absence or if you have made contact with the family and **are not satisfied with the outcome of your communication**. Satisfactory communication from the family should include the following:

— An adequate explanation for absence

— The child’s current whereabouts

— When the child will be returning to school

• For a student whose parent/legal guardian has been the subject of a **substantiated** report or for a student in **foster care**, please notify reportabusedece@schools.nyc.gov immediately on the third consecutive day of absence if you fail to reach the family, or if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your communications.

• In all communication to reportabusedece@schools.nyc.gov, please include the full name of the student, the student’s OSIS #, their listed address, and the SCR “Call I.D.” number, if applicable. You will receive confirmation that the DECE has received your email. This confirmation email will provide you with additional guidance on next steps.

• The site-based staff member assigned to monitor the attendance of students involved in child-welfare is strongly encouraged to build familiarity with each student’s attendance and personalize outreach efforts to the family. These efforts should be documented in detail.

If the outcome of outreach and communication gives the staff member reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment, the staff member must **both** make a report to the SCR and the DECE, as described above.

Programs must record the “Call I.D.” number and follow all reporting requirements outlined in the “Procedures for Reporting to the SCR” section above. Programs may also be required to cooperate with an agent from ACS who is following up regarding the absences of a student involved in child welfare.

**If at any time a NYCEEC staff member has reason to believe that there is an emergency or an imminent threat of danger to the child’s health and safety, the staff member must call 911.**

**Table 1: Definitions**

The following definitions are provided to assist staff in determining situations that warrant making a report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT</th>
<th>A child is considered abused or maltreated if a parent, guardian, custodian or person regularly residing in the home, or another person responsible for the child’s care, which includes employees of child day care programs, harms the child, creates substantial risk of harm, or fails to exercise a minimum degree of care to protect the child. As stated in Chancellor’s Regulation A-750:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHILD ABUSE</td>
<td>An “abused child” is a child whose parent, guardian, or other person legally responsible for a child, including program staff, inflicts upon the child serious physical injury, creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury, or commits an act of sex abuse against the child. A person can be abusive to a child if he or she perpetrates any of these actions against a child in his or her care, and a person can be guilty of abusing a child if he or she allows someone else to do these things to that child.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CHILD MALTREATMENT

Maltreatment refers to the quality of care a child is receiving from those responsible for him or her. Maltreatment occurs when a parent, guardian, or other person legally responsible for a child, including program staff, harms the child or places the child in imminent danger of harm by:

1) failing to exercise the minimum degree of care in providing the child with: food, clothing, shelter, and/or medical care when financially able to do so; 2) abandoning the child; 3) failing to provide adequate supervision for the child; or 4) engaging in excessive use of drugs or alcohol such that it interferes with their ability to adequately supervise the child.

*For additional guidance on how to identify typical indicators of child abuse and neglect, please reference Chancellor’s Regulation A-750.*

## CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND VERBAL ABUSE

Corporal punishment or verbal abuse of a student by staff, as defined below, is prohibited. As stated in Chancellor’s Regulations A-420, and A-421:

### CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Any act of physical force upon a pupil for the purpose of punishing that pupil. Corporal punishment does **not** include the use of reasonable physical force for any of the following purposes:

- To protect oneself from physical injury;
- To protect another pupil or teacher or any other person from physical injury (e.g., breaking up a physical altercation without using excessive force);
- To protect the property of the program or of others; or
- To restrain or remove a pupil whose behavior is interfering with the orderly exercise and performance of school district functions, powers, or duties if the pupil refuses to comply with a request to refrain from further disruptive acts, and alternative procedures and methods that do not involve the use of physical force cannot be reasonably employed to achieve the purposes set forth above.

### VERBAL ABUSE

Language (written or oral) about or directed toward students that:

1. Belittles, embarrasses or subjects students to ridicule; or
2. Has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance or ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program, program-sponsored activity or any other aspect of a student’s education; or
3. Has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s mental, emotional, or physical well-being; or
4. Reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his/her physical safety; or
5. Reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student.
Toileting

Program staff must ensure a safe and healthy learning environment that supports positive experiences for students. To that end, staff must assist all students with toileting regardless of a student’s acquired toileting skills. Additionally, programs are required to practice and demonstrate proper sanitary practices.

3-K for All classrooms should refer to the Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Toileting portion of this chapter.

What You Need to Know

Overview

Students enter pre-K at varying stages of proficiency in toileting. Assisting students in meeting their toileting needs and developing the capacity to use the bathroom independently supports their emotional and physical growth. Under no circumstances can your program deny enrollment to or dismiss any student because he or she has not yet mastered all of his or her developmental milestones, including his or her ability to use the toilet independently.

- All pre-K staff must be prepared to change diapers and help children after bathroom accidents as necessary.
- It is important to have frequent, open communication with families about toileting progress. Toileting routines at home and school should be as similar as possible.

Additionally, toilets and handwashing sinks should meet all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and be installed at a height and position that allows students to use them without assistance. If adult-sized toilets and hand wash sinks are in place, platforms should be securely installed to assist students.

Supervision

Students who have shown the capability to use the bathroom independently and who request privacy when using the bathroom should be given permission to do so. However, staff should ensure the following when supervising students who can toilet independently:

- Doors must not be able to be locked by children.
- Toilet paper is used, toilets are flushed and hands are washed.
- Students are using the toileting area appropriately (e.g., refraining from playing in the toilet, etc.).

A student should never be allowed to leave the classroom alone or be left unsupervised at any time, even if the student can follow the proper toileting procedures.

Adults should use verbal communication to make children aware that an adult is available to assist them, as needed. Staff should provide closer, more helpful supervision if students do not complete the toileting procedures (including handwashing) correctly and responsibly.

If a staff member leaves the classroom to take a student to the bathroom, the remaining staff members must be able to adequately supervise the remaining students in the classroom. Staff should not have their back to students and should position themselves to maintain line of sight supervision at all times.

Handwashing Practices

Staff and students must wash hands immediately after toileting or diapering.

- All students should be taught how to correctly wash their hands after using the bathroom. Visual (e.g., pictures) and verbal (e.g., songs) prompts should be used to assist students.
• Handwashing signs must be prominently posted in each restroom and by each sink at students’ eye-level.

• If the same sink is used for both toileting and other handwashing routines (e.g., art activities, food-related routines, etc.), it must be disinfected in between the types of use with a bleach solution or a solution approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Handwashing Procedure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In accordance with the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ECERS-R), the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) recommends that staff, as well as students, utilize the following handwashing procedure:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Moisten hands with water and apply liquid soap to hands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rub hands together, away from the water stream, vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for 20 seconds (students can sing “Row, row, row your boat,” twice).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rinse hands, and dry with individual paper towels that are not shared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The paper towel should be used to turn off the faucet when done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Throw paper towel in waste basket.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sanitizers should not be used as a substitute for handwashing after toileting as sanitizers are not as effective at eliminating pathogens.

**Staff Responsibilities**

All staff should be involved in helping students learn how to use the bathroom. Toileting accidents should be treated as teachable moments for students, and signals to staff that they need to increase the frequency of reminders and trips to the bathroom. **Students must never be reprimanded if they are not successful in using the toilet.**

**Communication to Families**

It is important to have frequent, open communication with families about toileting progress. Toileting routines at home and school should be as similar as possible. Staff should inform families about toileting policies and procedures at the beginning of the school year. The policy should clearly indicate:

- Where and how students will be assisted with diapering, toileting and/or changed after accidents.
- Supplies required for students who are not toilet trained (e.g., diapers, wipes, an extra set of clothing).
- How families can communicate concerns about staff assistance with toileting accidents and diapering (e.g., scheduling a private meeting).

**Assisting Students with Toileting Accidents & Diapering**

All staff must be prepared to support students with toileting, including changing diapers and assisting students immediately after bathroom accidents as necessary.

Staff must take precaution and ensure that a student’s privacy is not compromised in the classroom. Before assisting students, staff should designate an appropriate space for changing where staff can adequately maintain students’ privacy.
• All staff members assisting with toileting or diapering clean-up must follow the Universal Precautions.
  — You must provide appropriate supplies (e.g., disposable gloves, bleach, non-scented/non-allergenic wipes, and mild soap) for staff use.
  — All staff members must wear disposable gloves when changing students’ clothes or diapers and wash hands after cleaning up.
  — Use bleach and water solution or an EPA-approved disinfectant to clean up all soiled surfaces.
• Staff must assist students to put on a clean set of clothes, including underpants.
  — You should request that families provide a seasonal change of clothes (e.g., pants, underwear, etc.) for their child in the event of an accident.
  — Your program should always have a clean set of unisex clothes available in case of an emergency.
  — Families may be asked to provide pull-ups and/or diapers if their child is not toilet trained.
• Staff must demonstrate and help the student wash their hands, as described above.
• All cleaning supplies should be stored in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Facilities chapter of the Handbook.
• Staff must inform families about toileting accidents on the day that they occur. For accidents that demonstrate symptoms of illness and may require the child to be picked up, families should be notified immediately.
Guidance on Assisting Students After Toileting Accidents and Diapering

1. Staff should be sensitive to the privacy needs of students and ensure privacy is not compromised in the classroom. Clean-up and diapering should take place away from other students.

2. Prepare the changing area before bringing the student over for clean-up. You should have:
   a. Non-absorbent changing table paper to cover the surface, from the student’s shoulders to heels. Disinfect the surface if paper is not used.
   b. Clean wipes, clean underwear or diapers, and plastic bags for soiled clothing, wipes, and/or diapers.
   c. Non-porous gloves.
   d. Diaper cream on a disposable paper or tissue, if applicable.

3. If the student’s clothing is soiled, place soiled clothing into a plastic bag for the student’s parent to take home for laundering.

4. Use mild soap and water or non-scented wipes to clean the student’s bottom from front to back.
   a. If assisting with a toileting accident, place soiled underwear into a plastic bag for the student’s parent to take home for laundering.
   b. If changing a soiled diaper, the diaper should be left under the child while the child is being cleaned. Once the child is cleaned, place the soiled diaper and wipes into a plastic bag and into a lined, hands-free trash container.

5. Assisting staff should use wipes to remove soil from their hands as well as the student’s hands, as necessary.

6. Spray changing surface with an EPA-approved disinfectant or bleach/water solution, and wait more than 10 seconds before wiping the area with disposable towel or allow to air dry. Do not immediately wipe the surface after spraying.

7. Assisting staff and the student must wash hands immediately, using the handwashing procedure described above.

If a sink is used by students or staff for diapering and/or toileting and food-related routines or other purposes, it must be sanitized after toileting/diapering use, by spraying sinks and faucets with an EPA-approved disinfectant solution or bleach-water solution following the disinfecting procedure mentioned above.
Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Toileting

Programs must ensure a safe and healthy learning environment that supports the learning and developmental progress of 3-K for All students. Progress toward independent toileting is an important element of the developmental growth that 3-K for All students will make over the course of the school year. To that end, staff must assist all students with toileting regardless of a student’s acquired toileting skills.

Communication with Families

It is normal for 3-K for All students to enter the school year with a wide range of toileting abilities. To best support students’ learning, toileting and self-care routines at home and school should be as similar as possible. To that end, it is critical that staff have ongoing, two-way communication with families about progress and strategies.

Teaching staff should meet individually with families at the beginning of the year and on an ongoing basis to discuss each child’s development and needs, including support for toileting and other self-care skills. Teaching staff should be sensitive to differing cultural expectations and practices that families may have.

When discussing toileting and self-care routines with families, please utilize the following questions to guide your conversation.

- Is your child able to use the toilet independently, or what kind of support do they need?
- What strategies do you use at home to help your child learn to toilet independently?
- How often does your child usually need to go to the bathroom? Are there specific times of day that help your child be successful?
- What toileting or diapering materials do you use at home to assist your child (e.g., diapers, pull-ups, changes of clothes)?
- What is most helpful to your child if he or she has an accident?

*Please see the Materials section within this chapter for more information on requesting materials from families.*

Staff Responsibilities

Staff must assist all students with toileting, handwashing, and other critical self-care routines over the course of the year, regardless of a student’s acquired skills, in a patient and encouraging way.

Toileting Routines

Teaching staff should plan daily routines that incorporate frequent opportunities for 3-K for All students to visit the bathroom. Three-year-olds are developing bladder and bowel control and cannot wait long periods of time before using the bathroom. Additionally, 3-K for All students require a variety of physical, social, emotional, and cognitive skills to master toileting routines and may need prompts and reminders.

Whenever possible, staff should offer students the opportunity to visit the bathroom individually or in small groups. This will reduce the transitional waiting times and maximize children’s learning time in the classroom.
Assisting Students with Toileting Accidents & Diapering

Staff must change soiled diapers and/or clothing immediately for 3-K for All students. These moments should be handled in a patient and encouraging way.

- All 3-K for All staff members, including lead teachers and paraprofessionals, should assist children in learning to use the bathroom, and be ready to change children's diapers or soiled clothes.

- Volunteers may not assist children in the bathroom or change children's diapers or clothes.

Supervision

3-K for All students who have shown the capability to use the bathroom independently should be encouraged to do so. However, staff must maintain line-of-sight supervision during toileting and handwashing and should offer step-by-step guidance during these routines.

Facilities

3-K for All children require frequent trips to the bathroom. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that 3-K for All classes be located in classrooms that have access to a bathroom and sink within the classroom. In cases where bathrooms are not located inside 3-K for All classrooms, it is important that an adult always accompanies a child to the bathroom and provides consistent line-of-sight supervision.

Equipment Needs

To assist with toileting needs, 3-K for All programs should contain the following equipment:

- In the Bathroom:
  - Safe step aids and modified toilet seats (if necessary) to allow children to safely access sinks and toilets

- In the Classroom:
  - Changing Area: Classrooms should have an area to change children's clothes and diapers without leaving the classroom. This area should include:
    - A toddler changing table that allows teaching staff to change students on an elevated, sanitary surface, without having to lift a student physically off the floor. The surface should be firm, non-absorbent, and easily cleanable
    - A disposable covering must be provided on diaper changing counters and must be changed after each use
    - A source of running water
    - A lined trash receptacle with a closed lid, in or near this space
      - A portable sink is recommended in classrooms that do not have a sink installed; classrooms with portable sinks may require additional custodial support.

Materials

Programs should have the following materials available to 3-K for All teaching staff to support toileting and diapering:

- Supply of diapers/pull-ups
- Wipes
• Extra clothes (at least one full set of clean clothes per child should be available)
• Plastic bags (for sending soiled clothing home)
• Table paper (for the surface of the changing table)
• Latex gloves
• Sanitizing spray and towels to disinfect surfaces

Please note that program staff may request that families of 3-K for All students provide pull-ups, diapers, and extra clothing but must make clear that families are not required to provide such supplies. Should families not provide these items for their child, you are responsible for purchasing and providing the supplies, as necessary.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **Who is able to support toilet learning and change children’s diapers and clothes?**

All 3-K for All staff members, including lead teachers and paraprofessionals, should assist children in learning to use the bathroom and be ready to change children’s diapers or soiled clothes. Volunteers may not assist children in the bathroom or change children’s diapers or clothes.

2. **What do I need to provide my staff members who may be involved in diapering?**

All staff involved in diapering and helping students after accidents must receive training in Infection Control and Reporting Infectious Diseases, which is inclusive of OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen training. In addition, staff must receive the Hepatitis B vaccine free of charge.

3. **What are instructional strategies that support toilet learning?**

• Use visual and verbal cues in the classroom environment to reinforce proper toileting and handwashing routines (e.g., pictures, posted schedules, songs).

• Include children’s books about toileting in your classroom library. Suggested books include:
  — *Everyone Poops* by Taro Gomi (Kane/Miller 2001)
  — *On Your Potty* by Virginia Miller (Candlewick Press 1998)
  — *PJ and Puppy* by Cathryn Falwell (Clarion Books 1997)
  — *Potty* by Leslie Patricelli (Candlewick Press 2010)
  — *No More Diapers for Ducky* by Bernette Ford and Sam Williams (Boxer Books 2007)
  — *Polar Bear’s Underwear* by Tupera Tupera (Chronicle Books 2015)
  — *Potty Animals: What to Know When You’ve Gotta Go!* by Hope Vestergaard (Sterling 2010)
  — *Time to Pee* by Mo Willems (Hyperion Books 2003)

• Provide appropriate facilitation when children express interest in discussing toileting. Offer factual information (e.g., words for body parts, urine, and bowel movements) and respond positively to children’s curiosity.

• Plan toileting routines that complement the strategies that families are using at home.
4. What instructional strategies are not recommended when supporting toilet learning?

- **Potty Chairs**: The use of “potty chairs” is not recommended. Potty chairs are not practical to use in a 3-K environment as they must be sanitized after each use.

- **Extrinsic Rewards**: The use of rewards such as stickers to encourage toilet learning is not recommended. While this strategy may be effective to promote short-term progress in toilet learning, it could also lead to feelings of anxiety or failure for some students if they are not as successful as their peers.

5. Should students who require support with toileting receive special education services?

Not all students who require support with toileting are students who receive or require special education services.

- A referral to special education is only appropriate when families and teachers believe the student has a disability or developmental delay that impacts the student's ability to learn. Before making a referral, a variety of developmental and academic interventions should be put into place to support the student.

- Some students who receive special education services will require assistance with toileting. The student's needs, goals, and special education services regarding toileting will be outlined in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
II. Facilities and Materials

a. Facilities

b. Classroom Furniture and Instructional Materials
Facilities

Adequate and well-maintained facilities are essential to ensuring high-quality instruction in and out of the classroom.

⚠️ What You Need to Know

Indoor Facility Requirements

The indoor space at your program must be safe for students and provide a high-quality, comfortable learning environment.

Indoor Facilities At Your Pre-K Program Must:

• Be in good repair. This means that:
  — The indoor space must not present any health and safety risks such as:
    • Tripping hazards
    • Sharp corners or edges
    • Furniture that students can stand on or pull on that might topple over
  — There should be no substantial damage to the walls, ceiling, floors, floor covering, furniture, or other features of the space.

• Be in good sanitary condition. This means that:
  — Classroom floors, floor coverings, and other surfaces should be cleaned regularly and whenever they become dirty.
  — Tables should be washed thoroughly before and after meal time and whenever there is a spill.
  — Trash is not stored in areas accessible to students and families and is removed from the site regularly.
  — Instructional materials and furniture (e.g., easels) should be cleaned regularly and whenever they become dirty.

• Provide sufficient space for students, adults, and furnishings. Specifically:
  — A minimum of 30 square feet per student of usable indoor space must be available in the classroom.
    *For example, if 18 children are enrolled in a class, at least 540 square feet of usable indoor space must be available.*
  — During meal and snack time, there should be enough room for staff to walk between the tables while students are seated.
  — Centers must have enough space for instructional materials and for students to play.

  Please see the Classroom Furniture and Instructional Materials chapter of the Handbook for more information.

General Facility Safety

It is required that you comply with all applicable facilities requirements of your licensing agency (e.g., DOHMH), the NYC Building Code, NYC Fire Code, your contract, and all other applicable city, state, and federal regulations.

Please see the Licenses, Certifications, and Permits section of the Handbook for more information on reporting violations.
Table 1 provides detailed information in response to frequently asked questions regarding facility requirements. You must comply with all facility requirements of your licensing agency and other applicable regulations.

**Table 1: Definitions**

**Child Care (Article 47)**\(^\text{16}\) and **School-Based (Article 43)**\(^\text{17}\) Providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Classrooms in the Building</th>
<th>You may not operate your program above the third floor or in the basement of a building unless you have received written approval from the DOHMH and the NYCDOE.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modes of Egress</td>
<td>Your facility must have at least two mode of egress (<strong>not including fire escapes</strong>) that provide access out of the building. Egress paths should be free and clear of any obstructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Extinguishers</td>
<td>A minimum of two fire extinguishers must be located on each floor and inspected twice a year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting of Fire Exits</td>
<td>A floor plan must be posted in the lobby showing the location of all fire exits. Each classroom and hallway must have an egress plan posted, showing both paths to safe egress. All exits should have clear and illuminated exit signs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire and Carbon Monoxide Detection Systems</td>
<td>Your facility must have a minimum of one smoke detector and one carbon monoxide detector for every six classes. Detectors must be located on each floor and must be installed in the hallways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective Guards/Coverings</td>
<td>Required for all windows (including those in hallways and stairwells), columns, radiators, pipes, and poles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stairways</td>
<td>Stairways used by students must be equipped with protective barriers and low banisters or handrails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finishing and Materials</td>
<td>Walls, ceilings, and floors must be finished with non-toxic finishes, constructed of materials enabling thorough cleaning, and maintained in good repair, with no holes, missing tiles, peeling plaster, or other defects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asbestos</td>
<td>You must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding the inspection, containment and removal of friable asbestos containing materials. You must ensure that facilities do not contain any contaminants and other environmental health risks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead-Based Paint</td>
<td>All walls, furniture, and equipment must be free of lead-based finishes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead Water Testing</td>
<td>Water must be tested for lead every five years and test results sent to the DOHMH. Test results indicating elevated levels of lead must be accompanied by a plan for remediation and alternate sources of potable water must be provided until remediation is completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage of Cleaning Supplies</td>
<td>All cleaning supplies must be stored in their original containers and kept in places that are locked and inaccessible to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture/Play Space</td>
<td>All furniture and play equipment must be in good repair and free from hazards such as sharp edges, pointed parts, toxic, or poisonous finishes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information on Group Family Day Care facilities requirements, please see Appendix A of this chapter.

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\(^{16}\) Child Care (Article 47) - Programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code. Children Ages 3 through 5. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

\(^{17}\) School-Based (Article 43) - Programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 43 School-Based Filing Certificate for Children Ages 3 through 5. These programs are regulated by Article 43 of the NYC Health Code.
Facility Requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

You must comply with all facilities requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The ADA requires that you do not discriminate against persons with disabilities. That is, you must provide children and families with disabilities with an equal opportunity to participate in your program. Specifically:

- You cannot exclude students with disabilities from your program.
- You must make reasonable modifications to your facility to integrate students with disabilities into your program.
- You must generally make your facilities accessible to persons with disabilities.

You must be in **readily achievable compliance** with the [ADA Standards for Accessible Design](https://www.ada.gov) if your building was constructed prior to January 26, 1993. You must be in **strict compliance** if your building was constructed after January 26, 1993.

**If Your Facility Was Constructed Prior To January 26, 1993**

You must make every effort possible to allow people with disabilities to have access to your facilities. Reasonable modifications may include, but are not limited to:

- Installing offset hinges to widen a door opening.
- Installing grab bars in toilet stalls.
- Rearranging furniture to allow a student in a wheelchair to participate in your program.

**If Your Facility Was Constructed After January 26, 1993**

You must meet the [ADA Standards for Accessible Design](https://www.ada.gov). Key requirements include having:

- Accessible ground and elevated outdoor play spaces.
- Accessible routes, ramps, and transfer systems to facilities and play spaces.
- Wide entryways to allow for wheelchair access.

**Outdoor Play Space**

Students must have access to space where they can use their large muscles for at least 60 minutes a day.

**You are Required to Provide Outdoor Play Space that is:**

- Located on site; or
- Located within a 2 block radius of your site, with no major highway or other physical barriers that may pose a safety risk.

The 2 block radius requirement does not apply to classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC. Please contact your ACS Operations Manager for more information.

**If no outdoor play space is available, you must provide a DECE approved indoor play space and, if possible, provide community walks for students.**

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18 EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All services.
To ensure the health and safety of students, outdoor play areas must be maintained and in good condition. In all cases, outdoor play space must meet the following requirements:

- Be enclosed by climb-proof fencing that is a minimum of 5 feet high.
  - No razor or barbed wire can be used at the top of the fence unless it is more than 6 ½ feet high.
- Free of broken glass and other debris.
- Free of poisonous vegetation, and other hazards.
- Rooftop play areas can be provided in fireproof buildings only and must be approved by the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE), the Department of Buildings, and the Fire Department.
  - Rooftop play areas must be enclosed by a climb-proof fence that is at least 10 feet high with an additional 45° inwardly angled panel.

All equipment in an outdoor play space must:

- Be in good repair and free from hazards, such as sharp edges.
- Be free of toxic or poisonous finishes or materials, such as lead and arsenic.
- Provide adequate fall zones and cushioning should students fall off the equipment.

**Religious Symbols**

Wherever possible, you must remove or cover all religious signs, names, identification, symbols or insignias from the following locations in your facility:

- On the exterior entrance designated to be used by students
- Any part of the interior of the building to be used by students as part of your program

*If you have any questions about this requirement, contact your Operations Analyst.*

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **During 3-K for All or Pre-K for All hours, can students or adults not assigned to a 3-K or pre-K classroom utilize the space for non-3-K or pre-K for All related activities?**

No, during 3-K for All or Pre-K for All hours, these classrooms must be utilized exclusively by students and staff assigned to that 3-K or pre-K class, including students in approved mixed age classrooms.

2. **How must teachers store cleaning products and/or hazardous materials?**

Cleaning products containing hazardous materials must be stored in teachers’ closets/cabinets and locked from the outside. The cleaning products must be put away and locked immediately after use.
3. Is there a classroom temperature that must be maintained?

Yes, classrooms must be between 68 and 72 degrees Fahrenheit during cold weather (defined as an outside temperature of 55 degrees Fahrenheit or below).

During hot weather, you need to maintain a comfortable indoor air temperature for your staff and students. If outdoor temperatures reach a “Danger” or “Extreme Danger” on the NOAA’s National Weather Service Heat Index19 (see below), and you do not have a way to maintain cool indoor air temperatures, you should consider closing for the day to ensure the health and safety of your students and staff.

Please see FAQ #3 in the Calendar, Hours, and Flexible Schedule chapter of the Handbook for more guidance on what to do if your program closes due to inclement weather.

### NOAA’s National Weather Service Heat Index

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- **Yellow** Caution
- **Yellow** Extreme Caution
- **Orange** Danger
- **Red** Extreme Danger

Group Family Day Care (GFDC) Facility Safety Requirements

It is important that GFDC programs understand all applicable facilities requirements of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), the NYC Building Code, NYC Fire Code, the contract, and all other applicable city, state, and federal regulations.

Table 2 provides detailed information in response to frequently asked questions regarding facilities requirements for GFDCs. You must comply with all facility requirements of your licensing agency and other applicable regulations.

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### Table 2: GFDC Facility Safety Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Classrooms in the Building</th>
<th>Programs can operate up to the 5th floor in an apartment building. Programs cannot operate above the 2nd floor of a single-family dwelling.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modes of Egress</td>
<td>You must have two modes of egress. Fire escapes are considered a mode of egress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Extinguishers</td>
<td>Multi-purpose fire extinguishers approved to be used in residences must be maintained in good working condition and placed in the kitchen and outside the furnace room. Fire extinguishers with gauges must show a full charge and fire extinguishers with seals must have unbroken seals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Evacuation</td>
<td>The emergency evacuation diagram must be posted in a visible location. The emergency evacuation diagram must include a designation of primary and secondary evacuation routes and methods of evacuation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire and Carbon Monoxide Detection Systems</td>
<td>There must be an operational smoke detector on each floor of a program. In addition, there must be a smoke detector located either within rooms where children nap, or in adjoining rooms if there is no door.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective Guards/Coverings</td>
<td>Radiators and pipes located in rooms occupied by children must be covered to protect the children from injury when the heating system is in use. Windows above the first floor that are accessible to children, other than those identified for emergency evacuation, must be protected by permanent barriers or restrictive locking devices that prevent a window from opening fully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stairways</td>
<td>Barriers, porches, decks, or stairs with more than two steps must have railings with a barrier extending to the floor or ground to prevent children from falling. Acceptable types of barriers include, but are not limited to, balusters, intermediate rails, and heavy screening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finishing and Materials</td>
<td>Toxic paints or finishes must not be used on room surfaces, furniture, or any other equipment, materials, or furnishings that may be used by children or are within their reach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asbestos</td>
<td>Programs must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding the inspection, containment and removal of friable asbestos containing materials. Programs must ensure that facilities do not contain any contaminate and other environmental health risks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead-Based Paint</td>
<td>All walls, furniture, and equipment must be free of lead-based finishes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead Water Testing</td>
<td>Must follow OCFS regulations and make records available for inspection by the DECE. Drinking water from faucets and fountains shall be tested for lead content and the program shall investigate and take remedial action if lead levels at or above 15 parts per billion (ppb) are detected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage of Cleaning Supplies</td>
<td>Cleaning materials must be stored in their original containers unless the product’s use or your Health Plan indicates the product be mixed with water before use. In this case, the container used for the mixed product must state the name of the cleaning material. Cleaning materials must not contaminate play surfaces, food, or food preparation areas, or constitute a hazard to children. They must also be kept in a place inaccessible to children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture/Play Space</td>
<td>Programs must ensure furniture and play spaces are in safe locations and used specifically for their intended purpose. Materials and equipment used by children must be sturdy and free from rough edges and sharp corners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Classroom Furniture and Instructional Materials

Furniture and instructional materials available in classrooms should support staff and students in conducting daily learning activities.

3-K for All classrooms should refer to the Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Classroom Furniture and Instructional Materials portion of this chapter.

What You Need to Know

Classroom Furniture

With the appropriate quantity and quality of furniture and equipment, classrooms should provide a learning environment that is student-centered to support students’ learning and development across domains. Furniture in the classroom should support students’ growing independence in meeting their routine care needs and in conducting their daily activities.

Required Furniture

Your classrooms must have adequate furniture to provide opportunities for students to work independently and with their peers in a variety of small and large groups.

The following furniture must be available in all classrooms. Available furniture in the classrooms must meet the needs of the total number of enrolled students and the instructional staff supporting each class.

- Tables and chairs for meals/snacks and learning centers
  - Tables and chairs should be child-size
    - Chairs should allow for most students’ feet to touch the floor while they are seated (seat height should be approximately 12 inches).
    - Tables should be an appropriate height so that most students can rest their elbows on the top of the table (table height should be approximately 20 inches).
- Cubbies for storage of students’ personal items and creative work
  - If possible, students should have individual cubbies with their own hooks, so that their personal belongings do not touch another student’s belongings.
  - If possible, these cubbies should be within the pre-K classroom, so that students can access their belongings without leaving the teacher’s supervision.
  - Cubbies should be secured with a hook or nail.
- Storage shelves
  - Storage shelves should be set up to provide materials for centers including but not limited to, block play, art, manipulatives and science.
  - Storage shelves used by students should be easily accessible, neatly organized, and labeled with developmentally appropriate labels that include words and pictures.
  - Placement and arrangement of the storage shelves in the classroom should provide definition of space for learning centers.
  - When possible, the art and sensory centers should have easy-to-clean floors, and be placed near a sink.
— Some storage shelves not accessible to students should be utilized for storage of instructional materials not currently in rotation in the classroom.

• Furnishings for whole group learning
  — Carpet for whole group meetings.
  — An adult size chair for each instructional staff member (as classroom space allows).
    • The DECE recommends instructional staff members sit at student level whenever possible.
  — Teacher’s easel (as classroom space allows).

• Furnishings for relaxation
  — A clearly defined space containing soft materials that allows students to relax or play quietly.
  — Individual cots or mats for rest or nap.
    • Mats/cots should be stored in or near the room for easy access by staff. If mats are located in the classroom, it is easier to prepare for nap and to provide a smooth transition.
    • Mat/cots should be labeled with students’ names.

• Furnishings to facilitate play and learning during center time including but not limited to:
  — Furniture for sensory play (e.g. sand and water tables)
  — Display library bookcase and additional storage for books
  — Play kitchen set (including a small table and chairs if classroom space allows) and furniture to display and store dramatic play props
  — Early literacy center
  — Painting easel
  — Computer station at appropriate height for developmentally appropriate activities

If classroom space does not allow for the required furniture to be available to children, you should contact your DECE Field Office for guidance on how to best utilize the classroom space.

**Furniture Safety**

It is important that classroom furniture is maintained, sturdy, and in good condition at all times.

• All furniture must be:
  — Finished with non-toxic surface coverings
  — Cleaned and sanitized after meals, activities, and as needed
  — At a height low enough that staff can see and monitor an entire classroom free of obstruction
  — Free of sharp edges that can cause a safety hazard for pre-K students
  — Secured to safeguard against heavy furniture falling on students if you have large (height and length) bookcases, shelves, space dividers, etc.
Classroom Pets

DOE encourages programs to include living things in the classroom environment. However, Article 47 programs are prohibited from having reptiles, dogs, cats, and any other animals prohibited by the New York City Health Code Article 161 on their site. Any animals that you keep on site and/or in a classroom must be in good health, and show no evidence of carrying any disease. Pets must be kept in cages, and waste material within cages must be cleaned daily or more often, if needed.

- Examples of allowable classroom pets: goldfish, hamsters, hermit crabs, frogs
- Examples of classroom pets that are not allowed: turtles, lizards, snakes

Instructional Materials and Technology Tools

You must provide adequate instructional materials to implement your program curriculum and to enable students to select from a range of developmentally appropriate activities during center time. Materials must be plentiful enough to allow students to play cooperatively without competing over resources. Instructional materials must be complete, intact and in good condition for students’ use. Students must have access to these materials for a substantial portion of the day as defined by the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R) (2 hours, 7 minutes daily minimum for programs operating 6 hours and 20 minutes per day).

All instructional materials, including literature and technology tools present in the classroom, should be free of advertising, brand marketing, and violent or sexually graphic content.

All instructional materials must:

- **Rotate** throughout the year, according to individual and group skill levels, needs, and units of interest or study.
- **Reflect** the cultural and linguistic diversity of families, the community, and the city.
- **Support** meaningful independent and cooperative play in learning centers and be developmentally appropriate for students in the 3-5 year old age group.

For each classroom, you are required to provide the majority of the following instructional materials, to support learners based on the NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC) in each of the categories below:

- A wide selection and quantity of books, including:
  - Books with songs, poetry, and/or rhymes
  - Books that represent various cultures and languages spoken by families
  - Books that show people with different abilities
  - Fiction and informational texts to support current topics of exploration and discussion
  - Audio books

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The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R) is an observational tool used to assess early childhood learning environments. The assessor observes the classroom and looks for specific indicators of quality across the following areas: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interactions, and Program Structure.
• Early literacy materials, including:
  — Puppets and/or a magnetic/flannel story board
  — Magnets (e.g. symbols including upper and lower case letters, numbers, and mathematic symbols and magnetic write and wipe boards)
  — Writing materials (e.g. letter stamps and washable stamp pads, child-size pencils, crayons, washable markers, paper)

• Manipulative materials, including:
  — Small building toys (e.g. bristle blocks, magnetic blocks, interlocking cubes/blocks, Lincoln Logs)
  — Toys that promote fine motor development (e.g., beads and strings of different sizes, toys that snap or link together, pegs with peg boards, tangram puzzle shapes)
  — Toys allowing students to make comparisons related to attributes such as size, shape and color (e.g., attribute blocks, pattern games, geoboards, sets of objects with varying characteristics, color paddles)
  — Toys to support students’ exploration of quantity, measurement, and numerals (e.g., counting games, abacus, balance scale, tape measure, play money)
  — Puzzles with varying levels of difficulty

• Art materials, including:
  — Crayons, washable markers
  — Paint materials (e.g., tempera paint, brushes, finger paint)
  — Paper (various sizes, colors, textures)
  — Collage materials (e.g., yarn, fabric, cotton balls, sequins, foam shapes, glitter, etc.)
  — Child-safe scissors
  — Glue and/or paste
  — Play dough or clay
  — A place for drying paintings and art projects

• Music and movement materials, including:
  — CD player (preferably with MP3 output) and headphones for one or more students
  — A variety of music on CDs or on a digital music player
  — Child-sized instruments
• Blocks and accessories, including:
  — Classroom set of hardwood unit blocks
  — Vehicles, traffic signs, buildings (should be comparable in size to the blocks used)
  — Play people and animals

• Dramatic play materials, including:
  — Dress up clothing (e.g., clothing for various careers, clothing representing various cultures, gender-specific clothing, and clothing for fantasy play)
  — Toys to support students’ exploration of careers and community helpers (e.g., doctor’s office kit, tool kit, classroom mailbox, cash register)
  — Toys to explore housekeeping (e.g., materials for play food, dishes and utensils, housecleaning set, dolls and doll clothing, toy phone, mirror)

• Nature/science materials, including:
  — Collections of natural objects (e.g. sets of leaves, rocks, seashells)
  — Sand/water toys (e.g., scoops, funnels and containers of different sizes/shapes, objects that sink and float, sponges, shovels, rakes, sifters, sand/water wheels)
  — Tools to support students’ scientific observations (e.g., magnifying glasses, magnets, color mixers, simple microscope)
  — Nature games, toys, and books
  — Living things, if appropriate for your setting (e.g. plants, a class pet, window bird feeder)

Materials must be listed in your Budget Detail and approved by the DECE. Upon visiting your site, a Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) staff member may request that you provide additional instructional materials to students.

**Technology Tools**

When used intentionally and in a developmentally appropriate manner, technology can enhance students’ learning experiences. Technology may be used to extend students’ knowledge of curricular content through interactive activities.

• Technology in the classroom must support students’ hands-on learning and creative expression. Consider the strengths, preferences, experiences, linguistic diversity, and needs of your students when selecting a technology tool or interactive media activity to include in your classroom.

• Technology must be used in classrooms to support social interactions between students, their peers, and teachers. Students should not be isolated from peers or teachers while using technology or interactive media.

• Technology tools allowed in the classroom include:
  — Computers
  — Tablets
— Interactive whiteboards
— Mobile devices
— Cameras and recording devices

• Total screen time for any student may not exceed 30 minutes in a week. Students’ use of the technology tools listed above should be limited to no more than 15 minutes per day in total. Exceptions to this limit may be made for students with disabilities who require assistive computer technology as outlined in their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Classroom Furniture and Instructional Materials

Furniture and instructional materials available in 3-K for All classrooms should support staff and students in conducting daily learning activities.

Classroom Furniture

Generally, furniture requirements for 3-K for All classrooms are consistent with Pre-K for All classrooms. However, when choosing furniture, programs should take into consideration the height and weight of 3-K for All students and how to support their learning and developmental needs.

The following furniture policies apply specifically to 3-K for All classrooms:

• Chairs should allow for most students’ feet to touch the floor while they are seated (seat height should be approximately 10 inches for 3-K for All students compared with 12 inches for Pre-K for All students).

• Tables should be an appropriate height so that most students can rest their elbows on the top of the table (table height should be approximately 18 inches for 3-K for All students compared with 20 inches for Pre-K for All students).

In addition, the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) recommends that rugs have solid/one color designs, rather than excessive print, to avoid overstimulating 3-K for All students or limiting play.

Instructional Materials

3-K for All staff must be careful not to provide students with instructional materials that may pose a choking hazard. Toys and/or objects with the following characteristics must not be provided:

• Removable parts with a diameter less than 1 ¾ inches and a length between 1 and 2 ¼ inches

• Balls and toys with spherical, ovoid, or elliptical parts that are smaller than 1 ¾ inches in diameter, such as marbles or coins

• Other examples of hazardous materials include:
  — Plastic bags, balloons, and rubber or latex gloves
  — Objects that can break apart and become choking hazards (e.g., Styrofoam blocks)
  — Staff should use extra caution when students use toys or objects with sharp points or edges.
Frequently Asked Questions

1. Where can I purchase instructional materials and furniture?

You are not required to purchase furniture from any one vendor. However, some vendors have agreed to sell furniture and materials at select NYCDOE rates to 3-K for All and Pre-K for All providers. You should contact your DECE Field Office for additional information.
III. Staffing

a. Staff Qualifications, Hiring, and Substitutes

b. Security Clearances

c. Program Staffing and Class Management

d. Aspire

e. Professional Learning and Staff Trainings
Staff Qualifications, Hiring, and Substitutes

High-quality programs are staffed by educators who meet all qualification and certification requirements.

What You Need to Know

Education Director Qualifications

Education director qualifications depend on your program license.

**Child Care (Article 47)**

- Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education or related field of study.
- Teaching license or certificate valid for services in the early childhood or childhood grades as pursuant to New York State Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) regulations.
- At least two years of lead teacher experience in a program for children less than six years of age.

**School-Based (Article 43) And Group Family Day Care Providers**

- Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education or a related field of study.
- Teaching license or certificate valid for services in the early childhood or childhood grades as pursuant to New York State UPK regulations.

Lead Teacher Qualifications

All Lead Teachers must have ONE of the following:

- Teaching license or certificate valid for service in the early childhood grades as set forth by New York State Education Department (NYSED) regulations. This includes: Early Childhood (Birth – Grade 2); (Nursery-6); or (Pre-K-6) certification.
- Teaching license or certificate for Students with Disabilities (Birth – Grade 2).

— Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood or a related field and a written study plan approved by an accredited college or university for obtaining Early Childhood (Birth – Grade 2) certification. Depending on their date of hire, Lead Teachers on a study plan must obtain the necessary early childhood certification as follows – whichever is later:
  - By June 30, 2019 or
  - By three years from their date of hire as a Lead Teacher in a city-contracted pre-K class.

Teacher qualification requirements are subject to change – please review any policy updates communicated by the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE). Please contact the DECE at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov if you have any questions regarding teacher qualification and/or study plan requirements.

Teachers with a certification in Childhood Education (Grades 1 to 6) do not meet lead teacher certification requirements for 3-K for All or Pre-K for All. These teachers must have a written plan for obtaining an Early Childhood (Birth – Grade 2) certification within 3 years of employment.

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21 Child Care (Article 47) - Programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

22 School-Based (Article 43) - Programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 43 School-Based Filing Certificate for Children Ages 3 through 5. These programs are regulated by Article 43 of the NYC Health Code.

23 Group Family Day Care - Programs operating with a NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Group Family Child Care License.
In addition, all lead teachers must complete the mandatory 2 hours of training in child abuse maltreatment identification, reporting, and prevention. Information on this training is available at www.nysmandatereporter.org. All teaching staff members must complete 15 hours of training every 24 months, including the mandatory child abuse prevention and other subjects related to child health, safety, and early childhood development (Article 47 providers only).

Paraprofessionals

In full-day NYCEEC 3-K and pre-K programs, there are two kinds of paraprofessionals that may support classrooms: assistant teachers (also called teaching assistants), and teacher aides. Paraprofessionals play an integral role in the classroom by promoting positive interactions with students and families, implementing health and safety procedures, facilitating smooth transitions between activities, and planning collaboratively with lead teachers. Paraprofessionals often provide direct instructional support to students by facilitating whole and small group lessons and activities.

Assistant Teacher Requirements

All Assistant Teachers must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Have a high school diploma or equivalent (GED).
- Hold a valid Level I or higher NYS Teaching Assistant certification.
  — More information on teaching assistant certification can be found on the NYSED website.
- Complete the mandatory 2 hours of training in child abuse and maltreatment identification, reporting, and prevention as well as the requirements of applicable statutes and regulations.
- Complete 15 hours of training every 24 months, including the mandatory child abuse prevention and other subjects related to child health, safety, and early childhood development (Child Care Article 47 providers only).

Teacher’s Aide Requirements

All teacher aides must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Have a high school diploma or equivalent (GED).
- Complete the mandatory 2 hours of training in child abuse and maltreatment identification, reporting, and prevention as well as the requirements of applicable statutes and regulations.
- Complete 15 hours of training every 24 months, including the mandatory child abuse prevention and other subjects related to child health, safety, and early childhood development (Child Care Article 47 providers only).

Substitute Teachers

In the event that an assigned lead teacher or paraprofessional is absent, you must arrange for appropriate coverage.

Coverage options:

- Qualified substitute lead teacher
• The required staff/child ratio in a classroom may be maintained with paraprofessionals for up to three days, under the supervision of a qualified onsite education director. If a lead teacher is absent longer than three days, a qualified substitute lead teacher is required.

It is your responsibility to confirm that substitute lead teachers and paraprofessionals working in your program have completed all necessary eligibility clearance procedures before beginning work.

• Qualified substitute lead teachers must have:
  — A Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood or a related field.
  — Completed the mandatory two hours of training in child abuse maltreatment identification, reporting and prevention, and requirements of applicable statutes and regulations.

• Qualified substitute paraprofessionals must:
  — Be at least 18 years old.
  — Have a high school diploma or equivalent (GED).
  — Have completed the mandatory two hours of training in child abuse maltreatment identification, reporting and prevention, and requirements of applicable statutes and regulations.

Substitute Staff Members for Group Family Day Cares

Substitute staff members in GFDCs must have advance written approval from the NYS Office of Children and Family Services before they are able to care for children in your program. If you are a GFDC provider, you must develop a substitute staffing plan that ensures that substitute staff are pre-approved by OCFS before they care for any children in your program. The DECE recommends that you take steps to have substitute staff pre-approved at the beginning of each school year.

Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Staff Qualifications

High-quality 3-K for All programs are staffed by educators who meet all qualification and certification requirements.

Lead Teacher Qualifications

3-K for All lead teacher qualifications differ from Pre-K for All lead teacher qualifications. All 3-K for All lead teachers must meet the teacher qualifications described in Article 47 of the NYC Health Code by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). The DOE has adopted these qualifications for all 3-K for All classes, including those in Article 43 and Group Family Day Care programs.

Per Article 47.13(d) of the NYC Health Code, lead teachers must have ONE of the following:

1. **Baccalaureate degree and State certification**
   • A Bachelor’s degree in early childhood education or related field of study (approved by Department of Health) and a current certification in the early childhood grades. This includes: Early Childhood (Birth-Grade 2); (Nursery-6); and (Pre-K-6) certification as well as Students with Disabilities (Birth-Grade 2).

2. **Equivalent certification**
   • An equivalent certification from a public or private teacher accrediting organization (out of State) granted reciprocity by the New York State Education Department.
3. **Baccalaureate degree and 2 years of experience**
   - A bachelor’s degree in early childhood education or related field of study and two years of supervised and documented relevant experience in an early childhood program if currently employed in a permitted child care service.

4. **Approved study plan**
   - To be study plan eligible, a person must have:
     i. An associate’s (AA or AS) degree in early children education, practicum included; or
     ii. Ninety or more undergraduate college credits and one year of classroom experience teaching children in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, or grades 1-2; or
     iii. A bachelor’s degree in any other academic subject and one year of classroom experience teaching children up to third grade.
   - All study plans must be completed within seven years.
   - Study plans must be approved by an accredited college.
   - A person who is study plan eligible must submit documentation to DOHMH indicating proof of enrollment in such college and specifying the time required for completion of training.

Please consult Article 47 of the NYC Health Code for additional details and reach out to your DOHMH consultant with any questions.

As a reminder, all lead teachers must complete the mandatory 2 hours of training in child abuse maltreatment identification, reporting, and prevention. To view information on this free training, please visit [www.nysmandatedreporter.org](http://www.nysmandatedreporter.org). In addition, all teaching staff members must complete 15 hours of training every 24 months, including the mandatory child abuse prevention and other subjects related to child health, safety, and early childhood development (Article 47 providers only).

*Please note that 3-K for All lead teacher qualification policy is subject to change.*

### Paraprofessional Qualifications

All paraprofessionals serving 3-K for All classrooms, including assistant teachers and teacher’s aides, must meet the “assistant teacher” qualifications described in Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

Per Article 47.13(f) of the NYC Health Code, paraprofessionals must:
- Be at least 18 years of age, AND
- Have a high school diploma or equivalent (GED).

As a reminder, all paraprofessionals must complete the mandatory 2 hours of training in child abuse maltreatment identification, reporting, and prevention. Information on this training is available at [www.nysmandatedreporter.org](http://www.nysmandatedreporter.org). In addition, all teaching staff members must complete 15 hours of training every 24 months, including the mandatory child abuse prevention and other subjects related to child health, safety, and early childhood development (Article 47 providers only).

*Please note that the 3-K for All paraprofessional qualification policy is subject to change.*
Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can I recruit qualified teachers?

You can access NYCDOE’s free Early Childhood Teacher Finder (ECTF), an online tool to assist you in making optimal teacher hiring decisions for your program. You can also post your teacher vacancies.

The ECTF includes two groups of teacher candidates:

1. Those who hold or will hold New York State teacher certification by the first day of school; and

2. Those who do not yet hold certification but who hold a bachelor’s degree and have passed a rigorous quality screening by NYCDOE staff.

The Office of Teacher Recruitment and Quality (TRQ) provides one-on-one support with hard-to-staff vacancies or any unique or complex hiring situations. If you have teacher vacancies, you are highly encouraged to attend all of the teacher recruitment fairs hosted by TRQ over the summer to meet early childhood candidates and set up interviews. If you have questions regarding staffing, you should email TRQ at teachnycprek@schools.nyc.gov or call 718-935-4627.

2. If a teacher is certified in a state other than New York, does he or she need to become certified in New York?

All teachers must be certified through NYSED. While NYSED has “interstate reciprocity” agreements with certain states, candidates who qualify for interstate reciprocity must still apply for and receive a Conditional Initial Certificate from NYSED in order for their certification to be recognized by the NYCDOE. Programs should consult the New York Interstate Reciprocity List to determine if the teacher may be eligible for certification in New York. Information on applying for the Conditional Initial Certificate can be found on the NYSED website.

3. Do I need to maintain proof of my staff’s certifications on-site?

Yes, you must maintain proof of staff licenses/certifications at your site and make them available upon request by your designated DECE Field Office.

4. Can faith-based organizations give preference to job applicants of the same religion or denomination?

Providers may, to the extent permitted by law, give preference to job applicants of the same religion or denomination.

5. What are some additional resources for best practices in staffing and hiring?

Your program has access to the Teacher Hiring Toolkit, a collection of resources about how to prepare a hiring team, connect with candidates, interview and select candidates, welcome new hires, and retain talent. If you have questions regarding staffing, you should email TRQ at teachnycprek@schools.nyc.gov or call 718-935-4627.
Security Clearances

To ensure the safety of students and staff, all staff must receive the appropriate security clearance.

😊 What You Need to Know

Security Clearance Overview

All staff members and volunteers who have direct contact with students, or who have access to confidential information about staff or students, must complete required eligibility clearance procedures prior to starting work. The chart on page 68 outlines your site’s clearance procedure requirements based on your site setting and funding.

There are multiple city and state agencies that administer security clearance procedures:

- NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE): Fingerprinting and security clearance for New York City Early Education Center (NYCEEC) staff members using the Personnel Eligibility Tracking System (PETS – more information below)

- NYC Department of Investigation (DOI): Fingerprinting for certain NYCEEC staff members

- New York State Education Department (NYSED): Fingerprinting for staff in district schools and charter schools through the TEACH system

- New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS): Administers the NY Statewide Central Register for Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR), which is a required additional security clearance procedure for all NYCEEC staff members; and conducts fingerprinting and background checks for all Group Family Day Care providers through a third party vendor, IdentoGO

You may not retain as an employee any person who refuses to participate in these procedures or who has not completely and truthfully reported information concerning his or her criminal convictions.
## Security Clearance Procedures By Provider Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider Type</th>
<th>NYDOE Fingerprinting Required?</th>
<th>NYC DOI Fingerprinting Required?</th>
<th>Tracking System</th>
<th>SCR Clearance Required?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Funded by DOE only</strong></td>
<td>Article 47 providers with NYCDOE contracts (no ACS contract)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>See additional guidance below</td>
<td>PETS</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Group Family Day Care providers with NYCDOE contracts (no ACS contract)</td>
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<td>NO (must be fingerprinted through IdentoGO)</td>
<td>PETS &amp; OCFS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Article 43 School-Based providers (not including charter schools)</td>
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<td>PETS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pre-K programs offered by charter schools</td>
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<td>NO</td>
<td>TEACH</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Article 47 Child Care providers with NYCDOE and ACS contracts</td>
<td>See additional guidance below</td>
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<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Funded by ACS only</strong></td>
<td>Article 47 Child Care providers with ACS contracts (no DOE contract)</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
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*The SCR is not yet supporting clearance for Article 43 providers. Providers will be notified once clearance requests can be submitted.*

### Additional Guidance For Article 47 Providers With DOE Contracts

Employees and volunteers in programs offered through a NYCDOE contract must be fingerprinted by the NYCDOE.

- Use PETS to track information about these employees and volunteers.
- In certain cases where a NYCDOE investigation shows a need for additional screening of a candidate, the candidate will also be required to be fingerprinted by the DOI. If a candidate in your program requires DOI fingerprinting, the NYCDOE will start the process of obtaining additional fingerprints and the DOHMH Bureau of Child Care will contact you with information about the steps you must complete before allowing the person to begin work in your program.

### Additional Guidance For Article 47 Providers With EarlyLearn NYC (ELNYC) and NYDOE Contracts:

If you have both an ACS ELNYC contract and a direct contract with the NYCDOE, you must follow the instructions below.

- All employees or volunteers who have contact with NYCDOE-funded students, or who have access to information about these students, must be fingerprinted by the NYCDOE. Use PETS to track information about these employees and volunteers.

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44 Child Care (Article 47)- Programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

45 Group Family Day Care- Programs operating with a NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Group Family Child Care License.

46 School-Based (Article 43)- Programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 43 School-Based Filing Certificate for Children Ages 3 through 5. These programs are regulated by Article 43 of the NYC Health Code.

47 EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All services.
• In certain cases where an NYCDOE investigation shows a need for additional screening of a candidate, the candidate will also be required to be fingerprinted by the DOI. If a candidate in your program requires DOI fingerprinting, the NYCDOE will start the process of obtaining additional fingerprints and the DOHMH Bureau of Child Care will contact you with information about the steps you must complete before allowing the person to begin work in your program.

• All other employees and volunteers must be fingerprinted by the DOI.

NYCDOE Fingerprinting Procedures and the Personnel Eligibility Tracking System (PETS)

NYCDOE Fingerprinting

The NYCDOE HR Connect Walk-In Center and the Office of Personnel Investigation (OPI) conduct background investigations for all staff hired by the NYCDOE and NYCDOE vendors. OPI will review fingerprint results, work history, military history, and other background issues that may affect clearance. If the NYCDOE’s security clearance assessment identifies one or more areas in the applicant’s background that requires additional review, a detailed background investigation may be required. Additional information regarding arrest and conviction information for both applicants and current employees can be found in Chancellor’s Regulation C-105.

For more information on how staff may obtain NYCDOE clearances and fingerprinting, please review the New Employee webpage.

Candidates must be listed on your program’s PETS roster before you send them for fingerprinting.

Personnel Eligibility Tracking System (PETS)

PETS is an NYCDOE web-based application that tracks and shares real-time information regarding the eligibility status of employees working in 3-K and pre-K programs. If your program receives direct funding from the NYCDOE, your program is responsible for using PETS on an ongoing basis to track background security information about your staff members and the status of their security clearance.

You must keep up-to-date information in PETS about all of your staff members at all times. Conditionally hired staff may NOT start working at your program until their security clearance is marked “Eligible” in PETS. If an employee is terminated or resigns, you must immediately change the roster status to “Inactive” in PETS.

You must immediately remove staff from contact with students, access to student information and/or, if appropriate, access to PETS, if the staff member is deemed ineligible based upon any notification generated by PETS, screenshot displayed in the PETS application or as otherwise directed by the DECE Field Office, NYCDOE Office of Personnel Investigation, or other designated office.

If you are an ACS ELNYC provider without a direct contract with the NYCDOE, use the procedures described in the chart at the beginning of this chapter to track clearance information about your program employees and volunteers. You are not required to use PETS.

DOI Fingerprinting

The DOI conducts fingerprinting and subsequent background checks on individuals who work at child care facilities, including those that are under contract with the City of New York.

Staff are screened for criminal convictions and/or pending criminal actions against the New York State and federal criminal record databases.

For more information on how staff may obtain DOI Fingerprinting, please review the DOI Fingerprinting Unit webpage.
NYS Fingerprinting for Group Family Day Care Providers (GFDC)

GFDC providers must receive background clearance through the process mandated by the NYS OCFS, which includes fingerprinting through a contracted vendor, IdentoGO. All GFDCs who are directly contracted with the NYCDOE to provide 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All must also be fingerprinted and cleared through the PETS system.

For more information on how staff may obtain fingerprinting through IdentoGO, please review the OCFS Division of Child Care Services Fingerprinting webpage.

NYSED Fingerprinting and the TEACH System

The New York State Education Department conducts fingerprinting on individuals with a NYS teacher certification. Candidates and employers can use the TEACH system to track information about an individual’s fingerprint and certification information.

For more information on how staff may obtain NYSED fingerprinting, please review the NYSED fingerprinting webpage.

Statewide Central Register (SCR)

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) maintains the New York State Statewide Central Register for Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR), which contains information on the existence of any indicated reports of child abuse and maltreatment.

Article 43 and 47 Providers

The NYC Health Code sections 43.13 and 47.19 require that all persons associated with center-based or school-based child care services undergo a check with the SCR prior to having any unsupervised contact with children. The requirement is not currently enforced for Article 43 programs because the NYS Social Service Law does not recognize your program as being eligible to receive SCR result information. If you are an Article 47 provider, you must repeat these checks every two years for each current employee.

If your program is also funded through Head Start, you must complete SCR checks and confirm SCR clearance for all prospective employees before they begin work or have any contact with your students.

You must submit an electronic request to the SCR about each of your prospective employees using the Online Clearance System. SCR will issue response letters directly to you confirming if they either do or do not find a person to be the subject of an indicated case of child abuse and maltreatment. If you receive a letter stating that one of your prospective employees is the subject of an indicated case of child abuse and maltreatment, you should inform the prospective employee of the results of the SCR clearance and notify DOHMH.

Refer to the NYC Health Code 47.19 for more information.

Special Education Itinerant Teachers (SEITs) and Related Service Clinicians

Related service clinicians deliver special education services such as physical, occupational, and speech therapy to students with disabilities as are required to assist students to benefit from 3-K and pre-K. Special Education Itinerant Teachers (SEITs) are certified special educators who work closely with assigned students on academic, emotional, and social skills as needed. Related service clinicians and SEITs are assigned to students by the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) and travel to students’ programs to provide on-site services during the school day in accordance with students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
State Central Registry (SCR) Clearance of Related Service Clinicians and SEITs: Compliance Requirements

Related service clinicians and SEITs must be allowed on-site and provided access to students to whom they are assigned by the CPSE to serve. Consistent with federal law and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), programs are prohibited from precluding children with disabilities from receiving the services specified in their IEPs.

Article 47 Providers

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene amended Article 47.19 of the NYC Health Code to include new requirements regarding the SCR clearance of related service clinicians and SEITs (referred to in the NYC Health Code as professional consultants). These changes provide that program directors must allow professional consultants sent through the Early Intervention program and/or the Committee on Preschool Special Education to have access to children receiving services, without requiring proof of consultants’ fingerprinting, SCR clearances, resumes, transcripts, references, physical examinations, or immunization records.

SEITs and Related Service Clinicians can provide support in two ways:

- Related service clinicians and SEITs should present the Notification of Professional Consultant Assignment to program directors on the first day of service. This notification will confirm that the consultant has been appropriately cleared and authorized to provide services to a particular child in your program.

- If the professional consultant does not present the Notification of Professional Consultant Assignment, you may not deny the consultant access to his or her assigned student(s). You must permit the consultant to provide services to students within line-of-sight supervision of a cleared staff member (SCR and PETS clearance).

All Providers

You should request that all SEITs and related service clinicians visiting your program show photo identification when entering your facility and provide the following information before working with any of your students:

- Name and contact information of the SEIT or related service clinician
- Name and contact information of the agency that employs the SEIT or related service clinician
- Name of the student(s) receiving services
- Anticipated frequency and timing of visits from the SEIT or related service clinician (e.g., every Wednesday from 10am–11am, etc.)

Finally, program directors or their designees are responsible for signing Session Notes/Service Forms as requested by the related service clinician or SEIT after the session.

If you have a concern about a SEIT or a Related Service Clinician working with a student in your program, you must contact the employing agency. Please contact the Early Childhood Policy team at EarlyChildhood Policy@schools.nyc.gov if you have any questions or require further guidance.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the most common positions or titles that the eligibility clearance procedures apply to?

Program staff positions or titles that must complete the procedures listed in this chapter include, but are not limited to, education directors, lead teachers, assistant teachers, teacher aides, and all staff who have contact with NYCDOE students or student records, including office staff, food service workers, custodial staff, social services workers, substitute teachers and consultants (e.g., an art or dance teacher who visits your program on a regular basis).
2. **Must substitute teachers be cleared through the processes described above?**

Yes, substitute teachers must be fully cleared through the processes described above before coming into contact with students in your program. It is your responsibility to confirm that substitute teachers working in your program have completed all necessary eligibility clearance procedures before beginning work.

The NYCDOE and DOHMH have collaborated with an agency called School Professionals to create a pool of substitute teachers that NYCEECs may access to cover temporary staffing needs. If you are working with School Professionals, you should follow all instructions provided by the agency to ensure that substitute staff members are appropriately cleared.

3. **Must volunteers be cleared through the processes described above?**

Yes, all volunteers must be cleared through the regular process, unless they are supervised at all times by a cleared staff member.

4. **How do I request information about a prospective staff member from the Statewide Central Register?**

If you are a licensed Article 47 provider, you must first register your site by completing the SCR Online Clearance System Agency Information Registration Sheet and faxing it to OCFS (if you have not yet registered). You will be emailed with a user name and password with which you will be able to access the Online Clearance System. Utilizing the Online Clearance System, you can request information on the staff member. If you are seeking clearance of an individual who is new to your organization or has never been cleared by the SCR through your child care program, you will need to pay a $25.00 processing fee.

Send your check or money order to the Office for Children and Family Services, Capital View Park, Attn: Bureau for Financial Operations, 52 Washington Street, Rensselaer, NY 12144 within 2-3 business days. After the SCR conducts its search, you will receive an electronic notification of the search result directly from the SCR. You should review the information provided by the SCR and keep a copy on file at your site. If your program operates pursuant to Health Code Article 47, and your staff member is found to be “Indicated” you are required to develop and implement a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Article 47 programs must submit the CAP to DOHMH within five days for approval.

Group Family Day Care staff are cleared through SCR directly by DOHMH.

If your site is not yet permitted by your licensing agency, please contact your designated DOHMH borough office for additional information on how to obtain data from the SCR.
Program Staffing and Class Management

It is mandatory that programs have consistent and sufficient supervision of students throughout the day to ensure safe and enriching environments in all classrooms.

3-K for All classrooms should refer to the Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Program Staffing and Class Management portion of this chapter.

What You Need to Know

Overview

Your program is responsible for ensuring a safe learning environment that supports positive experiences for your students, families, and program staff. Required staff-to-student ratios must always be maintained to ensure there are enough staff members present to provide line of sight supervision of all students. Program directors should train staff on how to appropriately supervise students.

Class Size and Staffing Ratio Requirements

To ensure classrooms are appropriately staffed and students are appropriately supervised, there are strict guidelines for staff-to-student ratios.

Child Care (Article 47) and School-Based (Article 43) Providers

- The maximum class size is 20 students.
- In classes of 18 students or less, one lead teacher and one paraprofessional are required.
- In classes of 19 or 20, one lead teacher and two paraprofessionals are required.
- You may not serve more students than allowed for on your DOHMH license (based on the size of your classrooms and/or facility).

Group Family Day Care (GFDC) Providers

- The maximum class size is 12 students.
- One lead teacher and one paraprofessional are required.
- The maximum class size is inclusive of:
  - 3-K for All and Pre-K for All students
  - Additional students provided services at the home (under school-age)
  - Your own children who may be present during DOE program hours (under school-age)
- If school-aged children (any child under 13 years old who is enrolled in Kindergarten or a higher grade) are present, only 2 school-aged children may be present at any one time.
- You may not serve more students than your GFDC license allows for.

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28 Child Care (Article 47) - Programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.
29 School-Based (Article 43) - Programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 43 School-Based Filing Certificate for Children Ages 3 through 5. These programs are regulated by Article 43 of the NYC Health Code.
30 Group Family Day Care - Programs operating with a NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Group Family Child Care License.
Class Composition

Programs With EarlyLearn NYC\textsuperscript{3} Students

Students funded directly by the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) and students funded through EarlyLearn NYC are all 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All students.

- Students funded directly by the NYCDOE and students funded through EarlyLearn NYC must be served in separate classrooms unless otherwise approved by the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) and New York City Administration for Children Services (ACS).
  - At the ACS and the DECE's sole discretion and on a case-by-case basis, programs may be allowed to consolidate one directly funded NYCDOE class and one EarlyLearn NYC class into one classroom.
- You must request and receive written permission from the Operations Director at your designated DECE Field Office, as well as your ACS Operations Manager.
- In these circumstances, you must maintain class ratios of 18 children to 2 adults or up to 20 children with 3 adults.

Programs With Private Pay Students

- Students funded directly by the NYCDOE and private pay funded students may be served in the same classroom, pending the approval of your DECE Field Office Operations Director.

Mixed Age Classrooms

- If you have been approved by your DECE Operations Director (along with other necessary approvals) to offer one or more of the following options, you may offer a mixed age class of three and four year old students:
  - Combining Pre-K for All students and 3-K for All students in one class
  - Combining your students funded directly by the NYCDOE and students funded through EarlyLearn NYC

- Combining your students funded directly by the NYCDOE and private pay students in the same classroom.

In any mixed age class, you must ensure that students’ birth years are contiguous. For example, students born in 2014 and 2015 may be in a mixed age class together. However, students born in 2014 should not be in the same class as students born in 2016. Additional requirements for mixed age classrooms include:

- Class size and ratio requirements must be based on the predominant age of the students in the class.
  - If the number of four year old students exceeds the number of three year old students, Pre-K for All staff to student ratio requirements apply; the maximum class size is 18 students with one teacher and one paraprofessional, or 20 students with one lead teacher and two paraprofessionals.
  - If the number of three year old students exceed the number of four year old students, 3-K for All staff to student ratio requirements apply; the maximum class size is 15 students with one lead teacher and one paraprofessional.
- NYCDOE expectations for a high-quality 3-K for All or Pre-K for All program, including meeting the developmental and instructional needs of students of different ages within the same classroom.

\textsuperscript{3}EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All services.
Single Gender Classrooms

Single gender schools and single gender day care centers may operate single gender classrooms after obtaining approval from the DECE.

For more information on operating a single gender classroom and to request approval, please email the DECE at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov.

Line of Sight Supervision

Students require constant supervision to ensure that their health and safety needs are being met. As such, you must ensure that line of sight (within view) supervision of all students is maintained by a cleared staff member at all times.

For more information on clearance requirements, please see the Security Clearances chapter of the Handbook.

A student should never be allowed to leave the classroom alone or be left unsupervised at any time.

If a staff member leaves the classroom to take a student to the bathroom, the remaining staff members must be able to adequately supervise the remaining students in the classroom. Staff should not have their back to students and should position themselves to maintain line of sight supervision at all times.

Guidance on Sufficient Supervision

In accordance with the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), sufficient supervision to protect students’ safety requires that staff strategically position themselves to observe students during both routines and play. Staff should be positioned to:

- See all areas where students may be located
- Move around as needed to keep a close eye on students
- Remain attentive to student’s basic safety needs

Staff should be sensitive to students’ need to play independently and in their own way, while recognizing that adult interactions with students during play are beneficial to extending students’ knowledge and understanding.

Meal and Rest Time Staffing Requirements

You must adhere to the required staff–to-student ratio requirements at all times, including during meal and rest time. At least one staff member certified in Early Childhood Education must be on-site and on-duty throughout meal and rest times. The regularly assigned lead teacher and paraprofessional are not required to be in the classroom during meal and rest times as long as:

- The staff-to-student ratios are maintained; and
- A certified teacher or administrator is on-site and on-duty in the program.

During meal and rest times ONLY, family engagement staff members may count toward fulfilling required ratios.
• For a class of 18 students or less, two instructional or family engagement staff members must supervise students.

• For a class of 19 or 20 students, three instructional or family engagement staff members must supervise students.

Instructional or family engagement staff members present during meal and rest times are expected to engage in positive interactions with students and actively supervise the classroom at all times.

**Staffing of Field Trips**

During field trips, students must be accompanied by staff at all times.

• Appropriate and adequate supervision must be provided throughout the trip.

• At a minimum, classroom staff-to-student ratios apply to field trips. The exact number of chaperones needed will vary depending on the type of trip and must be approved in advance by your designated DECE Field Office.

• No student may be left unsupervised during any phase of a trip; line of sight supervision must be maintained at all times.

• Article 47 programs only: You must designate a trip coordinator who will accompany students on the field trip and will be responsible for ensuring:
  — Overall student supervision
  — Accountability procedures
  — Staff oversight

*For additional information on field trip requirements, see the Field Trips and Neighborhood Walks chapter of the Handbook.*

**Education Director Onsite Coverage Requirements**

Education directors are responsible for the daily supervision of all staff within their program. Education directors are required to be present on site during program hours. If your program is co-located with another DOHMH-licensed child care program (e.g., a single organization with both an infant/toddler and a preschool in the same facility), your education director may oversee both programs (a single education director may oversee a maximum of two co-located programs).

*Should an education director need to be absent or off-site, please refer to FAQ #1 for additional information.*

**Child Care (Article 47) Providers**

• Your program must employ an onsite education director.

• If the attendance of your child care center is more than 40 children (of any age), the education director may not have teaching responsibilities, including acting as a substitute for an absent teacher.

• If the education director is overseeing two co-located programs, he or she may not have any teaching responsibilities (including acting as a substitute for an absent teacher), regardless of the number of children in attendance.
Education directors may only be assigned to one site; you may not share an education director across multiple physical locations.

**School-Based (Article 43) Providers and Group Family Day Care Providers**

- You must employ an onsite education director if one or more lead teachers are on a study plan.
- You are not required to employ an onsite education director if all of your lead teachers are fully certified in accordance with the requirements outlined in the Staff Qualification, Hiring, and Substitutes chapter of the Policy Handbook.
- If you are required to employ an onsite education director AND your site serves more than 40 children (of any age), the onsite education director may not have teaching responsibilities, including acting as a substitute for an absent teacher

**Substitute Teachers**

In the event that an assigned lead teacher or paraprofessional is absent, you must arrange for appropriate coverage.

Coverage options:

- Qualified substitute lead teacher
  - The required staff/child ratio in a classroom may be maintained with paraprofessionals for up to three days, under the supervision of a qualified onsite education director. If a lead teacher is absent longer than three days, a qualified substitute lead teacher is required.

It is your responsibility to confirm that substitute lead teachers and paraprofessionals working in your program have completed all necessary eligibility clearance procedures before beginning work.

- Qualified substitute lead teachers must have:
  - A Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood or a related field.
  - Completed the mandatory two hours of training in child abuse maltreatment identification, reporting and prevention, and requirements of applicable statutes and regulations.

- Qualified substitute paraprofessionals must:
  - Be at least 18 years old.
  - Have a high school diploma or equivalent (GED).
  - Have completed the mandatory two hours of training in child abuse maltreatment identification, reporting and prevention, and requirements of applicable statutes and regulations.
Substitute Teacher Plan Guidance

Your program should have a Substitute Teacher Plan in place to ensure that a qualified substitute lead teacher or paraprofessional is available in the event a lead teacher or paraprofessional is absent. Recommended substitute plans, to cover a vacancy at your program, are listed below:

- If your child care center has 40 or more children (of any age) in attendance, the education director **may not** have teaching duties, including acting as a substitute for an absent teacher. If your education director does not have teaching duties in another classroom, and your program has under 40 students (of any age) in attendance, your education director may fill in when either a lead teacher or paraprofessional (assistant teacher or teacher’s aide) is absent.

- For absences up to three days, you may designate an appropriately qualified paraprofessional to substitute for the lead teacher; your program must ensure that there are sufficient staff members with security clearances onsite to ensure that all classrooms fulfill staff-to-student ratio requirements.

- You may designate a qualified, cleared lead teacher from another age group to substitute for the lead teacher; your program must ensure that there are sufficient staff members with security clearances onsite to ensure that all classrooms fulfill staff-to-student ratio requirements.

- Your program may employ a floating staff member who is cleared and qualified to fill in when a lead teacher or paraprofessional is absent.

- You have an account with School Professionals or another temp agency that can provide qualified and cleared substitutes. If you do not have an account with a temp agency, feel free to reach out to School Professionals directly. You can find out about possible substitute staff and any rates by calling 212-916-0809.

For guidance on staffing long-term absences, please contact your DECE Field Office Operations Analyst.

Volunteers in the Classroom

Utilizing volunteers in the classroom, especially family members of students, can provide enhanced learning opportunities for students. In addition, providing family members with this opportunity to volunteer in the classroom can support their involvement in their child’s learning.
Guidance on Including Volunteers in The Classroom

Volunteers can provide valuable help in a classroom, and this is supported through a clear and shared understanding of a volunteer’s role and schedule. The following guidance can help classrooms effectively utilize volunteers:

• Match the volunteer to classroom needs
  — Ask the volunteer at the beginning of the year what he or she would like to do and check-in throughout the year; it is important to know how a volunteer feels about preparing materials or engaging with students.

• Agree upon a schedule
  — Decide how many days or weeks the volunteer can devote to the classroom.

• Review key protocols with volunteers
  — Emergency protocols, including fire or lockdown emergencies.
  — Volunteer-specific protocols, including the sign in/sign out process for volunteers, who the volunteer should call if he or she is going to be late, and where volunteers may store their personal belongings or take breaks.

• Offer specific strategies
  — If a volunteer is going to work directly with students, he or she should know what particular skills or knowledge students are developing and how he or she can help.
  — Volunteers should also be made aware of appropriate behavior guidance strategies for students, aligning with the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance.
  — For further information, please see the Student Behavior section of the Handbook.

Staff Compensation

Details on staff compensation can be found in the Pre-K for All Expenditure Guide. Staff salaries are based on employer-employee agreements.

You must maintain the following records for all employees charged to your budget:

• Time records
  — Time cards or daily sign-in/sign-out sheets, or electronic timekeeping
  — Time records must be dated, reviewed by the staff member and approved by the supervisor

• Payroll records

• If an employee works in a program or programs operated by you in addition to your 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All program, you must document all the employee’s time spent in the additional program(s).
Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Program Staffing & Class Management

It is mandatory that 3-K for All programs have consistent and sufficient supervision of students throughout the day to ensure a safe and enriching environment.

Class Size and Staffing Ratio Requirements

To ensure 3-K for All classrooms are appropriately staffed and students are appropriately supervised, 3-K for All staff-to-student ratio requirements are aligned with Article 47 of the NYC Health Code, as follows.

Child Care (Article 47) and School-Based (Article 43) Providers

• The maximum class size is 15 students.
  — Maximum class size may not exceed the classroom capacity listed on the program’s DOHMH permit or DOHMH school-based preschool instructional program filing certificate.

• One lead teacher and one paraprofessional are required.

In certain situations, the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) may allow for an increase in class size. Class size may be increased only upon approval of your DECE Field Office Operations Director and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. In these cases, additional staffing requirements may apply.

Group Family Day Care (GFDC) Providers

For GFDC providers, the maximum class size and staff-to-student ratio policies are the same for 3-K for All and Pre-K for All classrooms.

• The maximum class size is 12 students.
  — Maximum class size may not exceed the classroom capacity listed on the program’s OCFS license.

• One lead teacher and one paraprofessional are required.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is coverage required if an education director is absent or off-site?

Education directors may occasionally be off-site during program hours for professional or personal reasons (e.g., to attend a meeting or to care for a sick family member). For this reason, all programs should appoint a staff member to act as the interim education director when the education director is absent. The staff member appointed must meet the education, experience, and certification qualifications of a certified lead teacher or lead teacher whose application for certification is fully submitted to the State Education Department and pending approval.

General guidance for education directors who have teaching responsibilities:

In addition to arranging for an interim education director, a substitute teacher may be required during the education director’s absence to fulfill the education director’s teaching responsibilities and meet mandatory student-to-staff ratios.

General guidance for education directors who are not permitted to have teaching responsibilities:

If the interim education director is a lead teacher, he/she may continue to fulfill teaching duties for up to 3 consecutive days, or 10 total days throughout the year, while serving as the interim education director.
Frequent or long-term absences:

If an education director has an absence exceeding three consecutive days, the interim education director may no longer have teaching responsibilities during this absence. A substitute teacher may be required to fulfill the interim education director’s teaching responsibilities and meet mandatory student to staff ratios until the education director returns to work. To maintain continuity of leadership, a limit has been placed on the cumulative number of absences that an education director may have during the school year.

If an education director is absent for an annual cumulative total of 10 days on which services are provided, the interim education director will no longer be permitted to fulfill his/her regularly assigned teaching responsibilities on any future days when the education director is absent through the end of the school year. In cases where this provision would create an undue hardship, you must request written permission from your DECE Field Office to implement an alternative plan for oversight of instruction, family engagement, and other key program functions.

2. What should you consider in determining your preferred adult-to-student ratio for a field trip?

You should consider the following when determining adult-to-student ratios for field trips:

- Nature of the field trip
- Type of activities in which the students will be engaging
- Age of participating students
- Method of transportation
- Ability of the number of adults to maintain constant supervision of every student

3. May NYCEECs have one lead teacher or paraprofessional for a class in the morning hours and a different lead teacher or paraprofessional for the afternoon hours?

To promote a stable learning environment for students and families, the same instructional staff members must be assigned to a class throughout the full program day and week. The only exception is that the regularly assigned instructional staff members do not need to be present in the classroom during meal and rest time.

Classrooms funded directly through EarlyLearn NYC should follow all staffing provisions of their EarlyLearn NYC contract.
Aspire

Aspire is an online system designed to track and promote the education, training, and experience of program staff. Aspire enables the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) to determine whether staff at your program meet all required qualifications and assists program leaders in determining if their staff are qualified.

What You Need to Know

Aspire Overview

Aspire is New York’s registry for early childhood professionals and is a part of New York Works for Children (NYWFC), the state’s integrated professional development system for the early childhood and school age workforce.

All education directors, lead teachers, and paraprofessionals working at your program are required to create and maintain an active profile in Aspire. Aspire profiles track staff certifications and study plans (if applicable).

Aspire Requirements

You must complete Aspire profiles by adhering to the following steps.

1. All programs must create an organization account in Aspire.

2. All Education directors, lead teachers, and paraprofessionals must complete their individual professional profiles.

3. After required staff have completed their profiles, program leaders must verify their employment. To verify employment, the manager of the organization account must log in to Aspire and specify the official NYCDOE class code for the classroom in which each staff member is teaching.

4. If any information changes in a program’s organization or individual account throughout the school year, the program leader or individual is responsible for updating the account immediately.

Your designated DECE Field Office will provide you with information about the deadlines by which you must complete each step listed above.
Professional Learning and Staff Trainings

Professional learning supports sites in meeting the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards (PQS) and advancing student learning based on the NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC). Staff are expected to attend and participate in ongoing professional learning and mandated trainings to be prepared to meet the needs of students and families.

3-K for All classrooms should refer to the Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Professional Learning and Staff Trainings portion of this chapter.

What You Need to Know

Professional Learning and Staff Training Overview

Program leaders and teaching staff must participate in ongoing professional learning provided by the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) that supports and advances the PQS and the PKFCC. In addition, staff are expected to attend and participate in all trainings mandated by their licensing agency.

Pre-K for All Professional Learning

Ongoing professional learning is an opportunity to cultivate professional practice and leadership and improve the quality of instruction in the classroom.

To assist Pre-K for All program leaders and teachers in building upon evidence-based practices, as well as the innovative and promising work already being done in New York City pre-K classrooms, each Pre-K for All program is assigned to a professional learning instructional track. Each instructional track supports the implementation of the PKFCC and allows staff to delve deeper into content alongside expert facilitators and their colleagues. Pre-K for All programs will be assigned to one instructional track based on interest, need, capacity, and other factors. ACS EarlyLearn programs may be assigned to the Trauma Smart professional learning series in the 2018–2019 school year in lieu of a DECE professional learning instructional track.

For more information on the Pre-K for All Instructional Tracks, see the DECE’s website.

Pre-K leaders and teaching staff have the opportunity to participate in professional learning sessions citywide, focusing on their pre-K program’s instructional track focus. Pre-K leaders and teaching staff will have the opportunity to collaborate and engage with other leaders and teachers at each of these professional learning sessions.

During the school year, the DECE will provide 4 days of professional learning, through a combination of in-person sessions and online resources, varied by instructional track. Your program must provide at least 180 days of Pre-K for All services, including at least 176 days of instruction and 4 days of professional development for teachers. Your program may choose to offer Pre-K for All instruction on professional learning days, with substitute teachers. If your program opts to offer instruction on these days, the education director must develop a plan for substitutes. Please contact prekinstruction@schools.nyc.gov with any questions.

Pre-K leaders and teaching staff are expected to arrive on time and stay for the entire duration of professional learning sessions.

Pre-K for All leaders will be offered professional learning provided by the DECE, either alongside teaching staff or on separate days. Please contact prekinstruction@schools.nyc.gov with any questions.

For more information on the school year calendar, please see the Calendar and Daily Program Hours chapter of the Handbook.
Health and Safety Staff Trainings Mandated by Licensing Agency

You are responsible for arranging, providing (if necessary), and verifying required in-service training for all of your program staff.

As of June 2018, the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) has updated training requirements for Article 43 and Article 47 programs. Additional detail on these new training requirements will be forthcoming in communications from DOHMH and DECE.

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<th>Provider Type</th>
<th>Type of Training</th>
<th>Staff Requirements</th>
<th>Course Information</th>
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| All Providers | CPR and First Aid | • At least one staff member certified in CPR and first aid must be on-site at all times.  
• Staff must renew their certification every 2–3 years | • Programs should contact the American Red Cross and their licensing agency for course information |
| All Providers | Child Abuse and Mal-treatment Identification, Reporting, and Prevention | • Required for staff who have the potential for unsupervised contact with pre-K students (including volunteers)  
• Must be completed by new employees within 6 months of being hired and by all staff every 24 months | • Two hours of training that must be provided by a New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) certified trainer  
• For course information, please review the online course offered by OCFS |
| All Providers | Safety Plan & Emergency Procedures | • Required for all program employees and volunteers  
• Training must be provided within three months of hire and on an ongoing annual basis  
• For more information, please review the Safety Plans and Procedures chapter of the Handbook | • Training must be provided by program leadership  
• Programs should reach out to their licensing agency for assistance |
| All Providers | OSHA Blood-borne Pathogen | • Required for all staff involved in assisting students with toileting, including lead teachers and paraprofessionals  
• Training must be completed annually | • For more information on how to obtain Blood-borne Pathogen training, programs should contact their licensing agency |
| All Providers | Food Protection Certification | • Training must be completed by at least one staff member who oversees food storage, preparation, cooking, holding, and cleaning activities  
It is recommended that at least two staff members complete the training should one staff member be absent. | • For course information please review the information on the online course and exam issued by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) or an agency acceptable to DOHMH |
| All Providers | Epinephrine Auto-injector Training | • Training must be completed by at least two staff members  
• At least one staff member trained in administering Epi-pens must be on site at all times | • Programs should reach out to their licensing agency for assistance |
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<th>Provider Type</th>
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<td>All Providers</td>
<td>SIDS/safe sleep/shaken baby</td>
<td>• Required for all staff members</td>
<td>• Programs should reach out to their licensing agency for assistance</td>
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<td>All Providers</td>
<td>Allergic reactions</td>
<td>• Required for all staff members</td>
<td>• Programs should reach out to their licensing agency for assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Providers</td>
<td>Infection Control and Reporting Infectious Diseases</td>
<td>• Must be completed at least once by Lead Teachers and Paraprofessionals within three months of hire</td>
<td>• Online courses are available via:</td>
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<td>• The American Academy of Pediatrics</td>
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<td>• Infectious Control Training Solutions</td>
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<td>• VMD Health Care Training</td>
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<td>All Providers</td>
<td>Medication Administration Training</td>
<td>• Recommended for all Article 47 Day Care Centers*</td>
<td>• Programs should contact a Child Care Resource and Referral Consortium (CCRR) for training information</td>
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<td>• Required for all Article 47 Day Care Centers who serve one or more students requiring non-emergency medication administration</td>
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<td>Article 47</td>
<td>All Staff Bi-Annual Training</td>
<td>• All staff must complete 15 hours of training every 24 months (inclusive of 2 hours of Child Abuse and Maltreatment training) on subjects including children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, family engagement, mental health first aid, child health and safety</td>
<td>• Programs should contact their licensing agency for more information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providers</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Early childhood development</td>
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<tr>
<td>GFDC Providers</td>
<td>Lead Teacher and Paraprofessional Bi-Annual Training</td>
<td>• All lead teachers and paraprofessionals must complete 30 hours of training every 24 months (inclusive of 2 hours of Child Abuse and Maltreatment training, OSHA Blood borne Pathogen training, and Infection Control and Reporting training) on subjects related to:</td>
<td>• All trainings must be approved by OCFS as per OCFS policy</td>
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<td>• Childhood development</td>
<td>• Programs should contact their licensing agency for more information</td>
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<td>• Student health and nutrition</td>
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*Required for all EarlyLearn NYC programs.
Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Professional Learning & Staff Development

Professional learning supports 3-K for All leaders and teachers in meeting the expectations outlined in the Program Quality Standards for operating a high-quality program. 3-K for All staff are expected to attend and participate in ongoing professional learning and mandated trainings to be prepared to meet the needs of 3-K for All students and families.

3-K for All Professional Learning

Ongoing professional learning is an opportunity to cultivate professional practice and leadership and improve the quality of the classroom.

- 3-K for All professional learning will not be associated with Pre-K for All professional learning instructional tracks (Create, Explore, Inspire, Thrive). If your program also serves Pre-K for All students, please do not send your 3-K for All teaching teams to Pre-K for All trainings.

— The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) will provide a combination of in-person professional learning sessions and online resources for 3-K for All teaching staff and leaders. For the 2018–19 school year, the DECE will provide the following in-person professional learning opportunities:
  - 1 day of in-person professional learning in late August 2018 (Optional)
  - 1 day of in-person professional learning during the school-year (Spring 2019)

For the most up-to-date information on 3-K for All professional learning policy and opportunities please refer to e-mail and 3-K Readiness Bulletin communications.

Programs are encouraged to offer professional learning to 3-K for All staff.

- A maximum of 4 days of professional learning, inclusive of both DECE and program provided days, may count toward the required number of instructional days.

- Programs should ensure that training provided is either free of charge or fits within the 3-K for All budget. Please consult 3-K for All communications and email 3kforallinstruction@schools.nyc.gov for ideas on training topics and developmentally appropriate trainings.

Please consult your instructional coordinator and/or social worker for how to best assist 3-K for All teachers with their strengths and areas of growth. You can also contact the DECE at 3kforallinstruction@schools.nyc.gov with any questions.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I change my assigned Instructional Track?

An Instructional Track may not be changed during the school year. If you are interested in changing your program’s Instructional Track for the following school year, you should express this interest in the professional learning survey distributed by the DECE in the spring.
IV. General Program Oversight

a. Enrollment

b. Calendar, Hours, and Flexible Schedule

c. Attendance

d. Student Behavior

e. Family Engagement

f. Fees

g. Meal Services

h. Uniforms

i. Field Trips and Neighborhood Walks

j. Data Management Systems and Student Privacy

k. Program Assessments

l. Contract Extensions
Enrollment

New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) are required to actively participate in the Pre-K for All admissions process and welcome families who have received offers.

3-K for All classrooms should refer to the Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Enrollment portion of this chapter.

What You Need to Know

Overview

New York City offers every four-year-old child a free, full-day, high-quality pre-K seat through the Pre-K for All program. All families with children born in 2015 are eligible to begin pre-K in September 2019. This includes students with disabilities and students whose home language is a language other than English. Families may apply to full-day programs at District Schools, New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs), and Pre-K Centers using the same application via the pre-K admissions process operated centrally by the Office of Student Enrollment (OSE).

You are required to follow all processes outlined by OSE. Staff should be familiar with all aspects of the application, admissions, and enrollment process and assist families as necessary.

3-K for All classrooms should refer to the Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Enrollment portion of this chapter.

Half-day pre-K classrooms do not participate in the pre-K admissions process operated centrally by OSE. Programs operating half-day classrooms are responsible for complying with all half-day enrollment policies outlined by OSE.

For more information on half-day enrollment policy, please contact OSE at ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov.

Outreach

There is no designated outreach period. In order to develop interest and maintain enrollment in your program, you are responsible for recruiting families and informing them of the services offered at your site. You should continuously communicate with families in your community about the benefits and features of your program.

You are responsible for:

• Collaborating with the Outreach Team, the NYCDOE Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE), and OSE as necessary throughout the outreach period.

• Sharing information with families to help them navigate the admissions process. Families should be provided with information on how to access the Finder. Sharing, at a minimum, the following information about your program with families to assist them make an educated enrollment decision:
  — Curriculum and instructional approach
  — Schedule and daily activities
  — Languages spoken by staff
  — Family engagement opportunities

3-K for All classrooms should refer to the Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Enrollment portion of this chapter.
Enrollment Resources for Families

**Pre-K Finder:** Families can use the Pre-K Finder map tool for the most up to date information on pre-K programs.

**Pre-K Directory:** Families can use the Pre-K Directory for detailed information on all Pre-K for All programs. The Pre-K Directory is available online and in print in English and nine other languages. The Directory is posted online and hard copies are available at Family Welcome Centers, schools, and libraries.

**Pre-K Quality Snapshot:** The Pre-K Quality Snapshot is one tool that provides families with information about program quality. By providing a concise overview of different elements of each pre-K program’s quality, families now have more information about pre-K programs in an even more accessible format to help them make informed decisions for their children.

All outreach practices must be objectively fair and transparent to families and must align to the information in the NYCDOE outreach and enrollment materials, including the Pre-K Directory. You may not:

- Require an interview or implement a screening process before giving families information about how to apply.
- Discourage families from applying to other programs.
- Implement any outreach practices that discriminate against a child or family on the basis of actual or perceived: income, race, creed, color, sex, gender, national origin, citizenship status, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, or political belief.
- Implement practices that discourage families with special needs from applying or enrolling.
- Offer financial incentives to encourage families to apply for a seat.
- Make the delivery of a giveaway or raffle conditional on a family applying.

In order to ensure equitable access to 3-K for All and Pre-K for All children, the NYCDOE takes these policies very seriously. Evidence of your program’s violation of these requirements will result in further investigation and could lead to contract termination.

**Outreach Strategies**

You are encouraged to utilize multiple outreach strategies to respond to the needs of your community.

- Increase visibility throughout the community (e.g., post a 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All sign or banner on the outside of your site.)
- Develop and implement a marketing strategy
- Offer opportunities for families to visit the site to learn more about 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All, ask questions, and tour the facility
- Provide materials in multiple languages (e.g., signs, flyers, brochures) spoken by families in the community
- Build relationships (e.g., send representatives to talk with families at events in the community; connect with local organizations)
- Utilize social media (e.g., create a website, post updates on Facebook)
Application

The admissions process allows families to apply to full-day 3-K for All or Pre-K for All programs at District Schools, Pre-K Centers, and NYCEECs by ranking up to 12 programs on their application in order of preference.

You must be prepared to help families complete their 3-K for All or Pre-K for All application. Staff should become familiar with the application process to provide the necessary guidance to families.

Families may apply in one of three ways:

- Online
- Over the Phone
- In Person

Admissions Priorities and Offers

Admissions Priorities

The NYCDOE is committed to providing a pre-K seat of interest to every eligible child during the application period, but the number of applicants may exceed the number of seats available in some programs. Placement in a particular pre-K program is not guaranteed.

Students are considered for placement at each pre-K program on their application based on a priority order. Students who fall in the first priority group will be considered for placement first; students in the second priority group will be considered next; and so on, until all seats have been filled. If there are more applicants than seats available within a given priority group, seats will be assigned by random selection among applicants at the same priority level. If there are more current student applicants for a program than there are seats, all of these current students still have current student priority at that program — offers will be made first to current students in other priority order (i.e., current student with siblings first).

You are responsible for verifying the admissions priorities indicated by families (e.g., sibling priority). Staff must follow all requirements outlined by OSE.

Admissions priorities differ among program types. Please see the Pre-K Directory for a list of NYCEEC admissions priorities.

Offers

Each family that submits an application during the main application round will receive an offer to a Pre-K for All program.

- Each family will receive a single offer letter from the NYCDOE.
- In some cases, no seats may be available at the sites listed on a family’s application. To ensure that all students receive a placement, families may receive an offer to a site to which they did not apply.
- You must review OSE guidance on the list of students receiving an offer to your site via the Student Enrollment Management System (SEMS) or Pre-KIDS.

Registration

After offer letters are distributed to families, you are expected to contact all families with offers to your Pre-K for All program, invite them to ask any questions they have and encourage them to accept the offer
and register. Your program must hold a seat for any family that received an offer letter unless they expressly decline their offer or the registration deadline passes.

To accept their offer to your program, families are required to visit the site and provide the required documentation. 

*For a list of all required documentation, please review the Pre-K Directory.*

Your program staff members are responsible for completing the registration process for students who have been offered a seat at your site. This process is completed in Pre-KIDS and includes the entry of student biographical data and other information.

*Detailed information on the registration process will be provided by OSE before registration begins.*

If a family has concerns about providing any of the required information, please welcome the family into your program and contact the DECE at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov.

**Students who apply to EarlyLearn NYC programs must fulfill eligibility requirements in order to register.**

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**Waitlist Management**

Families are automatically placed on the waitlist(s) for any program(s) that they listed higher on their application than the program where they were offered a seat. Students are placed on each program’s waitlist in order of priority group. Your program must make offers to families in the order of the waitlist in the Student Enrollment Management Systems (SEMS) application tool. SEMS is designed to support programs in managing enrollment processes.

Families who want to be on additional waitlists may contact pre-K program(s) of interest to have their children placed on the waitlist(s), after waitlists open. If you collected information from interested families before the waitlist opens, you must add those students to the SEMS waitlist once it is available.

A step-by-step guide to managing waitlists in SEMS will be shared in advance of waitlists being made available.

**Students who apply to EarlyLearn NYC programs must fulfill eligibility requirements in order to be placed on a waitlist.**

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**Special Student Populations**

Every family with an offer must be welcomed and allowed to register. A student with an offer may not be turned away, regardless if:

- The student has a disability (stated or perceived)
- The student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), regardless of IEP recommendation
- The student’s or family’s home language is a language other than English
- The student does or does not have a permanent residence

If you have questions about whether your site has the ability, setting, and/or resources to support a particular student based on disability, language, or any other status, you should:

- Welcome the family;
- Allow the family to register;
- Contact the Division of Early Childhood Education at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov; and
- Prepare to serve the student while the issue is resolved.
Students whose Home Language is a Language other than English

The NYCDOE provides a range of program options to ensure that all children gain foundational language, literacy, cognitive, and social emotional skills, including children whose home language is a language other than English. Some programs are designated as Dual Language (DL) programs provide instruction in two languages (half in English, half in the target language), with the aim of enabling all children to become bilingual over the course of their education. These programs support children whose home language is a language other than English as well as English-speaking children who are interested in learning a second language. Other programs known as Enhanced Language Support (ELS) offer additional supports for children, and their families, whose home language is a language other than English. These programs incorporate the language other than English most commonly spoken by children and families, known as the target language, in a variety of ways. These may include the use of the target language during story time, music and movement, center time, or activities.

If a program offers both a DL classroom and a general education classroom, and families wish to apply to both options, they must list the program twice on their application. Programs designated as ELS offer target language supports throughout all classrooms.

Programs may have other options to support students who do not speak English at home. Programs should provide information to all families expressing interest in enrolling at the site about services and programs that meet a child’s specific linguistic needs.

Students with Disabilities

Special education services are available for children ages 3-5 who have disabilities or developmental delays that impact their ability to learn; these services are provided free of charge by the NYCDOE. Special education services include:

• Related services (e.g., physical therapy, speech-language therapy, etc.) – available to students in any District School, Pre-K Center, or NYCEEC pre-K program

• Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT) – available to students in any District School, Pre-K Center, or NYCEEC pre-K program

• Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS) – serves general education and special education students

• Special Class (SC) – solely special education students

NYCEECs With SCIS Programs

The Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSEs) will assign students with an IEP recommendation for a SCIS class seats throughout the school year. General education students will be offered seats in the SCIS classes through the pre-K admissions process.

• If a student with any IEP recommendation receives an offer for a general education seat in a SCIS classroom, please welcome the family and contact OSE at ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov.

• Even if all seats are not filled by the first day of school, please do not make offers for seats reserved for students with an IEP recommendation for a SCIS class.

NYCEECs Without SC or SCIS Programs

If a student with an IEP recommendation for a SC or SCIS receives an offer to your program and you do not offer the program recommended on the IEP, please welcome the family and contact OSE at ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov.
Students who have Limited Mobility and/or Require Medical Accommodations

Under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, students who have a disability and/or health condition that does not impact their ability to learn, but requires accommodations, such as medical administration and/or a building that is accessible, are eligible to receive accommodations so they may participate in school activities on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers.

It is important that your program follows the necessary steps for ensuring that students who qualify receive the appropriate accommodations.

- If a student has medical administration needs, collect all required medical forms (i.e., Medication Administration Forms) from the family.

For detailed information on how to serve students with medical needs, please see the Student Health chapter of the Handbook.

- If a student with an offer to your program has limited mobility, you must make reasonable modifications to the facility to allow the student to have access to the facility.

For more information on meeting accessibility needs, please see the Student Health chapter of the Handbook.

If you are unsure if your program can serve a student's particular medical needs or do not believe your site is accessible, do not turn the family away. Please welcome the family, allow them to register, contact the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov, and prepare to serve the student while the issue is resolved.

Students In Temporary Housing

Students living in temporary housing are provided with additional flexibility in certain aspects of the admissions, registration, and enrollment processes.

For more information, please see the Students in Temporary Housing section of the Handbook.

Please contact an STH Content Expert with any questions on the enrollment of students in temporary housing.

Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Enrollment

3-K for All programs must participate in the centralized admissions process and welcome families who have received offers.

Eligibility

Families with children born in 2016 are eligible to begin 3-K for All in September 2019. While families from all New York City districts and boroughs are eligible to apply, children living in Community School Districts 4, 5, 7, 16, 23 and 27, or with a sibling in the program, will have priority at most programs.

Please see below for additional information on the 3-K for All admissions priorities.

Outreach

The enrollment resources for families are different for 3-K for All programs. Families interested in applying to 3-K for All should utilize the enrollment resources described on page 94.
Enrollment Resources for Families

3-K for All Finder: Families can use the 3-K Finder map tool for the most up to date information on 3-K programs.

3-K for All Program List: Families can use the 3-K Program List for detailed information on all 3-K for All programs. The 3-K Program List is available online and in print in English and nine other languages. The Program List is posted online and hard copies are available at Family Welcome Centers, schools, and libraries.

Note: The Pre-K Finder and Pre-K Directory should be utilized by families interested in attending Pre-K for All programs only.

Application and Admission Process

Similar to Pre-K for All, the 3-K for All admission process allows families to apply to full-day 3-K for All programs at District Schools, Pre-K Centers, and NYCEECs utilizing the same application. Although the process by which students are matched to a 3-K for All program remains the same, the admission priorities have changed for some programs. Please see the 3-K Program List for a list of Pre-K Center, District School, and NYCEEC admissions priorities.

Please note that the 3-K for All application is separate from the Pre-K for All application.

Offers

Beginning in the 2019-20 school year, the NYCDOE will begin offering 3-K for All seats in Community School Districts 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 16, 19, 23, 27 and 31. Families who receive an offer will receive a single offer letter from the NYCDOE.

Note: If the NYCDOE is unable to make a family an offer, the DECE will automatically place the family on the waitlist for the programs listed on their application.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is the 3-K for All and Pre-K for All application available in multiple languages?

Yes, the online application is available in ten languages: English, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu. Interpretation services are available in 200+ languages when families apply over the phone or in person at a Family Welcome Center.

2. Can program staff assist families in completing their application?

Yes, family members, program staff, and other community organizations are welcome to help parents/legal guardians create email accounts and walk them through completion of the online application, as long as the parent/guardian is submitting his or her own information and using his or her own email account.

3. Can a student repeat 3-K for All or Pre-K for All?

Admissions and enrollment for 3-K for All, Pre-K for All, and kindergarten is based on year of birth.

- Children are only eligible to apply to and enroll in 3-K for All during the calendar year in which they turn 3 years old.
• Children are only eligible to apply to and enroll in Pre-K for All during the calendar year in which they turn 4 years old.

• Children are only eligible to apply to and enroll in kindergarten during the calendar year in which they turn 5 years old.

Therefore, children born in 2014 are only eligible for kindergarten (not public pre-K) in the 2019–2020 school year. Enrollment in kindergarten is not mandatory, but is strongly encouraged so that children have the time and supports needed to develop and adjust to learning in a more structured environment.

For the 2019–2020 school year, if a family wishes to withdraw their child born in 2014 from kindergarten and enroll in a private preschool program at their own expense, they may do so. Grade level placement, in this case, would be an agreement between a family and a private school. Children born in 2014 are not eligible to enroll in public pre-K during the 2019–2020 school year.

If a family wishes to re-enroll their 2014-born child in kindergarten during the 2019–2020 school year, they may do so at any time.

4. What is the Pre-K Quality Snapshot’s purpose, and what information is included?

The Pre-K Quality Snapshot supports families to understand different aspects of program quality to help them make informed decisions for their children. The Pre-K Quality Snapshot provides a concise overview of each pre-K program’s quality in alignment with the DOE’s research-based Framework for Great Schools and the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards. The Snapshot features data on aspects of pre-K program quality that we know from research support student learning and draws information from program assessments (ECERS-R/CLASS), the Quality Review (for district schools) and the NYC School Survey to present a multifaceted overview of every Pre-K for All program.

5. How often will the Pre-K Quality Snapshot be released, and how can families access it?

The DOE plans to make updated Pre-K Quality Snapshots available on an annual basis. The Pre-K Quality Snapshot will be accessible through the Pre-K Finder and through the School Quality Reports Search Tool.

6. Where can I find additional resources about the Pre-K Quality Snapshot?

For more information about the Pre-K Quality Snapshot, its purpose, and how it relates to your program, visit the Pre-K Resources section of the Pre-K Enrollment page. A detailed FAQ document and a technical guide for educators are available for program leaders on the NYCDOE’s InfoHub. Additional family resources are also available in the Pre-K Resources section of the Pre-K Enrollment page. If you have further questions about the Snapshot, reach out to your DECE Instructional Coordinator, Social Worker, or Operations Analyst.

Only the parent or legal guardian of the child may create an account and submit an application on his or her behalf.

If you assist a family in completing an application, you must ensure that:

• All account information is that of the parent/legal guardian.

• All applications submitted under a single account have the same legal parent/guardian.

7. What should I do if a family cannot come in by the registration deadline but wants to accept their offer?

If a family is unable to register by the deadline, but has contacted you to indicate that they would like to accept their offer, please make alternate arrangements to register the family on another date as soon as possible.
Calendar, Hours, and Flexible Schedule

3-K for All and Pre-K for All offers free, full-day, high quality pre-K, in accordance with the NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE) school year calendar and New York State Education Department (NYSED) regulations.

What You Need to Know

Days and Hours of Operation

Your program’s calendar and hours of operation must meet the Pre-K for All operational requirements listed below, unless otherwise approved in writing by your DECE Field Office.

Days Per Year

- You must provide at least 180 days of services, including at least 176 days of instruction and 4 days of professional development for teachers.
  - You may choose to offer instruction on professional development days with qualified substitute teachers.
- The DECE strongly advises tentatively scheduling make-up days in case you must close due to inclement weather. See FAQ #3 for more information and procedural guidance on the decision to close your program during inclement weather.

Days Per Week

- You must operate 5 days (Monday to Friday) in a typical week.
  - You may choose to schedule program hours on a Saturday or Sunday to account for days when your program is closed due to a holiday.
- You may request approval from your DECE Field Office to operate for 6 days per week in a typical week (Monday through Friday and either Saturday or Sunday). See "Flexible Schedule" below for additional details.

*Half day programs may not operate 6 days per week in a typical week.

Hours Per Day

- You must provide a minimum of 6 hours and 20 minutes and a maximum of 7 hours of Pre-K for All services each day.
- You may request approval from your DECE Field Office to operate for less than 6 hours and 20 minutes per day. See "Flexible Schedule" below for additional details.
  *Half day programs must provide a minimum of 2 hours and 30 minutes of Pre-K for All services each day.

Prior to the start of the school year, you must get approval of your program’s proposed calendar and hours of operation by submitting your proposal to your DECE Field Office via Pre-KIDS.

All 3-K and pre-K programs serving students funded through EarlyLearn NYC must also receive approval of their proposed calendar and hours of operation as instructed by ACS.

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EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All services.
**Flexible Schedule**

To ensure 3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs reach all communities and reflect the incredible diversity of our City, you are provided with more flexibility in scheduling program hours.

3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs can:

- Schedule a short break in the middle of the day for non-3-K for All and Pre-K for All activities.
  - Time spent on non-3-K for All and Pre-K for All activities during a short break cannot count toward the minimum hours of required instruction.
  - *For additional information on implementing a short break, please see the “Short Break” section of this chapter.*
  - *Not applicable to half day programs*

- Provide less than 6 hours and 20 minutes per day of instruction on a given day (Monday to Friday). However, you must:
  - Continue to satisfy the minimum weekly hour requirement of 31 hours and 40 minutes of instruction.
  - Provide a minimum of 5 hours of instruction each weekday (Monday to Friday).
  - *Not applicable to half day programs*

- Schedule programming for 6 days per week (Monday to Friday and either Saturday or Sunday).
  - If you operate for 6 days in a typical week, you must operate for a minimum of 216 days per year.
  - *Not applicable to half day programs*

- Schedule programming on legal holidays.

**Approval From DECE Field Office**

If you plan to implement a flexible schedule, you must:

- Request approval from your DECE Field Office to implement a flexible schedule. You should complete and submit an online Scheduling Policy Request Form by the DECE specified date. You will receive an email with the link to the online Request Form.

- Provide families with a copy of your proposed calendar and hours of operation at pre-registration.

*If your site includes classrooms funded directly by the NYCDOE and classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC, you must also request permission from your ACS Operations Manager if you plan to implement a flexible schedule in the classroom(s) funded through EarlyLearn NYC.*

**Short Break**

You can request approval from your designated DECE Field Office to schedule a short break in the middle of the day for non-3-K for All and Pre-K for All activities.

- The short break will not count toward the minimum operating hour requirement and will not be supported with government funds.
To ensure that all students, including students participating in the short break, receive the required 31 hours and 40 minutes of weekly instruction, you must:

— Extend the length of the school day beyond 6 hours and 20 minutes (up to 7 hours); or
— Provide program hours on a Saturday or Sunday to ensure that you have met the weekly minimum of 31 hours and 40 minutes in a typical week.

**Approval from DECE Field Office**

If you plan to implement a short break in the middle of the day for non-3-K for All and Pre-K for All activities, you must:

• Submit an online Scheduling Policy Request Form by the DECE specified date. On the request form, you will be asked to provide the following information:
  — Your proposed daily and weekly schedule
  — The position titles of the staff who will be supervising the short break
  — The proposed location of the short break
  — A description of the short break activity that will be provided

If your site includes classrooms funded directly by the NYDOE and classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC, you must also request permission from your ACS Operations Manager if you plan to implement a short break in the classroom(s) funded through EarlyLearn NYC.

**Parent/Legal Guardian Consent**

• No student can participate in the short break unless their parent/legal guardian provides written consent.

• You must request written consent from parents or legal guardians at pre-registration (or upon enrollment if the student enrolls mid-year).
  — Consent must be provided on the Parent/Guardian Consent Form issued by the DECE.
  — The consent form is also posted on the Resources section of the Vendor Portal in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Urdu.
  — You must maintain documentation on file of written consent from every parent/legal guardian.

**You must neither encourage nor discourage participation in the short break.**

**Length of Short Break**

• The short break must last for no more than 20 minutes.
  — This includes transition time into and out of the break.
  — If you would like to implement a break of more than 20 minutes, you must indicate this request on your Scheduling Policy Request Form.

**Supervision of Short Break**

• If one or more students enrolled in your program opt not to participate in the short break, you must:
  — Designate staff other than the program’s lead teacher and teaching assistant(s) to oversee the short break. The lead teacher and teaching assistant(s) must continue to provide instructional activities to students who participate exclusively in city-funded programs.
• If ALL students enrolled in your program participate in the short break, you are strongly encouraged to:
  — Designate staff other than the lead teacher and teaching assistant(s) to oversee the short break.

**Location of Short Break**

• If one or more students enrolled in the program opt not to participate in the short break, you must:
  — Use a space separate from the classroom for the short break. 3-K for All and Pre-K for All classrooms must be utilized only by those students who participate exclusively in 3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs.

• If all students enrolled in the program participate in the short break, you are strongly encouraged to:
  — Use a space separate from the classroom for the short break.

**Transitioning Students to and from 3-K for All and Pre-K for All Activities and the Short Break**

• You must ensure that your staff supports transitions between 3-K for All and Pre-K for All activities and short break activities in a developmentally appropriate way. Suggestions include:
  — Reviewing norms and routines prior to each transition
  — Using instructional supports such as visual schedules, songs, or other strategies to actively involve students
  — Planning transition activities into and out of the break that also support students in adapting to change in all settings
  — Scheduling transitions so that only a few students transition at a time
  — Ensuring wait times during the transition are less than 1–2 minutes

*Please contact your designated DECE Field Office for further guidance on transitions.*

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **Which days are considered a legal holiday?**

   The following holidays are designated by the federal government as a legal holiday:

   • Labor Day
   • Columbus Day
   • Veterans Day
   • Thanksgiving Day
   • Christmas Day
   • New Year’s Day
   • Birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.
   • Washington’s Birthday
   • Memorial Day
2. Can I close my program on religious holidays or other dates when the NYCDOE District Schools remain open?

You may choose to close your program for religious holidays or other events. In determining whether to close, you should take into consideration the cultural and religious backgrounds of the families you serve.

Prior to the start of the school year, you must provide families with an annual calendar that clearly indicates what days you will be open and closed. If you chose to close your program on a day on which the NYCDOE District Schools remain open, you should remind families at least one week in advance about the closure.

3. Can I close due to inclement weather or other events beyond my control? What should I consider if making the decision to close, and what is the process?

Yes, you may close due to inclement weather or other events beyond your control, and the safety of your students, families, and staff should be your highest concern in determining whether to close. It is strongly recommended that on days when the NYCDOE District Schools close, you also close your program.

You must have a policy in place for informing families and staff when your program is unexpectedly forced to close. You should ensure that the method of communication is effective for all enrolled families and the time of the communication provides adequate notice for staff and families.

If the unexpected closure brings the total number of scheduled days to less than 180 (based on a 5 day week) or 216 days (based on a 6 day week), you must schedule a make-up day and revise your calendar in PreKIDS to reflect the change. It is recommended that you tentatively schedule make-up days in case of inclement weather closures during the academic year.

All pre-K sites serving students funded through EarlyLearn NYC must also notify ACS of unplanned and weather emergencies. During times of inclement weather and City emergencies, EarlyLearn NYC programs should close in accordance with the Mayor’s Office declaring a “City Emergency” or the closure of all public schools. In the case of a Citywide Emergency, no follow-up documentation or reporting of the closure to ACS is required.

4. Is my program required to operate in June if we can provide at least 180 days of 3-K for All and Pre-K for All services from September through May?

Your program schedule must meet the needs of families in your community. If your program would like to close in May and not provide 3-K for All and Pre-K for All services into the month of June, you are required to receive approval from the Operations Analyst at your designated Field Office.

5. Is my program permitted to hold prayers or blessings during the 3-K for All and Pre-K for All day?

Your staff may not lead, require, organize, or call for prayer by students during the school day. This means that staff members may not pray with or in the presence of students during the school day. You must utilize a short break for any activity where school staff may lead, require, organize or call for prayer by 3-K for All and Pre-K for All students, as described above.

- For example, students may not be required to attend assemblies that include prayers or blessings, and any prayers or blessings conducted over a loudspeaker must be muted in 3-K for All and Pre-K for All classrooms.

- While your staff members may not lead, require, organize or call for blessings before a meal, they do not need to prevent students who wish to pray before meals from doing so.
6. Is my program permitted to use religious texts during the 3-K for All and Pre-K for All day?

Religious instruction is not permitted during 3-K for All and Pre-K for All hours and services must be delivered in a non-sectarian manner. You must utilize a short break for any activity that includes a devotional or doctrinal component, as described above.

Use of texts from religious traditions (e.g., the Bible, Torah, Qu’ran, etc.) as part of the 3-K for All and Pre-K for All instruction is limited as follows:

• These texts may only be used when at least three (3) different cultures or traditions are represented as part of a developmentally appropriate and secular education program that advances the New York State pre-K learning standards. Instruction may not promote or inhibit any particular religion, or religion generally.

• You must utilize a short break for any instruction that includes texts from a single religious tradition, as described above.
Attendance

To ensure students get the most out of 3-K for All and Pre-K for All services, programs must stress the importance of regular attendance.

What You Need to Know

Attendance Overview

Research has shown that students in regular attendance benefit most from the services offered in 3-K and pre-K. 3-K and pre-K is truly an irreplaceable time for students’ growth and development. Studies clearly demonstrate that a high-quality early childhood education provides students with stronger math, reading, language, and social-emotional skills going into elementary school. To ensure students receive this foundation to succeed in Kindergarten and beyond, attendance is critical.

By collecting attendance data, developing strategies for improving attendance, and proactively building a welcoming and engaging environment for families and students, you have the ability to improve student attendance at your program.

Clear attendance and communication policies, along with collaboration with families, are crucial to improving student attendance:

- Set out the attendance expectations and policies for absences and lateness, including what is considered excused, what documentation is required, and what families need to do when a student is absent, late, or must leave early.
- Your communications with families during orientation, family-teacher conferences, and via written/online communications should clearly articulate the expectation that students attend 3-K and pre-K on a full-time, daily basis.
- You should work with families to understand reasons for low attendance, discuss strategies to address those reasons and, where necessary, discuss the impact of low attendance on their children’s 3-K and pre-K experience. In particular, program leaders must carefully monitor and support the attendance of students involved in child welfare.

Please refer to the Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting chapter of the Handbook for more information on supporting students in child welfare.

Attendance Expectations at the Beginning of the Year

Smooth transitions into your 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All program lay the foundation for a successful year. Your program should be prepared to assist students and families with their transition into 3-K and/or pre-K.

Staggered Schedule

If appropriate for your families, you may establish a staggered schedule during the first week of school to help facilitate a smooth transition for students and families at the start of the year.

- Please view the DECE’s Beginning the Year webpage for more information.
- For further assistance with staggered entrance, programs should contact the DECE at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov.

33 Mapping the Early Attendance Gap: Charting a Course for Student Success. Attendance Works & Healthy Schools Campaign, September 2015.
• If families request additional flexibility in their child’s schedule at the beginning of the school year, you should work with the family to develop a schedule that meets the needs of the family and child.

— You should work with the family to support the student to attend for a full day schedule (6 hours and 20 minutes, 5 days a week or weekly equivalent).

Ongoing Responsibilities

You are responsible for setting policy, tracking student attendance, and conducting follow-up communication with families. Staff should be trained and have a clear understanding of their role in ongoing tasks related to student attendance.

Maintaining Accurate Records of Student Attendance

You must maintain accurate records of daily attendance for all enrolled students utilizing all of the following methods.

• Daily attendance must be recorded for each student on his or her Pre-K Attendance Card or an alternate card approved by your designated DECE Field Office.

— You are required to enter a “P” for present, an “A” for absent, and an “E” for excused absence. Excused absences, which are still counted as absences, shall include, but are not necessarily limited to:

  • Student illness (for more information on when students should be asked to stay home, please see the “Excluding Students Due to Infectious Illnesses” section below).

    - Any student who is out for three or more days due to illness must provide a note from a physician.

  • Family emergencies

  • Transportation or weather emergencies

— You should communicate to families what absences are considered excused and any documentation required.

Classrooms funded directly through EarlyLearn NYC must use the Roster Book.

• Daily attendance must also be entered in Pre-KIDS.

— Attendance must be entered and verified at least once per month.

— Data entered into Pre-KIDS must match the data collected on the 3-K and Pre-K Attendance Cards.

— You must submit copies of attendance records, signed by your education director, to the DECE Field Office within five days of the last day of the school year if not already submitted electronically via Pre-KIDS.

• A Daily Attendance Record Form must be filled out to include at minimum each student’s name and arrival and departure time. (required for Article 47 providers and recommended for Article 43 and Group Family Day Care providers).

Classrooms funded directly through EarlyLearn NYC programs must use the Web-based Enrollment System (WES) to input daily attendance.

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34 Child Care (Article 47) - Programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

35 School-Based (Article 43) - Programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 43 School-Based Filing Certificate for Children Ages 3 through 5. These programs are regulated by Article 43 of the NYC Health Code.

36 Group Family Day Care - Programs operating with a NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Group Family Child Care License.
Responding To Student Absenteeism

When a student is absent or regularly late, it is important that you communicate with his or her family to understand the reason for the absence and determine if the student and family require additional supports or services. Please note, you may not discipline a student for arriving late or prohibit him or her from entering the 3-K and pre-K classroom. Students and families must never be treated in a negative manner due to a late arrival. You must work with families to develop strategies for enabling them to arrive on time.

Unless a family has notified you in advance of an absence, you must call his or her family:

• Within an hour, on the first day of an absence
• On each day of additional absence

Automated calling systems may not be used as a substitute for calling families.

If you fail to reach a student’s family by phone, you should utilize other methods of communication such as email, text message, and letters to try to contact the family and, when necessary, emergency contacts.

• A log must be kept of all communications made to families regarding absences. If you are unable to contact a student’s family successfully, you must document that you have attempted to reach the family.

Frequent Absenteeism

Regular participation in 3-K and pre-K enables students to get the most out of daily learning opportunities. You should take a proactive approach and work with families of students who are frequently absent. In these cases, you should discuss the following with the family:

• The nature of the student’s irregular attendance
• Actions to be taken by the family
• Actions to be taken by staff
• Actions to be taken in the event the attendance problem continues
• The time of the next meeting to review the progress of attendance
• How the family can coordinate with other families in the program who can share the responsibility of pick-up and/or drop-off

Visit Attendanceworks.org for tips and guides that staff can share with families, including research about how attendance in pre-K predicts later academic progress.

Recurring Absenteeism and Discharge Review Conferences

In 3-K and pre-K, recurring absence is defined as:

• 10 consecutive non-excused absences
• 20 non-excused absences in a 4-month period

If a student accumulates a high number of excused absences due to illness, family emergencies, etc., you must work with the family to determine if additional supports are required to enable the student to attend on a regular basis. Supports may include assisting the family to:

• Access health care, including counseling services
• Find a more reliable source of transportation
• Access community resources

If a student’s absences reach recurring absenteeism thresholds you must:

• Report the case of recurring absenteeism in writing and by telephone to your designated DECE Field Office with the reason for absences, or with your efforts to determine the reasons for absences.
  — Documentation must include your efforts to contact the family every day the student is absent, including calling the family within an hour on the first day of a student’s absence.

• Request that the family come to your site for a Discharge Review Conference to determine if the student should be removed from the program in order to permit a student on a waiting list to be registered and enrolled in his or her place.
  — If the family cannot be reached via email, phone, or mail, you should make an attempt to confirm the safety and well-being of the student and document all of your efforts. Documentation must be sent to your designated DECE Field Office.
  — If you have reasonable suspicion that a student may be the victim of abuse or maltreatment, follow the procedures outlined in the Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting chapter of the Handbook.

• A DECE social worker must be present at the Discharge Review Conference. Contact the DECE Family Engagement team at prekfamilyengagement@schools.nyc.gov if you need assistance engaging a family for a discharge review conference or support planning a conference. No student will be discharged before the family is given an opportunity to explain the recurring absenteeism and without DECE social worker and Field Office approval.

• The following documentation is required for a student discharge and should be sent to your DECE Field Office:
  — Record of parent/guardian’s request for withdrawal or if the family cannot be reached, your documented efforts to determine the safety and well-being of the student.

Contact prekfamilyengagement@schools.nyc.gov if you need further guidance. EarlyLearn NYC program can contact their ACS team leader for further guidance.

**Strategies for Improving Student Attendance**

You must monitor and analyze student attendance data with the goal of developing interventions and strategies toward improving attendance at your program. Both long-term and short-term analyses of student attendance data can guide your attendance strategies.

**Analysis**

As part of your program’s regular review of program-level data, you should have a system in place that ensures program staff are able to identify:

• Cases where a student is approaching frequent absenteeism
• Cases of recurring absenteeism
• Classrooms with low and high attendance rates
• Other attendance patterns

Not applicable to classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC.
Programs with classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC should refer to FAQ #3 for additional requirements on when the program must conduct an analysis of the causes of low attendance.

**Improvement Strategies**

You should work with families in an effort to improve student attendance. Potential strategies include:

- Engaging families in the curriculum to demonstrate why daily attendance matters
- Clearly communicating expectations for attendance to families
- Having regular celebration events for classrooms with improved attendance
- Offering supports to overcome common barriers to attendance
  - Assistance in accessing health care
  - Assistance in finding a safe and consistent transportation route to the program
- Engaging families in identifying and addressing family and community issues that contribute to frequent absenteeism (e.g., students in temporary housing)
- Ensuring families have the opportunity to meet with program staff to discuss concerns families may have about participation in the program, and to brainstorm solutions to those concerns

If your program knows or has reason to believe that a medical, special education, or transportation issue is affecting a child's attendance, you should consider whether a referral to a community-based preventive services program is appropriate. You can identify such programs and services to which families may be referred through the [ACS Preventive Agency search tool](#).

**Students Involved in Child Welfare**

The attendance of students involved in child-welfare must be carefully monitored and responded to, so as to ensure child safety and well-being. Students involved in child welfare include:

- Children for whom the parent/guardian has been the subject of a report made by your program to State Central Register (SCR) and the case remains open; or
- Children for whom the parent/guardian has been the subject of a report made by your program to SCR and the case was substantiated; or
- Children in foster care.

Programs should monitor the status of cases they have called into SCR. Only the staff member who initially made the report is able to receive updates on the case via SCR and may do so by calling the Office of Safety First at 718-KID-SAFE with the SCR “Call I.D.” number.

**If you are unsure of the status of a case you have called into SCR, please proceed under the assumption that the case remains open.**

Additional requirements for tracking and responding to the absenteeism of students involved in child welfare include:

- The program director should assign a site-based staff member to monitor the attendance of students involved in child-welfare.
• Consistent with NYCEEC policy for all students, unless a family has notified you in advance of an absence, you must call his or her family within an hour, on the first day of an absence and on each day of additional absence. For students involved in child welfare, you must make a minimum of three attempts each day to contact the family.

• All outreach and communication attempts to the families of students involved in child welfare must be recorded in detail, including:
  — Date and time of communication  
  — Staff member who made the communication  
  — Method of communication (e.g. email, phone)  
  — Result of communication

• For a student with an open child welfare case, you must notify reportabusedece@schools.nyc.gov immediately if you fail to reach the family on the first day of absence or you are not satisfied with the outcome of your communications. Satisfactory communication from the family should include the following:
  — The reason for absence  
  — The child’s current whereabouts  
  — When the child will be returning to school

• For a student whose parent/guardian has been the subject of a substantiated report or a student in foster care, you must notify reportabusedece@schools.nyc.gov immediately if you fail to reach the family when the student has been absent for 3 consecutive days, or you are not satisfied with the outcome of your communications, as above.

• All communication to reportabusedece@schools.nyc.gov must include the full name of the student, the student OSIS #, their listed address, and the SCR “Call I.D.” number, if applicable. You will receive confirmation that the DECE has received your email. This confirmation email will provide you with additional guidance on next steps.

• The site-based staff member assigned to monitor the attendance of students involved in child welfare is strongly encouraged to build familiarity with each student’s attendance and personalize outreach efforts to the family. These efforts should be documented in detail.

Suspected Abuse or Maltreatment

If the outcome of outreach and communication gives any staff member reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment, the staff member must both make a report to SCR and the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE).

For more information on reporting suspected child abuse and maltreatment, please see the Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting chapter of the Handbook.

Programs must record the “Call I.D.” number and follow all reporting requirements outlined in the Child Abuse Reporting chapter of the Handbook. Programs may also be required to cooperate with an agent from the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS).

If at any time a NYCEEC staff member has reason to believe that there is an emergency or an imminent threat of danger to the child’s health and safety, the staff member must call 911.
Excluding Students Due to Infectious Illnesses

To promote student health, and avoid the spread of illnesses in school, your program may request that students with contagious diseases stay home until the symptoms are gone or until a doctor approves readmission into the program.

Families must report to the program within 24 hours any absences due to the following illnesses:

- Chicken pox, conjunctivitis, diarrhea, diphtheria, food poisoning, hepatitis, haemophilus influenzae type b infection, impetigo, measles, meningitis (all types), meningococcal disease, methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), mumps, pertussis (whooping cough), poliomyelitis, rubella (German measles), salmonella, scarlet fever, tuberculosis, or any other disease or condition which may be a danger to the health of other children. **Such disease or condition shall not include acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection.**

Excluding Students Due To Lice

To avoid the spread of lice and/or nits (eggs):

- Students who have lice must be excluded from your program for 24 hours after receiving treatment and becoming lice/nit free.

- Staff at your program should check the student’s head to see that the student is nit-free before readmission into your program.

- Students should be sent home if the family has not complied with the nit-free policy of the DOHMH Bureau of Child Care, even when a health care provider sends a student back with a clearance from a physician.

- **A note from a physician is not a requirement for a student who has lice to return to your program.**

The NYCDOE policy for school-age students, which states a student only needs to be lice free, is different from the DOHMH readmission policy to child care, which requires students to be nit-free as well as lice-free.

Bed Bugs

Bed bugs are not known to cause or transmit disease and the risk of person-to-person transference in school is very low. This is NOT a communicable disease. In case of the possibility of bed bugs:

- You should not exclude a student from attending your program or send a student home, nor does the student need to see a physician when there are bed bugs in the home.

Excluding Students Who Have Not Received All Required Immunizations

*For information on the immunization requirements of New York Public Health Law §2164 and DOHMH, please see the Student Health chapter of the Handbook.*

Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Attendance

To ensure children get the most out of 3-K for All services, programs must stress the importance of regular attendance and stress to families that their involvement creates lasting habits to support school success.

Attendance Expectations at the Beginning of the Year

Smooth transitions into 3-K for All programs lay the foundation for a successful year. As you develop plans to welcome children and families for the 2018-19 school year, the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE)
strongly encourages you to use a staggered schedule to help children and families adjust. You are strongly encouraged to invite a caregiver to stay with their child on the first and second day of school and on subsequent days as needed.

The DECE also strongly encourages programs to plan experiences for children and families that support the development of increasing familiarity with classroom routines and developing strong relationships with teachers and peers.

The schedule below is designed as a sample, assuming that you may choose not to operate your 3-K for All program on September 10 and 11, 2018 in observance of Rosh Hashanah. 3-K for All programs should make changes as necessary to meet the needs of their students, families, and staff. Please note that the recommended staggered schedule for 3-K for All is different from Pre-K for All and offers students and families additional time to adjust.

**Recommended 3-K for All Staggered Schedule: September 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 5, 2018</td>
<td>Two groups of 7-8 students attend in the A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st group from 9:00 – 10:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd group from 11:00 – 12:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 6, 2018</td>
<td>Two groups of 7-8 students attend in the A.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st group from 9:00 – 10:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd group from 11:00 – 12:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, September 7, 2018</td>
<td>Entire class attends for a shortened session of 2 hours and 30 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 12, 2018</td>
<td>Entire class attends for a shortened session of 2 hours and 30 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 13, 2018</td>
<td>Entire class attends for a shortened session of 2 hours and 30 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, September 14, 2018</td>
<td>Entire class begins the program’s full day schedule.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. *Can the schedule for an individual student be temporarily modified to support their development of positive behavior?*

You may not temporarily shorten the school day or otherwise modify the daily schedule of any student unless you have received advance approval from DECE and the voluntary, written consent from the student’s parent/legal guardian.

*Program leaders who consider using this strategy should contact the DECE Policy Team for more information by emailing EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov with the following subject “Request for modified schedule at (insert program name).”*

Prior to initiating the process for temporary schedule modification, programs must utilize the proactive measures, positive reinforcements, and responsive strategies from The Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance (see Appendix B) to address a student’s behaviors. Staff must document the supports and interventions that have been put in place, and their outcomes, as part of an evidence-based approach to behavior guidance.
As a prerequisite for the DECE's approval, a DECE social worker, program leader, and the student's parent/guardian must be in agreement that temporarily shortening the length of the student's program day is in the student's best interest and will help him or her develop positive behaviors. This will require an in-person meeting to discuss strategies for using a temporarily modified schedule as part of a comprehensive approach to positive behavior guidance.

For more information, please see the Student Behavior section of the Handbook.

2. What procedures should be followed if a family informs program staff ahead of time that the student will be absent due to a family vacation?

If a family informs you ahead of time that their child will be absent for more than 10 consecutive days due to a family vacation, international travel, etc., you should meet with the family prior to the student's absence.

• At this meeting, you should determine with the family if/when the student will be returning to your program.

• If possible, you should request documentation from the family providing confirmation of their return date and their contact information while they are away.

— If your program does not have a waitlist, the student should not be discharged and should be allowed to return to your program at a future date.

— If your program does have a waitlist, you should make a determination whether to allow the student to remain enrolled. In making this decision, the following should be considered:

• How long the student will be absent.

• How the student might benefit from the pre-K program upon his or her return and the number of days remaining in the school year upon his or her return (e.g. if the student will return late in the school year and have only a few weeks back before school ends, the transition may not work well).

• Potential benefit to a student on the waitlist.

Contact prekfAMILYengagement@schools.nyc.gov for assistance in supporting smooth transitions for both the student absent for an extended period of time and the students’ classmates.

3. When are EarlyLearn NYC funded classrooms required to conduct an analysis of the causes of low attendance?

When the monthly average daily attendance falls below 85 percent, an analysis of the causes should be conducted. The analysis should include:

• The pattern of absences for each student.

• The number of absences that occur on consecutive days.

• The initiation of family support, if the absences are the result of anything other than illness.
Student Behavior

Programs are responsible for using positive behavior guidance strategies to empower students to develop a positive self-concept, and intentionally guide students to interact respectfully and constructively with peers and adults in their community, and their environment.

What You Need to Know

Overview

Students who are engaged in active learning, who feel secure, supported, and valued are more likely to demonstrate respectful and constructive behaviors and engage in positive interactions. You should structure an environment and approach interactions in ways that build positive relationships with students and families. Students’ behavior should be guided in a positive way as part of the developmentally appropriate instruction taking place in the classroom.

Your program must implement positive behavior guidance and behavior management policies that align with the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) and Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance (see Appendix B), which is the guiding document on behavior management and discipline for students.

Please see Appendix B for the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance

Students may not be expelled or suspended. In addition, students may not be sent home early as a form of discipline or as a strategy to manage disruptive behavior in the classroom.

Your program must develop and implement strategies for responding to behavior that is disruptive to other students or unsafe for the student and/or others. Staff are responsible for documenting the supports and interventions that are put in place as part of an evidence-based approach to behavior guidance, instruction, and professional reflection.

Behavior Guidance Policy

Programs are required to establish a positive classroom culture and a written student behavior guidance policy that complies with the NYCDOE and ACS Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance in Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC Programs (see Appendix B).

Your program’s student behavior guidance policy must be communicated to families and staff at the start of the school year and be made available in the home language of the families your program serves. Your policy must reflect that:

- Any responsive measures and logical consequences used must relate to the student's behavior, be developmentally appropriate, and be handled without prolonged delay on part of the staff
- All acts of abuse are prohibited
- Room isolation is prohibited
- Denial of food is prohibited

All staff, including non-instructional staff, must receive a copy of the student behavior management policy and be trained on the policy at the beginning of the year.
Your program must also collaborate and communicate with families to develop strategies to build each child’s social, emotional and behavioral skills. Additionally, you should share best practices with families in culturally and linguistically responsive ways.

Positive Behavior Guidance Strategies

You must utilize the following practices and strategies throughout the school year in order to provide a rigorous and developmentally appropriate education:

1. Proactive Measures to Promote Positive Behavior

Prior to and in the beginning of the school year, you must develop and implement the following proactive and developmentally appropriate strategies:

   • Establish respectful, caring relationships
   • Plan curriculum that is flexible and responsive to students’ needs
   • Arrange and supervise the physical environment to support students
   • Communicate clear expectations for students
   • Use developmentally appropriate instructional strategies to establish a positive classroom culture
   • Plan for successful management of transitions

2. Positive Reinforcement to Promote Positive Behavior

Positive reinforcement acknowledges and motivates further positive behavior. It is important to let students know that they are making progress toward a desirable new skill and encourage their effort.

You must not use food for students exhibiting positive behaviors. Examples of developmentally appropriate ways to reinforce positive behaviors include:

   • Using social reinforcements such as praise and encouragement that provide meaningful and relevant feedback.
     — Praise should be specific and provide meaningful feedback, especially when the behavior is relatively new to the student (e.g., “You were very thoughtful to share the toys with your friend. He seems really happy that you included him in the game.”). Avoid more general feedback (e.g., “Good job”).
     — A high-five or thumbs-up are appropriate non-verbal reinforcements for behaviors that are clearly encouraged (e.g., the student has been working on sharing and you notice her sharing toys with other students from across the room; you catch her eye and give her a thumbs-up immediately following the positive behavior.).

   • Using activity reinforcements as a reward for desired positive behaviors, such as being able to choose a song or activity for the group or during center time.
     — There should already be room in the curriculum for following student’s interests or ideas for learning. These reinforcements are therefore a logical way to incorporate positive reinforcement into your program.

3. Responsive Strategies to Promote Positive Behavior

You are required to develop and implement strategies for responding to behavior that is disruptive to other students or unsafe for the student and/or others.
This does not apply to behaviors of intentional risk-taking necessary for learning new skills, such as walking on a balance beam or climbing a rope ladder during gross motor activities, which are appropriate with adult support and supervision.

All strategies for guiding students to appropriate behaviors should be implemented in a calm, consistent, and non-punitive way to support students' social and emotional development and learning.

Teaching staff should collaborate with a student’s family to help the student develop solutions to challenging situations and practice appropriate alternative behaviors, consistently and in various contexts. Your program should communicate with families throughout the process of positive behavior guidance to exchange information about strategies and progress.

Possible responsive strategies include:

- Understanding contributing factors
- Offering choices
- Redirecting or providing acceptable substitutes
- Supporting the child’s sense of security, self-regulation and self-soothing skills
- Limiting negative attention
- Logical consequences
- Replacement/alternative behaviors
- Modifications to program structures
- Additional special education support

More detailed information about these proactive measures, positive reinforcement strategies, and responsive strategies is available in the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance (see Appendix B).

In situations where your program needs more support to interpret or implement positive behavior guidance strategies, you should contact prekfamilyengagement@schools.nyc.gov.

**Required Documentation for Disruptive or Unsafe Behavior**

Through intentional observation and documentation of such behaviors, teaching staff may identify the situations that trigger disruptive or unsafe behaviors and should adjust their practices accordingly to mitigate against those triggers.

Your program staff must document instances of disruptive or unsafe behavior, including data that may identify the contributing factors to such behavior, and the responsive supports or interventions put in place by teaching staff, including the duration and outcomes of those interventions.

Examples of disruptive or unsafe behavior that should be documented may include:

- Consistently responding to transitions with crying, yelling, or non-compliance
- Running out of the classroom or building
- Consistently aggressive behaviors directed towards staff members or other students (e.g., kicking, hitting, biting)
Teaching staff should also work together with families to understand any additional factors contributing to a student’s behavior and to provide consistent behavior guidance strategies.

Documentation of student behavior and intervention strategies may include:

- Low inference notes
- Authentic assessment data
- Meeting notes from family interviews to discuss concerns
- A functional behavior assessment developed by a trained staff member

These and other types of documentation may be reviewed by the DECE to identify and provide extra support to your program in interpreting or implementing positive behavior guidance strategies.

**Behavioral Crisis De-Escalation and Intervention**

In the event that a student may enter a behavioral crisis and engage in unsafe behavior that poses a substantial risk of serious injury to the child and/or others, prior to calling 911, every effort must be made to safely de-escalate the behavior when possible using pre-determined strategies and interventions for addressing behavioral crises.

Programs must pre-determine the appropriate ways to manage students’ unsafe or disruptive behavior and consider how to safely de-escalate the situation.

The NYCDOE strongly recommends that you develop a behavioral crisis de-escalation plan. Elements of a behavioral crisis de-escalation plan may include:

- Strategies for de-escalating behavioral crisis situations;
- Locations in the building in which students in crisis may be safely isolated from others;
- Program staff trained in de-escalation techniques;
- Program and community resources available to the program and parents/legal guardians; and
- Details for how crisis de-escalation and response protocols are communicated to program staff.

Behavioral crisis de-escalation plans must align to the responsive strategies of the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance (see Appendix B), as well as any crisis de-escalation frameworks included in your program’s approach to creating a safe and supportive environment.

**Considerations for Individual Students**

Your program is encouraged to develop individual behavioral crisis intervention plans for students who often engage in unsafe behaviors. When doing so, your program staff must take into consideration the unique developmental level of the student and the student’s familiarity or relationship with responding staff when developing the strategies specifically for him or her.

For more information and additional resources please see the NYCDOE’s website and the additional resources section of the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance (see Appendix B).

**Training for Staff**

You must inform your program staff of, or collaboratively develop with them, your program’s behavior management policies and protocols for responding to children in behavioral crisis early in the school year.
Education directors should consider proactive training for staff in behavior crisis de-escalation techniques to proactively promote the developmentally appropriate instruction of students’ social-emotional learning and development of positive behaviors.

**Schedule Modifications**

Teaching staff must implement strategies such as those outlined in the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance (see Appendix B) to support a student in developing positive behaviors prior to considering any temporary schedule modification. A student’s schedule may be modified on a temporary basis only if all three of the following requirements are met:

- The use of a temporarily modified schedule must be in the student’s best interest, as part of a comprehensive approach to assisting him or her in developing positive behavior
- The program leader must receive advance, written approval from the DECE
- The program leader must receive voluntary, written consent from the student’s parent/legal guardian

As a pre-requisite for DECE approval, you will be required to provide documentation of the student’s behaviors, potential antecedents, previous intervention strategies that have been put in place by staff, and the outcomes of those interventions. See “Required Documentation for Disruptive or Unsafe Behavior“ and FAQ #3 below for more information.

ACS EarlyLearn programs must contact their ACS team leader before approaching the family or the DECE about a temporary modified schedule. ACS will review such requests on a case-by-case basis to ensure compliance with the requirements of Child Care Development Block Grant and Head Start.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **Who should I contact if I need help implementing positive behavior guidance strategies or have specific questions about students?**

   In situations where your program needs more support to implement positive behavior guidance strategies, you should contact the DECE Family Engagement team by emailing prekfamilyengagement@schools.nyc.gov.

2. **What are some additional resources my program can utilize when developing positive behavior guidance strategies?**

   The Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance (see Appendix B) provides additional information on implementing positive behavior management strategies.

   Additionally, the DECE uses the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool as one of two programmatic assessment tools. The CLASS tool provides resources and strategies to understand the kinds of interactions that happen in pre-K classrooms. CLASS provides a common language around effective, positive interactions in pre-K classrooms, and is a strong tool to provide professional development to teachers who need support with effective interactions that are aligned to the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance (see Appendix B). For more information about the CLASS tool, including regional trainings that are offered in New York City, please contact programassessment@schools.nyc.gov.

3. **Can the schedule for an individual student be temporarily modified to support his or her development of positive behavior?**

   You **may not** temporarily shorten the school day or otherwise modify the daily schedule of any student unless doing so is in the student’s best interest, and unless you have received approval from DECE and voluntary, written consent from the student’s parent/legal guardian.
As a pre-requisite for the DECE’s approval, a DECE social worker, DECE instructional coordinator, program leader, and the student’s parent/guardian must agree that temporarily shortening the length of the student’s program day is in the student’s best interest and will help him or her develop positive behaviors.

You will also be required to provide documentation of the student’s behaviors, potential antecedents, and intervention strategies that have been put in place by staff, and the outcomes of those interventions, if seeking approval to temporarily shorten a student’s school day.

If you are considering using this strategy, please contact the DECE Policy Team for more information by emailing EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov with the following subject “Request for modified schedule at (insert program name).”

4. Is the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance available in other languages?

Yes, the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance (see Appendix B) is available in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu on the NYCDOE’s website.

5. What should I do if I suspect (or know) that a staff member has engaged in corporal punishment or verbal abuse of a pre-k student?

Consistent with the 3-K for All and Pre-K for All contract and Chancellor’s Regulations A-420 and A-421, which are incorporated into the contract, corporal punishment and verbal abuse of students by staff members is prohibited. Program staff must prevent and report corporal punishment and verbal abuse as explained in the Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting chapter of this handbook. You must immediately report any case where a staff member has allegedly engaged in corporal punishment or verbal abuse of a student to both the DECE and the Special Commissioner of Investigations (SCI). Article 47 and Group Family Day Care staff must also be reported to the State Central Register (SCR) in accordance with New York State Social Services Law and Chancellor’s Regulation A-750. For more information, please see the Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting chapter of the Handbook.
Family Engagement

Proactive partnerships between families and staff in 3-K and pre-K establish a solid foundation for students’ success in Kindergarten and beyond.

What You Need to Know

Overview

Strong partnerships with families lay the foundation for on-going engagement in their student’s education. Your program must provide families with a warm and respectful environment. The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) requires that programs provide information to families throughout the school year. All program policies, communications, and services must be sensitive to the linguistic, cultural, and social-emotional needs of families.

Communication with Families

Programs are required to communicate with families before the school year begins and on an on-going basis. Teachers and staff should orient families to program policies, goals, and content so that they understand what their child is learning.

Supporting Students and Families as They Transition From Their Home Environment To a Classroom Setting

3-K for All or Pre-K for All may be a family’s first time in a structured classroom setting. Transitioning students from their typical home environment to a structured classroom setting can be both exciting and overwhelming for families. Below are some suggestions on how to best support students and families during their transition into your program:

- Ask families questions to help teaching staff understand how best to serve the needs of their child. Examples may include:
  - “Are there any special circumstances or important background information we should know in order to best serve your child and family?”

- Work with your program leadership and Family Engagement staff (if available) to:
  - Develop a plan for engaging and supporting families that leverages best practices and is tailored to their needs.
  - Promote professional learning opportunities for teaching staff and other family-facing staff as it relates to family engagement.

For more strategies to support children and families to successfully transition to your pre-K program, see the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards and the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance (see Appendix B).

Communication at the Beginning of the School Year

Please share the information below with families at the beginning of the school year. Information should be disseminated using various channels, which may include but is not limited to welcome orientations, electronic methods, postal mail, and backpacking letters home. Additionally, written materials should be shared in the preferred language of each family whenever possible.
Forms

Your program must provide the following forms and documents to families at the beginning of the school year to complete and return:

• Health Information
  — Child & Adolescent Health Examination Form (CH-205)
  — Additional Medical Forms (as applicable). For more information see the Student Health section of the Handbook.

• The Emergency Home Contact Card (Blue Card)

Information To Share

Additionally, it is important that families are provided with the following information about services at your program:

• General Operational Information
  — Program calendar and hours, identifying the first day of school and days when the program will not be in session
  — Pre-K Daily Class Schedule
  — Program contact information, including information on:
    • How program staff will communicate with families (e.g., newsletters, texts, emails, etc.)
    • How families can best communicate with program staff
  — A copy of the Pre-K for All Commitment to Families
  — A copy of A Parent’s Guide to Universal Pre-Kindergarten
  — Attendance Policy and Expectations

• Instruction
  — Information on the NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC) and/or the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (for 3-K for All programs) and how the curriculum your site utilizes advances and supports student learning
  — Information on your program’s curriculum

• Key program policies, including:
  — Meal services
    • Meals being served and general food policy, including information on food safety and allergies
    • Vendors utilized (if applicable)
      - For more information, please see the Meal Services section of the Handbook
  — Health Information
    • Immunization Compliance Requirements
    • Physical Examination Requirements
• How illnesses, injuries, and student allergies will be managed and communicated

  - For more information, please see the Student Health section of the Handbook.

— Safety Information

• Evacuation plan
• Fire and safety drills
• Volunteer/visitor policy

— Pick-up/drop-off timing and procedures

• Early drop-off and late pick-up policy
• Fees policy (only relevant for programs that provide services for a fee before/after DOE-funded program hours)

— Attendance Policy and Expectations

— Student behavior management policy (must align to the DOE and ACS Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance in Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC Programs (see Appendix B).

  • For more information please see the Student Behavior section of the Handbook.

— Clothing or uniform policy (if applicable)

  • For more information, please see the Uniforms section of the Handbook.

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**Welcome Orientation**

Providing a Welcome Orientation event at or before the beginning of the school year, or even before school starts, is a great way to set a warm tone with families and share key information about your program’s policies, expectations, and goals. The DECE strongly recommends that each program hold a welcoming or orientation event for families before the program begins or within the first two weeks of the school year.

It is *strongly encouraged* that you share the following additional information with families at a Welcome Orientation in ways that address the linguistic, cultural, and social-emotional needs of families:

- Information on the first days of school
  - Information about the transition into 3-K for All or Pre-K for All
  - Supports for coping with separation
  - How families can support their student and partner with teachers during this time

- Appropriate developmental expectations for three-year-olds or four-year-olds

- How your program plans to communicate with families (e.g. newsletter, texts, emails, etc.)

- Methods for how families can communicate with your program and inform your program about their preferred method of communication
Ongoing Communication

Programs must maintain communications with families throughout the school year to develop families’ capacity to enrich children’s academic, social, emotional, and behavioral skills that are foundational to learning. To that end, it is important that the following information be provided to families throughout the school year.

- **Updates on Student’s Developmental Progress and Learning**
  - Authentic Assessments
    - *For more information, please see the Authentic Assessments section of the Handbook.*
  - Positive Updates and Student Behavior
    - Your program staff members should keep families informed of their child’s development and when necessary enlist families as partners in implementing positive behavior guidance.

- **Extended Learning Opportunities**
  - *For more information, please see the Extending Learning to Home chapter of the Handbook.*

- **Health & Safety Incidents**
  - Where serious medical or safety incidents occur, your program is responsible for immediately notifying families

- **Meal Services**
  - Families must be provided with food menus on a regular basis

Your program must communicate with families by utilizing multiple methods of communication in order to ensure that families receive all program communications. Your program should also provide families with multiple ways to stay in touch with staff and encourage families to share information about their student and questions they may have on a regular basis. Methods of communication should support the linguistic, cultural, and social-emotional needs of families and take into consideration family preferences. These methods may include, but are not limited to:

- In-person conversations between staff and families at arrival and dismissal
- Emails and/or texts
- Through your website
- Through newsletters
- By phone
- At school meetings
- During family workshops, classroom celebrations, and other program events

*For more information or for questions on communicating with families, please contact prekfamilyengagement@schools.nyc.gov.*
Language Line Program

The DECE Language Line Program provides staff members at NYCEECs with access to over-the-phone interpretation service in over 200 languages. This is an important resource for NYCEECs and supports your ongoing efforts to serve students and families from diverse backgrounds, including those whose home language is a language other than English.

For an interpreter to assist you in communicating with your families:

- Dial 1-866-874-3972
- Provide your client ID: 572767
- Indicate the language you need translated
- Provide your program’s zip code

*This service is solely intended for use by 3-K for All and Pre-K for All staff members at NYCEECs. This line must not be shared with families or the general public.*

Please review the following resources to assist you in using this service:

- Information Sheet on how to use the Language Line
- 11 Tips for Working with an Over-the-Phone Interpreter
- Home Language Identification Card

If you have questions or need support with this line, contact the Language Line at 1-800-752-6096.

If you have additional questions about pre-K supports for students and families whose home language is a language other than English please email earlychildhood@schools.nyc.gov.

Family-Teacher Conferences

Family-teacher conferences are a time for deepening your relationships with families. These conversations provide an opportunity for teachers to collaborate with families and to discuss together how they can support their child’s learning and development. Conferences are a great time to discuss student progress and a child’s individual needs that build on the shorter casual conversations that you have with families daily.

Families should be offered at least three opportunities for family-teacher conferences throughout the school-year. You should strongly encourage families to participate in family-teacher conferences, as it is an important way to have conversations about their student’s learning and developmental progress.

When scheduling conferences you should consider the following:

- Your program should use authentic assessment data, including student observations, work samples, and Developmental Summary Reports, to plan family-teacher conferences.
- Allow approximately 20 minutes with each family to talk about their child’s progress.
- Family-teacher conferences should be scheduled at times that are convenient for families. Conferences may be held before, during, or after regular program hours. To schedule family-teacher conferences at times that meet families’ needs, you may:
  - Employ substitutes on family-teacher conference days to enable teachers to meet with families during program hours.
— Schedule a half-day of instruction for students on family-teacher conference days to enable teachers to meet with families during program hours.

• You may schedule a maximum of three half-days per year for this purpose. These days will be credited as regular instructional days in your program calendar as long as they are at least 3 hours in length. Please note: During a week when there is a half-day schedule, meal times must be covered the entire week by teachers or paraprofessionals.

Half-day programs are encouraged but not required to hold family-teacher conferences.

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<th>Guidance for a Successful Family-Teacher Conference</th>
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Strategies for planning a successful family-teacher conference include:

• Coordinating with other staff in the building such as directors and family engagement staff on early outreach and hosting family activities

• Utilizing A Teacher Guide to Parent-Teacher Conferences

• Advertising the family-teacher conferences by sending home invitations at least 10 days in advance.

• Setting up a greeting station for incoming families near the main entrance

• Providing families with a map of your program site (as needed)

For more information or for questions on family-teacher Conferences, please contact prekfamilyengagement@schools.nyc.gov.

Transitioning Families to Kindergarten

Your program must allocate time towards the end of the school year to support Pre-K for All families and children as they transition to Kindergarten. This must include sharing information on:

• The Kindergarten enrollment process

• The “Turning 5 Process” for families of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

In addition, the DECE strongly recommends that programs share information on:

• Kindergarten learning expectations;

• The Kindergarten school calendar and district school routines;

• Individualized goal setting for students’ transition to Kindergarten;

• Summer enrichment activities; and

• Local organizations (e.g., libraries) that can support parents in the transition to Kindergarten.

For more information on transitioning families to Kindergarten, please visit the Kindergarten Enrollment website.

For information on the cumulative folder and record transfer process, please see the Data Management Systems and Record Keeping section of the Handbook.
School Survey Overview

Every year, parents/guardians, teachers, and students in grades 6-12 take the NYC School Survey. The survey helps school administrators and NYCEEC program leaders understand what key members of their school or program’s community think about the learning environment and the quality of education children are receiving. The information captured by the survey is designed to support a dialogue among all members of a school or program’s community about how to make the school or program a better place for learning.

For 3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs, the NYC School Survey consists of the following separate survey instruments:

- The “Parent/Guardian Survey,” which can be filled out online or by hand
- The “Teacher Survey,” which is only available online

For more information about the NYC School Survey, visit the [nycschoolsurvey.org](http://nycschoolsurvey.org). Anonymous results from the Parent/Guardian Survey will be shared publicly and incorporated into each program’s Quality Snapshot and may be used along with other information to help the Division of Early Childhood Education understand program quality.

Each fall, you must designate a Survey Coordinator. The Survey Coordinator is the point person for all communications regarding the NYC School Survey. This request will come via the Early Childhood Bulletin. For more information on survey administration to teachers and parents/guardians, please see [nycschoolsurvey.org](http://nycschoolsurvey.org).

The NYC School Survey is completely confidential for parents/guardians and anonymous for teachers, so there is no way for anyone from the NYCDOE or individual schools or programs to know which people have or have not taken the survey. Please remember to uphold the confidential nature of survey responses and be careful not to interfere in any way with surveys that have been completed and sealed. For more guidance on ethical survey administration, please review the Survey Ethics Reference Guide on the [School Survey website](http://www.schoolsurvey.org).

### Strategies for Encouraging Families to Complete The Parent/Guardian Survey

- Distribute the surveys at program events that draw families or during drop-off/pick-up
- Remind families on your program’s website, in newsletters, or on social media
- Convey the essential role that survey feedback will play in supporting program improvement
- Make clear to families that the survey is completely confidential
Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can I increase family engagement in my program?

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<tr>
<th>Guidance on Increasing Family Engagement and Volunteering</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open new communication channels.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consider multiple ways to communicate with families (e.g., email, postal mail, texts). Not all families receive or see hard copy flyers or notes all the time.</td>
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<td>Be clear about how families can support in and out of the classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consider asking for the specific help that you are seeking (e.g., helping in the classroom, helping with field trips, working on home activities with their children, translating, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner and collaborate with families.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Keep parents or other family members involved when it comes to making decisions about their children's progress and school experience. Consider involving families in program decisions as well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Touch base frequently with your parents and family members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Remember to thank your volunteers at the end of the semester or school year (or the time period that they have committed).</td>
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Fees

3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs provide New York City families with free, full-day, high-quality early childhood programs. You are prohibited from charging families fees for these services.

What You Need to Know

Program Services

You can never charge families a fee for New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE)-funded 3-K for All and Pre-K for All services. Specifically, your program is not allowed to charge families for:

- Application and enrollment to the 3-K for All and Pre-K for All program
- Any services provided during 3-K for All and Pre-K for All operating hours (e.g., instruction, celebratory activities, and special events)
- Any materials and supplies (e.g., art supplies or paper)
  - Families may not be required to provide materials or supplies.
- Field Trips
  - The cost of all field trips must fit within the scope of your budget.
  - You should plan field trips in advance and identify all required funding in your proposed annual budget.
- Meals
  - You must provide students with a minimum of a lunch and a snack free of charge.

For information about permissible voluntary fundraising activities, see the “Fundraising” section of this chapter below.

Early Drop-Off and Late Pick-Up

You should establish clear expectations for families regarding drop-off and pick-up times. You should make it clear that families are expected to drop-off and pick-up their children within the specified time.

- You may charge a fee to families who consistently drop-off their children before 3-K for All and Pre-K for All hours begin and/or pick-up their child after 3-K for All and Pre-K for All hours have ended.
  - You must establish policies to ensure the adequate supervision of students beyond your program’s regular hours of operation should a family be late.
  - You must inform families of the policy and emphasize that children need to be dropped-off and picked-up on time.
  - If you plan to charge a fee in certain circumstances (e.g., when a child is picked-up more than ten minutes after program hours end), you must clearly communicate that to families.
- A family’s inability to pay a fee is not cause for removing or excluding a student from your program. Under no circumstances may you remove a student from your program for his or her family’s inability to pay any such fee.
Services Provided Before and After Program Operating Hours

You are allowed to offer services before and after 3-K for All and Pre-K for All hours. However, a family’s participation in these extended services is always voluntary.

- You may charge a fee for services provided before and/or after program hours.
  - You may not discourage enrollment or refuse registration to any student whose family does not plan to participate in any non-3-K for All or Pre-K for All services.

- If you offer services for a fee before or after program operating hours, you must communicate the following in writing to families:
  - Hours of 3-K for All and Pre-K for All and that they are free.
  - Hours of extended services and any related fee. You must remind families that these services are opt-in and further, that enrollment and registration are not contingent upon participation in any non-3-K for All or Pre-K for All services.

- If you offer extended services, you may be required to share the following with your Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) Field Office:
  - A roster of families/students participating in non-3-K for All or Pre-K for All services who also participate in city-funded programming.
  - Rates for any non-3-K for All or Pre-K for All services.

Please direct any questions about these requirements to your DECE Field Office Operations Analyst.

Fundraising

Fundraising consists of any activity related to the solicitation of money by your program or by families that will be used for program activities. You may make a broad appeal to all families for voluntary donations to offset the cost of program activities (e.g., field trips), but may not solicit donations from any single family. All students must receive equivalent services. No child may be denied participation in any activity due to a family not making a donation.

- All fundraising activities that involve 3-K for All or Pre-K for All students must be developmentally appropriate.

- Fundraising is a voluntary activity. All funds raised must be voluntary from families and your program’s messaging must not imply that contributions or participation in any fundraising activity is expected or required.

- A student/family must never be excluded from any activity for not providing funds.

- Only one fundraiser that is conducted during any part of the instructional day and that involves students is permitted each school year.

- Food served as a part of any fundraiser must meet the nutritional guidelines for students outlined in the Meals Services chapter of the Handbook.

- Items purchased with NYCDOE funds may not be sold or offered in connection with fundraising activities and students should not be charged for the use of these items.

- Costs incurred for fundraising activities are not reimbursable by the NYCDOE.
Per Chancellor’s Regulation A-610, the following fundraising activities are prohibited:

- The sale of tickets for children’s attendance at movie houses and theatres unless the project is directly connected with the curriculum.
- House-to-house solicitations of funds by children.
- The sale of raffle tickets to any children.
- Bingo or any other form of gambling.

The above is not considered a complete recitation of the NYCDOE regulation on fundraising activities and collection of money from students or Chancellor’s Regulation A-610.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **If my program operates a short break in the middle of the day, may I charge a fee for any services provided?**

No, you may not charge a fee for any services provided during the short break.

2. **What should I consider in establishing a late pick-up or early drop-off fee policy?**

The NYCDOE strongly encourages you to do the following when establishing a late pick-up fee policy:

- Develop a protocol for partnering with families to understand the reasons for late pick-up and perhaps coordinate alternate pick-up arrangements.
- Provide a “grace period” of at least 10 minutes before charging a fee.
- Charge fees only to families that meet your pre-determined and clearly communicated definition of “consistently late or early.”
- Establish a fee amount that is reasonable and not excessive.

Students may not be disciplined, suspended or expelled due to a family’s inability to pay a late fee.

3. **Can I ask families to donate classroom materials and supplies?**

Yes, you can ask that families make an optional donation of classroom materials and supplies. You must inform families that a donation is not required and that their child will be able to participate in all classroom activities with access to the same materials even if no donation is made. Under no circumstances may a donation be required for students to enroll in or attend your program.

4. **Can I charge a fee for school uniforms?**

No, but you may ask families to purchase uniforms. If you do request that students wear a uniform during program hours, you may not sell uniforms directly to families; families must purchase uniforms directly from the vendor. You must have provisions in place to assist if a family cannot afford to pay for uniforms. You must pay for and provide their child with a reasonable number of uniforms.

5. **Can I charge families a fee for a stepping-up ceremony or other special celebrations?**

No, you may not charge a fee or require families to purchase anything for a stepping-up ceremony or special celebration during program hours. If the stepping-up ceremony or special celebration is taking place outside of program hours, you may request a fee from families. However, in all correspondence with families you must indicate that this is an optional event and families are not required to pay a fee in order for their child to participate.
6. If my site serves students funded directly by the NYCDOE and students funded by EarlyLearn NYC via Child Care funding (Child Care and Dual Eligible programs), should I still collect the Child Care weekly fee?

Yes, you should collect the Child Care weekly fee. However, the fee may only be charged to those families participating in EarlyLearn NYC via Child Care funding. Please contact your ACS Resource Area with any questions.
# Meal Services

3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs must follow food standards to ensure that every student is provided nutritious meals.

## What You Need to Know

### Meal Requirements

Full-day programs must offer one of the following approved meal patterns to students to ensure that their nutritional needs are met:

- Breakfast and lunch or
- Lunch and a nutritious snack

Half-day Pre-K for All programs must offer, at a minimum, one of the following to students to ensure their nutritional needs are met:

- Breakfast or
- Lunch or
- Snack

*Classrooms funded directly through EarlyLearn NYC must follow all meal provisions of their EarlyLearn NYC contract.*

## Overview of Nutritional Requirements

The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) has adopted the guidelines of the New York State Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to set nutritional standards for meals served to 3-K for All and Pre-K for All students. In addition to following CACFP standards, you are required to follow the New York City Food Standards for all meals served. (The following meal components reflect required minimum quantities).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beverages: Overall Requirements</th>
<th>Water must be available to children at all meal and snack times and upon request throughout the day. No more than one 4oz. serving of 100% juice per day may be served to students. You may not serve students any beverages with added artificial or natural sweeteners.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Breakfast: Required Minimum Components | If served, breakfast must contain all of the following:  
- One serving of unflavored milk (fat-free or 1%) – ¾ cup  
- One serving of a vegetable/fruit or 100% Juice – ¼ cup or 4oz.  
- One serving of grain/whole-wheat or whole-grain bread– ½ slice per serving |
| Lunch: Required Minimum Components | Lunch must contain all of the following:  
- One serving of unflavored milk (fat-free or 1%) – ¾ cup  
- One serving of vegetables – ¼ cup  
- One serving of fruits or 100% juice – ¼ cup  
- One serving of grain/whole-wheat or whole-grain bread – ½ slice, ¼ cup pasta/grains, or ½ tortilla  
- One serving of meat or approved meat alternate |
Snack: Required Minimum Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Minimum Components</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If served, snack must include two of the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One serving of unflavored milk (fat-free or 1%) – ½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One serving of vegetable – ½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One serving of fruits or 100% juice – ½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One serving of grain/whole-wheat or whole-grain bread – ½ slice per serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One serving of meat/meat alternative – ½ oz.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Overall Requirements for All Meals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Requirements for All Meals</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• No food containing artificial trans-fat may be served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deep frying may not be used to prepare students' meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No fruit canned in light or heavy syrup may be served</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For more detailed nutritional requirements, see the CACFP Child Meal Pattern and the “New York City Nutrition Requirements” at the end of this chapter.*

**Providing Meals to Students with Dietary Restrictions**

Students with medical needs and/or food preferences may require food substitutions or meal pattern modifications to meet their dietary needs. It is important that you follow the guidelines below and understand what menu modifications are mandatory and/or permitted.

- Food substitutions are:
  - A food item from the planned menu that is replaced by another food of the same food component category (i.e., peaches replacing citrus sections).

- Meal pattern modifications are:
  - Changes to the menu which result in less than the minimum meal pattern requirements being met for food components (i.e., no serving of grain/bread is provided).

**Students With Disabilities**

Food substitutions and meal pattern modifications are mandatory to accommodate participants whose disability restricts their diet as specified in a statement signed by a licensed physician.

- Meal pattern modifications are only permitted if medically necessary for conditions such as diabetes or for potentially life-threatening food allergies.

- A medical order is required for meal pattern modifications and must describe:
  - The participant’s disability and how the disability restricts his or her diet
  - The major life activity affected by the disability
  - The food(s) to be omitted and the food(s) that must be substituted

**Non-Disabled Students**

Food substitutions are permitted but not mandatory to accommodate a non-disabled student’s food preferences, food allergies, or other health concerns.

- Programs should develop a written policy as to whether they will accommodate non-medical dietary requests.
Students with a doctor's note about lactose intolerance must have a substitute milk product made available to them.

In unique cases, meal pattern modifications are permitted, but not mandatory, to accommodate non-disabled students. In these cases, a medical order must be provided and include:

- The student’s medical or other special dietary need which restricts his or her diet
- The food(s) to be omitted and the food(s) that may be substituted

In all cases, families may opt to provide meals for their student. Please see FAQ #1 for more information.

Managing Food Allergies

Programs must have a process in place to identify any children with food allergies. Upon being notified that a student has allergies, programs should take the following steps to collect information and plan collaboratively with the student’s family and physician to support his or her needs:

1. Request that parent/guardian(s) complete the Allergies/Anaphylaxis Medication Administration Form (AAMAF)
2. Maintain all documentation in a secured location (e.g., director’s office)
3. Staff should collaboratively develop an Allergy Response Plan with students’ parent/guardian(s) and physician. The plan should include the following information:
   a. Allergen(s) to avoid (e.g., nuts, certain food groups)
   b. Procedures the program and family will follow to reduce the risk of exposure
   c. Range of symptoms the student exhibits when exposed to allergen(s)
   d. When and how to administer emergency medication
   e. When to call 911, if necessary
   f. Appropriate food substitutes/meal pattern modifications if applicable
4. All staff in the program must receive training on prevention and response to allergic reactions. Staff must also be trained on the individualized Allergy Response Plan and emergency care procedures for any child who will be in their care. Information on student allergies must be made available to all staff that come in contact with the student, in a manner that respects student privacy. For example, a list of children's allergies may be posted in each classroom in a location that is only accessible to staff members.

For more information on handling medical emergencies, refer to the Safety and Security: Plans and Procedures chapter of the Handbook. For more information on medication administration, refer to the Student Health chapter of the Handbook.

Menus

On a weekly or monthly basis, you must share a menu with families to provide details about the daily meals and snacks to be served to students.

It is important that your menu is culturally diverse and meets the needs and preferences of students and families.
Menus must:

- Contain a sufficient amount of detail to be helpful for families.
  - Example: Instead of “fruit,” you should include detail such as “sliced apples.”
- Be distributed home to families in advance and posted prominently at your site.
  - Example: If you prepare your menu on a monthly basis, you should distribute menus to families in the last week of the preceding month.
- Accurately reflect the food that will be served with the note explaining that changes may be made based on what is fresh and available/in season.
- Be provided in the home language spoken by the family whenever possible.

**Promoting Learning during Meal Time**

Meal time is an opportunity for staff members to promote students’ progress in approaches to learning, social-emotional development, healthy habits, fine motor skills, and language development. To facilitate this learning, meals and snacks should be served family-style and provided in an environment conducive to interaction between staff and students.

During meal time, staff should:

- Sit with students
- Model healthy eating habits, such as showing enthusiasm for trying new foods
- Promote positive social interactions; students should be encouraged to talk during meal times
- Support students, as needed, to develop skills to feed and serve themselves independently

Students have a role in managing meal time and can participate in distributing supplies, serving themselves, and cleaning up after the meal is finished.

- Instructional staff members are encouraged to eat the meals and snacks served by your program alongside students in order to model healthy eating habits.

- **Due to allergy concerns and other dietary restrictions, staff members may not share foods brought from home with students.**

*For additional guidance on staffing requirements and expectations during meal time, please see the Program Staffing and Class Composition chapter of the Handbook.*

**Food Safety and Sanitation Requirements**

Your program must adhere to the following food safety and sanitation policies in accordance with New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) policies and guidelines, defined by the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R). Failure to prepare, store, and serve food in a safe and sanitary manner may lead to harmful health consequences for students. The following requirements are applicable to all program staff (e.g., kitchen staff and teaching staff). You must follow these guidelines in addition to guidance provided by your licensing agency:

**Food Storage**

- All food should be stored at the proper temperatures in a clean and sanitary environment.
• Dry or canned food is to be stored in insect and rodent-proof containers with tight lids.

• Keep food out of the danger zone for temperature (food should be kept at a temperature lower than 40°F or above 140°F).

• Expiration dates are to be monitored and food should not be served or kept beyond the expiration date.

**Meal Service**

• Hands should be thoroughly washed before wearing new gloves and after handling food.

• To prevent the contamination of food, food handlers should use single-use disposable gloves.

• Proper serving utensils are to be rust-free, clean and sanitized.

• Food that leaves the kitchen or food storage areas should be covered and maintained at proper temperatures when transported.

• Food moved to serving areas should be discarded after meal service and may not be re-served.

**Clean-Up and Sanitation**

• All food contact surfaces should be properly cleaned and sanitized before and after meal service.

• To clean and sanitize tables or soiled surfaces:
  — Food spills on tables should be cleaned with a soap and water solution.
  — After cleaning, use a spray bottle containing sanitizing solution made up of one capful of bleach per one gallon of water to sanitize tables.
  — The bleach-water solution should be allowed to sit for at least 10 seconds before being wiped dry.
    • Note: Allowing the solution to sit for at least 2 minutes and allowing the table to air dry is preferable.
  — Sponges cannot be used for sanitizing tables because they soak bacteria away from the surface of the sponge, which then cannot easily be reached by a sanitizing agent.
  — A separate paper towel is required for each table.

**Hand Washing Practices after Meal Time**

In accordance with ECERS-R38, the following hand washing practices should be followed by students and staff after meal times:

1. Moisten hands with water and apply liquid soap to hands.

2. Rub hands together, away from the water stream, vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for 20 seconds (students can sing “Row, row, row your boat,” twice).

3. Rinse hands, and dry with individual paper towels that are not shared.

4. The paper towel should be used to turn off the faucet when done.

5. Throw paper towel in waste basket.

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38The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R) is an observational tool used to assess early childhood learning environments. The assessor observes the pre-K classroom and looks for specific indicators of quality across the following areas: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure.
Sanitizers should not be used as a substitute for hand washing, as sanitizers are not as effective at eliminating pathogens. If sanitizers are used, hands should be washed as soon as possible thereafter using soap and water.

**Food Protection Certificate**

In order to ensure that food is served in a safe manner, you must have at least one staff member who holds a Food Protection certificate issued by DOHMH or an agency acceptable to DOHMH. The staff member must be on-site to supervise all food storage, preparation, cooking, holding, and cleaning activities, whenever such activities are in progress.

The Food Protection course is free and available on the DOHMH website in English, Spanish, and Chinese. You are responsible for the cost of the final exam required to receive the certificate.

**Food Served on Special Occasions**

Food provided on special occasions such as holidays and birthday celebrations must:

- Include a healthy option such as fresh fruit and/or vegetable slices
- Be served with water as a beverage option
- Be served at the same time as lunch or snack; your program’s food must also be served

The DECE strongly recommends that programs choosing to serve sweets/desserts at special occasions do so in moderation and offer child-sized portions. Inform families in advance if sweets/desserts will be served on a special occasion and provide families with the option not to have these foods served to their child.

You must develop a program policy on whether families will be allowed to provide food to your students on special occasions. If you choose to allow families to provide food, your policy must include the following:

- That families must provide a list of ingredients included in the food to ensure the health and safety of students with dietary restrictions.
- That families must provide permission in advance allowing their child to eat food provided by families of other students.

**Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Meals**

3-K for All programs must follow food standards to ensure that every student is provided nutritious meals.

**Meal Requirements**

3-K for All programs must offer one of the following approved meal plans to 3-K for All students to ensure that their nutritional needs are met:

- Breakfast and lunch, or
- Lunch and a nutritious snack

To meet the nutritional needs of 3-K for All students, the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) strongly encourages all 3-K for All classrooms to provide students with breakfast, lunch, and a snack during the school day. Programs receiving reimbursement from the New York State Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) will be able to obtain reimbursement for all three meals/snacks.
Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can families provide meals for their children?

Yes, families can provide meals as long as they have been informed that the program is providing a healthy meal and snack for their child at no cost. If a family prefers to provide meals for their child, you are responsible for ensuring that the student’s food is properly refrigerated, and that the family is informed of age-appropriate nutritional guidelines.

If a family prefers to provide a meal and/or a snack for their child:

- You should request a note from the student’s family indicating that the student will be provided with a meal and/or snack from home.
- The note should state that you, the program, are not responsible for providing the meal and/or snack since the family intends to provide it on a daily basis.

**Guidance on Family Provision of Meals**

The DECE recommends that you encourage families not to send food in with their child for the following reasons:

- Students may expand their food preferences by trying different foods.
- If the meals are served family style, the student can choose how much and what he or she wants to eat.
- Your program’s meals may be more nutritious.
- Meal time is more cohesive when all students are eating the same meal. If one student brings in food, others may request to do the same, increasing the difficulty of serving a family style meal.

2. Are there any restrictions on where you can purchase food?

The DECE does not place restrictions on the food vendor(s) that you utilize. However, you are responsible for ensuring that all meals and snacks served to students meet the nutritional requirements and fit within your budget.

3. What are some additional recommended best practices to implement during meal times?

DOHMH has developed a [Nutrition and Physical Activity Best Practices](#) document that can be referred to for recommendations on meal time best practices.

**New York City Nutrition Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulation</th>
<th>Article 47 Child Care Programs&lt;sup&gt;40&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>New York City Food Standards (Required of all programs)</th>
<th>New York State Child and Adult Care Food Program (if participating)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beverages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do not serve beverages with added sweeteners, whether artificial or natural.</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serve only 100% fruit juice.</td>
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<sup>40</sup> Child Care (Article 47) - Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Meals Prepared At The Center</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limit total sodium per day to 1,700 mg or less. Breakfast can contain no more than 425 mg sodium, snacks no more than 170 mg sodium, lunch no more than 600 mg sodium, and dinner no more than 600 mg sodium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve at least 19 grams of fiber per day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limit total fat to no more than 35% of total calories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit saturated fat to less than 10% of total calories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve a minimum of two servings of fruits and vegetables per meal for lunch and dinner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve a minimum of five servings of fruits and vegetables per day for programs serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs serving meals on more than five days per week: Offer a minimum of five servings of non-starchy vegetables weekly at lunch and at dinner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not deep fry foods.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Food Purchased For Meal Service**

<p>| Serve low-fat or non-fat yogurt that contains no artificial sweeteners. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Serve items that contain no more than 480 mg sodium per serving. | ✓ |   |
| Serve sliced sandwich bread with no more than 180 mg sodium per serving. Bread must be whole wheat/whole grain and contain 2 or more grams of fiber per serving. | ✓ |   |
| Serve other baked goods (such as dinner rolls, muffins, bagels, and tortillas) with no more than 290 mg sodium per serving. | ✓ |   |
| Serve cereal with no more than 215 mg sodium per serving and at least 2 grams of fiber per serving. | ✓ |   |
| Serve cereal with no more than 6 grams of sugar per serving. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Limit sweet grains served at breakfast and snack to no more than twice a week. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Do not serve fruit canned in syrup. Serve canned fruit in unsweetened juice or water. | ✓ |   |
| Serve canned and frozen vegetables and beans with no more than 290 mg of sodium per serving. | ✓ |   |
| Serve canned and frozen seafood and poultry with no more than 290 mg of sodium per serving. | ✓ |   |
| Serve canned beef and pork and luncheon meat with no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving. | ✓ |   |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Serve portion-controlled items (such as breaded chicken, chicken nuggets, frozen French toast and waffles) with no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving.</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Serve salad dressings with no more than 290 mg of sodium per serving.</strong></th>
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<td>✓</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Serve sauces with no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving (except soy sauce).</strong></th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Purchase snacks, such as crackers, chips and salty snacks, with no more than 200 mg of sodium per serving.</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Purchase grains (such as granola bars, cookies and muffins) for snacks with no more than 10 grams sugar and at least 2 grams fiber per serving.</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Do not use artificial trans-fat. Do not store, distribute or use it to prepare any menu item.</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Food Served At Celebrations</strong></th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Do not serve beverages with any added sweeteners, whether artificial or natural.</strong></th>
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<td>✓</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Give nutritional guidelines for food and drink brought into the child care center to parents.</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>✓</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Serve healthy options, like fresh fruit, leafy green salads and/or vegetables slices, at special occasion celebrations.</strong></th>
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<td>✓</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Serve water at all special occasion celebrations.</strong></th>
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<tr>
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</table>
Uniforms

Programs can request that 3-K for All and Pre-K for All students wear uniforms.

What You Need to Know

Uniform Policy

Programs may request that students wear a uniform during program hours. If you request that students wear a uniform, you must adhere to the following policies and procedures:

- You may ask families to purchase uniforms for their child.
- You may not exclude or penalize a student whose family would prefer that their child not wear a uniform.
- No student may be denied a uniform because of economic hardship.
  - You must develop a plan to obtain uniforms for families who demonstrate that they are unable to purchase them.
  - For any student whose family cannot afford to pay for a uniform, you must purchase the uniforms for them directly from the vendor.
  - You must purchase a sufficient number of uniforms for that student.
  - Costs for these uniforms may not be charged to the 3-K for All or Pre-K for All budget and will not be reimbursed by the NYCDOE.
- You cannot collect fees for uniforms directly from parents; parents must purchase uniforms directly from the vendor.
- You must inform families about the uniform policy when describing your program (e.g., at outreach events and registration) and ensure families receive written notice about this policy with enough time to purchase the uniform or request that you either provide the uniform or grant an exemption. The written notice must:
  - Describe and/or enclose a photograph of the uniform and explain the purpose, expectations, and benefits of the uniform policy.
  - List the range of costs for each item of clothing.
  - Advise families that:
    - They must purchase uniforms directly from the vendor.
    - They can purchase clothing that satisfies the uniform requirement at any vendor or store of their choice.
    - If they cannot afford to buy a uniform, they can request that you provide a uniform for their child.
    - They can request an exemption from the uniform requirement.

Students may not be sent home, excluded, disciplined, or penalized in any way if they fail to wear a uniform to your program.
Uniform Wear

You must select a developmentally appropriate uniform that aligns with the intended goals of your uniform policy. You should select a uniform that is durable, easy to care for, and cost-effective.

In addition, uniforms must NOT:

• Consist of clothing that poses a health and safety hazard or that is disruptive to the education process.
• Require girls to wear skirts. You must offer the option of wearing pants.
• Contain offensive slogans or pictures.
• Contain religious symbols or text.

— Except if the name of your program has religious text references, which may be displayed as text only, absent any religious symbol.
Field Trips and Neighborhood Walks

Field trips are an instructional strategy used to provide students with hands-on opportunities to apply and deepen learning outside of the classroom. It is important that all New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) field trip policies are followed to ensure that students are safe and gain the most from any off-site experience.

3-K for All classrooms should refer to the Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Field Trips and Neighborhood Walks portion of this chapter.

What You Need to Know

Overview

All field trips require written parent/legal guardian consent and should be planned to ensure the health, safety and adequate supervision of all students at all times.

All field trips and neighborhood walks must:

- Contain an educational component supporting the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) (for 3-K for All) or NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC) (for Pre-K for All), align to the current unit of study, and be developmentally appropriate. Examples of appropriate field trips include:
  - Exploring plants at the Botanical Garden.
  - Learning about community careers at your local police station, post office, or fire station.

- Fit within the scope of your budget
  - You must budget for field trips in advance and identify all required funding in your proposed annual budget.
  - You may make a broad appeal to families for voluntary donations to offset the cost of a field trip, but you may not solicit donations from any single family.
  - No student may be excluded from a trip if this or her family cannot make a donation.

Students requiring assistance may not be excluded from field trips or neighborhood walks. You should plan to support students with disabilities to participate in all activities.

EarlyLearn NYC programs must follow ACS guidance and requirements for field trips and neighborhood walks.

Field Trips Involving Transportation

In some cases, you may need to provide students with vehicular transportation (e.g., a bus) to take them to an off-site location. If you choose to transport students as a part of any trip, you are required to adhere to the following policies:

- All students under five years old or weighing 50 pounds or less at the time of the trip must ride in Child Safety Restraint Systems (car seats).
  - Families may not be asked to provide car seats to use on private buses.
  - You may not purchase car seats to use. Car seats must be provided and installed by the private bus operator.

EarlyLearn NYC – Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All services.
• You are responsible for securing an appropriate bus vendor for field trips.
  — Programs are not entitled to use NYCDOE Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) contracted buses for field trips.

• Your program may not provide more than three field trips involving transportation in a given school year.

• Under no circumstances may students utilize public transportation to get to or from an off-site location.

• Travel time either to or from a field trip location must not exceed one hour (one way).

• Transportation of students must be in compliance with all applicable federal, state, local, and NYCDOE laws, rules, and regulations. See FAQ #3 below for additional details.
  — If you transport students with your program’s own vehicle at any time, you must maintain Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance. See FAQ #2 for additional details.
  — If you retain another company to transport students at any time, you must ensure that the private company maintains Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance. See FAQ #2 for additional details.
  • All vehicle operators must be 19-A certified as per the NYSDMV Bus Driver Certification Unit and Article 19-A of the NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law. Drivers must carry license and certifications with them at all times while transporting students.

• You must maintain a daily transportation log of students placed aboard vehicles documenting:
  — Names of students transported
  — Arrival and departure dates and times
  — Name(s) of transportation staff
  — Identifying information for transportation service

• You must maintain daily transportation logs for at least six months, and make them available for inspection by the DOHMH upon request.

The NYCDOE recognizes that the updated car seat requirements may present logistical and funding challenges in arranging bus transportation for field trips. The DECE strongly encourages you to utilize neighborhood walks and push-in visitors as an alternative to field trips requiring transportation.

For more information on push-in visitors see FAQ #6 below.

Approval from the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE)

Prior to taking students on a field trip involving transportation, you must receive approval from your designated DECE Field Office.

• To receive approval, you must submit a Field Trip Authorization Form at least two weeks prior to the proposed field trip to your designated DECE Field Office

• The following documents must be completed and submitted with your Field Trip Authorization Form:
  — Motor Vehicle Liability insurance for Bus Vendor or Provider
  — 19-A Roster of Active Drivers for Bus Vendor or Provider
  — DECE Car Seat Verification Form signed by a representative of the Bus Vender or Provider
  — 3-K for All Only: One Toileting Plan per field trip
Neighborhood Walks

The DECE strongly encourages you to utilize neighborhood walks to provide enriching opportunities for students.

Neighborhood walks are a valuable instructional strategy for deepening students’ connections to the curriculum and the community. Teaching staff can use these opportunities to engage students in noticing details of, or changes in, their environment. Examples of neighborhood walks include excursions to:

• Observe local buildings and landmarks, collect natural artifacts, or study transportation
• Visit helpers in the community, such as a local grocery store, fire station, or doctor’s office
• Visit nearby museums, theaters, and libraries

Safety Considerations

• The distance of a walk should not exceed ½ mile (about 10 blocks) from your facility.
• Plan a walking route that avoids large avenues, busy streets, or throughways.
• Ensure that students are accompanied at all times during a walk. You are strongly encouraged to provide a minimum adult-to-student ratio of one adult to four students.

Parent/Legal Guardian Notice and Approval

If you plan to take students on a field trip involving transportation or a neighborhood walk, you must:

• Notify students’ parents/legal guardians at least two weeks in advance of any planned neighborhood walk or field trip
• Prior to each field trip, obtain written permission on a parental/legal guardian consent form that includes, at a minimum, all information contained on the NYCDOE Parent Notification/Consent Form (see pg. 10-11).
• If neighborhood walks are to take place on a regular basis (e.g., trips to an off-site playground), you only need to collect one parental/legal guardian consent form for neighborhood walks taking place at that location.
  — Indicate the proposed schedule of neighborhood walks on the consent form.

Student Supervision

You must ensure that students are accompanied at all times during field trips and neighborhood walks. No student may be left unsupervised during any part of a field trip or neighborhood walk.

• The exact number of chaperones needed for each field trip will vary depending on the type of trip, but there must be, at minimum, the same ratio of adults to students as required in the classroom.
• Children should never be left unsupervised with an adult chaperone (e.g., a parent volunteer) who has not received all required background checks.
• On the Field Trip Authorization Form, you will be required to indicate your proposed adult-to-student supervision ratios.
  — The DECE Field Office will review all proposed staffing of field trips involving transportation. If needed, the Field Office will contact you for additional information.
A system for maintaining accountability for students during neighborhood walks and field trips must be detailed in your written safety plan and include, at minimum, procedures for:

- Conducting name-to-face headcounts:
  - Before leaving for a field trip
  - Upon arrival at the field trip location
  - At periodic times throughout the field trip
  - Before departing
  - Upon arrival back at your facility

- Providing students with a piece of clothing and/or other item that identifies and provides contact information for your program.
  - A student or family’s name should not be included in the contact information.
  - Examples include:
    - T-shirts with your program name and contact information
    - Stickers displaying your pre-K program name and contact information

You must also appoint a trip coordinator who will be responsible for:

- Assessing supervision needs.
- Developing guidelines and procedures for when additional staff and volunteers accompany students on field trips.
  - Incorporating these guidelines and procedures into the written safety plan(s).
- Accompanying students on field trips to improve accountability and lower the risk of leaving students unsupervised.

The trip coordinator can be a lead teacher, paraprofessional, or education director.

**Emergency Preparedness and First Aid**

Your program must develop an Emergency Plan for staff to follow when taking students on trips. Staff must be informed of this plan at an appropriate staff/volunteer orientation. Emergency plans should include staff responsibilities in case of an emergency.

**Lost Student Emergencies**

Upon a report that a student is missing, the responsible adult or trip coordinator will:

**Step 1:** Designate the chaperone who will conduct the preliminary search and reassign that chaperone’s students to another group and chaperones.

**Step 2:** Concurrently notify security guards or supervisors at the site.

**Step 3:** If, after the preliminary search the student is not found, all staff members not required for the immediate supervision of the other students must be called together and given information as to the lost student’s last whereabouts. The entrances, exits, and insides of buildings must be checked, as well as the surrounding area.
**Step 4:** If the above mentioned search is unsuccessful, the trip coordinator or designee must notify the police, giving full description of the student: clothes, height, weight, hair color, and when last seen. The trip coordinator should notify the director, who will call the DECE Field Office and notify the family. Also, the Child Abuse hotline (1-800-635-1522) must be called.

**Bus Travel Emergencies**

In case of an emergency on the bus, the trip coordinator or designee must:

1. Provide adequate supervision in a secure area for all students.
2. Notify proper authorities and your DECE Field Office as the situation indicates and provide for appropriate first aid and medical care.
3. Arrange for alternate means of transportation, if needed.

In case of injury, call 911 depending upon the nature of the injury. If the injury is to a chaperone, immediately reassign the students who were in his or her charge to other chaperones. The pre-K program director should also be called and informed of the situation and the group’s plans.

Families must always be informed of any incidents/accidents involving their child on the same day on which the incident occurred. This can be done by telephone or in writing if the parent/guardian cannot be reached by phone.

**First Aid**

The New York City Health Code 47.19 mandates that all programs have at least one staff member certified in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on the premises at all times. It is required that a staff member certified in first aid and CPR go on all trips.

**Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Field Trips and Neighborhood Walks**

Field trips and neighborhood walks are instructional strategies used to provide children with hands-on opportunities to apply and deepen learning outside of the classroom. NYCEECs may offer field trips and neighborhood walks for 3-K for All classes, in alignment with the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) policy and as approved by parents or legal guardians. In addition, all field trips must be approved by the designated DECE Field Office.

**Supervision**

To ensure their safety, 3-K for All students require attentive supervision when attending an off-site field trip or neighborhood walk. Please note that the policies below are more stringent than those for Pre-K for All.

- A minimum ratio of one adult chaperone for every three 3-K for All students is required on all field trips and neighborhood walks.

You must outline your staffing and supervision plan on the [Field Trip Authorization form](#) that is required to receive approval from the DECE Field Office to take an off-site field trip requiring transportation. Trip approval may be denied if the required minimum staff-to-student ratio seems insufficient based on the nature of the trip.

When determining adequate adult-to-student ratios, you should consider the following:

- Nature of the field trip
- Type of activities in which the students will be engaging
• Ability of the number of adults to maintain constant supervision of every student

• Mode of transportation (i.e., neighborhood walk vs. bus transportation)

**Toileting**

Three-year-olds cannot wait long periods of time before using the bathroom. To that end, you must develop a plan for addressing the toileting needs of students while on an off-site trip.

Prior to an off-site field trip requiring transportation, you must develop a toileting plan to be included on the Field Trip Authorization form. This plan should include:

• When students will be provided opportunities to use the toilet.

• How students will be assisted with diapering/toileting while off-site.

• A list of toileting supplies to be brought on the trip (e.g., diapers, wipes, extra clothes)

• While off-site, toileting procedures must meet all sanitation requirements.

**Transportation**

3-K for All classrooms may provide students with vehicular transportation (e.g., a bus) to take them to an off-site location. If you choose to transport students as a part of any trip, you are required to adhere to the policies of the NYCDOE Office of Pupil Transportation. 3-K for All programs are not entitled to use NYCDOE Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) contracted buses for field trips.

• All children under five years old or weighing 50 pounds or less at the time of the trip must ride in the appropriate Child Safety Restraint Systems (i.e., car seats).

• Please note that the weight and size of three-year-olds can vary substantially, resulting in significantly different Child Safety Restraint System (i.e., car seat) requirements.

• Programs must comply with all applicable State and Federal rules, regulations, and guidance regarding the transportation of children.

The maximum allotted travel time for 3-K for All trips is limited to 45 minutes in each direction; Pre-K for All field trips are limited to one hour in each direction.

The DECE encourages NYCEECs to utilize neighborhood walks and push-in visitors as an alternative to field trips requiring transportation.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. *Do drivers have to meet security clearance requirements when transporting students for a field trip?*

Any driver who has or may have the potential for any unsupervised contact with students must be screened for child abuse and criminal history in accordance with the Security Clearances chapter of the Policy Handbook. Drivers either need to be cleared of child abuse and criminal history or, if they are unscreened, they must be working under the direct supervision and within the line of sight of a screened employee of your program at all times.
2. **What are the specific Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance Requirements?**

If you transport students with your program’s own vehicle at any time, you must maintain Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance that insures your program, program staff, and names as additional insureds the NYCDOE and the City of New York, during the performance of work under your contract against all present and future claims for bodily injury, sickness, disease, death, and property damaged which may arise because of a vehicular accident. The limit of the liability must be at least $5,000,000 for all injuries sustained in any one occurrence. The limit of liability for property damage must be at least $100,000 for one claimant and at least $200,000 for two or more claimants in any one accident. Such damages must include all injury to, or destruction of, property of such claimant as well as the loss of the use occasioned by the accident.

If you retain another company to transport students at any time, you must ensure that the private company maintains Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance that meets the above requirements.

3. **What are the applicable laws, rules and regulations I must follow when transporting students?**

The applicable laws, rules, and regulations you must follow when transporting students include, but are not limited to, NYS Department of Transportation rules and regulations, NYCDOE Office of Pupil Transportation rules and regulations, NYS Department of Motor Vehicles rules and regulations, and the US Department of Transportation rules and regulations, including, but not limited to Titles 15 and 17 of the NY Code of Rules and Regulations, 49 CFR 571.213 and NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law 1229-c.

4. **Are field trips required?**

While field trips are encouraged because they provide students with hands-on opportunities to apply and deepen learning outside of the classroom, they are not required.

5. **Can I forgo the use of a private bus and have parents/legal guardians take their own child to a field trip destination?**

No, you may not have parents/legal guardians take their own child to a field trip destination.

6. **Are push-in visitors an alternative learning experience to neighborhood walks or field trips?**

Yes, push-in visitors enhance the curriculum through in-depth explorations on-site at your location with role models from the community. All push-in visitors must remain under direct supervision of a teaching staff member at all times. Examples of push-in visitors include:

- Families (e.g., sharing cultural traditions)
- Community helpers (e.g., representatives from your local fire or police department)
- Theater companies or children’s museums
Data Management Systems and Student Privacy

Programs are responsible for maintaining accurate and timely data utilizing the appropriate New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) data systems for pupil accounting and other purposes.

⚠️ What You Need to Know

Data Systems

Pre-K Integrated Data System (Pre-KIDS)

The Pre-KIDS Vendor Portal is an NYCDOE online management tool for vendors. **Payments to programs are made based on the data your program enters into Pre-KIDS.**

Pre-KIDS must be used to:

- Enter student enrollment information
- Create and amend budgets
- Submit mid-year and end-year expenditure reports
- Certify student attendance on a monthly basis
- Generate invoices on a monthly basis
- Enter developmental screening outcomes
- Manage staff rosters (must be updated monthly)*

*Only staff members with a status of “Active” and “Eligible” in the Personnel Eligibility Tracking System (PETS) can be listed on your Pre-KIDS budget. Pre-KIDS will not allow a program to list a staff member on its budget who has a status of “Inactive” or “Ineligible” in PETS. See “Personnel Eligibility Tracking System (PETS)” below for additional details on the PETS system.

For questions about how to utilize Pre-KIDS or on managing staff rosters in Pre-KIDS and PETS, please contact the Operations Analyst at your designated DECE Field Office.

For detailed user information on Pre-KIDS, please utilize the [Pre-KIDS Vendor User Manual](#).

Please note that EarlyLearn NYC programs are only responsible for entering student enrollment information into Pre-KIDS.
Special Education Information in Pre-Kids

• To help support collaboration between NYCEECs and Special Education providers, 3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs receive information on mandated special education services for individual students (e.g., Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT) services and/or related services, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language therapy and counseling) in Pre-KIDS. This information becomes available in Pre-KIDS over the summer.

• Programs can use this information to help guide steps taken prior to the school year, including, but not limited to:
  • Supporting teachers with strategies to work with special education providers.
  • Making informed decisions regarding classroom placements and the creation of schedules with special education providers.
  • Developing and sharing a system with staff to track special education services in the classroom for individual students.
  • Engaging families of special education students about the services and supports their child will receive.

• Please email prekIEP@strongschools.nyc with questions about the Pre-KIDS enhancement.

• Please email relatedservices@schools.nyc.gov with questions regarding 3-K for All or Pre-K for All related services.

Personnel Eligibility Tracking Systems (PETS)

PETS is an NYCDOE web-based application that tracks and shares real-time information on the eligibility status of employees working in 3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs. If your program receives direct funding from the NYCDOE, your program is responsible for using PETS on an ongoing basis to track background security information about your staff members and the status of their security clearance.

All staff members who may have unsupervised contact with students or who have access to student or staff information (e.g., medical data) must be entered into PETS.

You must maintain up-to-date information about applicable staff members in PETS at all times. Conditionally hired staff may NOT start working at your program until their security clearance is marked “Satisfactory and Eligible” in PETS. If an employee is terminated or resigns, you must immediately mark him/her as “Inactive” in PETS.

You must immediately remove staff from contact with students, access to student information and/or, if appropriate, access to PETS, if the staff member is deemed ineligible based upon any notification generated by PETS, screen-shots displayed in the PETS application or as otherwise directed by the DECE Field Office, NYCDOE Office of Personnel Investigation, or other designated office.

Please email PETS@schools.nyc.gov for PETS questions, including help if you have forgotten your PETS login information or are having trouble logging in.

*EarlyLearn NYC Programs are not required to utilize PETS.

Student Enrollment Management System (SEMS)

SEMS supports programs in managing enrollment processes. Additionally, SEMS is the application tool through which families apply to 3-K for All and Pre-K for All.
Programs must utilize SEMS to:

• Verify admissions priorities,
• Track student offers, and
• Manage student waitlists.

For detailed information on SEMS guidance please utilize the SEMS website or contact the Office of Student Enrollment (OSE) by emailing ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov.

To request access for an additional user at your program, please email EarlyChildhood@schools.nyc.gov.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

To support student learning and provide staff with easily accessible information on student health and safety needs, it is required that programs maintain all required students’ records. Additionally, programs must comply with all applicable regulations and protect the privacy of students’ records in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including protecting the confidentiality of student records when they are maintained on site, discarded, or placed in storage.

Programs must maintain students’ records in an easily accessible and confidential space on site. In accordance with FERPA, no part of a student’s record may be divulged with personally identifiable information to any person, organization, or agency in any manner unless there is:

• Informed written consent by the parent
  — Please see Chancellor’s Regulation A-820 for the Parent’s Consent to Release of Student Records.
• A valid court order or lawfully issued subpoena requesting such information
• A request for disclosure by authorized representatives of the officials or agencies headed by Federal, State or local education authorities
• A health and safety emergency and disclosure of personally identifiable information is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals
• Another reason permitted by law

Please note, a record of each request and each disclosure of personally identifiable information from the students’ records must be maintained.

The original student data below must be maintained on-site through the end of the school year in which the student is enrolled, and for six years after the termination of the provider contract (seven years if classroom is funded through EarlyLearn NYC):

• Student Health and Safety
  — Emergency Contact Card
  — Child and Adolescent Health Exam Form (CH205)
  — Immunization Records (If not provided on CH 205)
• Student Information
  — Individualized Education Program (IEP)
— Home Language ID Survey
— Parent/Guardian Student Ethnic Identification Form

- **Student Educational Data**
  — Attendance Card
  — Cumulative Record (see below for more information)

The student data below must be maintained at all times through the end of the school year in which the student is enrolled, and for one year thereafter (seven years if the classroom is funded through EarlyLearn NYC):

- **Child Screening Data**
  — Parent Questionnaire
  — Scoring Sheet

- **Authentic Assessment Data**
  — Student Portfolio Items
  — Developmental Summary Reports
  — Hard Copy Student Portfolio Items

After maintaining student records for the required period of time, you must properly dispose the information. When records containing confidential information are to be disposed of, they must be shredded to ensure that the confidential information is destroyed. Boxes containing student records designated for disposal must be carefully labeled.

*For more information on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), please see Chancellor’s Regulation A-820.*

### Guidelines for Social Media Use

Social media is defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, Internet websites, Internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, and Flickr. *3-K for All* and *Pre-K for All* programs should exercise caution and common sense when using social media sites.

- Authentic assessment systems are not included in the definition of social media. Please see the *Authentic Assessment* chapter for additional information.

#### Professional Social Media

Professional social media is a work-related social media activity (e.g., a program leader establishing a Facebook page for his/her program or a teacher establishing a blog for his/her class).

- Program staff members should obtain consent from the program leader before setting up a professional social media site. Program leaders should maintain a list of all active social media accounts for their program and should have administrative rights for each account. The program leader is responsible for regularly monitoring and editing the content of the program’s professional social media sites.

- Program staff members should treat professional social media space and communication like a classroom and/or professional workplace. Behavior that would not be appropriate in the workplace is also not appropriate for a professional social media site.
• No personally identifiable student information may be posted.

• If any student image is posted, there must be a media consent form on file signed by the parent/guardian of each child featured. Photographs of students may only be taken using a NYCDOE-owned device; program staff may not use personal cell phones or other personal devices to take photographs of students.

**Personal Social Media**

Personal social media use is a non-work-related social media activity (e.g., an administrative employee or teacher establishing a Facebook page or a Twitter account for his/her own personal use).

• Program staff are encouraged to use appropriate privacy settings to control access to their personal social media sites. However, be aware that there are limitations to privacy settings. Private communication published on the Internet can easily become public. Furthermore, social media sites can change their current default privacy settings and other functions. As a result, staff members are responsible for understanding the rules of the social media site being utilized.

• It is recommended that program staff do not “tag” photos of other staff members, volunteers, contractors or vendors without the prior permission of the individuals being tagged.

• Program staff are prohibited from posting personally identifiable student information or confidential information, including student images, on personal social media sites.

**Cumulative Folder and Record Transfer Process**

Cumulative folders will form the foundation of each child’s public school record and are expected to be transmitted to the student’s Kindergarten program. Your program is responsible for organizing and submitting cumulative folders on behalf of each student.

You must pick up cumulative folders from your designated DECE Field Office, at the beginning of the year, when enrollment packages are approved.

**Submitting Cumulative Folders**

Before submitting your student records, you are responsible for completing the *Pre-K for All* Student Roster Workbook, which summarizes where each folder will be delivered. This roster will be emailed to your program in the spring. You will separately include a copy of this roster and your completed family option letters when dropping off their folders at the DECE Field Office.

• You must ensure cumulative folders contain the following information prior to submitting to your designated DECE Field Office in the spring:

  — *Cumulative attendance card* (to be completed by program)

  — The final Authentic Assessment checkpoint data. This data can be found in one of the following reports based on the Authentic Assessment system of choice:

    • Teaching Strategies Gold: Individual Child Report
    • Work Sampling system: Narrative Summary Report
    • High Scope COR Advantage: Developmental Summary Report
• Your program must submit these records to their designated DECE Field Office by the date specified by the DECE.

— The DECE will communicate instructions for submission in the spring.

• You are responsible for contacting their designated DECE Field Office to arrange a time to submit your program’s student records.

Additional Student Record Transfer guidance can be found under the Pre-KIDS Vendor Portal Resources Tab.

If you have any questions about helping families complete the family option letter, or about the student record transfer process in general, please contact your Operations Analyst.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Which program staff can access student records?

Staff members who seek access to a student’s records must have a specific and legitimate educational reason. The validity of the educational reason is to be determined by your program director. You should contact your designated DECE Field Office with any questions.

In addition, all staff with access to student records must have received the appropriate security clearance. For more information, please see the Security Clearances section of the Handbook.

2. Must a student’s IEP be transferred to the school the student will be attending for Kindergarten?

No, you do not need to transfer the IEP. District schools can access IEPs via the Special Education Student Information System (SESIS) for students entering Kindergarten.

You should store IEPs on-site in a secure and locked location for a minimum of 6 years after the student is enrolled. When disposing of IEPs, documents must be shredded to ensure that the confidential information is destroyed.
Program Assessments

The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) utilizes nationally recognized, valid and reliable program assessment tools in conjunction with other information to monitor and understand program quality and inform various support efforts. ECERS-R and CLASS are the assessment tools currently used in both 3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs.

What You Need to Know

Overview

The DECE utilizes the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to measure the extent to which programs are successful at implementing many of the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards (PQS). ECERS-R measures the extent to which programs are successful at reaching the PQS as it relates to aspects of a supportive environment and rigorous instruction. CLASS measures the extent to which programs are successfully implementing the practices outlined in the PQS related to interactions between teachers and students.

ECERS-R and CLASS are widely used in early childhood settings across the country. Data shows that there is a consistent relationship between ECERS-R and CLASS scores and child development and learning outcomes.

Notification & Scheduling Procedures

Notification and Initial Scheduling

The DECE will notify you via email when your program has been selected to participate in an ECERS-R and/or CLASS assessment.

• Assessments must take place on a typical day of school for all students. This means that the usual daily schedule should be roughly followed and that the program operations take place as normal.

  — A typical day does not include:

  • School days where some students have been asked to stay home from school, or moved to different classrooms for behavior reasons
  • Walking field trips (neighborhood walks) that do not take place on a regular basis
  • Special assemblies
  • Extra-curricular events
  • School days when fewer than 50% of children are in attendance

  — A typical day does include:

  • School days as defined by the DOE or school calendar, including school days on before or after holidays
  • School days that include regular schedule changes for children (such as one day of the week that is consistently shortened)
  • Regularly scheduled specials and cluster classes
  • Small schedule fluctuations, such as a late meal delivery, that could feasibly happen any school day
• In most cases, you will be contacted by an ECERS-R or CLASS evaluator with the assessment date at least two weeks in advance.
  — You are requested to reply within two business days of notification, confirming that the projected assessment date is a typical day at your program.
• You should inform staff of the scheduled date and time of the assessment. In most cases, a confirmation email will be sent two to seven days before the date of the assessment.
• As part of the DECE’s procedures to ensure and maintain consistent calibration and quality implementation, more than one evaluator may be sent to your site and observe in the classroom at the same time.

Preparing For the Assessment

• Prior to the assessment date, you will be asked to provide the following information to DECE staff:
  — Number of 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All classrooms
  — 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All hours
  — Languages other than English spoken during instruction
  — 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All classroom daily schedule
  — Name of the staff member who will meet and greet the evaluator (e.g., lead teacher, Education Director)
  — Any other program information requested by the evaluator

Preparing materials such as lesson plans or curriculum maps is not required on the day of the assessment as these additional materials are not factored into scoring.

Introductory trainings are offered for the ECERS-R and CLASS tools are available on an ongoing basis. The exact training dates and locations are advertised in the Early Childhood Bulletin.

You will be sent a copy of the All About the ECERS-R book or CLASS Dimensions Guide in the year of your assessment if you have not received one recently. A spiral bound ECERS-R scale can be requested by emailing programassessment@schools.nyc.gov.

Rescheduling an Assessment

If an assessment needs to be rescheduled for any reason (e.g., major facility issue, lead teacher absence; less than 50% of students in attendance; etc.), you should contact the evaluator as soon as possible via email or phone. The evaluator will work with you to reschedule the assessment as soon as possible, based on the reason given.

In the event of an unexpected school closure, the evaluator will not visit your program. He or she will contact you to reschedule the assessment.

In most cases, assessments rescheduled for any reason will take place within a month of the originally scheduled date.

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R)

The ECERS-R tool is an observational tool used to assess early childhood learning environments. ECERS-R measures the quality of the learning environment across six subscales: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure.
Assessment Details

- One 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All classroom will be assessed. On the morning of the assessment, the evaluator will randomly choose which specific classroom will be assessed.

- Assessments take three-and-a-half (3.5) to four (4) hours and consists of:
  
  — A 3–3.5 hour classroom observation

  — A 30 minute interview with the lead teacher following the observation. **Program administration is responsible for ensuring the lead teacher is available during the time of the assessment.**

For more information on the ECERS-R assessment tool, including a webinar series and frequently asked questions, please see the Program Assessment section of the DECE’s website.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

The CLASS is an observational tool that provides a common lens and language focused on classroom interactions that research shows support student learning. CLASS measures classroom interactions across three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support.

Assessment Details

- Most or all of your 3K for All and/or Pre-K for All classrooms will be observed.

- Assessments take anywhere from two to eight hours. The assessment may take place over more than one day, or more than one evaluator may be sent to your program depending on the number of classrooms at your program.

- Assessments will consist of at least two 20-minute observation cycles in each observed classroom. In most cases, the number of cycles that will take place in each classroom will depend on the number of classrooms in the program as outlined in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Classrooms</th>
<th>Number of observation cycles per classroom</th>
<th>Amount of time in each classroom (approximately)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 in one class, 3 in the other</td>
<td>40 minutes &amp; 60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or more</td>
<td>2 cycles per classroom</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 or more</td>
<td>75% or more of classrooms will be observed</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information on the CLASS assessment tool, please see the Program Assessment section of the DECE’s website. For more information on specific subscales and CLASS topics, please see the Teachstone website.

Results & Reports

Program staff are expected to use ECERS-R and CLASS results to inform program goals. Evaluators will not be able to provide any feedback to your program on the assessment day unless it requires the immediate attention of the program leader. Feedback will be sent in the form of a detailed report. Scores from the ECERS-R and CLASS assessments will be made publicly available on an annual basis and through the Pre-K Quality Snapshot.
**ECERS-R**

Results will come in the form of an ECERS-R report, which includes:

- An overall average ECERS-R score;
- Average scores for each of the subscales;
- Areas of strength (where applicable);
- Detailed observation notes for lower scoring items; and
- General recommendations for next steps.

**CLASS**

CLASS scores are the averages of observations collected across all 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All classrooms. Results will come in the form of a CLASS report, which includes:

- Average scores for each of the three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization and Instructional Support;
- Average scores for each of the 10 dimensions;
- Interpretation guidance for each of the CLASS domains and dimensions;
- Observation notes for each of the 10 dimensions; and
- General recommendations for next steps.

Since the DECE uses the CLASS tool to collect program level data, the scores on the CLASS report will show an average of all of the 15–20 minute observation cycles that are conducted in all 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All classrooms.

*For more information regarding results and reports, or with any other ECERS-R and CLASS questions, please contact programassessment@schools.nyc.gov.*
Contract Extensions

New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) operate under a contract with the NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE) or the NYC Administration for Children Services (ACS) to provide 3-K for All and Pre-K for All. Programs should consult their contract and understand the terms of the agreement.

This chapter is only applicable to programs that contract with the NYCDOE.

FAQ: What You Need to Know

Overview

NYCEECs that receive an award from the NYCDOE to provide 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All services, provide those services pursuant to a contract with the NYCDOE. The original period of the contract is specified in your program's contract and is generally three years, although there are exceptions.

Extensions

Pursuant to the contract, upon completion of the original period, the DECE has the discretion to extend the contract for a specified number of years. Programs that meet instructional and operational quality expectations, as set forth by the DECE, during the period of the contract may be eligible to receive a contract extension from the NYCDOE.

The DECE reviews the performance of all vendors to determine whether extensions will be made to programs whose contracts are eligible for an extension. Extensions will be offered only to programs that meet quality expectations and offer services in areas of need.

Programs that do not receive a contract extension may have an opportunity to re-apply to be a 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All provider at a future time, depending on the NYCDOE’s need for such services.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will my existing contract change if I am granted a contract extension?

No, the terms of an existing contract will not be re-negotiated upon receipt of an extension. All contract extensions are processed as contract renewals. A new contract and contract number are generated when a contract is extended.
V. Instructional Programming

a. Developmental Screenings

b. Authentic Assessments

c. Curriculum

d. Daily Student Schedule

e. Nap and Rest

f. Extending Learning to Home

g. Report Cards
Developmental Screenings

Programs must use a valid and reliable developmental screening tool, along with authentic assessment data, to identify students with potential developmental delays and language support needs.

3-K for All classrooms should refer to the Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Developmental Screenings portion of this chapter.

What You Need to Know

Developmental Screening Tools Overview

Developmental screening is a key part of a student’s transition into your program. At the beginning of the year, you must use a valid and reliable developmental screening tool to identify potential developmental delays and language support needs. Screening tools assist educators in learning about the various aspects of a student’s development, such as language cognition, perception, and motor development.

Programs with classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC+2 programs should follow EarlyLearn requirements for developmental screenings.

The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) has approved three developmental screening tools:

• Early Screening Inventory- Revised (ESI-R)
• Brigance Early Childhood Screens System III
• Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Third Edition (ASQ-3)

The DECE provides materials and training for the ESI-R tool; see the DECE’s Developmental Screening website for information. If you would like to use a tool not on this list, this must be approved in advance in writing by the DECE. These requests should be sent to prekassessment@schools.nyc.gov.

Key Requirements

• Teachers are required to administer a developmental screening to all students within 45 calendar days of enrollment.

• Your program should take the needs and backgrounds of the students that you are serving into consideration and ensure that screenings are implemented using culturally, linguistically, and developmentally responsive methods.

  — You do not have to administer developmental screenings to students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or students who were screened with an approved tool in a prior year to pre-K.

  — If a student’s screening results indicate that he or she needs to be rescreened for any reason, you are required to rescreen the student within 8-10 weeks.

  — If the screening is not available in a child’s primary home language, see the information on Language Exceptions below. The ESI-R tool has been translated to Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Spanish, Cantonese, and Russian.

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+2 EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All services.
### Child Screening Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Day of School&lt;sup&gt;43&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Send the Introduction to Developmental Screening letter to families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Begin screening enrolled students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 Calendar Days from</td>
<td>All students must be screened within 45 calendar days of enrollment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Calendar Days from</td>
<td>Screening outcomes are to be submitted via Pre-KIDS within 21 days of each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>student's screening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 8 and 10 weeks</td>
<td>All students who were screened with an outcome indicating a need for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from Screening (56 to 70</td>
<td>rescreening must be rescreened in this two-week period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar Days)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After December 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>All students enrolled after December 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; must be screened within 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>calendar days of enrollment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Screening outcomes for these students must be submitted within 21 calendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>days of screening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If applicable, rescreening for these students must occur 8 to 10 weeks from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the initial screening.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-R)

#### ESI-R Examiner Qualifications

Your program’s education director has the responsibility to ensure that staff administering the developmental screening meet the following minimum requirements:

- Must have understanding of basic principles of standardized tests, including:
  - Knowledge of methods to ensure objectivity in administration of the tool
  - Importance of following standard procedures for administration and scoring
- Must be an education director, lead teacher, paraprofessional, or other staff member experienced in early childhood education, with an understanding of early childhood behavior and development.
- Must complete training to include observation of an examiner administering the tool (through WeTeachNYC.org or in-person training).
- Must be fluent and proficient in the language(s) used to administer the developmental screening tool (including Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, Spanish, Cantonese, and Russian if using the ESI-R).

Self-paced training for ESI-R is available at WeTeachNYC.org. If you experience technical trouble, such as logging into your account, please email WeTeachNYC@schools.nyc.gov or call 212-374-6646 for immediate support.

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<sup>43</sup> If a family enrolls after day 1, you must send the Introduction to Development Screening letter to them within 1 week of enrollment.
ESI-R Materials

The DECE provides ESI-R materials by request. To submit a request for ESI-R materials, please see the DECE Developmental Screening website.

If your program received a kit in a prior school year, it must be reused.

ESI-R kits include:

- An Examiner’s Manual
  - Four shape and six picture cards
  - 10 blocks
  - A button
  - A rubber ball
  - A toy car
  - Reusable 8-foot measuring tape
  - A tote bag
- Parent Questionnaires
- Scoring Sheets

Programs will need to provide the following additional materials:

- Cardboard/manila file folder (to be used as a screen)
- 2 sheets of construction paper, 8 ½” x 11” (building surface)
- Plain white paper, 8 ½” x 11”
- Pencil without an eraser

Please note, materials must be standardized to the above requirements to maintain the validity of the screening.

Screening Results

Submitting Screening Outcomes

- All screening outcomes must be submitted to the DECE through Pre-KIDS within 21 days of the screening
  - For additional guidance about screening data submission, please refer to the guidance posted on the DECE Developmental Screening website.
- Developmental screening outcomes must also be communicated to families.
  - The method of communication to families is at the discretion of your program’s education director.
**Language Exception**

- If the screening is not available in a child’s home language, indicate the language exception in Pre-KIDS. For more information, see the DECE Developmental Screening website.

- You must use authentic assessment to monitor ongoing developmental progression and to provide the student with language support, as well as send the Language Exception letter to families.

**Referrals**

- If a student scores below the “Refer” cutoff on the ESI-R, or below the referral cutoff on a comparable developmental screening, the lead teacher should continue to monitor ongoing developmental progression through the use of an approved authentic assessment system to inform possible referral to the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) for information about evaluation services.

- Referral cutoffs are available in the ESI-R manual and are differentiated by age. Methods of referrals are at the discretion of the education director at your program.

**Communicating with Families**

**Prior To Screening**

- All families must receive the Introduction to Developmental Screening letter prior to any screening beginning at your program.

  — Translated letters in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu can be found on the DECE Developmental Screening website.

- IEP Exemption letters must be sent to families of students with IEPs.

- Language Exception letters must be sent to families of students who do not speak Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English or Spanish, or who are unable to complete the screening in one of the offered languages (for the ESI-R tool, these languages include Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, Spanish, Cantonese, and Russian).

**After Screening**

- Methods of communicating screening and rescreening results are at the discretion of the education director at your program.

**Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Developmental Screenings**

3-K for All programs must use a valid and reliable developmental screening tool, along with authentic assessment data, to identify students with potential developmental delays and language support needs.

**Developmental Screening Tools**

Developmental screening is a key part of a student’s transition into 3-K for All. You must use a valid and reliable developmental screening tool to identify potential developmental delays and language support needs.
The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) has approved three developmental screening tools for 3-K for All. Please note that these are the same approved tools as those utilized for Pre-K for All.

- Early Screening Inventory- Revised (ESI-R)
- Brigance Early Childhood Screens System III
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Third Edition (ASQ-3)

**Child Screening Timeline**

Generally, 3-K for All students must be screened within the same timelines as Pre-K for All students. In summary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Day of School</td>
<td>Send the Introduction to Developmental Screening letter to families. Begin screening enrolled students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 Calendar Days from Enrollment</td>
<td>All students must be screened within 45 days of enrollment. *The ESI-R screening tool may not be utilized to screen 3-K for All students until they are three years old. If your program utilizes the ESI-R screening tool, any child who is not yet three-years-old upon enrollment into 3-K for All must be screened between the date of their third birthday and February 14th of the school year. The 45-day screening requirement does not apply in these instances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Calendar Days from Enrollment</td>
<td>Screening outcomes are to be submitted via Pre-KIDS within 21 days of each student’s screening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 8 and 10 weeks from Screening (56 and 70 Calendar Days)</td>
<td>All students who were screened with an outcome indicating a need for rescreening must be rescreened in this two-week period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After December 1st</td>
<td>All students enrolled after December 1st must be screened within 15 calendar days of enrollment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Screening outcomes for these students must be submitted within 21 calendar days of screening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If applicable, rescreening for these students must occur 8 to 10 weeks from the initial screening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 14th</td>
<td>If your program utilizes the ESI-R screening tool, any child who is not yet three-years-old upon enrollment into 3-K for All must be screened between the date of their third birthday and February 14th of the school year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: You do not have to administer developmental screenings to students with Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs) or Individual Education Programs (IEPs).
Frequently Asked Questions

1. The primary home language of a student attending my program is Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, or Spanish, but no one on my staff meets the qualifications to administer the ESI-R developmental screening in this language. How should I proceed?

If you do not have a qualified staff member who is fluent and proficient in the student’s primary home language, you should mark a language exception for this student in Pre-KIDS and send the family a language exception letter, as detailed in the sections above. Family members may not be asked to translate for the student.

2. What is the difference between developmental screening and authentic assessments?

Developmental screening (ESI-R, Ages and Stages Questionnaire and Brigance Early Childhood Screens System III) is different and separate from authentic assessments (Work Sampling System, Teaching Strategies GOLD, and HighScope COR Advantage).

Developmental screening is a brief process conducted once early in the year to identify potential developmental delays and/or language support needs in conjunction with authentic assessments.

Authentic assessments are conducted throughout the year to monitor a student’s progress and aid teachers in individualized instruction and family engagement.

3. What is the difference between developmental screening and environmental/programmatic assessments?

Developmental screening (ESI-R, Ages and Stages Questionnaire and Brigance Early Childhood Screens System III) is different from environmental/programmatic assessments (ECERS-R and CLASS).

Developmental screening is a brief process conducted once early in the year to identify potential developmental delays and/or language support needs in conjunction with authentic assessments.

Environmental/programmatic assessments are designed to measure program quality by assessing various interactions that go on in a classroom, as well as the features that support these interactions, such as space, schedule, materials, etc.
Authentic Assessments

Authentic assessments provide educators a system to monitor students’ developmental progress across all domains of learning, to inform instruction.

3-K for All classrooms should refer to the Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Authentic Assessments portion of this chapter.

What You Need to Know

Authentic Assessments Overview

3-K for All and Pre-K for All classrooms are required to use a developmentally appropriate, valid, and reliable authentic assessment system to monitor developmental progress, plan instruction, and inform family engagement. Authentic assessment systems include a formative collection of qualitative student data (e.g., student observations and work samples). By utilizing authentic assessments, teaching staff deepen their shared understanding of students’ development and learning to inform instruction and family engagement.

Authentic assessment systems support teachers to:

- Strategically collect observational data and student work samples
- Analyze that information along a developmental continuum
- Plan instruction that is responsive to the needs of individual students and groups of students
- Inform family engagement practices

The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) provides online subscriptions and resources to assist teachers in authentic assessment work.

The DECE and EarlyLearn NYC approved authentic assessment systems include:

- Work Sampling System (WSS)
- Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG)
- High Scope Child Observation Record (COR) Advantage

Your program must use the same authentic assessment system across all classrooms. If your program would like to use an authentic assessment system not on this list, you must get the tool approved in advance in writing by the DECE. These requests should be sent to prekassessment@schools.nyc.gov.

DECE and EarlyLearn NYC Approved Authentic Assessment Systems

Three authentic assessment options have been approved by DECE and EarlyLearn NYC for programs to utilize throughout the school year.

Work Sampling System

The Work Sampling System (WSS) is an authentic assessment system that informs educators about their students’ skills, behaviors and academic achievement across seven domains:

1. Personal & Social Development
2. Language & Literacy
3. Mathematical Thinking
4. Scientific Thinking
5. Social Studies
6. The Arts
7. Physical Development, Health, & Safety

Teachers develop student portfolios by collecting student observations and work samples throughout the year for three Citywide Checkpoint periods: fall, winter, and spring.

For more information, please see Work Sampling System/Online.

**Teaching Strategies Gold**

Teaching Strategies GOLD is an authentic assessment system that tracks students’ development across ten domains:

1. Social-emotional
2. Physical
3. Language
4. Cognitive
5. Literacy
6. Mathematics
7. Science & Technology
8. Social Studies
9. The Arts
10. English Language Acquisition

Teachers collect evidence of student learning through student observations and work samples throughout the year for three Citywide Checkpoint periods: fall, winter, and spring.

For more information, please see Teaching Strategies GOLD.

**High Scope Child Observation Record Advantage**

The High Scope Child Observation Record Advantage (COR) is an authentic assessment system that tracks students’ development across six domains:

1. Approaches to Learning
2. Social and Emotional Development
3. Physical Development and Health
4. Language, Literacy, and Communication
5. Mathematics
6. Creative Arts
7. Science and Technology
8. Social Studies

9. English Language Learning (ELL)

Teachers collect evidence of student learning through the collection of student observations and work samples throughout the year for three Citywide Checkpoint periods: fall, winter, and spring.

For more information, please see HighScope Child Observation Record/Child Observation Record Advantage.

Please note, all approved online authentic assessment systems align to the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and the NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core, and can be used with any developmentally appropriate curriculum.

**Assessment Requirements**

Authentic assessment data consists of low-inference notes and high-quality work samples (including photographs). Data must be collected throughout the school year and aggregated at least three times per school year in the form of Developmental Summary Reports. Authentic assessment data must be used to develop:

- **Student Portfolios**
  - Teachers must:
    - Take low-inference notes and collect work samples regularly throughout the school year.
    - Align student portfolio items to the authentic assessment system domains and indicators.
  - Student portfolio items are entered online, and hard copies can be stored within the classroom.

- **Developmental Summary Reports**
  - Teachers must:
    - Complete Developmental Summary Reports by using student portfolio items to assess each student's progress along a developmental continuum, across the domains of learning.
    - Complete Developmental Summary Reports three times per school year during the Fall, Winter, and Spring Citywide Checkpoints.
    - Use the data to individualize practice and set goals that address the needs of each student.
  - Developmental Summary Reports are stored online and in the student’s cumulative folder.

The DECE recommends that education directors meet regularly with teaching staff to:

- Review student portfolio items and students' developmental progress.
- Use students' developmental progress to inform ongoing instruction and support.

Additionally, teachers should communicate students' developmental progress to families regularly and during family-teacher conferences.

- Programs should refer families to the Parent Guide to Understanding Authentic Assessments for Young Children letter for additional information on authentic assessments.

See FAQ #1 for more information on how paraprofessionals can support authentic assessments.
Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Authentic Assessments

Authentic assessments provide 3-K for All educators with a system to monitor students’ developmental progress across all domains of learning, to inform instruction.

**Authentic Assessment Systems**

3-K for All classrooms are required to use the same developmentally appropriate, valid, and reliable authentic assessment systems to monitor developmental progress, plan instruction, and inform family engagement as they use in Pre-K for All classrooms. As a reminder, the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) and EarlyLearn NYC approved authentic assessment systems include:

- **Work Sampling System (WSS)**
- **Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG)**
- **High Scope Child Observation Record (COR) Advantage**

Your program must use the same authentic assessment system across all 3-K for All and Pre-K for All classrooms.

**Work Sampling System**

3-K for All classrooms utilizing the Work Sampling System must use the Work Sampling System Preschool-3 (P3) developmental guidelines, which are appropriate for children in 3-K for All. The Work Sampling System Preschool-4 (P4) developmental guidelines are not appropriate for children in 3-K for All.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **How should paraprofessionals support authentic assessment?**

   Lead teachers are responsible for inputting the authentic assessment data. Paraprofessionals can assist with collecting student work samples and observations as well as with the uploading of most authentic student portfolio items under the direction of the lead teacher and through the lead teacher account.

2. **Can a lead teacher choose to change his or her authentic assessment system?**

   The program must use a single authentic assessment system across all classes at your site. If a lead teacher would like to change his or her authentic assessment tool, he or she must receive approval from his or her education director first. The education director must request and receive approval from DECE. Requests to DECE must come directly from your program’s education director and sent via email to prekassessment@schools.nyc.gov.

   Please note that requests to change the program’s authentic assessment system can only be processed at a specified time in between school years.

3. **How can I communicate authentic assessments with families?**

   For a guide on how to introduce authentic assessments to families, please refer to the Parent Guide to Understanding Authentic Assessments for Young Children.

   For more information on how to communicate authentic assessments with families, see the Family Engagement chapter of the Handbook.
4. Can teaching staff use personal cell phones to take pictures/document student work?

No, teaching staff may not use personal cell phones or other personal devices to document student observations and work samples. Your program should provide appropriate technology for each classroom to support teaching staff to photograph student activities and student work.

5. Can teachers utilize standardized tests to assess students?

No, traditional standardized tests must never be administered to students. Students should only be assessed utilizing approved authentic assessment systems and approved developmental screenings.

For more information on developmental screenings, see the Developmental Screenings chapter of the Handbook.
Curriculum

Pre-K classrooms are required to implement a research-based curriculum that supports and advances the NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC) guiding principles and learning standards. The curriculum must support all students to have rich and varied early learning experiences that prepare them for success in K-12 and beyond.

3-K for All classrooms should refer to the Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Curriculum portion of this chapter.

What You Need to Know

Curriculum Overview

Your program must choose or design a pre-K curriculum that:

1. Advances students’ learning and development across all domains of the PKFCC.

2. Supports and advances the guiding principles of the PKFCC and draws on research-based practices about how young children develop and learn.

3. Incorporates information about students’ learning and developmental progress collected with one of three authentic assessment systems approved by the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE). Please see the Authentic Assessments chapter of the Handbook for more information.

4. Supports and advances all Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards (PQS) including:
   — Opportunities for students to engage in active, hands-on, purposeful play and exploration through student-initiated and teacher-facilitated activities, particularly during center time.
   — Opportunities for students to engage in individual, small, and whole-group learning through a balance of student-initiated and teacher-facilitated activities.
   — Adjustments to the curriculum based on students’ interests, backgrounds, linguistic needs, and ideas for learning.
   — Multiple ways of engaging with the curriculum based on the variety of skills and developmental levels of the students in the class, including modifications for students based on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), as needed.
   — Opportunities for families to contribute to and participate in their student’s learning experiences, as well as opportunities for families to extend learning beyond the classroom.

Pre-K for All Interdisciplinary Units of Study

The Interdisciplinary Units of Study were developed by the DECE to support student learning in all domains using research-based developmentally appropriate practice for pre-K classrooms. The interdisciplinary units, grounded in the PKFCC, follow a progression of interdisciplinary learning throughout the year.

For more information on how to utilize the Interdisciplinary Units of Study, please review the Early Childhood Instructional Resources page.

There are two versions of the Interdisciplinary Units of Study:

1. For sites in Pre-K Explore, utilizing the Building Blocks math curriculum together with the Pre-K for All Interdisciplinary Units of Study. See the Pre-K Explore section of this chapter for more information.

2. For sites participating in all other Instructional Tracks.
Pre-K programs that are not in the Pre-K Explore Instructional Track are encouraged, but not required, to utilize the Units of Study. If your program does not use the Interdisciplinary Units of Study, the DECE will determine the extent to which your curriculum meets the requirements outlined above.

If the DECE determines the requirements are not met, your Pre-K for All program may be required to implement supplemental curriculum and activities and receive additional professional learning and support.

Additional resources to support teachers and program leaders in using the Units of Study can be found on the Early Childhood Instructional Resources page.

For more information or to provide feedback on the Interdisciplinary Units of Study, please email prekinstruction@schools.nyc.gov. The DECE will continue to revise and refine the units based on pre-K teacher and leader feedback.

Pre-K Explore

The DECE is working with a select number of Pre-K for All programs to implement the Building Blocks math curriculum in combination with the Interdisciplinary Units of Study. These programs receive professional learning provided by the DECE to support the integration of these tools.

Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Curriculum

3-K for All classrooms are required to implement a curriculum that supports and advances child outcomes, as outlined in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. The 3-K for All curriculum must support the delivery of rich and varied early learning experiences that prepare 3-K for All students for success in school and beyond.

Grounded in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Explorations provide instructional opportunities for program staff, children, and families to connect, explore materials, and learn together. These instructional guidance documents are ECERS-R-aligned and offer guidance for teaching staff in interacting with, creating a classroom environment, and selecting materials for three-year-olds. The Interdisciplinary Units of Study developed by the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) to support Pre-K for All student learning are not applicable to 3-K for All classrooms.

3-K for All and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five

3-K for All programs must use the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) to understand and facilitate children’s learning and development. The New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC), as referenced in the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards, is not applicable to 3-K for All students.

The ELOF presents age-appropriate outcomes across five broad areas of early learning, referred to as central domains. The ELOF emphasizes the key skills, behaviors, and knowledge that NYCEECs must foster in children from ages birth to five, and outlines the expected developmental progress in each central domain. These domains are aligned to the holistic domains of learning and development in the PKFCC, which programs must use in their Pre-K for All classrooms.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can a Pre-K for All program use the Units of Study if not a part of Pre-K Explore?

Yes, there is a version of the Units of Study available for programs not participating in Pre-K Explore. Visit the Interdisciplinary Units of Study to access this resource. If you have further questions, please email prekinstruction@schools.nyc.gov.
Daily Student Schedule

Daily program schedules must include a variety of both student and adult-initiated activities that advance student learning and development across all domains of learning and development.

3-K for All classrooms should refer to the Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Daily Student Schedule portion of this chapter.

What You Need to Know

Overview

During Pre-K for All program hours, you must offer activities which are appropriate to the age-level and individual needs of students and that build on students’ interests, backgrounds, and ideas for learning. Activities provided should support the development of skills and knowledge described in the PKFCC standards and adhere to the PKFCC Guiding Principles.

Students learn best when they have the opportunity to work independently and in a variety of group settings facilitated by teachers. Your daily schedule must provide students with opportunities for individual, small, and whole group learning through a balance of student and adult-initiated activities.

Classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC must follow ACS daily schedule requirements.

Pre-K for All Daily Schedule Requirements

While the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) does not mandate that your program follow a specific schedule, your program must offer each of the required daily activities.

Your program’s daily schedule must be displayed prominently in the classroom at student eye level, using both words and pictures to describe activities.
All daily activities represented below are aligned to key Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) requirements and should advance student learning and development described in the PKFCC standards. You must include the following activities in your daily schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Recommended Length (Including transitions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snack and Meal Time</td>
<td>• Full-day <em>Pre-K for All</em> programs must provide at least lunch and a snack or breakfast during <em>Pre-K for All</em> hours and utilize one of the following meal patterns:</td>
<td>Full-day programs:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>— Lunch and a snack</td>
<td>• Approximately 30 minutes for meals and 15 minutes for snacks (unless snack/breakfast is integrated into other activities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>— Lunch and breakfast</td>
<td>Half-day programs:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Half-day <em>Pre-K for All</em> programs must provide, at a minimum, one of the following:</td>
<td>• Approximately 30 minutes for meals and up to 15 minutes for snacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>— Breakfast; or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>— Lunch; or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>— Nutritious snack</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To facilitate learning, meals should be served family style and provided in an environment conducive to interaction between staff and students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>— Provision of snacks can be integrated into center time if family style breakfast/lunch is provided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>— Provision of breakfast can be done via buffet style if family style lunch is provided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• For more information on snack and meal time (e.g., sanitary practices), see the Meal Services chapter of the Handbook.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nap and Rest Time</td>
<td>• Provide an environment conducive for students to nap and rest.</td>
<td>• Approximately 30-45 minutes allowing for individual differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>— Quiet activities must be provided for students who do not nap.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Length of nap and rest time can be adjusted throughout the year depending on students’ needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• For more information on nap and rest time, see the Nap and Rest Time chapter of the Handbook.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Nap and rest time is not provided to students attending half-day <em>Pre-K for All</em> programs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Gross Motor Time | • If outdoor space is available, weather permitting, provide students with time to be outdoors where they are able to move around freely and select gross motor activities such as: running, jumping, climbing, throwing, catching, etc.  
  — If no outdoor space is available and in cases of inclement weather, provide students with adequate indoor space and appropriate equipment for freedom of movement, where they run, jump, or move in ways that are necessary for students’ appropriate physical learning and development, purposeful play, and self-expression.  
  Full-day programs:  
  • Minimum of 60 minutes per day (Two 30 minute periods can be provided)  
  Half-day programs:  
  • Minimum of 20 minutes per day |
| Center Time | • Provide students with the opportunity to self-select a variety of activities, materials, and companions, while supported by teachers who facilitate their learning within the centers.  
  — Materials in centers should be offered for the range of skills, interests, and abilities of students in the classroom.  
  — Teaching staff should arrange the physical environment so that all students can successfully and independently access resources in response to their natural curiosity, to engage with group activity, or find space to work independently and collaboratively throughout the classroom and outdoor areas.  
  Full-day programs:  
  • Minimum of 2 hours and 20 minutes required per day for full-day programs  
  • Reminder: This is inclusive of transition time  
  Half-day programs:  
  • Minimum of 60 minutes for half-day programs  
  • Reminder: This is inclusive of transition time |
| Whole Group (Meeting/ Circle Time) | • Provide students with group activities where they can engage in active learning opportunities.  
  • Meeting/Circle Time can include, but is not limited to:  
  — Time to review the daily schedule and the day’s activities and choices for Center Time  
  — Read Alouds  
  — Music and Movement activities  
  Full-day programs:  
  • At least two meetings per day lasting a maximum of 15 minutes each  
  Half-day programs:  
  • At least one meeting per day lasting a maximum of 15 minutes  
  • Reminder: This is inclusive of transition time |
Sample Schedule Full-Day Programs

The following sample schedule is based on a 6 hour and 20 minute day. The schedule is a recommendation and is not intended to be a mandated schedule.

Sample Schedule

The following sample schedule is based on a 6 hour and 20 minute day. The schedule is a recommendation and is not intended to be a mandated schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Arrival Activities/Greeting Routine/Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Large Group Meeting (including transitions in and out of the activity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 minutes</td>
<td>Center Time/Small Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Clean-up/Hand Washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Lunch (family style)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Toileting and Hand Washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 minutes</td>
<td>Nap/Rest Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Large Group Meeting (including transitions in and out of the activity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 minutes</td>
<td>Center Time/Small Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Clean-up/Hand Washing/ Snack (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>Gross Motor Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Closing Meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information on how to align pre-K daily schedules with ECERS-R, please email prekinstruction@schools.nyc.gov.

Sample Schedule Half-Day Programs

The following sample schedule is based on a 2 hour and 30 minute day. The schedule is a recommendation and is not intended to be a mandated schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 minutes</td>
<td>Arrivals/ Greetings/ Breakfast (includes time for handwashing and cleanup)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Meeting/ Circle Time #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>Center Time/ Small Group (includes 10 minutes for clean-up and transitions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>Outdoor Play (includes 10 minutes for transition time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Toileting and Handwashing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Circle Time #2/ Debrief meeting/ Prepare for dismissal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information on how to align pre-K daily schedules with ECERS-R, please email prekinstruction@schools.nyc.gov.
### General Notes on Developing a Schedule

- Transition time will vary depending on the space and number of students.
- When creating a daily schedule, consider alternating active and less active times.

### Center Time Activities

During Center Time students should have daily opportunities to experience different content areas.

*For additional information on instructional materials that must be provided during these activities, please view the Classroom Furniture and Instructional Materials chapter of the Handbook.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Examples of Recommended Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Art</strong></td>
<td>• Painting/drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Using three dimensional materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Making collages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Modeling with clay/playdough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff</strong> should provide materials that students can use for creative expression through various artistic media and representations.**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music and Movement</strong></td>
<td>• Experimenting with instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Exercising to music (e.g., yoga, Zumba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Acting out the content of songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nature, Science &amp; Discovery</strong></td>
<td>• Using magnifying glasses to investigate the properties of natural materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sorting natural materials (e.g., rocks, leaves, shells) according to various characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Completing a weather chart with teacher support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Planting a garden and caring for it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math and Manipulatives</strong></td>
<td>• Offering puzzles of varying shapes and difficulties for manipulation, reasoning, and problem-solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Offering open-ended resource sets with items representing a range of shapes, colors, sizes, and weights, for comparing, sorting, weighing, or for use in games or making patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Providing small connecting toys for manipulating and building fine-motor skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Using tape measures, rulers, abaci, or other resources, along with items of various sizes, to encourage measurement and comparison (e.g., bigger, smaller, more, less, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block Play</td>
<td>• Building structures related to the current unit&lt;br&gt;• Encouraging students to build structures that reflect their neighborhood&lt;br&gt;• Talking with students about the spaces they created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>• Using technology to do research, gather information, or play developmentally appropriate learning games on:&lt;br&gt;  — Computers&lt;br&gt;  — Tablets&lt;br&gt;  — iPads&lt;br&gt;  — Smartboards&lt;br&gt;  See below for additional information on the use of technology tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand and Water</td>
<td>• Digging and pouring&lt;br&gt;• Conducting sink and float experiments&lt;br&gt;• Having students observe how many teaspoons of sand or water are needed to fill various measuring cups&lt;br&gt;• Encouraging students to make patterns in the sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Centers</td>
<td>• Utilizing the library with books for children to read or read aloud&lt;br&gt;• Listening to books and music&lt;br&gt;• Making books from student work&lt;br&gt;• Providing materials to support language and literacy: writing utensils, flannel/magnetic story boards, puppets&lt;br&gt;&lt;p&gt;&lt;i&gt;Literacy Centers are inclusive of library and listening centers, which may be separate or combined depending on classroom size and set up. Writing activities should be integrated within centers.&lt;/i&gt;&lt;/p&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation and Comfort</td>
<td>• Using a cozy corner for a student's private time&lt;br&gt;• Lounging on soft toys or furnishings&lt;br&gt;• Reading on bean bags&lt;br&gt;• Conducting quiet activities in a comfortable space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Play</td>
<td>• Pretending with child-size kitchens&lt;br&gt;• Dressing up with costumes&lt;br&gt;• Playing with a pretend register and/or store supplies&lt;br&gt;&lt;p&gt;&lt;i&gt;Students can develop the dramatic play area to align to current units of study (e.g., dramatic play area can incorporate a second theme in addition to housekeeping, such as a vehicle, grocery store, garden, spaceship, castle, hospital etc.).&lt;/i&gt;&lt;/p&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transitions

Transitions occur when students switch from one activity period to another activity. Pre-K staff should establish routines yet remain flexible, maximizing students’ engagement in their learning and creating smooth transitions between portions of the day.

• You must ensure that your staff handle transitions between Pre-K for All activities in a developmentally appropriate way. Suggestions include:
  — Reviewing norms and routines prior to each transition.
  — Giving students reminders before major transitions so they have time to finish what they are doing and prepare for the next activity.
  — Using instructional supports during transitions such as visual schedules, songs, or other strategies to actively involve students.
  — Scheduling transitions so that only a few children transition at a time (when appropriate).
  — Ensuring wait times during the transition are less than 1-2 minutes and that students remain consistently engaged.

Use of Technology Tools

Students’ interdisciplinary learning and higher-order thinking can be supported through the appropriate exposure to, and use of, technology. When used intentionally and in a developmentally appropriate manner, technology can enhance students’ learning experiences. Technology may be used to extend students’ knowledge of curricular content through interactive activities.

• Student use of technology tools must be limited to no more than 15 minutes per day and no more than 30 minutes per week for both full and half-day Pre-K for All programs.
  — A student with a disability with an Individual Education Program (IEP) requiring assistive computer technology is exempt from this policy.

• Technology tools allowed in the classroom include:
  — Computers
  — Tablets
  — Interactive whiteboards
  — Mobile devices
  — Cameras and recording devices

• Technology in the pre-K classroom should support hands-on learning and creative expression. You should consider the unit of study and the strengths, preferences, experiences, linguistic diversity, and needs of the pre-K students when selecting a technology tool or interactive media activity to include in the classroom. All instructional materials, including literature and technology tools present in the classroom, should be free of advertising, brand marketing, and violent or sexually graphic content.

• Technology should be used in the classroom to support social interactions between students, their peers, and teachers. Students should not be isolated from peers or teachers while using technology or interactive media.
• Lead teachers and paraprofessionals should support and monitor students when they are using technology tools.

**Additional Guidance for 3-K for All on Daily Schedule**

Daily program schedules must include a variety of both student and adult-initiated activities that are appropriate to the age levels and individual needs of students and advance student learning and development.

**Daily Schedule Requirements**

While the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) does not mandate that your program follow a specific schedule, your program must offer each of the required daily activities. The list of required activities for 3-K for All is consistent with Pre-K for All. However, the recommended length of these activities has changed based on the developmental needs of 3-K for All students. Please review the information below to ensure that your site provides the appropriate activity lengths.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Pre-K for All Recommended Length</th>
<th>3-K for All Recommended Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snack and Meal Time</td>
<td>Approximately 30 minutes for meals and 15 minutes for snacks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nap and Rest Time</td>
<td>Approximately 30-45 minutes allowing for individual differences</td>
<td>Approximately 60 minutes allowing for individual differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Motor Time</td>
<td>Minimum of 60 minutes per day (Two 30 minute periods can be provided)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center Time</td>
<td>Minimum of 2 hours and 20 minutes required per day for full-day programs.</td>
<td><em>This is inclusive of transition time.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Group (Meeting/Circle Time)</td>
<td>At least two meetings per day lasting a maximum of 15 minutes each</td>
<td>A maximum of two meetings per day lasting a maximum of 10 minutes each</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sample Schedule**

While the DECE does not mandate that your program follow a specific schedule, the sample schedule below can be utilized to guide the development of your 3-K for All program schedule. Similar to Pre-K for All, the following sample 3-K for All schedule is based on a 6 hour and 20 minute day. The schedule is a recommendation and is not intended to be a mandated schedule.

**3-K for All Sample Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Arrival Activities/Greeting Routine/Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Large Group Meeting (Including transitions in and out of the activity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 minutes</td>
<td>Center Time/Small Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Clean-Up/ Handwashing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 minutes</td>
<td>Lunch (family style)/Toileting/Handwashing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>Nap/Rest Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Story Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 minutes</td>
<td>Center Time/Small Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Center Time Activities

During Center Time, 3-K for All students should have daily opportunities to explore materials and interact with peers and adults. Please review the Center Time activities below as they differ from those recommended for Pre-K for All students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Examples of Recommended Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>• Painting/drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Using three dimensional materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Making collages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Modeling with clay/playdough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Staff should provide materials that students can use for creative expression through various artistic media and representations.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music and Movement</td>
<td>• Experimenting with instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Exercising to music (e.g., yoga, Zumba)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Acting out the content of songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature, Science &amp; Discovery</td>
<td>• Using magnifying glasses to investigate the properties of natural materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Exploring natural materials (e.g., rocks, leaves, shells) according to various characteristics (be mindful of choking hazards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Exploring vocabulary and information through senses (i.e., soft/hard, wet/dry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Planting a garden and caring for it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math and Manipulatives</td>
<td>• Opportunities to use puzzles of varying shapes and difficulties for manipulation, reasoning, and problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunities to use open-ended resource sets with items representing a range of shapes, colors, sizes, and weights, for comparing, sorting, weighing, or for use in games or making patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunities to use connecting toys for manipulating and building fine-motor skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block Play</td>
<td>• Opportunities to explore and create three-dimensional structures, experiencing the effects of physical forces like gravity and weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunities to use materials to support block play (i.e., trucks, cars, signs, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunities to have conversations about the structures they created, including the relevance to their lived experiences, and any related mathematical and physical concepts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Computer | • Using technology to do research, gather information, or play developmentally appropriate learning games on:  
|          | — Computers  
|          | — Tablets  
|          | — iPads  
|          | — Smartboards  |
| Sand and Water | • Exploring properties of sand and water  
|                | • Digging and pouring with various size containers and tools  |
| Literacy Centers | • Utilizing the library independently and with teachers  
|                  | • Listening to books and exploring music  
|                  | • Exploring class made books on shared experiences  
|                  | • Exploring materials to support language and literacy: writing utensils, flannel/magnetic story boards, puppets  

*Library and listening activities may be separate or combined literacy centers, depending on classroom size and set-up. Drawing/writing activities should be integrated within centers.*

| Relaxation and Comfort | • Using a cozy corner for a student’s private time  
|                       | • Relaxing on soft toys or furnishings with transitional objects, as needed  
|                       | • Looking through books on bean bags  
|                       | • Conducting quiet activities in a comfortable space  |
| Dramatic Play | • Exploring with child-size kitchens, dishes, and other items related to homes and care-taking  
|               | • Dressing up with clothing and materials that can be used to reflect a variety of professions and genders  
|               | • Playing with a pretend register and/or store supplies  |

**Transitions**

Transitions occur when students switch from one activity period to another activity. As compared with *Pre-K for All* students, *3-K for All* students may take longer to transition and staff should consider strategies to limit wait time. You must ensure that your *3-K for All* staff handle transitions between activities in a developmentally appropriate way. Suggestions for how to specifically meet the needs of *3-K for All* students include:

- Adjust transition times to reflect the needs of individual children
- Engage students with a developmentally appropriate, short activity if students transition at different paces
- Allow for students to transition in smaller groups, rather than having the whole group wait for everyone else
• Use staff in a coordinated way so that one staff member helps children through transitions, while the other staff member moves those who are finished to the next activity

• Have students participate in getting things ready for the next activity

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do I have to inform families of my daily schedule?

Yes, you must publicize your daily schedule with times in any program description made during the application and enrollment periods so that families may make informed choices during enrollment.

In addition, the daily schedule must be shared with families during family orientation or welcome events and should be prominently posted in the classroom for reference.

2. Should the classroom’s written daily schedule be posted in the classroom?

Yes, your written daily schedule should be posted in the classroom where it can be easily seen by staff, substitutes, and families.

3. When is it appropriate to cancel outdoor play?

Adequate periods of outdoor play should be provided daily for all students. Low temperatures should not be a barrier to outside play, as long as students are appropriately dressed. In inclement weather, active play shall be encouraged and supported in safe indoor play areas. Students should not play outside on days when there is ice on the playground.

In instances of extreme heat, you are encouraged to utilize the NOAA’s National Weather Service Heat Index to determine if outdoor play is appropriate.

For more information on the NOAA’s National Weather Service Heat Index, please see the Facilities chapter of the Handbook.

You should use caution when taking students out in the heat and should make sure they are hydrated and in the shade if possible. Metal surfaces and other playground materials may become dangerously hot in direct sunlight. Test all equipment before use and keep students away from any objects that pose a safety hazard.

Considerations When Developing an Outdoor Play Policy

In developing a policy for when it is appropriate for students to be outside, you should consider the following:

• The DECE encourages programs to follow the recommendations of the New York City Office of Emergency Management or the National Weather Service when inclement weather is predicted.

• The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R), one of the DECE’s primary tools for assessing program quality, recommends that programs minimize the days when students are unable to play outside.

• Students should be dressed properly and be allowed to play outdoors unless there is a “danger associated with the outdoor exposure.”

• You should be flexible where there is bad weather and, if necessary, try to reschedule play time for a different time of the day.
Nap and Rest

Regularly scheduled nap and rest time is important to ensure students are able to relax, rest, and replenish their energy.

What You Need to Know

Overview

Mid-day nap and rest time plays a crucial role in enhancing the memory, alertness, as well as the cognitive and physical development of students. Your program must have a regularly scheduled nap or rest time during which you must provide an environment conducive for students to nap and rest. Quiet activities must be provided for students who do not wish to nap or rest.

*Half-day Pre-K for All programs must not have nap and rest time included in their daily pre-K schedule.*

Scheduling of Nap and Rest Time

Your daily schedule must include time for students to nap and rest. It is recommended that nap and rest be scheduled with some flexibility and discretion:

- At a consistent time each day
- At a time that meets the needs of students in the class (i.e., at a time when most students are tired enough to want to nap and rest)
- To allow for students to nap and rest for 45 minutes (inclusive of transition time)\(^{44}\)
  - The length of nap and rest time may vary depending on the changing needs of students over the course of the school year and the length of the program day.
  - If most students do not nap and are not tired during your program day, a shorter rest period or supervised accommodation in a designated space for quiet activities may be appropriate.
  - Alternatively, if most students are not ready to wake up at the end of nap and rest time, this period may need be extended up to 15 minutes longer. Programs with longer nap and rest periods should periodically consider whether it would be appropriate to decrease the length of this time.

Equipment and Furnishings

During nap and rest time, students must be offered the following items to allow them to relax comfortably:

- A firm sanitary cot or mat
  - A separate cot or mat must be provided for the exclusive use of each student.
  - Cots and mats must be cleaned and sanitized if soiled or contaminated.
- A clean sheet and blanket
  - You are required to provide clean sheets for every student enrolled.
  - Families may provide their own sheets should they choose to do so.

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\(^{44}\) Classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC who operate for more than 8 hours per day may schedule a longer rest period as necessary to accommodate students’ needs. EarlyLearn NYC: Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide 3-K for All and/or Pre-K for All services.
— You may request that families provide blankets.

• All sheets and blankets must be:
  — Provided for each student’s exclusive use and labeled with the student’s name.
  — Stored separately to minimize spread of illness.
  — Washed (either at home or at school) at least once a week.
    • Programs should be mindful of student allergies to detergent.

• If there are students in the class who do not nap or rest, a designated space with sufficient lighting to enable reading or other quiet activities should be provided.

When not in use, all nap and rest equipment, furnishings and materials must be stored separately and in a sanitary manner to minimize the spread of illness. Storage accommodations must be arranged to ensure that students’ personal items and bedding are not touching each other, and that sleeping surfaces (i.e., the side of a mat that a student sleeps on) do not touch the floor.

**Staffing**

• Staff-to-student ratios must be adhered to at all times during 3-K for All and Pre-K for All hours, including nap and rest time.

• During nap and rest time, family engagement staff members may count toward fulfilling required ratios.
  — For a class of 18 students or less, two instructional or family engagement staff members must supervise students during nap and rest time.
  — For a class of 19 or 20 students, three instructional or family engagement staff members must supervise students during nap and rest time.

• At least one staff member with a teaching license from the New York State Education Department (NYSED) valid for service in the early childhood grades, must be on-site and on-duty throughout the entire nap and rest time. This staff member does not have to be the lead teacher or paraprofessional.

Instructional or family engagement staff members present during nap and rest time must maintain line of sight supervision of students at all times.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **How can I help students relax during nap and rest time?**

It is important to create a classroom environment that helps students to relax, rest, and replenish their energy. The following provisions can be implemented to help students rest well:

• Help students relax at the beginning of nap and rest time by:
  — Playing soft music or singing a lullaby at a low volume.
  — Telling or reading a short story in a calm, gentle voice.
  — Rubbing a student’s back.

• Offer students a transitional object from home (e.g., family picture, special blanket, etc.) that they can use during nap and rest time.
• Collaborate with the families of your students to develop a routine that meets the varying needs of your individual students.

• Lights may be turned down and/or blinds closed to dim the room. However, the room must remain light enough to permit appropriate supervision and safe egress in the event of an emergency.

• Place cots/mats in the same area every day so students can go to the same spot as part of their routine.

• Keep the room quiet or play soft music at a low volume.

• Handle any disruptions calmly.

• Gently awaken students at the end of nap and rest time.

2. How can I make accommodations for students that are having trouble dealing with the nap and rest schedule that is appropriate for all others in the group?

Your nap and rest schedule should be flexible enough to meet the varying needs of individual students.

Your staff should accommodate individual needs by, for example, letting one student go to sleep earlier than others or allowing a student who does not wish to rest participate in an alternate activity. Flexibility can also be provided as your staff gives attention to a particular student for a longer period of time than is needed by others, to help the student relax.

Guidance on Early Risers or Non-Nappers

Early risers and non-nappers are those students who sleep less than others and who are ready to get up and engage in an activity while others sleep. These students should not have to stay quietly on their cots or mats with nothing to do. You should provide ways for these students to be appropriately involved and supervised while others are sleeping.

The following provisions can be taken:

• Students can be encouraged to quietly read books or play quietly with soft toys on their mats or cots.

• Students can read or play quietly in a separate part of the room that is away from sleeping students.

• Students can go to another room where non-nappers or early risers can participate in interesting activities with necessary supervision.

3. What are some examples of family engagement staff members who might supervise students during nap and rest time?

Family engagement staff members can be anyone who has been cleared to work with students, is familiar with your students/families, and is trained on your safety plan/emergency procedures. This may include receptionists, paraprofessionals, etc.
Extending Learning to Home

Programs are encouraged to offer meaningful extended learning opportunities that support and encourage families to be partners in their child’s education.

💡 What You Need to Know

Extending Learning Overview

The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) is committed to ensuring that all students enter Kindergarten with the foundation they need for school and a lifetime of learning. Your program is expected to provide opportunities for families to contribute to and participate in their child’s learning experiences beyond the classroom.

• The DECE encourages you to offer activities as an extension of the curriculum for students. These activities are an opportunity for your instructional staff to partner with families in understanding their child’s learning and development.

• Extended learning opportunities should provide a variety of ways for families to engage with their child using developmentally appropriate practices and supportive adult-child interactions grounded in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) (for 3-K for All) or NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC).

• Extended learning opportunities offered to families and students should be based on authentic learning activities. Students should not be provided with worksheets.

• Students and families must not be required to complete extended learning opportunities. Additionally, family participation in extended learning opportunities must not be used as a condition of enrollment or participation in classroom or program-wide activities.

Please note that Pre-K for All programs enrolled in the Pre-K Explore Instructional Track should also utilize the specific extended learning activities from the Building Blocks math curriculum.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice when Extending Learning to Home

Your program is encouraged to design activities for families and students that extend upon the learning in the classroom.

Appropriately designed extended learning opportunities should:

• Be grounded in research about how young students benefit from active learning and interactions with others

• Allow for differences in students’ individual characteristics, abilities, and needs

• Build on students’ interests and curiosities

• Build on families’ strengths and interests

• Relate to units of study and themes being covered in the classroom

• Be used in a positive way to provide support to students

Extended learning opportunities must be communicated with families as optional and enriching experiences that can help students extend their learning outside the classroom. A benefit of providing extended learning
opportunities for home is building capacity of families as their child’s primary teacher and advocate for their learning.

Some examples of meaningful extended learning opportunities that align to the developmental domains outlined in the PKFCC are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Skills</th>
<th>Learning Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying letters and numbers</td>
<td>Ask students and families to look for letters and numbers on the vehicles (e.g., buses, trains, cars) they see outside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Communication, Language, and Literacy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a variety of tools and materials to test predictions through active experimentation</td>
<td>Invite families to try a “sink and float” experiment. They can gather an assortment of small items, predict which items will sink and which will float and test their theories by placing each item in a container of water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Cognition and Knowledge of the World – Scientific Thinking)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counting objects</td>
<td>Invite families to count the number of squares they can find at home. Repeat with other shapes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Cognition and Knowledge of the World – Mathematical Practices)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding and observing different plants</td>
<td>Invite families to go on a plant scavenger hunt together. Provide a list of things for them to look for such as a patch of grass, a tree taller than they are, something with petals, or other plant parts or types that can be found in your program’s neighborhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Physical Development and Health; Cognition and Knowledge of the World – Scientific Thinking)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing an understanding of emotional competence</td>
<td>Send home a page with the pictures used for the class feelings chart. Families can display it at home and discuss the way they feel and what they can do when they experience these emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Social and Emotional Development)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing an understanding of how people and things change over time and how to relate past events to present and future activities</td>
<td>Ask families to talk about important milestones in the child’s life and create a timeline that reflects a few of these experiences. Ask families to think of two to four noteworthy events in the child’s past such as when a child was born or took his or her first steps or an important family event such as a new home or sibling, etc. If desired, families can also draw or include pictures on the timeline. For children who are with different families now than when they were babies, this activity can be focused on more recent events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The DECE’s research-based **Interdisciplinary Units of Study** support student learning in all domains using developmentally appropriate practice. They include ideas for inviting families to share their experience and knowledge with the class, or for extending learning outside the classroom. The DECE encourages programs to utilize these recommended activities.

*If you have questions, please contact the DECE by emailing prekinstruction@schools.nyc.gov.*
Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What are some examples of activities not appropriate for 3-K for All or Pre-K for All?**

   Your program should extend learning to home by supporting families to engage their child in developmentally appropriate, hands-on learning activities. Some examples of inappropriate activities that do not meet these guidelines include asking students to:

   - Circle 5 stars on a worksheet
   - Trace letters by connecting the dots
   - Draw lines to connect pictures of things that start with the letter “H”

2. **Are teachers permitted to send home worksheets with students?**

   The DECE expects that your program will offer extended learning opportunities based on authentic learning activities. The DECE does not recommend sending home worksheets.

   *If you have questions, please contact the DECE by emailing prekinstruction@schools.nyc.gov.*
Report Cards

Programs should promote two-way sharing of information between staff and families, in a culturally and linguistically responsive manner, to support students’ well-being, academic success, and developmental progress. As such, students must not be issued written report cards.

⚠️ What You Need to Know

Report Card Overview

In order to ensure that families receive developmentally appropriate summaries of their child’s progress in 3-K for All and Pre-K for All, families must not be issued written report cards.

Instead, in order to understand students’ progress, teaching staff should prioritize individual conversations with families, using data from authentic assessments and student work samples to provide a comprehensive overview of how students are progressing in all developmental domains.

Please see the Family Engagement chapter of the Handbook for more information on family-teacher conferences.
VI. Special Populations

a. Special Education Services

b. Language Services

c. Immigrant Populations

d. Students in Temporary Housing
Special Education Services

Your program must provide supports for families throughout the year regarding the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) process, including the special education referral and evaluation process.

💡 What You Need to Know

Overview

The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) is committed to supporting and serving all students, including those who may require special education services. Special education services are available for students who have disabilities or developmental delays that impact their ability to learn. The CPSE is responsible for coordinating and carrying out the special education referral and evaluation process for students.

Regional CPSE offices serve families in the district in which the family resides, regardless of where their child attends 3-K for All or Pre-K for All.

For CPSE contact information, please see the CPSE website.

CPSE Process

Programs are required to follow all policies outlined by the CPSE and support families in navigating the CPSE process.

*Details of the CPSE process can be found in the “Committee on Preschool Special Education Guidance” document at the end of this chapter.*

The CPSE process consists of five steps:

1. Referral
2. Evaluation
3. CPSE Meeting
4. Implementation of Individualized Education Program (IEP)
5. Annual Review

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Before making a referral to the CPSE, how can programs work with students?*

Before making a referral to the CPSE, you should implement strategies and supports as a first step toward improving learning for a student suspected of having a disability. Please work together with families to collect information, support the student, and determine next steps. During this time, you should take the following steps:

- Implement a variety of developmental and academic strategies to support the student;
- Consult with DECE social workers and instructional coordinators;
- Collect ongoing, authentic assessments such as classroom work and observation notes;
- Analyze authentic assessments to determine the student’s developmental progress and to inform planning and supports; and
• Share authentic assessments, as well as the decisions that are made after considering the data collected, with families.

2. Can staff make requests for students to receive a CPSE evaluation?

A written request that the CPSE refer a student for an initial evaluation may be made by a professional staff member at the program that the student attends or is eligible to attend, a physician, a judicial officer, or a professional staff member of a public agency with responsibility for the welfare, health, or education of the student. Requests for referrals may or may not lead to a referral.

Consistent with the New York State education law, a referral for an initial evaluation may be made by a student’s parent/legal guardian or a CPSE administrator, and the referral must be made in writing to the Chairperson of the CPSE office in the family’s home district.

For more information, including the specific requirements that a written request for referral must meet, please review the “Preschool Special Education Guidance” document at the end of this chapter.

3. How can I support families as they undergo the referral process?

You can support families in many ways as they undergo the referral process:

• Continue to support the student in the classroom by collecting and analyzing authentic assessments, and using this information to inform classroom supports;
• Meet with the family members to learn more about the student’s needs and home life, and share how the student is responding to targeted interventions;
• Build the family’s skills so they can support learning and social-emotional development at home;
• Connect the family to additional resources and community organizations to support the student’s needs and answer the family’s questions;
• Assist the family in writing a referral letter; and
• Support the family in arranging a special education evaluation.

4. Do lead teachers and other program staff participate in the CPSE meeting?

Consistent with your program’s contract with the NYCDOE, you are expected to allow the child’s teacher to participate in CPSE meetings for initial referrals and for annual reviews requested by the CPSE or the child’s parent. Teachers are part of the CPSE team and play a very important role at CPSE meetings. Often, teachers spend the most time with students and get to observe their academic, social, and behavioral strengths and needs regularly. The rich amount of knowledge teachers have about the student and his or her development, general education curriculum and interventions, and day-to-day workings of the classroom provides a unique and valuable perspective to the CPSE team.

At CPSE meetings, teachers can share knowledge in the following areas:

• The current performance of the student in the general education environment including strengths, and needs;
• Student interactions with peers;
• Classroom operations in terms of approach, pace, and dynamics;
• Classroom interventions and supports put into place and how the student responded;
• Student progress toward IEP goals in the classroom; and
• Their work with pre-K special education providers to integrate services in the classroom, if appropriate.

Additionally, CPSE meetings are an opportunity for teachers to learn more about the student and collaborate with special education professionals and the family on how to holistically meet the student's needs.

5. Can three and four-year-olds be enrolled in a SCIS classroom?

Yes, in accordance with New York State Education Department (NYSED) regulations, Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS) classes must be available to students ages three and four with IEPs; this includes students who are currently in the “Turning 5“ process.

6. How can I access a student’s IEP?

Your program will receive a copy of the IEPs of students who are officially enrolled. Your program must ensure that the content of IEPs are kept confidential. IEPs should only be shared with staff who are responsible for the implementation of the IEP. You must also ensure that all IEPs are maintained in a secure, locked location. The IEP package will include a cover letter with information regarding the use of IEPs, including access, storage and best practices for implementation.

If you have not received an IEP for a student enrolled at your program, email specialedprek@schools.nyc.gov and provide the student’s name, student’s date of birth, program name, program address and name of the program director. For general questions, email specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov.
Preschool Special Education

Preschool special education services are available for children age 3 to 5 who have disabilities or delays in development that affect learning. These services are provided free of charge to eligible children by the NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE). The Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) is responsible for coordinating the special education process for preschool children. There are 10 CPSE offices in different areas of the city that work with families in the district where the family lives. For CPSE contact information, please visit [http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/Help/Contacts/CSECPSE](http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/SpecialEducation/Help/Contacts/CSECPSE).

1. Referral

2. Evaluation

3. CPSE Meeting

4. Services

### Referral

Prior to making a referral to the CPSE, families and teachers should work together to implement a variety of developmental and academic interventions to support the child. A referral must:

- Be made in writing to the CPSE that serves the family’s home district; and

- Come from a parent, principal of a DOE school, or CPSE administrator.

In a referral, a parent should:

- Request a preschool special education evaluation;

- Provide their child’s full, legal name and date of birth;

- Describe any specific areas of concerns about their child’s development;

- List any services their child received in the past;

- Provide full contact information to reach the family; and

- State their preferred language, if it is not English.

Once a referral has been made, the CPSE will mail the family a referral packet for preschool special education services. After the family receives the packet, they should schedule an evaluation with an approved evaluation site.

The referral process can also start if someone else submits a written request for initial referral to special education to the CPSE. A request to refer a student for special education must:

- Be made in writing to the CPSE that serves the family’s home district;

- Come from a professional staff member of the school district in which the child resides, professional staff member of the school the child attends or is eligible to attend, licensed physician, judicial officer, or professional staff member of a public agency with responsibility for the welfare, health or education of children;

- State the reasons for the request for referral and include any test results, records, or reports upon which the request for referral is based;

- Describe interventions used to remediate the child’s performance prior to the request for referral; and

- Describe the extent of parental contact or involvement prior to the request for referral.

A referral packed includes a:

- Notice of Referral form
- List of NYS approved evaluation sites
- Consent for Initial Preschool Evaluation form
- Child and Adolescent Health Examination form
- NYSED Procedural Safeguards Notice
When the CPSE receives a request for referral, the CPSE will, within 10 school days, either initiate the referral process and agree to refer the child for evaluation, or provide the parent with a copy of the request for referral, inform the parent of his or her right to refer the child for an initial evaluation, and offer the parent an opportunity to meet.

**Evaluation**

The parent should review the list of approved evaluation sites and choose an agency from the list. The CPSE can support as needed. While most of the evaluation sites are private agencies, the NYCDOE also has preschool evaluators in CPSE offices. The evaluation site will:

- Schedule a meeting with the family to explain the evaluation process, answer any questions, share due process rights, and obtain **written consent** to evaluate their child;
- Notify the CPSE that they obtained consent to evaluate the child;
- Conduct appropriate evaluations;
- Complete the Preschool Student Evaluation Summary Report in the parent’s preferred language; and
- Provide copies of the evaluation reports, including the summary report, to the parent and CPSE.

An initial preschool evaluation will consist of:

- A psychological evaluation;
- A social history interview;
- A physical evaluation;
- An observation of the child; and
- Other appropriate assessments as necessary to ascertain the physical, mental, behavioral, and emotional factors that contribute to the child’s suspected disability.

Some children require a **bilingual evaluation**, which is conducted in both English and the child’s home or native language. Agencies that offer bilingual evaluations are identified on the evaluation agency list in the referral packet, along with the specific languages (other than English) that they offer.

**CPSE Meeting**

Once evaluations are complete, a CPSE meeting will be held. The initial CPSE meeting must take place within 60 calendar days of the date the parent signed consent to evaluate, unless extended by mutual agreement. At the CPSE meeting, the team will review the evaluation results, share and learn more about the child, and determine if the child is eligible for preschool special education services. A child will be found eligible if his or her disability impacts participation in age-appropriate activities and there is a significant delay in cognitive, language and communication, adaptive, socio-emotional, or motor functional areas or the child meets other criteria set forth in the regulations.

CPSE meeting participants include the parent, a **general education teacher whenever the child is or may be in general education**, a special education teacher and/or provider (if applicable), a district representative (the CPSE administrator), and others with knowledge about the child or special expertise (evaluator, doctor, additional parent member, etc.). At a CPSE meeting, teachers can share knowledge of the child and his or her development, curriculum and interventions used, and day-to-day workings of the classroom.
If found eligible, the CPSE will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP is a plan that discusses a child's abilities and outlines the services the DOE will provide to meet the child's educational needs. The IEP will include present levels of performance, measurable annual goals, recommended special education programs and services, and accommodations and modifications.

After a child has been identified as a preschool student with a disability, the child's IEP will be reviewed at least once per year in additional CPSE meetings. These are called “annual reviews.” In addition to this annual review, a parent may ask for an additional CPSE meeting. This is often called a “requested review.” At any time, a parent may also ask for a reevaluation.

**Services**

There is a range of education and related services available to support preschool students with IEPs. Special education services fall along a continuum from less restrictive to more restrictive. Less restrictive programs allow children to receive services alongside students without IEPs. More restrictive programs are available for children who require more specialized supports and services. The CPSE will always consider a child's least restrictive environment (LRE).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs and Services</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Related Services</td>
<td>Physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language therapy, counseling, orientation and mobility services, hearing, vision, and health services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT)</td>
<td>Certified special educator to work closely with a student on academic, emotional and social skills; can be delivered in small groups or one-on-one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Class in an Integrated Setting (Half and Full Day)</td>
<td>Classroom where students with and without IEPs are educated together; a general and special education teacher work together throughout the day to ensure all students have access to the general education curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Class (Half and Full Day)</td>
<td>Classroom that only serves students with IEPs whose needs cannot be met within the general education setting or integrated classroom; led by a special education teacher and generally has 6–12 students in a special class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Placement</td>
<td>Provided for a minimum of five hours per day, five days per week by a state-approved program at a site where children receive care 24 hours per day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional supports and services could include a paraprofessional, assistive technology, bilingual services, behavioral supports, and transportation.

All services on students’ IEPs are provided free of cost to families. Written consent from the parent is required for services to start. Services should begin no later than 60 school days from the date the parent provided consent to evaluate or 30 school days from the date of the initial CPSE meeting, whichever is first.
Contacts

Always first contact a child’s CPSE administrator with questions about preschool special education services. CPSE contact information can be found at [https://schools.nyc.gov/special-education/help/cpse-cse](https://schools.nyc.gov/special-education/help/cpse-cse). The following [NYCDOE contacts](https://www.schools.nyc.gov) are also available:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td><a href="mailto:SpecialEducation@schools.nyc.gov">SpecialEducation@schools.nyc.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Services</td>
<td><a href="mailto:RelatedServices@schools.nyc.gov">RelatedServices@schools.nyc.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitioning to Kindergarten</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Turnings@schools.nyc.gov">Turnings@schools.nyc.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-K for All and Pre-K for All Enrollment</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov">ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-K for All and Pre-K for All Programs</td>
<td><a href="mailto:EarlyChildhood@schools.nyc.gov">EarlyChildhood@schools.nyc.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOE Special Education Hotline</td>
<td>(718) 935-2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in Temporary Housing</td>
<td>(718) 391-6845 <a href="mailto:MPonzio@schools.nyc.gov">MPonzio@schools.nyc.gov</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a foster parent wants to know if they have educational decision-making rights, they can contact the child's foster care agency caseworker or the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Office of Education Support and Policy Planning at 212-453-9918 or [education.unit@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:education.unit@acs.nyc.gov).

The Early Childhood Direction Centers (ECDCs), funded by the New York State Education Department, provide free confidential information for families and professionals about services for young children with suspected or diagnosed developmental delays or disabilities. You can contact your borough’s ECDC to talk about early intervention, preschool special education services, early childhood programs, and the transition to kindergarten and school-age special education services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bronx</td>
<td>(347) 271-8159</td>
<td><a href="mailto:maura@bils.org">maura@bils.org</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ecdcbronx.org">http://www.ecdcbronx.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn</td>
<td>(718) 437-3794</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ksamet@adaptcommunitynetwork.org">ksamet@adaptcommunitynetwork.org</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.adaptcommunitynetwork.org">www.adaptcommunitynetwork.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manhattan</td>
<td>(212) 746-6175</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ecdc@nyp.org">ecdc@nyp.org</a></td>
<td><a href="http://nyp.org/ecdc">http://nyp.org/ecdc</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Queens</td>
<td>(718) 215-1299</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cwarkala@queenscp.org">cwarkala@queenscp.org</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ecdcqueens.org/">http://www.ecdcqueens.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staten Island</td>
<td>(718) 226-6670</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Ikennedy3a@northwell.edu">Ikennedy3a@northwell.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.siuh.edu/childhood">http://www.siuh.edu/childhood</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Language Services

As a part of the Division Early Childhood Education's (DECE) effort to ensure all students, including those from diverse language and cultural backgrounds benefit from 3-K for All and Pre-K for All, programs must be responsive to the needs of students and families whose home language is a language other than English.

What You Need to Know

Language Services Overview

Your program must embrace and support the cultural and linguistic diversity of all students and families, working with families to appropriately tailor practices and resources at both the classroom and program levels. You must assist all students, including those whose home language is a language other than English, in developing the skills and knowledge reflected in the NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC).

During pre-registration, families are asked to complete the Language Needs Survey. Survey results and other authentic assessment data sources will help you identify and meet the needs of your diverse students.

For additional guidance on serving students whose home language is a language other than English, please email prekinstruction@schools.nyc.gov.

The DECE currently designates two language models for full-day Pre-K for All NYCEEC programs, Dual Language (DL) and Enhanced Language Support (ELS), as options for families to select during the pre-K application process.

3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs may have other language support options for students who speak languages other than English at home.

Dual Language Classrooms

Dual Language (DL) classrooms are only available in full-day Pre-K for All programs. DL classrooms are designed for students whose home language is a language other than English to continue developing the student’s home language, as well as English language skills. In addition, English proficient students are given the opportunity to learn a new language. Both groups provide good linguistic role models for each other and, through their interactions, support language development in both languages.

DL classrooms provide instruction in two languages: English and the target language. The target language is the language other than English most commonly spoken by students and families at home. DL classrooms support students whose:

1. Home language is a language other than English
2. Families are interested in their child learning a second language

DL classrooms should consist of a balance of students whose home language is English and students whose home language is the target language.

Pre-K for All programs that are approved and designated by the DECE to offer DL must have a minimum of one pre-K classroom that follows the DL model. There are three common options for DL instructional models in pre-K:

1. Two classrooms are utilized for pre-K instruction and students switch classrooms each day. One classroom is designated only for instruction in English and the other classroom is designated only for instruction in the target language.
2. One classroom is utilized for pre-K instruction. Instruction in English occurs on one day and instruction in the target language occurs on the next day.

3. One classroom is utilized for pre-K instruction. Instruction in one language occurs in the morning and instruction in the other language occurs in the afternoon.

Information on how to apply to provide a DL classroom will be provided through the Early Childhood Bulletin. If you have questions about providing DL, please contact prekinstruction@schools.nyc.gov.

*EarlyLearn NYC programs do not follow the NYCDOE Pre-K Dual Language model.*

**Staff Qualifications**

- Lead teachers in DL classrooms must possess and maintain a current New York State certification in the Early Childhood Grades, be fluent in the target language, and have or be in the process of obtaining a Bilingual Extension.
  
  — If in the process of obtaining a Bilingual Extension, lead teachers must be able to provide proper documentation.

**Enrollment**

The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) aims to place students in DL classrooms appropriately based on a number of different factors and priorities, including a student’s home language.

During the pre-K application process, families may select a Dual Language (DL) pre-K classroom for their child. If they choose a program providing DL, they are asked the following three questions about their child’s home language:

1. What is your child’s home language?

2. How well does your child speak and understand English?

3. How well does your child speak and understand [the target language]?

This information, along with the additional admissions priorities, is considered when placing students in a DL classroom.

*Additional information on DL admissions priorities can be found in the Enrollment section of the Handbook.*

**Enhanced Language Support**

Enhanced Language Support (ELS) programs are only available in full-day *Pre-K for All* NYCEEC programs. ELS programs offer additional supports for students in English and whose home language is a language other than English and their families. These programs support development of the language other than English, known as the target language, most commonly spoken by students and families. Programs build on the target language in a variety of ways. These may include the use of the target language during story time, music and movement, or other whole group activities.

If your program is approved and designated as offering Enhanced Language Support (ELS), you must offer target language supports throughout all classrooms in your *Pre-K for All* program.

Programs designated as ELS must:

- Have at least one staff member who speaks the program’s target language regularly available on-site to meet with families and provide additional supports.
• Provide regular opportunities for family members to share language, stories, food, music, and other artifacts from their culture into the classroom, in celebrations, and meetings throughout the school year.

• Have schedules, labels, music, and a wide range of books in both English and the program’s target language readily accessible.

• Ensure continued language development of both English and the home language, so that students receive instruction in both languages and build their knowledge and fluency in both English and their home language.

Information on how to apply to provide an ELS program will be provided through the Early Childhood Bulletin. If you have questions about becoming an ELS program, please contact prekduallanguage@schools.nyc.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who determines the language in which services for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are delivered?

The Committee of Preschool Special Education (CPSE) in accordance with an IEP team determine a student’s eligibility for special education services and the language in which special education programs and services are delivered.

For more information on special education services and programs available to students, please see the Special Education Services chapter of the Handbook.

2. How should I engage families whose home language is a language other than English?

Strong partnerships with families lay the foundation for ongoing engagement in their child’s K-12 education. You should provide families with a warm and respectful environment that supports families whose home language is a language other than English. All of your program’s policies, communications, and services should be sensitive, respectful, and responsive to the linguistic and cultural needs of families. Additionally, your program may have other language support options for students and families who speak languages other than English at home.

For additional information on translation requirements, please see the Family Engagement section of the Handbook.
Immigrant Populations

The Division Early Childhood Education (DECE) is committed to protecting the right of children in New York City to attend 3-K for All and Pre-K for All, regardless of immigration status and will ensure that all children continue to learn in a safe, nurturing environment.

What You Need to Know

Overview

All students must be allowed to attend 3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs, regardless of immigration status. Your program should ensure that all students benefit from a quality education. To ensure that all children are able to learn in safe, nurturing environments, programs are encouraged to follow the policies below:

- **You should not ask about or keep a record of the immigration status of a student or family member.** If a family does share confidential information, including immigration status, it should be kept confidential.

- **You should not grant unlimited access to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).** ICE, like all other law enforcement agencies, is not permitted access to students without proper legal authority. If ICE officers arrive at your program for immigration enforcement purposes, program staff should refer them to you, the NYCEEC Director. If you receive a referral of ICE officers, you should contact your designated DECE Field Office or the DECE Policy Team at earlychildhoodpolicy@schools.nyc.gov, send copies of any documentation presented by ICE, and wait for further instructions.

If you have questions or would like more information regarding this process, you should contact your DECE Field Office.

- **You may not release student information unless required to by law.** If you are unsure whether or not a request for student information is lawful, you should reach out to your designated DECE Field Office immediately.

- **If the family of a student enrolled in your program is seeking immigration legal services, please refer them to ActionNYC.** This is a program that offers free, safe immigration legal help from trusted community organizations, in the family’s community and home language. Families can also refer to the ActionNYC website for more information.

- **You should reassure families of students enrolled in your program that all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, have access to City services.**

For assistance, they can call 311 or visit nyc.gov/immigrants for more information from the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs. Additionally, resources are available on the NYCDOE website.

Your program staff should ensure that all students are in a safe and supportive learning environment. NYCDOE and DECE policy is to maintain safe and inclusive schools and programs that are free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination on account of actual or perceived race, color, religion, age, creed, ethnicity, national origin, alienage, citizenship status, disability, sexual orientation, gender (sex), or weight. Any incidents or concerns should be immediately reported to you or to your designated DECE Field Office by your program staff. The DECE will work with you to investigate and take swift action in response to reported incidents or concerns.
Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can undocumented children go to school in New York City?

Yes. Every child in New York City has a right to a public school education, regardless of immigration status.

- Children age 3 or turning 3 by the end of a calendar year are eligible for 3-K for All
- Children age 4 or turning 4 by the end of a calendar year are eligible for Pre-K for All
- All residents have the right to attend public school from age 5 until graduation or until the end of the school year when they turn 21.

3-K for All and Pre-K for All providers are considered public school programs. Program staff should not ask about immigration status. If families share information about immigration status, this information must be kept confidential.

2. Can a student’s family visit my program if they are undocumented?

Yes. To visit your program, family members need to have an official form of photo identification, unless they are already known to your program. Acceptable forms of official photo identification include IDNYC, the free municipal ID card issued by New York City to all New Yorkers. IDNYC does not collect immigration status information. Guardians and family members can sign up for a free IDNYC card at www.nyc.gov/idnyc.

3. I have students whose families are not citizens. Should they be worried about deportation?

Immigration law can be very complicated and every individual’s case is different. If a student or student’s family members are not sure about how recent immigration announcements affect their ability to stay and work lawfully in the U.S., they should speak to an immigration attorney to understand their options. You should suggest they call 311 and say “ActionNYC” to make an appointment for free, safe immigration legal help. Remind families to beware of unlicensed immigration service providers who take advantage of their customers and recommend that they get help only from a trusted, licensed immigration attorney or accredited representative.

4. Does the City participate in immigration enforcement?

The City does not conduct immigration enforcement actions. The federal government handles immigration enforcement. The City’s confidentiality policy, which protects immigration status and other confidential information, is meant to keep the City a safe and welcoming place for all residents, including undocumented immigrants.

5. Can my students’ families feel safe calling the police for help?

Yes. The NYPD does not ask about the immigration status of crime victims, witnesses, or other people who ask for help. Anyone who has been the victim of a crime, including a hate crime, should contact the NYPD at 911. To contact the NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force directly, call (646) 610-5267.

6. What kinds of city services are available to my program’s staff, students, and their families?

Most City services, including going to school or using the health care system, are available to all New Yorkers, including undocumented immigrants. City employees will not ask immigration status unless it is necessary to do their jobs. Immigration status must be kept confidential.

- IDNYC – IDNYC is the City’s identification card for all New Yorkers. IDNYC does not collect immigration status information. Individuals can make an appointment at www.nyc.gov/idnyc.
• **Health care**

  — Low-cost emergency and non-emergency health care is available to all at public hospitals and clinics and at other affordable clinics. Families can call 311 for more information.

  — NYCWell is a free, confidential connection to mental health care in more than 200 languages, any time of day. Call 1-888-NYC-Well, text WELL to 65173, or go to [www.nyc.gov/nycwell](http://www.nyc.gov/nycwell).

• **Child care** – Low-income families with children age 6 weeks through 12 years old have access to free or low-cost child care. Families can call 311 for more information.

• **Emergency food and shelter** – Locations across NYC provide free food to people in need. The Homebase program can help residents avoid entering the shelter system. Families can call 311 for more information.

7. *What should my program staff or a student or family do if they feel like they have been the victim of discrimination or harassment?*

New Yorkers have the right to be free from unlawful discrimination, retaliation, and harassment, in the workplace, housing and public places, including 3-K for All and Pre-K for All programs. For more information or to report an incident, you can suggest calling 311, or calling the NYC Commission on Human Rights hotline at (718) 722-3131. Families or program staff with older children enrolled in District Schools can also reach out to that school’s “Respect for All” liaison for support.
Students in Temporary Housing

Students living in temporary housing must have equal access to the same 3-K for All and Pre-K for All services provided to students permanently housed in the community.

What You Need to Know

Overview

Students living in temporary housing have several important rights related to education. These include:

- A right to immediate enrollment in a 3-K for All or Pre-K for All program, even without enrollment documents
- A right to receive transportation to and from their program
  — In early childhood programs, transportation assistance is offered through a free MetroCard for the child's family
- A right to either remain in their program or transfer to a different program should students become homeless or move between temporary housing locations.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and NYCDOE policy ensure that students residing in temporary living situations have access to the services that are available to permanently housed students.

Students in temporary housing lack a fixed regular, and adequate night time residence. This includes a student who:

- Is living with a friend, relative, or someone else because his or her family lost their housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (often referred to as “doubled-up”), or is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or camping ground due to lack of alternative accommodations
- Is living in a subsidized publicly or privately-operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including commercial hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill)
- Is living in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation
- Is living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, or substandard housing

The Students in Temporary Housing (STH) unit within the NYCDOE Office of Safety and Youth Development (OSYD) is available to answer questions on the rights of students residing in temporary housing situations. The STH unit has multiple staff available to assist your Pre-K for All program.

- Shelter-based family assistants: coordinate transportation, enrollment, etc. and are located in shelters
- Content experts: coordinate resources (including a free MetroCard) and programs for students in temporary housing and are located in the borough offices

For questions related to enrolling students in temporary housing in your program, you can reach out to the DOE Outreach Team.

- DOE Outreach Team
  Email: Outreachteam@schools.nyc.gov
  Phone: 212-637-8000

You can also contact the NYS-TEACHS hotline at (800) 388-2014 with any questions on the rights of students residing in temporary housing.
Communication with Families

The DECE has developed a poster to detail the basic rights of students living in temporary housing. These posters will be distributed to NYCEEC programs by Fall 2018. You are responsible for displaying the poster in a prominent location where it can be seen by prospective and currently enrolled families in your program. Additionally, you must have information sheets available that detail the basic rights of students living in temporary housing.

NYS-TEACHS offers free brochures and posters with information on the educational rights of children and youth who are homeless. Brochures and posters are available in both English and Spanish. NYS-TEACHS also carries posters in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, and Urdu.

Application, Registration, and Enrollment

Students living in temporary housing are provided with additional flexibility in certain aspects of the admissions, registration, and enrollment processes.

Application

Families living in temporary housing should apply for 3-K for All and Pre-K for All via the single application process.

• If living in a shelter, families should enter the shelter address as the address on their application.

• If living in a domestic violence shelter, the family should enter the P.O. Box assigned to the shelter on their application.

• If a family is living in another temporary housing situation (e.g., a doubled-up housing situation), families should use their temporary address on their application.

For more information on the application process, please see the Enrollment chapter of the Handbook.

Registration and Enrollment

All families may accept their offer to your program by registering at your site in person and presenting the required documentation. As outlined in the Enrollment chapter of the Handbook, you must register and enroll students in temporary housing even if the family is unable to provide the following documentation at pre-registration:

• Birth Certificate

• Proof of Residency

• Immunization Records (see below for more information)

After enrolling a student living in temporary housing, you should work with a content-expert to obtain any necessary documentation to complete registration and enrollment, as necessary. Students must not be prevented from enrolling in your program while staff obtain documentation.

All families must also complete a Residency Questionnaire Form during registration or upon enrollment in your program. Your staff must assist families in filling out the form as needed. The information provided on the form can be used to help determine if a student is living in temporary housing.

Immunization Requirements For Attendance

You must allow students in temporary housing to attend your program even if they have not yet received all required immunizations or do not have documentation of immunizations. Your staff must assist families to obtain proof of immunizations within 90 days of enrollment, including recommending walk-in clinics that can assist the family.

For more information, please see the Health Services chapter of the Handbook.
Mid-Year Enrollment

A student who becomes homeless after the start of the school year has a right to either remain enrolled in his or her current program or to transfer to and enroll in another program for which he or she meets the eligibility criteria and according to NYCDOE regulations. If a family living in temporary housing who is not currently enrolled at your program informs you after the start of the school year that they would like the enroll their child, you should:

- Enroll the student
  - If you are enrolling a new student mid-year, you must enter the student’s address and housing status in the Pre-KIDS enrollment page.
- If there are no open seats at your program, immediately contact the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov. The DECE will review the case and will discuss next steps with you and/or the family. Please provide the following information within the email:
  - Student name
  - Date of birth
  - Family contact information
  - Any additional contact information
  - Current address
  - Name of the program(s) that the child has previously attended (if applicable)

Students with an IEP

If a student living in temporary housing has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that recommends a Special Class (SC) or Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS) and requests mid-year enrollment at a program, your staff should refer the family to their Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) and immediately contact EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov providing the student’s name, date of birth, and the family’s current address and contact information. CPSE arranges placement for all students with IEPs recommending SC or SCIS settings enrolling mid-year, including homeless students.

Address Changes

Students in temporary housing whose living situation or address changes (e.g., move to a different shelter) and whose family would like them to enroll in or transfer to a 3-K for All or Pre-K for All program, must be provided with the necessary assistance to do so.

If a family’s address or housing status changes throughout the year, you must note this change in Pre-KIDS. Please contact your designated DECE Field Office with any questions.

Eligibility to Remain at Current Program

Students are eligible to stay in their original program even if they:

- Lose their permanent residence during the school year; or
- Move from temporary housing to permanent housing; or
- Change temporary housing locations.
Students who move after the start of the year and choose to stay in their original program must be provided with assistance to maintain continuity of education. Families should be informed that they should contact a STH Family Assistant located in a shelter or a content expert to arrange transportation assistance.

Please see the Transportation section below for more information.

**Transfers**

If a family living in temporary housing who has a child that is currently enrolled at your program informs your staff that they are moving and wish to enroll their child at a different program, you must direct the family to their district's content expert and immediately e-mail the DECE at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov. Within the email, please include the following information:

- Student name
- Date of birth
- Family contact information
- Previous address
- Current address
- Any additional contact information
- New program preference

Families will receive assistance in enrolling in a program if they move from:

- Permanent housing to temporary housing;
- Temporary housing to another temporary housing situation; and
- Temporary housing to permanent housing.

The DECE will work with the Office of Student Enrollment (OSE) to place the student in a program close to his or her new residence in accordance with NYCDOE policy. Families are not required to demonstrate a travel or other hardship before requesting to transfer to and enroll their child in another program due to changes in residence.

The choice about whether a student living in temporary housing will remain in his or her program of origin or change schools must be made in coordination with the family and in the “best interest” of the student. It is presumed to be in the best interest of the child to stay in the same program, unless this is contrary to the wishes of the student's parent/legal guardian.

Your program should provide families with necessary supports if they would like to remain in the same program. If additional guidance is needed, please contact the DECE Family Engagement team at PreKFamilyEngagement@schools.nyc.gov.

**Transportation**

Parents/legal guardians of students in temporary housing are entitled to free Metro Cards to get their children to and from pre-K. You should contact your STH Content Expert to get a free MetroCard for a parent/legal guardian. Parents/legal guardians are also entitled to free Metro Cards to get their child to and from your program for the remainder of the school year in which the child becomes permanently housed.

If a student living in temporary housing has an IEP that recommends special transportation, you should contact your local Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE), who will assist in arranging transportation.
VII. Appendix A: 
*Pre-K for All* Program 
Quality Standards
Appendix A: *Pre-K for All* Program Quality Standards

*Pre-K for All* Program Quality Standards

Every day, throughout New York City, we work to ensure all our students will be ready for the next stage of their education, and ultimately, prepared to succeed and engage as citizens in the 21st century. As part of this mission, and for the first time in New York City’s history, every four-year-old will have the opportunity to begin his or her path to success in free, full-day, high-quality pre-K through NYC’s *Pre-K for All*.

The [NYC Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards](#) define the New York City Department of Education’s (NYCDOE) vision for high-quality *Pre-K for All* programs in NYC. They describe the key practices of family engagement, rigorous and developmentally appropriate instruction, professional collaborations, and leadership that support children in gaining the knowledge and skills outlined in the [New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core](#) (PKFCC). Grounded in the NYCDOE’s vision for school improvement across the pre-K to 12 continuum, the [DOE Framework for Great Schools](#), the *Pre-K for All* Program Quality Standards establish a shared set of expectations for pre-K programs across all settings. The NYCDOE Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) staff, pre-K program leaders and teachers, and pre-K families will use the Program Quality Standards to understand and advance program quality and positive outcomes for children.

Pre-K is a critical and irreplaceable foundation for our city’s young learners, and is the beginning of their educational relationship with the NYCDOE. As such, the Program Quality Standards provide a new opportunity for collaboration between the NYCDOE, *Pre-K for All* educators and leaders in New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) and elementary schools. Pre-K children and their families will benefit from smooth transitions between pre-K and Kindergarten, and the NYCDOE can continue to build on the quality foundations for learning and development established in the pre-K year. The DECE’s tailored supports and professional learning opportunities will be aligned to the Program Quality Standards and the DECE will engage with programs and school communities to deepen a shared understanding. The *Pre-K for All* Program Quality Standards will drive a unified effort to improve quality in our practice, preparing all children for success in Kindergarten and beyond.

### *Pre-K for All* Program Quality Standards

#### Strong Family-Community Ties

NYC *Pre-K for All* begins with strong relationships and is a unique opportunity to establish partnerships with families at the beginning of a child’s P-12 experience. Pre-K programs create trust and respect in their community by communicating with families in ways the families can understand and by valuing what families know about their child and their needs. Families are supported in building their capacity to act as their child’s first teacher and advocate, and programs partner with families and community organizations to help each child and family succeed.

#### Effective School Leadership

NYC *Pre-K for All* leaders play a key role in shaping a vision for how the program will help each child learn and grow in the context of the community each program serves. They create a positive culture in the program to support that vision and work with teachers and families to set goals. They gather and use many types of information to manage their resources to improve outcomes for children. Leaders work together with their staff and families to improve the quality of the program.
Supportive Environment

NYC Pre-K for All programs provide a safe and healthy environment as the foundation for children as they learn and grow. Programs respect and value the differences for individual children, and make changes to the ways they teach so each child can succeed. Each and every child will be supported in meeting high expectations for holistic learning and growth.

Rigorous Instruction

Pre-K for All children are active learners who learn through play, exploration, and from their relationships with teachers and peers. Teachers are role models and work together and with children to create a classroom culture where children learn to think critically, are motivated to solve problems and think creatively, and can work independently and interact with others in positive ways. When teachers have rich interactions with children, make materials and books available to embrace the diversity in the classroom, and arrange the physical environment in a thoughtful and responsive way, all children are supported in their learning and growth.

In NYC Pre-K for All, teachers learn about the children in their class through assessments that are appropriate for young children, observing and listening to children, and two-way communications with families. Teachers use that knowledge along with learning goals for pre-K children in all the domains of the Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core in order to plan the curriculum. This cycle is ongoing and allows teachers to respond to what children know and can do throughout the year. Rigor in these actions of assessment and planning, as well as through instruction that honors the ways young children learn, ensures that Pre-K for All programs are supporting all children in developing the foundations of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Collaborative Teachers

NYC Pre-K for All teachers, leaders, and other teaching staff are committed to improving their professional practice and outcomes for children and families. They work together to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the Pre-K classroom. Program leaders work with teachers and other staff to learn from student work and provide professional feedback. Teachers take ownership of their own learning, and are supported in developing their own leadership skills.

Trust

Everyone works toward the shared goal of improving child and family outcomes, preparing children for success in school and beyond. Program administrators, teaching staff, children, and families value and respect each other. Relationships between all members of the program and school community are based on mutual respect, personal regard, and integrity.
Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards

Strong Family-Community Ties

1. **Strong Relationships**: Programs foster mutual respect, trust, and connection with and among families and the community in order to build strong relationships.

2. **Two-Way Communication**: Programs promote two-way sharing of information between program staff and families, in a culturally and linguistically responsive manner, to support children’s well-being, academic success, and developmental progress.

3. **Capacity-Building**: Programs recognize families’ essential contribution to their child’s development and support families in enacting their role as their child’s:
   
   3.1. **Primary Teacher**: Programs partner with families to develop their capacity to enrich their child's academic, social, emotional, and behavioral skills that are foundational to learning.
   
   3.2. **Primary Advocate**: Programs partner with families to develop their capacity to advocate for their child's holistic needs and drive program improvement.

Supportive Environment

4. **Health, Safety & Well-being**: Program leaders ensure a safe and healthy learning environment that supports positive experiences for children, families, and program staff.

5. **Equity & Individualization in Education**: Leaders and teaching staff tailor the practices of teaching and learning and family engagement to each child, so that all children are successfully supported in achieving high expectations for their learning and developmental progress.

Rigorous Instruction

6. **Developmental Screening & Authentic Assessment**: Teaching staff deepen their shared understanding of children’s development and learning across domains to inform instruction.

7. **Curriculum Planning Cycle**: Teaching staff integrate and respond to knowledge of children, child-development, and content across the domains of learning to plan and adapt the curriculum, aligned to the Pre-K Foundation for the Common Core.

8. **Engaging Children in Meaningful Activity**: Teaching staff engage children as active learners and interact with children using a range of effective, developmentally appropriate strategies to create connections and extend children’s learning across domains and in a variety of contexts and experiences.

9. **Creating a Positive Classroom Culture**: Programs empower and support children to develop a positive self-concept and intentionally guide children to interact respectfully and constructively with the peers and adults of their community, and their environment.

10. **Physical Resources for Learning**: Program staff cultivate the physical space and resources in the classroom and outside to facilitate children’s learning and development through purposeful play.
Collaborative Teachers

11. **Cultivating Professional Practice and Leadership**: Leaders and teaching staff improve the quality of the classroom and program experience as partners in continual professional learning, collaboration, and leadership development.

Effective School Leadership

12. **Shaping a Vision**: Leaders foster a shared vision and theory of action with and among their staff and families, and build a positive organizational culture and community to support that vision.

13. **Resource Management**: Leaders manage the organizational and human resources in a sustainable and strategic manner to advance the goals of the program.

14. **Program Quality Improvement**: Leaders collaborate with their staff and families to evaluate and improve classroom and program quality, relying on well-managed data to set instructional, family engagement, and organizational goals, increasing the coherence of policies and practices.

*The following NYC Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards describe the key practices essential for providing a high-quality Pre-K experience for children, their families, and educational community.*

Strong Family-Community Ties

1. **Strong Relationships**

Programs foster mutual respect, trust, and connection with and among families and the community in order to build strong relationships.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

a. Prior to the beginning of the school year, the program welcomes all families individually (e.g., through welcome letters, phone-calls, in-person meetings), conducts informal welcome events at which families can begin developing connections with each other and program staff, and develops a clear plan for supporting families and their children with the upcoming transition into pre-K.

b. Teachers and program staff make a continuous effort to get to know families through conversations and thoughtful needs assessments and use this information to develop clear processes for engaging with families that are sensitive to families’ schedules and cultural and linguistic needs.

c. The program connects and collaborates with organizations in the community to assist program staff in meeting the needs of families and their children.

d. Program staff greet families and children warmly and respectfully in everyday interactions throughout the building, over the phone, and through formal communications.

e. The program expresses value for families in the physical environment of the site by displaying signs that welcome and honor families and by designating a physical space in which families can access meaningful resources and develop relationships with each other and site staff.

f. Teachers regularly incorporate families’ cultures, talents, and skills into lessons, activities, and school events in a culturally competent manner and create multiple opportunities throughout the year for families to come to the site in order to celebrate their children’s accomplishments, volunteer where appropriate, and to connect with each other.
2. Two-Way Communication

Programs promote two-way sharing of information between program staff and families, in a culturally and linguistically responsive manner, to support children’s well-being, academic success, and developmental progress.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

a. Teachers collect information from families beginning early in the year about their child’s interests, talents, unique health, safety, and learning needs, and create ongoing, culturally and linguistically responsive methods for families to share their observations, insights, and concerns regarding their child’s development.

b. Teachers collaborate with families to set goals for their child based on a shared understanding of their child’s strengths and needs, utilize this data in curricular and instructional planning, and create specific opportunities for families to review their child’s work and to discuss their child’s progress toward achieving identified goals.

c. The program establishes and communicates clear processes for how families and staff collaborate when concerns about their child’s academic, social, emotional, and behavioral development arise, building on communication channels established at the start of the school year.

d. Teachers and staff frequently provide families with positive and constructive feedback on their child’s progress through conversations at drop-off and pick-up, as well as through other means of communication specific to families’ preferences.

3. Capacity Building

Programs recognize families’ essential contribution to their child’s development and support families in enacting their role as their child’s:

3.1 Primary Teacher

Programs partner with families to develop their capacity to enrich their child’s academic, social, emotional, and behavioral skills that are foundational to learning.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

a. The program conveys a strong belief in the essential role that families play in their child’s academic, social, emotional, and behavioral development and emphasizes the value of actively communicating high expectations to children and encouraging their development as learners.

b. Starting at the beginning of the school year, teachers and staff orient families to program policies, goals, and content so that families understand what their child is learning and how this learning aligns to program goals.

c. Teachers invite families to visit their child’s classroom, observe teaching, and learn about classroom routines, expectations, and practices.

d. Teachers and families discuss the ways in which specific, everyday activities influence children’s brain development and capacity for learning and work together to share, practice, and refine strategies that seek to enrich children’s learning in and out of the classroom.
3.2 **Primary Advocate**

Programs create opportunities for families to develop their capacity to advocate for their child’s needs and drive program improvement.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

a. The program creates effective opportunities for families to provide feedback on various aspects of program quality and shares with families how their feedback can be used for program improvement.

b. The program provides opportunities for families to contribute directly to program governance and exercise leadership such as through participating on the School Leadership Team, the Parent Teachers Association, or other parent/family leadership councils.

c. The program creates multiple opportunities throughout the year for families to connect, learn, and support each other around shared affinities and challenges.

d. The program connects families to available resources and organizations in the community that can assist in meeting their child’s needs.

e. The program provides necessary supports for families throughout the year regarding the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) process, including special education referral and evaluation, as well as the “Gifted and Talented” process.

f. The program has a clear plan to support families’ transition of their child from pre-K to kindergarten that includes procedural support for kindergarten enrollment as well as clear information on how to select the appropriate kindergarten setting for their child.

**Supportive Environment**

4. **Health, Safety & Well-being**

Program leaders ensure a safe and healthy learning environment that supports positive experiences for children, families, and program staff.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

a. Programs successfully monitor and manage children’s health requirements and prevent or respond appropriately to safety hazards in children’s learning environments.

b. Programs ensure that any medical practices or modifications to the program that promote a child’s physical health are also responsive to that child’s social, emotional, and mental well-being.

c. Programs provide sufficient amounts of healthy food for children, which meet all nutritional guidelines and whenever possible are sourced locally and/or sustainably.

d. Programs communicate with the appropriate agencies and families regarding information relative to children’s health and safety, medical needs, and changes to their routines (such as toileting and nutrition), in a timely and respectful manner to promote positive collaborations.

e. Program staff manage the physical environment to create spaces that are comfortable and practically appropriate for teaching staff and families, and that promote positive, intentional, and respectful verbal and written communications.
5. **Equity & Individualization in Education**

*Leaders and teaching staff tailor the practices of teaching and learning to each child, so that all children are successfully supported in achieving high expectations for their learning and developmental progress.*

*An program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:*

- a. The guiding philosophy of all Pre-K for All programs aligns to the Program Quality Standards and Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC) guiding principles and outcomes for children, and communicates high expectations for all children, including children of diverse abilities, cultures, languages, and learning styles.

- b. The program embraces and supports the cultural and linguistic diversity of all children and families, working with families to appropriately tailor practices and resources at both the classroom and program level.

- c. Teaching staff ensure all children have multiple ways to demonstrate their learning in an inclusive, and socially and emotionally supportive environment.

- d. Teaching staff differentiate instructional strategies, activities, and resources to meet the unique needs of children and their families.

- e. The program works effectively with outside agencies such as Special Education Itinerant Teachers (SEIT) and related service providers, and the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) in the development and implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), including regular communication and monitoring of progress.

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6. **Rigorous Instruction**

6. **Developmental Screening & Authentic Assessment**

*Teaching staff deepen their shared understanding of children's development and learning across domains to inform instruction.*

*An program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:*

- a. Programs ensure teaching staff are appropriately trained and supported to implement screening and assessment tools used by the program and that these practices are culturally, linguistically, and developmentally responsive.

- b. Teachers screen all children upon entry to the program using a valid and reliable developmental screening tool and, along with ongoing authentic assessments, determine additional supports that children may need to successfully engage in the curriculum.

- c. Teachers incorporate an approved, research-based authentic assessment system to monitor the developmental progression and learning of each child over the course of the school year, which includes:

  i. Documentation of children's actions and communications through observational notes and photographs;

  ii. Collecting and analyzing authentic student work products;
iii. Assessment across all domains of the Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core, which are:

1. Approaches to Learning;
2. Physical Development and Health;
3. Social and Emotional Development;
4. Communication, Language, and Literacy;

d. Teaching staff actively solicit children’s understandings and ideas of their own learning to be incorporated into instructional practices by:

i. Asking children about their work products and discussing plans or next steps;

ii. Asking children to explain their understanding of a concept or process for acquiring a new skill and engaging in feedback loops;

e. Teachers communicate with families about their child’s screening and regularly share data from authentic assessment as part of the program’s collaboration with families in creating shared understandings and goals for their children.

7. Curriculum Planning Cycle

Teaching staff integrate and respond to knowledge of children, child-development, and content across the domains of learning to plan and adapt the curriculum, aligned to the Pre-K Foundation for the Common Core.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

a. Teaching staff are knowledgeable of the sequences and strategies through which children learn and develop, within and across the domains of learning and development of the Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core.

b. Programs ensure teachers are effectively trained to use information from the authentic assessment system to differentiate instructional practices for individual children and small groups, and plan the lessons and activities for the class as a whole.

c. Teaching staff meet regularly to plan and adjust curricular activities and the learning environment, based on:

i. Assessment data of children’s learning and developmental progress;

ii. Knowledge of children’s interests, backgrounds, and ideas for learning;

iii. Knowledge of curricular content, sequences for learning and development, and opportunities for connections within and across domains;

iv. Knowledge of any other educational or developmental consideration gathered from effective family engagement practices;

v. A child’s IEP goals, as well as strategies shared by SEIT and/or related service providers, as applicable.
d. Teaching staff plan deep content explorations and experiences that incorporate learning objectives across domains and embed multiple entry points into engaging and meaningful activities.

e. Teaching staff are respectful of children’s ways of learning by establishing routines while remaining flexible, allowing for student choice, and taking advantage of spontaneous “teachable moments.”

f. Teaching staff provide families with ongoing opportunities to share their cultures, talents, or skills, and use regular communication with families to ensure the curriculum is responsive and relevant to children’s lived experiences.

8. Engaging Children in Meaningful Activity

_**Teaching staff engage children as active learners and interact with children using a range of effective, developmentally appropriate strategies to create connections and extend children’s learning across domains and in a variety of contexts and experiences.**_

_A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:_

a. Teaching staff provide daily opportunities for individual-, small and whole group-learning through a balance of child- and adult-initiated activities.

b. Teaching staff effectively facilitate children’s involvement in the program, increasing children’s levels of participation and focus in a variety of activities for learning and development across the domains of the PKFCC.

   i. During child-initiated portions of the day, children are empowered and encouraged to intentionally self-select a wide variety of activities, companions, and learning materials, as well as to return to previous projects.

c. Teaching staff actively encourage and incorporate student perspectives throughout the program, and provide children with ample time and opportunity to explore, revisit, apply and communicate about new knowledge, skills, and ideas for learning.

d. Teaching staff intentionally use and model language to develop children’s communication and thinking skills by:

   i. Initiating, joining, or extending conversations with children and between peers;

   ii. Extending children’s vocabulary and complexity of their language;

   iii. Using self- and parallel talk to connect language to children’s experiences and actions;

   iv. Asking children open-ended questions that are relevant to children’s experiences or actions;

   v. Engaging frequently and meaningfully with children to encourage analysis, reasoning, creative thinking, and problem-solving.

e. Teaching staff use scaffolding, discussion, and intentionally select and combine materials in children’s activities to help children make connections and link the concepts of the curriculum to children’s experience, interests, and previous learning across the PKFCC domains.

f. Teaching staff utilize daily events, such as mealtimes and transitions, as meaningful learning experiences.
9. Creating a Positive Classroom Culture

*Programs empower and support children to develop a positive self-concept and intentionally guide children to interact respectfully and constructively with the peers and adults of their community, and their environment.*

A *program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:*

a. Teaching and program staff model and communicate a positive attitude towards learning and promote children's development of a positive self-concept by supporting children's playfulness, curiosity, persistence, experimentation by trial & error, and opportunities for autonomy and leadership.

b. Teaching and program staff role-model and promote respectful and compassionate interactions throughout the day, act as a source of comfort and support for children, and use language, discussion, and other instructional strategies to develop children's empathy and consideration of others.

c. Teaching and program staff establish routines yet remain flexible and responsive to student perspectives and challenges, keeping children engaged in their learning and creating smooth transitions between portions of the day.

d. Teaching staff establish clear and consistent expectations with children's input, proactively supporting children in developing positive behaviors and understanding the impacts of their choices, and providing children with the opportunity to practice conflict resolution strategies.

e. Teaching staff provide encouragement and guidance during daily events, such as toileting and rest, to develop children's personal-care and self-regulation skills.

f. Teaching and program staff model and promote children's care and respect for program resources and sustainable practices for the environment, such as returning permanent resources after their use and recycling waste materials.

10. Physical Resources for Learning

*Program staff cultivate the physical space and resources in the classroom and outside to facilitate children’s learning and development through purposeful play.*

A *program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:*

a. Teaching staff support children's interdisciplinary learning and higher-order thinking through play and project-based learning opportunities that incorporate various experiences and materials to meet children's needs, such as:

i. Creative artistic expression with various artistic media and representations;

ii. Dramatic play that incorporates a variety of props and costumes that represent a diversity of backgrounds, interests and experiences;

iii. Early literacy resources such as a library, developmentally appropriate writing resources, and resources promoting print awareness throughout the program;

iv. Science/discovery experiences that include sand, water, and other sensory resources;

v. Math manipulatives, blocks, and puzzles;

vi. Music and movement experiences with instruments and a variety of music types;
vii. Gross-motor equipment and resources that are appropriately challenging for all children;
viii. Community trips that are educational and fun;
ix. Appropriate exposure and use of technology in education;
x. Health and well-being practices such as cooking or other self-care tasks.

b. The program provides a learning environment that is child-centered, with the appropriate quantity and quality of self-care resources, furniture and equipment for children’s daily engagement with the program, to support children’s learning and development across domains.

c. Teaching staff arrange the physical environment so that all children can successfully and independently access resources in response to their natural curiosity, to engage with group activity or find space for privacy and relaxation, and with enough space to work independently and collaboratively throughout the classroom and outdoor areas.

d. The program provides culturally and linguistically diverse resources throughout the program that promote diversity and represent the children and families of the program and New York City as a whole.

Collaborative Teachers

11. Cultivating Professional Practice and Leadership

Leaders and teaching staff improve the quality of the classroom and program experience as partners in continual professional learning, collaboration, and leadership development.

A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

a. Leaders and teaching staff (including teams of lead teachers and assistant teachers/paraprofessionals) create, support, and engage with systems for:
   i. Regular collaborative analysis of child-, classroom-, and program-level data through inquiry and reflection, fostering the responsiveness of professional practice within each program’s context.
   
   ii. Teacher observation, inter-visitation, and professional development that is timely, consistent, transparent, equitable, and relevant for each staff member’s professional improvement and the goals of the program.
   
   iii. Developing staff capacity to support the needs of all children and families, including children with IEPs, children whose native language is not English, or children with any other specific considerations for their learning and development.
   
   b. Leaders provide staff with evidence-based feedback on strengths and challenges, with actionable next steps for professional learning, staff ownership and clarity about objectives, and the measurements used to determine progress.
   
   c. Leaders retain and develop their staff by providing a socially, emotionally, and professionally supportive environment, by valuing the skills and knowledge of their staff and offering leadership opportunities, and by modelling reflection and professionalism.
   
   d. Leaders and administrators effectively communicate with all program staff regarding the requirements and policies relevant to their work, and there are procedures in place to keep staff aware of any updates or challenges and involve staff in making changes as needed.
Effective School Leadership

12. Shaping a Vision

_Leaders foster a shared vision and theory of action among their staff, and build a positive organizational culture and community to support that vision._

_A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:_

a. Leaders foster a shared vision with and among program staff and families that supports all children in achieving high expectations, and build an invested community by consistently communicating with staff and families about the program’s vision and goals.

b. Leaders inform and align their vision, theory of action, and goals for the program with the _Pre-K for All_ vision of program quality and the PKFCC guiding principles and outcomes for children to meaningfully advance positive outcomes for children and families.

c. Leaders shape the organizational culture by establishing values and norms for interaction and respectful, responsible, and professional behavior.

d. Leaders use effective communication strategies with families in their community to respond to their needs, resulting in high levels of enrollment and family engagement with _Pre-K for All_.

e. Leaders develop and maintain effective relationships with the NYCDoe, city agencies, and other organizations, and collaborate with organizations and individuals in the community to advance the program’s vision and progress towards goals.

13. Resource Management

_Leaders manage the organizational and human resources in a sustainable and strategic manner to advance the goals of the program._

_A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:_

a. Program leaders use sound budgeting and financial management techniques to strategically plan and align resources to instructional and family engagement goals throughout the year, including the provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate resources and developmental modifications.

b. Program leaders make strategic scheduling decisions to ensure teaching staff are able to effectively engage in teaching practices, including time to plan and prepare, assess and evaluate children’s learning and development, and communicate with families regularly and on an as-needed basis.

c. Program leaders strategically recruit and hire the best possible teachers and program staff, with the necessary talent (e.g., skills, mindset, and knowledge) to meet the needs of children and families.

d. Leaders make human resource decisions that value program staff as professionals in their field and enable staff to engage in professional learning, collaborations, and leadership development.

e. Program leaders ensure that professional resources and technology are available and used appropriately by all program staff to ensure high-quality instructional, family engagement, and organizational practices.

14. Program Quality Improvement

_Leaders collaborate with their staff and families to evaluate and improve classroom and program quality, relying on well-managed data to set instructional, family engagement, and organizational goals, increasing the coherence of policies and practices._
A program that has fully implemented this Standard demonstrates all of the following characteristics:

a. Leaders ensure that plans for improvement are evidence-based through the effective collection and management of various types and sources of data at the child, teacher, classroom and program levels (for example: attendance, authentic assessments, surveys, ECERS-R, CLASS, etc.).

b. Leaders collaborate with program staff to regularly analyze data, providing the program with an accurate representation of the program’s strengths and challenges and ensuring that conclusions are arrived at systematically and equitably.

c. Leaders collaborate with teaching staff and families and include children’s perspectives in developing goals and plans for improvement, promoting the empowerment of the community and a shared leadership structure.

d. Leaders ensure the implementation of plans for improvement, monitor progress toward achieving the program’s goals, and evaluate the outcomes of that implementation to inform a continuous cycle of classroom and program quality improvement.

i. In evaluating the outcomes of a program’s improvement efforts, leaders evaluate the effectiveness of family and community engagement, any unintended outcomes for children, families or staff, and the extent to which programmatic goals are socially responsible and achieve equity in education.
VIII. Appendix B: Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance
Appendix B: Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance

Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance in Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC Programs
NYC Department of Education & Administration for Children’s Services

Position

The NYC Department of Education (DOE) and Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) are committed to ensuring all Pre-K for All programs prepare children and families with the skills and knowledge needed to enter Kindergarten prepared to succeed. With Pre-K for All, children will gain a strong foundation in all domains of development and families will be prepared to support their child’s learning and growth.

Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC programs are responsible for structuring an environment and approaching interactions in ways that build positive relationships with children and families. In our pre-K programs, children and families should feel secure, supported, and recognized as important members of a program’s community. A child engaged in active learning who feels secure, supported, and valued, is more likely to demonstrate respectful and constructive behaviors and engage in positive interactions. Children’s behavior should be guided in a positive way as part of the developmentally appropriate instruction taking place throughout the program.

Children in Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC programs may not be expelled or suspended.

Pre-K for All Programs are expected to implement positive behavior guidance strategies that are grounded in the following practices:

• Teaching staff build nurturing learning environments through the use of developmentally appropriate strategies that advance children’s social and emotional development and approaches to learning. For more detail on these domains of development and learning, refer to the NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.

• Successful positive behavior guidance is built upon strong relationships that are grounded in trust and respect. Programs collaborate with families to ensure the program meets the needs of all learners. Teaching staff and administrators develop strategies to build each child’s social, emotional, and behavioral skills based on shared understandings with each family. Establishing regular and ongoing two-way communication with families will create strong relationships that allow for effective collaborations.

Overview of Guidance and Support for Pre-K Programs

The following pages outline additional guidance on positive behavior guidance strategies to support programs in meeting the expectations described above. Behavior guidance approaches, strategies, policies and procedures implemented in programs must align to this guidance. Our guidance currently includes sections on:

1. Proactive Measures
2. Positive Reinforcement
3. Responsive Strategies

In situations where programs need more support to interpret or implement positive behavior guidance strategies, programs should contact DOE or ACS.

• Pre-K for All programs (including district schools, NYC Early Education Centers, EarlyLearn NYC providers, and DOE Pre-K Centers) with questions should contact the DOE Early Childhood Social Worker Team by emailing prekfamilyengagement@schools.nyc.gov.

• EarlyLearn NYC providers should utilize their partnerships with mental health consultants who can provide observation, guidance, and support to teachers in developing a plan to meet a child’s individualized social and emotional needs.
Positive Behavior Guidance Strategies

1. Proactive Measures to Promote Positive Behavior

Children enter early childhood programs at varying developmental levels. There is a wide range in the behaviors and skills that are considered “typical” for children in this age group. Each child is unique and requires individualization that may be based on personality, ability, etc. These important considerations must be taken into account as programs advance children's learning and development across all domains. To support each child's growth in social-emotional and other skills that affect children's ability to engage with curriculum and program as a whole, Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC programs are required to develop and implement proactive, developmentally appropriate behavior guidance strategies such as those described below.

- Respectful, caring relationships
- Flexible and responsive teaching
- Physical environment and activities
- Clear expectations
- Developmentally appropriate instructional strategies
- Transitions

Establish respectful, caring relationships among staff, children, and families.

- Communicate and act on the principle that all children are capable of learning and making developmental progress.
- Consistently use welcoming and positive language and tone, and ensure adults in the program interact positively with each other as well as with children.
- Acknowledge children's emotions and provide comfort and assistance when necessary.
- Explicitly welcome families into the classroom environment and foster daily two-way communications between families and teaching staff.
- Deepen knowledge of each child’s skills, interests and needs through implementation of an authentic assessment system and regular conversation with families.
- Acknowledge and respect children’s rich backgrounds, cultures, and linguistic diversity and tailor your practices appropriately to meet these needs.

Be flexible and responsive to children’s skills, interests and developmental needs when planning the curriculum.

- The flow of the day/daily schedule should include ample time for child-initiated and teacher-facilitated activities.
- During child-initiated times of the day, empower children to self-select and engage with a variety of classroom centers, learning materials, and companions, encouraging purposeful play.
- Use information gathered from authentic assessments to develop lessons and activities that build on children's strengths and interests while addressing their needs.
- Support children's active participation by incorporating children's ideas into instructional activities and encourage children to talk and share their ideas for learning.
• Encourage children to have freedom of movement by allowing them to choose how and where they sit, stand, or move within small-group and whole-group learning experiences, as long as this does not interfere with other children’s learning or feelings of belonging. Limit the amount of time children are expected to remain sitting during an activity to short periods of about 10–15 minutes at a time.

• If students do not appear to be engaged during periods of whole-group instruction, consider:
  — Including additional whole-group movement.
  — Increasing student participation.
  — Shortening or changing the activity.
  — Reducing the frequency of whole-group activities.

Arrange and supervise the physical environment and activities in ways that promote children’s development of approaches to learning, social and emotional skills, and positive behaviors.

• Arrange the environment to allow children to utilize shared space collaboratively.
  — Stock classroom centers with diverse materials that are suitable for the range of skills, interests, and abilities of children in the classroom. Ensure there is an appropriate amount of resources and that children can access those resources independently. All children should have opportunities to participate without competing for classroom resources or adult assistance.
  — Ensure that each area of the classroom has sufficient space to allow for the number of children that will utilize the space at a given time.

• Use visual displays (e.g., Tools of Autonomy) that support children in understanding expectations of their behavior during the day, with others, and with the resources in their environment.
  — Tools of Autonomy are the supports in the classroom that support prekindergarten students to develop independence and self-sufficiency. They include center systems or choice charts (that children use to choose their interest area), flow of the day displays (that establish a predictable sequence of events in pictures and words), interactive attendance charts, and job charts (that support children to take turns with routine jobs with modelling and support from the teacher).
  — Other examples of visual displays include using labels for center and resource organization (to assist children in choosing or returning materials after their use), or pictures that remind children of specific behavior expectations (such as a mouth that can remind children to use soft voices indoors).

• Establish a cozy area reserved for quiet activity, or a way for children to find space for privacy and relaxation.

• Offer extra support, attention, and modelling when children are engaging in a new activity and gradually introduce new materials and manage resource access to keep children from being overwhelmed.

• Anticipate problematic behavior by frequently monitoring, or “scanning,” the classroom, and proactively intervene to avoid escalation.

Communicate clear expectations for children that help them develop independence and self-regulation skills, and engage in respectful interactions with peers and adults.

• At the beginning of the year, encourage children to participate in creating a set of expectations for behavior in the classroom.
  — Use positive language to clearly establish and define the desired behavior (e.g., “We share toys with friends” rather than “Don’t grab toys from other children”).
In general, negative language should be avoided when setting or reinforcing behavior expectations. Very rarely, using negative language like “no” or “stop” may be appropriate to keep a child safe in an emergency.

- Explicitly teach children how to use and move through the classroom space/centers, treat their resources and environment with respect, and remind children of classroom expectations frequently, especially at the beginning of the year or before a transition to another activity.

- Throughout the year, guide children’s peer interactions in a clear and consistent manner, so that children come to understand behavioral expectations, the impact of their choices, and have an opportunity to practice conflict resolution strategies.

Use developmentally appropriate instructional strategies to establish a positive classroom culture, help children make meaningful connections, and feel excited and motivated to engage in meaningful activities as well as with adults and other children.

- Help children develop self-regulation skills and positive relationships by modelling respectful and caring behaviors.

- When modelling such behaviors, teaching staff should use self- and parallel talk by narrating or describing their actions and children’s actions:
  — To explain considerate ways of thinking and acting (e.g., “I notice you don’t have a magnifying glass but you look like you want to join the science activity. Would you like some help finding an extra one?”)
  — To explain emotional regulation (e.g., “Hmm, you just took the markers from me and I’m getting upset… I wonder, what should I do now? Should I grab for them or ask you to give them back?”)

- Use story-telling, literature, puppetry, etc. to engage children in thinking about the impacts of certain behaviors, and to extend children’s empathy and understanding of emotions.

- Engage children in problem-solving discussion regularly and establish the expectations that children talk with each other to resolve conflicts.

Plan for successful management of transitions at the beginning and end of the day, between activities, into and out of the program, and when starting or ending special education services or specialist activities (when applicable).

- Give children reminders before major transitions so they have time to finish what they are doing and prepare for the next activity.

- Make transitions or wait times fun and educational by singing songs, rhyming words or names, or going over the expected behaviors of the next setting. This will keep children engaged in learning and prepared for the next event.

- Minimize wait times during transitions in order to maximize children’s active engagement throughout all times of day.
  — For example, during bathroom routines, rotate small groups of children so that all children can engage in productive learning activities for as much time as possible rather than waiting in line.

2. Positive Reinforcement to Promote Positive Behavior

Positive reinforcement acknowledges and motivates further positive behavior. It is important to let children know that they are making progress toward a desirable new skill to encourage their effort. Positive
reinforcement can be done in many ways, and may need to be tailored for individual children. Children demonstrating new and more complicated behaviors may need additional reinforcements.

Examples of developmentally appropriate ways to reinforce positive behaviors include:

• Using **social reinforcements** such as praise, smiles, encouragement, or even a well-timed high-five or a thumbs up.
  
  — Praise should be specific and provide meaningful feedback, especially when the behavior is relatively new to the child (e.g., “You were very thoughtful to share the toys with your friend. He seems really happy that you included him in the game.”). Avoid more general feedback (e.g., “good job”).
  
  — A high-five or thumbs up are appropriate non-verbal reinforcements for behaviors that are clearly encouraged (e.g., the child has been working on sharing and you notice them share their toys from across the room. You catch their eye and give them a thumbs up immediately following the positive behavior.).

• Using **activity reinforcements** as a reward for desired positive behaviors, such as being able to choose a song or activity for the group or during center time.
  
  — There should already be room in the curriculum for following children’s interests or ideas for learning. These reinforcements are therefore a logical way to incorporate positive reinforcement into the program.

3. **Responsive Strategies to Promote Positive Behavior**

*Pre-K for All* and EarlyLearn NYC programs are required to develop and implement strategies for responding to behavior that is disruptive to other children or unsafe for the child and/or others. This does not apply to behaviors of intentional risk-taking appropriate for learning new physical skills, such as walking on a balance beam or climbing a rope ladder during gross-motor activities, with adult support and supervision. Teaching staff should collaborate with a child’s family to help the child develop solutions to demonstrate positive behavior or practice appropriate alternative behaviors, consistently and in various contexts. Programs should communicate with families throughout the process of positive behavior guidance to exchange information about strategies and progress. **All strategies for guiding children to appropriate behaviors should be implemented in a calm, consistent, and non-punitive way to support children’s social and emotional development and approaches to learning.**

• Understand contributing factors

• Offering choices

• Redirecting or providing acceptable substitutes

• Supporting the child’s sense of security, self-regulation and self-soothing skills

• Limiting negative attention

• Logical consequences

• Replacement/alternative behaviors

• Modifications to program structures

• Additional support
Program staff members should work together with families and others to better understand the factors contributing to a child’s behavior. Ask the question: “What is this child trying to communicate when they demonstrate this behavior?” Factors contributing to a child’s behavior may include:

- Programmatic structures or conditions such as the flow of the day/daily schedule, arrangement of the classroom, noise level, etc.

- The child’s feeling of security within the classroom or the condition of their relationships with adults or peers.

- The child’s unique circumstances. For example:
  
  — The child has not yet learned appropriate behaviors for social interactions and may be grabbing toys instead of asking or hitting when upset.

  — The child is going through a transition at home and experiencing emotional distress as a result (e.g., a new baby in the family) or has experienced trauma.

- By consistently observing and documenting children’s behavior, teaching staff may identify the situations that trigger disruptive or unsafe behaviors and help determine the factors that contribute to such behavior.

  — A cycle of observation (collect and annotate evidence), planning (analyze the evidence and use it to inform your practice), implementation (make planned changes to your practice or program), reflection (observe the effect), and adjustment (make improvements if needed) should be used in any response plan for behavior guidance.

  — Cycles of assessment and planning are already in use within programs through the implementation of authentic assessment systems, and can be leveraged to plan for positive behavior guidance.

Depending on the contributing factors, some strategies to respond to unsafe or disruptive behaviors include:

- Offering choices to allow children control over their own behavior, such as choosing which toys to put away or where to sit at the lunch table.

- Redirecting or providing acceptable substitutes to help children identify options for their behavior, such as when a teacher may notice there are too many people at an activity table and suggest a child engage with a different activity while they wait for a turn.

- Supporting the child’s sense of security and development of self-regulation or self-soothing skills.

  — Staff may collaborate with the child and family to strengthen the child’s relationships with children and adults in the program.

  — The child may be encouraged to bring a “security object” (e.g., blanket, teddy bear) to help feel more comfortable in the classroom.

  — The child may be encouraged to utilize the quiet space or create a space for privacy in the classroom where children can calm down from feelings of anger or frustration.

  — The child can be encouraged to practice breathing techniques, getting a drink of water, or other strategies that assist in processing strong emotions or related negative physiological responses.

  — The child may be encouraged to self-soothe using sensory materials or objects, such as sand or water play, or any other activity calming to the child’s senses.
Limiting the amount of negative attention given to children by ignoring non-disruptive inappropriate behavior and focusing on the positive.

- Staff may choose to ignore non-disruptive behavior and continue to focus children on another learning activity. Positive behaviors should be reinforced with positive attention.

- A strategy of actively ignoring a child's behavior should not be utilized in isolation or to the extent where it becomes a detriment to a child's well-being. This strategy does not replace the expectation that teachers and program staff actively engage all children in the curriculum and encourage their participation in the program.

Implementing logical consequences, where a child's access to an activity or resource is restricted in direct response to an unsafe or disruptive behavior.

- The severity of the consequence should be appropriate and relevant (e.g., not being able to stay at the water table because they continue to pour water on other children).

- This strategy may be used along with redirecting or providing acceptable alternatives.

- This strategy may be used along with encouraging a child to utilize a quiet space for a limited period of time.

Helping the child develop appropriate replacement or alternative behaviors.

- Staff may use different strategies depending on the program's philosophy and the unique needs of the child and family. One possible strategy for programs and families is outlined below:

  1. Identify the inappropriate behavior in a non-judgmental, factual way.

  2. Calmly communicate with the child about the impact of the behavior on him/herself and others.

  3. Help the child identify contributing factors and identify an appropriate alternative behavior or way to address the situation.

  4. With the child, develop strategies for demonstrating the appropriate alternative behavior, along with any supports the child may need (for example, a phrase or visual cue that the teacher and student agree on to help remind the student to use the alternative behavior).

  5. Collaborate with the child's family throughout the process.

  6. Celebrate with the child when he or she makes progress over time.

Modifying programmatic structures as appropriate.

- Staff may make modifications to daily schedules (such as scheduling center-time to take place earlier in the day) or the physical environment (such as moving the quiet and noisy centers further apart in the classroom) to accommodate the needs of children and minimize their frustration throughout the day. This can be an effective support for a group of children or individual children.

- Programs may not shorten the school day of any child unless the program receives approval from the DOE’s Division of Early Childhood Education and written consent of the child’s parent or guardian. In particular, any proposed changes that would modify a child’s access to the program by temporarily shortening the length of a child’s day must be planned with the support of your program's assigned Early Childhood Social Worker or Program Specialist, in collaboration with the child's family. These changes can be implemented only with voluntary written consent of the child’s parent or legal guardian on a form provided by the Social Worker or Program Specialist informing the family of the option of continuing with a full-time program. This written plan must outline the strategies that the program will use to aid the child to return to full access and program participation within a specified timeline (not to exceed three weeks).
Programs may only place children on shortened schedules if they follow these procedures and if the child's parent or legal guardian consents. Parents' written consent to a shortened schedule must be kept on file and be made available upon request. Programs may not shorten the school day of a child as an alternative to suspension.

- Any changes to programmatic structures must not discriminate against any child or family, where a child or family's right to successfully engage in a full day of high quality pre-K is limited due to any characteristic or perceived characteristic of that child or family.

After implementing these positive behavior guidance strategies with the support of an assigned Social Worker or Program Specialist, the program and family may need additional support from an outside agency.

- These supports include, but are not limited to, parenting or family support classes, professional learning opportunities for program staff, psychological evaluation or collaboration with the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE).

- In some cases, the outside agencies may not be able to provide services to the child or family immediately. In these cases, the child may require more direct supervision for a period of time. This will help ensure a safe, nurturing environment for the child and his or her peers.

- For a child who already has an IEP, contact the child's parent or legal guardian and the CPSE to discuss scheduling a new IEP meeting to consider whether any changes to the IEP are needed to support the child's development.

— For a child without an IEP, the behavior can most often be addressed using the positive behavior guidance strategies described above. However, a referral for preschool special education evaluations may be appropriate if a child is not making meaningful progress even with the interventions that the pre-K program has implemented. In these cases, speak with the parent about making a referral to the CPSE for preschool special education evaluations.

Additional Resources for Programs

1. The NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC) and the Early Learning Outcomes Framework describe outcomes and goals for children within the domains of learning and development. The benchmarks and guiding principles provide the basis for developmentally appropriate expectations for young children's learning and the underlying principles of practice for Pre-K programs.

2. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) provides a common language around effective, positive interactions in pre-K classrooms, and is a strong tool to support teachers with guidance on effective interactions that are aligned to this Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance in Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC Programs.

- For more information about the CLASS tool, including regional trainings that are offered in New York City, please visit Teachstone’s website (https://teachstone.com).

3. An authentic assessment system is a formative collection of qualitative student data (i.e., student observations and work samples) that measures student progress across developmental domains to inform instruction. Authentic assessment systems support teachers to:

- Strategically collect observational data and student work samples.

- Analyze that information along a developmental continuum.

- Consider next steps for planning instruction that is responsive to the needs of individual children and groups of children.
Pre-K for All programs are required to use a developmentally appropriate, valid, and reliable authentic assessment system to monitor developmental progression and plan instruction. The Division of Early Childhood Education provides online subscriptions and resources to assist teachers in authentic assessment work. For more information about the DOE-approved authentic assessment systems, please email prekassessment@schools.nyc.gov and/or visit the following links.

- Work Sampling System (WSS)
- Teaching Strategies GOLD (TS GOLD)
- High Scope Child Observation Record Advantage (COR Advantage)

4. The following websites have useful resources that Pre-K and EarlyLearn NYC programs can use to understand and support children's social, emotional and behavioral development:

- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
- Technical Assistance Center for Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children
  - Toolkit
  - Resources
- Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
  - Teaching Tools for Young Children with Challenging Behaviors
- Collaborative Problem Solving
  - Materials
- Center on the Developing Child
- Trauma Smart
- Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative

5. The following books can be used to support social-emotional learning and to understand behavioral expectations:

- Will I Have a Friend?, by M. Cohen.
- Llama Llama Misses Mama, by A. Dewdney.
- Wemberly Worried, by K. Henkes.
- The Kissing Hand, by Audrey Penn.
- When I Feel Good about Myself, by Cornelia Maude Spleman (and others in the series)
- Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity, by M. Willems.
- How Do Dinosaurs Go to School?, by Yolen & Teague.
- Me I Am!, by J. Prelutsky.
IX. Appendix C: *Pre-K for All* Commitment to Families
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Pre-K for All Commitment to Families

Your child and family deserve access to a free, full-day, high-quality Pre-K for All program. Pre-K for All programs are committed to partner with you to support your child’s learning. Each Pre-K for All program is held to rigorous quality standards and policies by the NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE). You can expect your Pre-K for All program to support your family by...

Offering your child free, full-day, high-quality pre-K

• Every New York City family with a child who will turn four-years-old during the school year for which they are applying, is eligible for Pre-K for All.

• Your child will receive a free instructional full-day of 6 hours and 20 minutes (or a weekly equivalent).

• Your family cannot be charged a fee to pre-register or enroll in pre-K.

• Your family cannot be required to participate in any other program offered by the provider. For example, a program may not require you to enroll in their extended hours or afterschool services.

• Your child's progress towards meeting developmental milestones (behaviors or abilities that are generally demonstrated by children of a certain age) is not used to determine eligibility for pre-K. For example, a program may not deny your child entry if he or she does not yet use the bathroom independently or if your child does not yet dress him or herself independently.¹

Providing a safe and healthy learning environment for your child

• Your child's pre-K program will be in a secure and clean facility.

• Your child will be appropriately supervised at all times by staff members who have passed mandatory security and medical clearance.

• Your child will be served nutritious meals and snacks.

• Your child will receive any necessary health or medical accommodations to allow for their participation in Pre-K for All.

Creating a learning environment to support your child's development

• Your child will receive a full-day of instruction focused on developing the foundational knowledge and skills outlined in the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core standards.

• The standards include five key areas of development: Approaches to Learning, Physical Development and Health, Social and Emotional Growth, Communication and Language Skills, and Knowledge of the World.

• Your child's teachers and program administrators will have the appropriate qualifications for their positions.

• Your child's teachers and assistants will support and encourage him or her to learn and try new things, actively explore with his or her peers, adjust to routines, solve problems, and use new vocabulary throughout the day.

¹ Programs must provide equal educational opportunities without regard to actual or perceived race, color, religion, age, creed, ethnicity, national origin, alienage, citizenship status, disability, sexual orientation, gender (sex) or weight. Some Pre-K for All programs at NYC Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) receive funding through Head Start or the NYC Administration for Children's Services. These programs have income eligibility and other requirements that families must meet in order to enroll their child. These programs are designated in the 2015 Pre-Kindergarten Directory.
• Your child will have opportunities to participate in whole group, small group and independent classroom experiences and physical activities, using a wide variety of learning materials.

Our approach to partnership with families

Each child’s maximum potential can be best achieved through a proactive partnership between families and the educational community.²

To promote this partnership, Pre-K for All programs will:

• Provide a warm and welcoming environment that respects your family's language and culture.

• Plan with you for your child's transition into and out of pre-K.

• Communicate regularly with you to share important information about your child's learning and the program's policies and activities.

• Join you in making decisions about your child's learning experience.

• Provide activities and opportunities to extend your child's learning outside the classroom.

Families are encouraged to:

• Ensure that your child attends pre-K regularly, and notify your program when your child will be absent.

• Observe important procedures, including arranging for a responsible adult to drop off and pick up your child on time each day, and follow safety rules identified by your child's program.

• Provide required documents for enrollment and important information that will help teachers and program administrators learn about your child’s needs.

• Participate in ongoing communication with program staff to support your child’s learning and development, including attending meetings requested by your child's program.

• Participate in hands-on home activities and other opportunities to help extend your child’s learning outside the classroom.

• Discuss any changes you may notice in your child’s behavior or learning needs with your child’s teacher.

If you believe that your child may have a disability or developmental delay that impacts his or her ability to learn, you should first talk to your child’s program to find out if there are developmental and academic interventions to support your child within the general education setting. If strategies have been implemented and you feel your child may require special education services, your program can assist you in submitting an initial referral for an evaluation to the NYCDOE Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) to receive free special education services.

Families are encouraged to use the guidance below in directing inquiries or concerns:

Families are encouraged to speak with your children’s teachers, program support staff, or program administrators as a first step to address a question or concern.

If program staff members are unable to address a question or concern, families may reach out to the Division of Early Childhood Education at the NYC Department of Education at (212) 374-0351 or at EarlyChildhood@schools.nyc.gov.
