Birth-to-Five Policy Handbook

for New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs)

NYC Department of Education

Introduction

New York City provides high-quality, early care and education services for children, birth to five, and their families across the five boroughs. This is only possible thanks to the critical partnerships with community-based organizations, or NYC Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) who contract with the Department of Education to provide more than half of the City's early care and education services. NYCEECs have impactful partnerships in the neighborhoods they serve and many have been providing early care and education services in their communities for decades. Together, with you our NYCEEC partners, we seek to continue to strengthen our system of early care and education to ensure every child has a shot to live up to their full potential.

In July 2019, New York City shifted its contracted early care and education programs into one comprehensive system managed by the NYC Department of Education. This shift was cemented with the launch of new contracts in summer 2021. This system shift increases access for families, streamlines the City's partnership with providers of early care and education services, and allows for further socio-economic and integrated programming services for children of all backgrounds throughout the five boroughs. As outlined below, this Handbook will support programs in the context of this overall shift.

This Birth-to-Five Policy Handbook for New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs) is designed to be a supportive resource for your program in understanding and navigating the applicable policies for your program. We seek to do this by clearly articulating pertinent policies and highlighting operational guidance. This handbook is aligned to relevant federal, state and local policies applicable to DOE-contracted NYCEEC programs; including but not limited to the New York State office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), the Head Start Program Performance Standards, the New York State Education Department regulations, the NYCDOE Chancellor's regulations and the applicable state and city licensing requirements.

The guidance provided throughout this Policy Handbook is applicable to School Day and Year (, and Extended Day and Year programs. These programs provide services to children ages birth to five which includes:

Infants & Toddlers	Programs providing extended day and year services for infants and toddlers whose families meet income and other eligibility requirements. • EarlyLearn infants are babies between 6 weeks and 12 months of age. • EarlyLearn toddlers are children over the age of 12 months who are not yet age-eligible to participate in 3-K.
3-k	All services for 3-year-old children. Children are eligible for 3-K in the summer/ fall of the calendar year that they turn 3. This includes free programs that are open to all families and operated during the school day/year and free or low-cost programs that are open to families that meet income and other eligibility requirements and offer an extended day/year.
Pre-k	All services for 4-year-old children. Children are eligible for Pre-K in the summer/fall of the calendar year that they turn 4. This includes free programs that are open to all families and operated during the school day/year and free or low-cost programs that are open to families that meet income and other eligibility requirements and offer an extended day/year.

This handbook applies to all contracted Article 47, Article 43 and GFDC programs. When policies are different based on the program model, age group, or setting type, the Handbook identifies the differences; the "How to Use" section provides a guide to how these differences are represented visually. The Handbook was not developed for Charter Schools; however, it can be utilized as a guidance tool in navigating policies on early childhood programming. Please note that the Birth-to-Five Policy Handbook for NYCEECs is inclusive of all content and replaces previous versions of the Policy Handbook.

This resource is also aligned to and includes the Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ), which defines the New York City Department of Education's vision for high-quality early childhood programs in New York City and serves as the foundation for all program quality supports, including on-site supports and professional learning. While similarly establishing a set of expectations for programs to advance program quality and positive outcomes for children, the Early Childhood Framework for Quality differs from the Policy Handbook. The Policy Handbook outlines legal, contractual, and policy requirements that you must satisfy whereas the Early Childhood Framework for Quality describes the high-quality practices every early childhood program should advance. Programs are expected to work toward fully implementing all content of the Policy Handbook and the Early Childhood Framework for Quality.
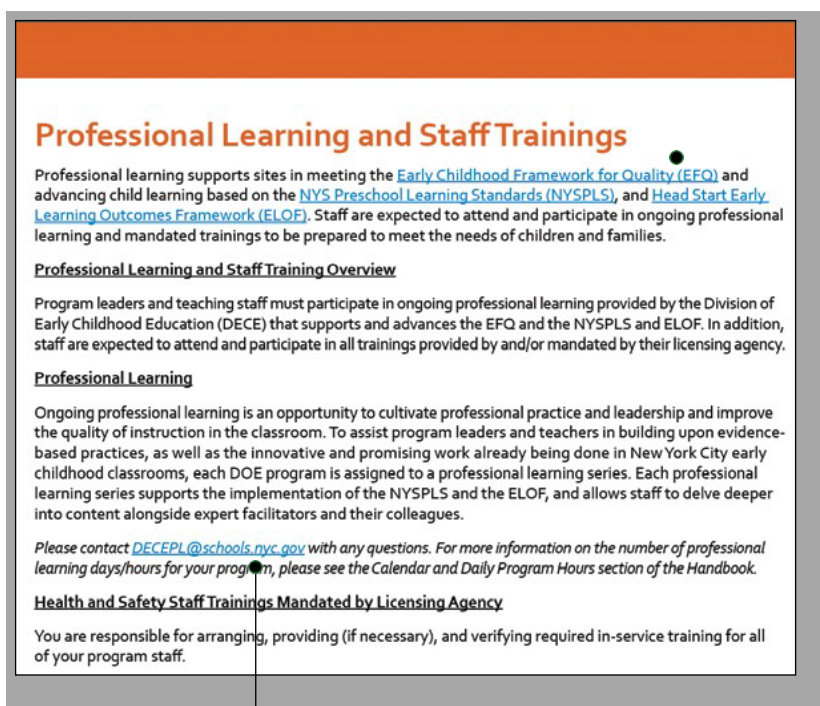
We want to thank you for your partnership. Delivering full-day, high-quality early childhood education to children across the City would not be possible without the work you do, day in and out, for the children, families and communities you serve.

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 contact EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov.

How to Use:

The guidance provided throughout this Policy Handbook is applicable to NYCEEC programs that provide services under different program models, in different setting types for different age groups and supported by different funding streams. All programs are expected to offer high-quality early childhood education services in alignment with the Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ), and to follow the same core set of policies. However, some policies vary by program model, setting type, age group, or funding stream. To support your understanding of what does and does not apply to your program, each policy that only applies to a specific group of programs is identified with a visual marker. Within the online version of the handbook there are live links and email addresses as exemplified below.

Live hyperlink (online Handbook only)

Professional Learning and Staff Trainings

Professional learning supports sites in meeting the Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ) and advancing child learning based on the NYS Preschool Learning Standards (NYSPLS), and Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF). Staff are expected to attend and participate in ongoing professional learning and mandated trainings to be prepared to meet the needs of children and families.

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 EFQ and the NYSPLS and ELOF. In addition, staff are expected to attend and participate in all trainings provided by and/or mandated by their licensing agency.

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 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 early childhood classrooms, each DOE program is assigned to a professional learning series. Each professional learning series supports the implementation of the NYSPLS and the ELOF, and allows staff to delve deeper into content alongside expert facilitators and their colleagues.

Please contact DECEPL@schools.nyc.gov with any questions. For more information on the number of professional learning days/hours for your program, please see the Calendar and Daily Program Hours section 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.

Live email address (online Handbook only)

Program Models

- There are two program models covered in this Handbook: (1) School Day and Year (SDY), and (2) Extended Day and Year (EDY).

    — SDY programs serve 3-K and/or Pre-K children only, and operate for 180 days for 6 hours and 20 minutes a day between September - June.

    — EDY programs may serve Birth-5 age children. These programs include DOE Head Start programs and programs funded by the Child Care Block Grant and operate year-round for a total of 225 or 260 days and for 8 or 10 hours per day. Policies that apply only to Extended Day and Year programs will be shaded blue.

Age Groups

Policies that apply to a specific age group will be indicated by colored text.

(Infants and toddlers): Policies that apply only to **(infants and toddlers)** programs that serve infants and toddlers appear in green text.

3-K: Policies that apply only to *3-K* services, services provided to three-year-olds, appear in blue text

Pre-K: Policies that apply only to *Pre-K* services, services provided to four-year-olds, appear in purple text

All: Policies that apply to all age groups appear in black text

GFDC

Head Start

EarlyLearn
(Infant/Toddlers)

Pre-K for All

3-K for All

Setting Types

Policies that apply only to Article 47 or Article 43 programs are indicated in the text of the policy handbook.

GFDC: All policies that apply only to Group Family Day Cares are presented with the house symbol and shaded yellow.

Funding Sources

NYCEECs are supported by a variety of funding sources, including New York State Universal Pre-K funding and City Tax Levy. Extended Day and Year programs are also supported by either Head Start funding or Child Care Block Grant funding. These funding sources come with specific requirements that are noted throughout the document.

Head Start: Policies that apply only to Head Start and Extended Day and Year programs will be shaded light blue and presented with the Head Start logo.

Child Care Block Grant: Policies that apply only to Birth to Five Extended Day and Year programs funded by the Child Care Block Grant will be shaded blue and presented with the care logo.

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Licenses, Certification, and Permits

Overview

All programs must comply with the licensing and permitting requirements of the Department of Health and Hygiene (DOHMH), Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB), and the Fire Department of New York (FDNY).

All Head Start programs must also comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1302.21(d). The section below aligns with §1302.21(d)'s requirements.

Licenses and Permits

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

Program Type	Licensing Agency	License Requirement	Services Models
Child Care Centers (Article 47 Providers)	DOHMH	Article 47 Child Care Services permit: • Infant/toddler permit (if applicable) • Preschool permit (for ages 2-5)	• School Day and Year services for 3- and 4-year-olds • Birth to Five Extended Day and Year services for infants, toddlers, 3- and 4-year-olds • Early Head Start/Head Start services for infants, toddlers, 3- and 4-year-olds
School-Based Providers (Article 43 Providers)	DOHMH	Article 43 School-Based Filing Certificate for Children Ages 3 through 5	School Day and Year services for 3- and 4-year-olds
Group Family Day Cares (GFDCs)	NYS OCFS	Group Family Day Care License	• School Day and Year services for 3- and 4-year-olds • Birth to Five Extended Day and Year services for 3- and 4-year-olds

Department of Building Certificates - Center-Based Programs Only

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

> • A Certificate of Occupancy (C of O); or

> • A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO); or

> • A Letter of No Objection.

If your program has a TCO, you must ensure that you update your certificate before the expiration date (normally within 90 days). The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) encourages your program to pursue a final C of O.

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

> **Center-Based providers of infant and/or toddler care 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).**

> > • A separate Article 47 Infant/Toddler permit is required for early childhood education programs providing infant and toddler child care. We strongly suggest that programs also have a preschool aged permit, since the Infant/Toddler permit only covers services for children up to 24 months old.

> > • Infant and toddler child care must be provided on the first floor of the building, unless approved by DOB, FDNY, or other appropriate government agencies.

> > • Infant and toddler child care programs must be equipped with a sprinkler system that complies with the NYC Building Code.

Procedures to Follow If Your License or Permit Is Suspended or Revoked

For all program types, under no circumstances, may children attend a program that does not have all required licenses or permits in good standing. If your licensing agency suspends or revokes your license or permit, your program's services will also be suspended.

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

> **1.** Inform your DECE Policy Support Specialist (PSS) within one day

> **2.** Remedy any violations

> **3.** In the event of an unforeseen emergency, your program must inform the DECE within one day. DECE 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 (In the event of an emergency, DECE will accept an expedited timeline). The DECE will determine if the new location meets the standards of the program (i.e., demand, health and safety, etc.).

FDNY Inspections and Fire Drills

Providers will receive an annual FDNY inspection from your local fire department. Fire drill and evacuation procedures, including the evacuation diagram, are to be visibly posted in all spaces used for the services. Fire drills shall be performed at least monthly as required by law. 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.

Fire Extinguishers

Programs shall have approved fire extinguishers in good working order and have them inspected as required by the FDNY.

For Article 47 and Article 43 programs, a minimum of two fire extinguishers must be located on each floor and inspected at least twice a year. Extinguishers should have gauges that show a full charge at all times and fire extinguishers with seals must have unbroken seals. A minimum of one smoke detector for every six classes shall be located on each floor of the facility and shall be installed in hallways, with a minimum of one smoke detector per floor.

For GFDCs, 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 (where applicable). Fire extinguishers with gauges must show a full charge and fire extinguishers with seals must have unbroken seals. A minimum of two fire extinguishers are to be located on each floor of a GFDC site. There must be an operational smoke detector on each floor of the site and within each room where children nap, or in adjoining rooms. In the case of rooms used for napping or sleeping which have doors, a smoke detector is required inside that room.

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 to DECE and your licensing agency immediately. This includes all common areas of facilities used by children 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 and/or work with your landlord/building manager to resolve the violations as quickly as possible.

You can use the Department of Buildings online query system also known as BIS to search for general information on a property in the city including recorded complaints and violations, actions, applications, and inspections.

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 DECE as soon as possible after receiving notice of the violation.

You (or your landlord/building manager) must immediately start to correct any violations and complete corrections within the required timeframe set by DOHMH or OCFS. If a safety violation designated as a "public health hazard" or "imminent danger" is not corrected immediately, the program may have its services suspended until the violations are remedied.

You can use DOHMH's Child Care Connect to search for inspection records and any open violations at your program.

Insurance

You must obtain and maintain all required insurance, as stated in your Head Start and/or Birth to Five Services contract. Please contact the DECE Borough Office if you have any questions regarding insurance requirements.

DOHMH Performance Summary Cards (A47 only)

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) now issues and requires all Article 47 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 DOHMH'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. 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 DOHMH will issue a summons. If you have had any suspensions in the past three years, the DOHMH will mail you a separate suspension summary card that you must post with the performance summary card.

If the card gets damaged or defaced, the program should call 311 to request a replacement card from the DOHMH. Once a request is received, the DOHMH will send the program a confirmation email. Programs should keep this email in case an inspection occurs while they are waiting for a replacement card. An inspector will not issue a violation for failure to post the performance summary card if the program shares the confirmation email with the inspector. Please note it may take up to 14 business days to receive a new 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 DOHMH's website
  https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/dc/childcare-performance-summary-card-faq.pdf

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 should:

- Explain that the DOHMH 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.

Safety and Security: Plans and Procedures

Overview

All programs must ensure a safe learning environment for both children 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.

All Head Start programs must comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1302.47. The section below aligns with §1302.47's requirements.

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 (DOE) policy and the requirements of your licensing agency (i.e., Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Children and Family Services).

Safety plans must be submitted to DOHMH or OCFS when updated and available for review by DECE upon request. 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.

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

Providers must develop a written safety plan that meets the requirements of Article 47.11 of the NYC Health Code for Child Care programs and Article 43.07 of the NYC Health Code for School-Based programs, in addition to the expectations outlined in this section. The plan must account for the individual needs of the children enrolled in your program.

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 and contain, at minimum, a table of contents and the following components:

Supervision and Staffing

- Staff organization chart, job descriptions, and staff-to-child ratios.

- 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.

- 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).

Schedules

- 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.

Emergency Prevention and Action Plans

- 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.

- 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.

  — Programs that maintain a staff/child ratio of 1:4 for children under 12 months of age shall demonstrate through their Written Safety Plan that they have sufficient staff in the program at all times to provide a staff/child ratio of 1:3 for the safe evacuation of children younger than 12 months of age during emergency situations.

- Emergency evacuation procedures must be posted in conspicuous places throughout the facility, including lockdown drills and shelter-in-place drills.

- 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.

    - The DOE suggests all infant and toddler providers have an evacuation crib or other assistive devices available for children unable to evacuate on their own or without assistance.

  — Roles of the staff and chain of command.

  — Notification of authorities and the children's families/legal guardians.

Medication and Health Care

- 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.

- Infant sleep safety (required only for providers with an infant/toddler license).

- Storage of epinephrine auto-injectors, including storage location, which must be readily accessible to trained staff but not children; 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.

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

Food

- Food protection procedures, identity of individuals certified in food protection, schedule of sanitation procedures of food preparation areas and identification of approved food sources.

Reporting Child Abuse and Maltreatment

- 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.

Orientations

- 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.

- 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).

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 DOE, 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 permit 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 child medication requirements

- Health and safety violations

- Hiring of new staff

Group Family Day Care Providers

- 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 children and adults will be made aware of an emergency.

  — A designation of primary and secondary evacuation routes.

  — Methods of evacuation, including where children and adults will meet after evacuating the program/home and how attendance will be taken.

  — A plan for the safe evacuation of children 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 that prohibits re-entry into the premises, and how the health, safety, and emotional needs of children will be met in the event it becomes necessary to evacuate to another location.

Communication and Training of Safety Plan (Article 43 and Article 47) or Emergency plan (GFDCs)

Once you complete your safety plan or emergency plan, it is important that your staff become familiar with the 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 programming year and 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 program year, families must be provided with a summary of the safety or emergency plan, including procedures for emergency evacuation and communications (e.g., emergency evacuation locations and emergency contact plans).

Monitoring and Securing your Program

All facilities, buildings, premises, equipment, and furnishings used should be secure and safe. Facilities must comply with all applicable requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), New York City Fire and Building Codes, the New York City Health Code, OCFS GFDC regulations, and must be operated in accordance with DOHMH and DOE facilities requirements and policies.

Monitoring programs

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 children and staff.

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

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

• 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 families/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.

▪ This is not required for GFDCs.

— 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's name and address.**

• Adults allowed in your facility are limited to:

— Staff

— Families 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 child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP)

— Visiting instructors (e.g., music teachers, art teachers, and community members)

— Student teacher trainees or observers

— Credentialed DOE and other public inspectors (e.g., coaches, support personnel, DOHMH, FDNY, OCFS, OHS 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 program 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 section for additional information.

<u>Arrival and Dismissal</u>

All programs must develop arrival and dismissal protocols that ensure the safety of children. Arrival and dismissal serve as important opportunities for staff to interact and engage with families outside of regularly scheduled family engagement activities. Arrival and dismissal procedures must adhere to all city, state, and federal funding regulations.

It is beneficial to allow all families to drop off and pick up their child in the classroom. While this is a strong recommendation for *Pre-K* classrooms, it is a requirement for infant, toddler and 3-K children to be dropped off and picked up in their classroom due to safety considerations and the positive benefits children receive from the in-person transition.

Providers 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 children is under the supervision of a staff member who is active and eligible in the Personnel Eligibility Tracking System (PETS), and for Article 47s and GFDCs, is also additionally cleared through the Comprehensive Background Check (CBC).

During arrival and dismissal, your program staff must:

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

- Ensure that children are only released to a parent/legal guardian or authorized escort.

  — You must maintain a list of authorized escorts for each child enrolled. The following information must be maintained for each authorized escort: name, relationship to the child, address, and contact information. You are required to track authorized escorts by utilizing the Emergency Contact Card (also referred to as a Blue Card).

In developing arrival and dismissal policy and procedures, you should keep in mind that the DOE 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 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 children.

A Daily Attendance Record Form must be filled out to include at minimum each child's name and arrival/departure time (this is recommended for 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 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.

You should also be mindful of the impact the drills and plans might have on the children. Consider having conversations with the children about why it is important to practice these drills and maintaining calm composure in emergency situations. As you conduct the drill, talk with children about what is happening and why.

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

In developing your evacuation plans you should consider the age of the children and how to evacuate children in an expedient manner. Strategies to consider include:

- An adult-to-child ratio during an evacuation

  — Please note: For infants the adult-to-child ratio is smaller than typical classroom ratios

- Locating classrooms near an easily accessible exit

- Locating classrooms on the 1st floor

Shelter-in Plans

Shelter-in emergency procedures take effect if a dangerous incident occurs outside your facility (e.g., severe storms, release of hazardous materials). During a shelter-in, children and staff remain inside the building and conduct activities as usual. You should record and keep on file on the premises all drills conducted.

- 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.

- Group Family Day Cares must conduct shelter-in drills twice annually.

  — Families must be made aware of the drills in advance.

- It is strongly encouraged that you conduct shelter-in drills every 6 months during the program year. If you choose to do so, the drill must be age-appropriate and take into consideration the emotional response of children.

Lockdown Plans

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

- You are required to develop a lockdown plan to ensure staff and children 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 children.

- Staff should be trained to:

  — Check any hallways outside their classroom for staff and children, lock classroom doors, and turn off the lights.

  — Move out of sight and keep silent.

  — Wait for first responders to open the door, or for messaging that the lockdown has been lifted, and/or other specific directions.

  — Take attendance and account for any missing staff and children.

🏠 *Lockdown drills are not required for GFDCs, but DECE strongly recommends all GFDCs create lockdown plans.

Emergency Evacuation and Fire Plans

- You are required to develop and maintain on-site evacuation procedures to ensure that staff and children are aware of their roles during an evacuation, relocation sites, and the routes they should take in the event there is a hazard to children and staff inside or outside 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 children.

- 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 children.

  — Fire drills should be held at different times of the day over the course of the program 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. For all providers except GFDC providers, submitted plans or updates, as applicable, must be available on-site by November 1st of each program 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 including evacuation diagrams where applicable are to be posted in all instructional rooms.

<u>Health Emergencies</u>

At the time of enrollment, you must obtain written consent from every child's families/legal guardians authorizing your program to obtain and/or provide emergency health care for each child. 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 child, your program must follow the procedures in the plan.

- Call 911, if applicable (See below in emergency communications).

- Notify the child's family.

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

- Maintain an on-site 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 DECE (via the Occurrence Report) within 24 hours.

For more information on serving children with severe allergies, refer to the Meal Services section of the Handbook. For more information on medication administration, refer to the Child Health section of the Handbook.

<u>Emergency Communications</u>

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

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

- You are required to call 911 immediately if a staff member has administered an asthma inhaler or nebulizer to a child and the child'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 child.

- 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 child.

You must report any serious child injuries or illnesses that occur in your program to DOHMH and DECE, via the Occurrence Report, 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 DECE.

The DECE Suggests:
Developmentally Appropriate Evacuation, Shelter-in, and Lockdown Training and Drills

The best time to plan for an emergency response is before it occurs. When children 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 children for emergencies.

- Prepare children 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 children 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 children understand safety protocols. Some examples include:

  — Have ongoing conversations with children 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 children 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.

- 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

Staff Health Requirements

Overview

Ensuring staff working with children are protected from communicable diseases and have health records on file is critical to providing a healthy and safe learning environment. 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 and the DOE.

- Maintain staff health records in a secure, on-site location.

All Head Start programs must also comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1302.93. The section below aligns with §1302.93's requirements.

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 their 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. The staff member or volunteer must be immunized against and in compliance with requirements for:

    ▪ Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)

      - Persons born on or before December 31, 1956 shall not require such vaccines.

      - A history of having had MMR disease shall not be substituted for the MMR Vaccine.

      - Laboratory testing demonstrating detectable MMR antibodies is acceptable in lieu of MMR vaccines.

    ▪ Varicella (chicken pox)

    ▪ Tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap)

An employee may be exempted from an immunization requirement for any medical reason that would make the immunization inadvisable/detrimental to their health. Approval is required from DOHMH Bureau of Immunization. Programs must submit completed immunization waivers to the Department directly.

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 of any persons in a child care service at any time 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 Article 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 the program without a written statement of recovery from a health care provider.

Head Start Programs: Programs must make mental health and wellness information available to staff regarding health issues that may affect their job performance, and must provide regularly scheduled opportunities to learn about mental health, wellness, and health education.

Group Family Day Care (GFDC) Providers

Prior to the start of the programming year, GFDC providers must ensure that all staff, volunteers, and household members meet the applicable health requirements.

- All staff, volunteers, 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. For household members, the medical statement must be completed before the person begins to reside in the home.

  — Only a licensed health care provider (i.e., 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 Statement must provide:

  — Satisfactory evidence that the individual is physically fit to provide child day care and has no diagnosed psychiatric or emotional disorder that would preclude such an individual from providing day care.

  — An indication that the individual is free from communicable diseases unless their 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 Statement 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.

While employed:

- If the Provider is a GFDC, the Provider will maintain on-site documentation from a health care provider that the individual is physically and mentally fit to perform their assigned duties, with or without accommodation, as construed under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Child Health Requirements

Overview

Programs must comply with all federal, state, and local laws regarding child health, as described below.

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

All Head Start programs must also comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1302.42 and 1302.43. The section below aligns with §1302.42 and 1302.43's requirements. For more information on these requirements, please see the Head Start Implementation Guide.

Medical Examinations

Infants and toddlers are required to have more frequent medical examinations by their pediatrician. These visits assist with identifying any delays in developmental milestones, or questions the family may have and also allow the child to be given their necessary vaccinations. It is expected that infants and toddlers have periodic examinations at 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18 and 24 months.

Immunizations

All children must be immunized in accordance with the New York Public Health Law §2164 and DOHMH regulations. Prior to allowing a child to attend your program, you must ensure that the child has:

- • Obtained all required immunizations, as described below; or

- • Obtained, at a minimum, the provisional immunizations to enroll; or

- • Received a valid medical exemption for any missing immunizations; or

- • Submitted a medical immunization exemption request and is waiting on a determination.

A child may not attend any program if immunization information has not been provided for that child unless the provisions above are applicable. Providers must have on-site, all appropriate documentation from families for each child in attendance.

Children living in temporary housing and children who recently transferred from another state or country may receive flexibility in meeting immunization requirements. Please see page 25 for more details.

Please note the current immunization requirements are subject to change. Providers should regularly review state and city guidance regarding immunization requirements. The DOE also provides information on vaccines here.

Immunization	Doses Required	Notes
Hepatitis B (HepB)	3 doses	
Diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTaP)	4 doses	
Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	1 - 4 doses	Depends on child's age and type of doses previously received
Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV)	1 - 4 doses	Depends on child's age and type of doses previously received
Polio (IPV or OPV)	3 doses	
Influenza (Flu)	1 dose	Annual requirement for children 6 months and older. Must be given between July 1 - December 31
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	1 dose	
Varicella (chickenpox)	1 dose	

Providers must collect immunization records at pre-registration. If the family is not able to provide the immunization records at pre-registration, you may collect the immunization records at another time prior to the child attending the program.

- 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

- Children who have not yet received all required immunizations may attend your program if documentation shows the child meets the Provisional Immunization Requirements.

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

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

- Children who are not immunized in accordance with the Provisional Immunization Requirements must be excluded from the program until they comply with the requirements.

Immunization Exemptions

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

- Medical

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

        - Families 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 immunizations is detrimental to the child.

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

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 child living in temporary housing may not be denied admission or enrollment because they lack documentation verifying that immunizations have been received. If a child living in temporary housing does not have the documentation, you must assist the parent/guardian to obtain documents and/or obtain the necessary immunizations. If you do not receive documentation or the child has not received all required immunizations, staff should contact EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov.

Please see the Students in Temporary Housing section of the Handbook for more information.

Children Transferring from Another State or Country

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

Child Health Registration

Providers must have families complete and provide upon enrollment:

- Medical form (CH-205), updated at the appropriate intervals

- Immunization form, updated at the appropriate intervals

- Medication Administration form, if applicable

- Ointment Agreement, if applicable

Providers should have families complete and provide upon enrollment:

(Infant/Toddler) Providers

— Plan for child's sleeping routine (see sample Sleeping Arrangement agreement here)

— Plan for child's feeding arrangement (see sample Feeding Agreement here)

Head Start Programs:

- Within **30 days of enrollment**, programs must consult with families to determine whether all enrolled Head Start children have health insurance and a health care professional for ongoing care.

    — If the child does not have ongoing care and health insurance coverage, the program must assist families in accessing care and health insurance that will meet these criteria, as quickly as possible.

- Within **45 days of enrollment**, programs must conduct or obtain developmentally appropriate, evidence-based hearing and vision screenings for all enrolled Head Start children.

- Within **90 days of enrollment**, programs must obtain determinations from health care and oral health care professionals on whether all enrolled Head Start children are up-to-date on age-appropriate medical and oral health care.

For more information on Head Start child health requirements, please see the Head Start Implementation Guide.

Child and Adolescent Health Examination Form (CH-205)

All children must provide documentation of a comprehensive medical examination that has been conducted by a NYS licensed medical provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant with physician signoff). The medical examination must have taken place within one year of program entry.

Per DOHMH policy, the CH-205 form should be completed by the child's medical provider and returned prior to a child'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 starting the program.

Accommodations for Qualified Children with Disabilities: §504 Compliance

Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) protects children with disabilities against discrimination by requiring publicly funded early childhood programs to provide eligible children reasonable and appropriate accommodations so they may participate in program activities on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers. Under Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a child 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 children who qualify receive the appropriate accommodations. The DECE expects programs to follow all requirements of Section 504, 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 child with a disability in your program requires the administration of medication during the program day as a reasonable accommodation to facilitate their 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 on page 27.

Consistent with the DECE enrollment policy, every family with a School Day and Year offer of admission from the DOE should be welcomed by you and your staff and allowed to present documentation for registration. A child with an offer may not be turned away.

Extended Day and Year programs must welcome all families and explain the eligibility determination process. All matched families must have the opportunity to go through the eligibility verification process. Programs must work with the DOE to ensure any families deemed ineligible for services offered at their program are able to find an alternate site.

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. All forms listed can be found here.

- Medication Administration Form (MAF)

- Allergies/Anaphylaxis Medication Administration (AAMAF)

> 🏠 — GFDCs must also have families complete the Individual Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan

- 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

> 📦 **Head Start programs** must collaborate with families as partners in the health and well-being of their children in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner. Programs provide support to assist families' navigation through health systems, including working with families and their physicians to complete any of the above applicable forms.

For all children who may require medication to be administered during the program 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.

Medication Administration

Epinephrine Auto-Injector Requirements

The NYC Health Code Articles 43 and 47 require providers to maintain epinephrine auto-injectors as a stock medication. Under these regulations, programs must:

- Maintain on-site at least two epinephrine auto-injectors with retractable needles in each dosage appropriate for children who may be in your program. Please contact autoinjector@health.nyc.gov for additional guidance on how to obtain auto-injectors for your program.

- Have a staff person trained to administer the epinephrine auto-injector on-site at all times when children are present. The training must be a New York State-approved training curriculum; a list of approved trainers will be available through DOHMH. You will need to train at least one staff member to meet this requirement, and the DOE strongly suggests having at least two staff members complete the training.

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

🏠 GFDCs: The Office of Children and Families (OCFS) requires Group Family Day Care (GFDC) to have a comprehensive Health Care Plan that includes the prevention of allergic reactions and the recognition of and prompt response to anaphylaxis. Programs have a new option to stock non-patient specific epinephrine auto-injectors or not stock the auto-injectors. There are different requirements for each option; please review OCFS regulations for the most up-to-date guidance.

This plan must be reviewed as required by regulation and updated when circumstances, conditions or activities change, or as required. The section(s) of the plan related to anaphylaxis must address the following elements:

- Anaphylaxis prevention through screening and identification of children with allergies

- Individual Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Plans for children known to have food or other allergies that include clear instructions of action to take when an allergic reaction occurs

- Training program for child day care personnel to prevent, recognize and respond to food and other allergic reactions and anaphylaxis

- Strategies to reduce risk of exposure to allergic triggers

- Communication plan for intake and dissemination of information among staff and volunteers regarding children with food or other allergies (including risk reduction)

- Annual notification to families of anaphylaxis plan

Serving Children 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 children with these conditions:

- Upon enrollment, work with the parent/legal guardian of any child 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 child'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 child'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 children with prescriptions for these emergency medications if they have been trained by the child's parent/legal guardian to do so and have documentation on prescription, dosage, and additional necessary steps to ensure appropriate administration. Medication Administration Training is not required to administer these medications.

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

  🏠 — GFDCs: Must have a comprehensive Health Care Plan that includes the prevention of allergic reactions and the recognition of and prompt response to anaphylaxis.

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

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

Sites with Licensed Medical Personnel On-Site

If your site has access to an on-site medical professional you are expected to serve children with medical needs, including those who may require medication administration during the program 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 children with medical disabilities, which may include administering medication if administering such medication is a reasonable accommodation that enables a child to participate in the program.

To become approved to administer medication, you must:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.

2. Possess current certifications in first aid, CPR.

3. 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.

   — MAT certifications shall be effective for a period of three years from the date of issuance.

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

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

   — Please contact a CCRR to obtain this service.

6. 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.

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 them so that they 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 child's particular medical needs please contact the DECE at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov. Under no circumstances may you refuse enrollment to any child with an offer to your program.

<u>Medication Administration Policy and Procedures</u>

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

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

- A child's parent/legal guardian, or other adult authorized in writing by the child's parent/legal guardian, 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 children 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 programming 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 child's particular medical needs, please contact the DECE at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov. Under no circumstances may you refuse enrollment to any child eligible to attend your program.

<u>Children Requiring Accessibility Accommodations</u>

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

If a child who requires an accessible site receives an offer to your program and your program is not fully accessible but their parent/guardian believes that a reasonable accommodation would allow the child 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 child's particular needs please contact the DECE at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov. Under no circumstances may you refuse enrollment to any child eligible to attend your program.

<u>First Aid and CPR Compliance</u>

Pursuant to the NYC Health Code, **all staff with regular child contact must receive basic CPR and first aid training** before providing services, and every two years thereafter.

In addition, all programs must have **at least one staff member certified in CPR and first aid** on the premises during all hours when children are present. CPR and first aid (CPR/FA) certification must be based on successful completion of training that includes **hands-on skill tests**, and 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 section of the Handbook.

If a child is injured at your program, the child's family must be informed by telephone immediately. Additionally, a written occurrence report must be submitted to the DECE within one programming day of any significant injury.

Child 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 children's medical records (paper or electronic) are:

- • Secured and locked in the director's office, separate and apart from children's program records.

- • Not made available for inspection or copying by any person other than a parent/legal guardian, other persons who present a written authorization from a parent/guardian, authorized DOHMH staff, or to comply with a court order or lawfully issued subpoena.

Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting

Overview

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.

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, neglect, corporal punishment, and verbal abuse.

Please see Table 1 at the end of this section 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), the Office of Head Start, and/or other agencies, as appropriate.

Please use this resource to understand 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 children who are involved with or receiving child welfare services are absent for inadequately explained reasons. For a child 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 you are not satisfied with the outcome of your communication.

If a child 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 child behavior management policy that complies with the DOE. This policy must reflect that all acts of abuse or maltreatment are prohibited.

Please see the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance in Appendix B and the Child Behavior Section 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 every two years (as applicable).

> • The training is offered for free on the DOHMH website.

Please see the Staff Trainings and Professional Learning section 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.

- **Volunteers and non-program staff:** Staff at your site who are not directly engaged in your program's services.

- **DOE staff:** Visiting employees of the DOE (e.g., DECE coaches, social workers, and operations analysts).

Child Abuse Reporting Requirements

Article 47 Day Care Centers & Group Family Day Cares (GFDCs)

- 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 section.
    — Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) via an Occurrence Report

- 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 section.
    — Special Commissioner of Investigation (SCI) for suspected corporal punishment or verbal abuse as defined in Table 1 at the end of this section.
    — Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) via an Occurrence Report
    — Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)

- 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 section.
    — Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) via an Occurrence Report
    — Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)

- If a **DOE 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 section.
    — Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) via an Occurrence Report

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 section.
    — Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) via an Occurrence Report

- 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 section.
    — Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) via an Occurrence Report

- 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 child for suspected child abuse, maltreatment, corporal punishment, or verbal abuse as defined in Table 1 at the end of this section.

  — Special Commissioner of Investigation (SCI) for suspected corporal punishment or verbal abuse as defined in Table 1 at the end of this section.

  — Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) when a report is made regarding child-care aged children for suspected child abuse or maltreatment as defined in Table 1 at the end of this section.

- If a **DOE** 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 section.

  — Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) via an Occurrence Report

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/guardian 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 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 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 assigned DECE Policy Support Specialist**

Photographing Injuries When Child Abuse or Maltreatment is Suspected

- Consistent with the New York Social Services Law and the DOE Chancellor's Regulation A-750, once you become aware of 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. The designated staff member should be provided with appropriate instruction about how to perform this task.

- Photographs must be taken in a private setting in a way that best serves the interest and privacy of the child.

  —Photographs must be taken with a device purchased with DOE funds, which must be labeled "Property of NYC Department of Education." Photographs must be taken with a device designated only for professional use and must be maintained as confidential documents. Photographs may not be taken with a personally owned device. No photographs may be taken and no examination may be conducted of a child'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 DOE-owned device, in accordance with procedures developed by the DOE.

  —The email must contain: the SCR "Call I.D." number; the child's name; the child'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 the photographs. The report and the photograph are confidential documents and may not be released to the subject of the report, parent/guardian, 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 DOE-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 DOE-owned device. No copies of such photographs shall be made or retained.

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 program staff member. Parents/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).

Please refer to the following DOE resources:

- Online training

- Chancellor's Regulation A-750

After reporting to SCR, you are required to notify the DECE within one programming day via an Occurrence Report. These reports should include the "Call I.D." numbers from reports to SCR in addition to the required information.

See the Reporting to the Division of Early Childhood Education section 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 DOE and the vendors with which it contracts. Allegations of corporal punishment and verbal abuse against staff members must be reported to SCI.

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 program day.

The program director must ensure the staff member notifies 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 staff member. Families/guardians must be notified within 24 hours after the report is made to SCI.

After reporting to SCI, you are required to report to the DECE within one programming day of making the report by submitting a completed occurrence report to your Policy Support Specialist. These reports should include the "Call I.D." numbers from reports to SCI in addition to other 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 DOE provider contract, in the event of an alleged incident of child abuse or maltreatment, corporal punishment, or verbal abuse involving or related to children 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 program day of the alleged incident or receipt of the allegation.

The program director <u>must</u> provide a written report of the allegation using the DECE Occurrence Report form, available on the [DOE infohub](#), and submit the form to your Policy Support Specialist. 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 against staff 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

    — *For more information on how to report to DOHMH, please contact your DOHMH Early Childhood Education Consultant (ECEC).*

- 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.

Children Receiving Child Welfare Services

The DECE encourages program directors to carefully monitor the attendance of children receiving child welfare services and to promptly inquire regarding the absences of such children in order to ensure their safety and well-being. Children 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 <u>the case remains open</u>, and

- Children 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

- Children 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 children receiving child welfare services in accordance with the following guidance:

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

- Consistent with your DOE contract, unless a family has notified you in advance regarding the reason for an absence, you must call the child's family on the first day of the child's absence and on each day of

additional absence to determine the reason for absence. **For children 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 children 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., email, phone)

  — Result of communication

- For a child with an <u>open</u> child welfare case, please notify the Office of Safety First at 718-KID-SAFE with the "Call I.D." number associated with the report, and <u>reportabusedece@schools.nyc.gov</u> 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 <u>you are not satisfied with the outcome of your communication</u>. 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 child whose parent/legal guardian has been the subject of a <u>substantiated</u> report or for a child in <u>foster care</u>, please notify 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, and <u>reportabusedece@schools.nyc.gov</u> 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 <u>reportabusedece@schools.nyc.gov</u>, please include the full name of the child, the child's OSIS #, their listed address, the SCR "Call I.D." number, if applicable, and confirmation that the report was received by the Office of Safety First. 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 a child involved in child welfare is strongly encouraged to build familiarity with each child'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 child involved in child welfare.

If at any time a staff member has reason to believe that there is an emergency or 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.

CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT	
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 DOE Chancellor's Regulation A-750:	
CHILD ABUSE	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 they perpetrate any of these actions against a child in their care, and a person can be guilty of abusing a child if they allow someone else to do these things to that child.
CHILD MALTREATMENT	Maltreatment refers to the quality of care a child is receiving from those responsible for them. 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 DOE Chancellor's Regulation A-750.*
CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND VERBAL ABUSE	
Corporal punishment or verbal abuse of a child by staff, as defined below, is prohibited. As stated in DOE Chancellor's Regulations A-420, and A-421:	
CORPORAL PUNISHMENT	Any act of physical force upon a child for the purpose of punishing that child. 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 child or staff 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 child whose behavior is interfering with the orderly exercise and performance of school district functions, powers, or duties if the child 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 children that: **1.** Belittles, embarrasses, or subjects children to ridicule; or **2.** Has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a child's educational performance or ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program, program-sponsored activity, or any other aspect of a child's education; or **3.** Has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a child's mental, emotional, or physical well-being; or **4.** Reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a child to fear for their physical safety; or **5.** Reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a child.

Enrichment Activities with Inherent Risk

You may decide to provide gross motor enrichment activities or programs for children enrolled in your program. These programs may be offered on-site or within walking distance of your facility. If the nature of your enrichment program presents a heightened risk of injury to children, you must ensure that there is appropriate adult supervision while the children engage in the program, and you will be required to obtain DECE approval before offering the program to children during contracted hours. Examples of enrichment programs that require advance DECE approval include, but are not limited to:

- Ice skating

- Swimming

- Horseback riding

- Skiing

- Boating

- Gymnastics

Programs are required, by Chancellor's Regulations, to get parent/guardian notification in writing in advance of any planned trips or high-risk activities, and a parent/guardian consent form is required for each trip. Consent forms must identify activities with inherent risks (e.g., swimming, horseback riding, ice skating, use of physical fitness equipment) that children will engage in and must contain specific requests for parent/guardian permission to engage in those activities. If medical preclearance is required for a child to take part in the trip and/or participate in certain activities, it must be obtained in advance of the trip.

Before seeking approval from the DECE, you must ensure that your program has obtained any necessary approvals from its licensing authority (e.g., Article 47 providers must seek approval from DOHMH prior to offering any swimming or aquatic activities). Programs should contact earlychildhoodpolicy@schools.nyc.gov with any questions and to request approval for the enrichment activity or program.

Note that any enrichment program offered during regular program hours must be free of charge and participation must be open to all children, unless the restriction is being imposed based upon a child's age group.

II. Facilities and Materials

a. Facilities and Materials

b. Classroom Furniture and Materials

Facilities and Materials

Facilities Overview

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

Indoor Facility Requirements

The indoor space at your program must be safe for children and provide a high-quality, comfortable learning environment. Space should have adequate lighting, ventilation, temperature control, and sound absorbing materials. Space should be in good repair with no major problems that could present any health and safety risks that could endanger children or compromise their care. When health and safety hazards are present in child care spaces, there is an increased likelihood for accidents as well as risks to staff and children's own health.

All Head Start programs must also comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1302.21(d)(2) and §1302.21(d)(3). The section below aligns with §1302.21(d)(2) and §1302.21(d)(3)'s requirements.

<u>Indoor Facilities at Your Program Must:</u>

- Be in good repair. This means that:

  — There should be no substantial damage to the walls, ceiling, floors, floor covering, lighting, plumbing, furniture, or other features of the indoor space such as:

    - Sharp corners, edges, nails

    - Peeling paint

    - Exposed wires

    - Exposed outlets

    - Mold

    - Furniture that children can stand on or pull on that might topple over

    - Tripping hazards

- Be in good sanitary condition. This means that:

  — Classroom floors, floor coverings, and other surfaces should be cleaned regularly and big messes such as food on the floor or spilled sand or paint should be cleaned up promptly.

  — For classrooms with children who are still crawling and likely to put items in their mouth, it is extremely important to make sure no small items such as thumbtacks, staples, paperclips, etc. are within their reach and are immediately removed from the floor or any space that is accessible to young children.

  — Tables should be washed thoroughly before and after meal time and whenever there is a spill. For appropriate ways to wash your tables, please see Table Cleaning Procedures.

  — Create a daily checklist to ensure that proper cleaning and sanitizing of toys, materials and equipment occurs throughout the classroom and in the outdoor gross motor spaces.

  — Trash cans used in the classroom are hands-free and have tight fitting lids.

    - Trash is not stored in areas accessible to children and families and is removed from the site regularly.

— Instructional materials and furniture (e.g., easels) should be cleaned regularly and well maintained.

— Bathrooms are regularly cleaned and disinfected. The frequency of the cleaning and disinfecting should be dependent on the frequency of use.

— Bathrooms remain sufficiently stocked with liquid hand soap and paper towels.

— All handwashing sinks are in a state of good repair.

— Carpets and rugs should be cleaned regularly. If rugs are heavily soiled or cannot be cleaned they should be removed.

• Provide sufficient space for children, adults, and furnishings. Specifically:

— A minimum of 30 square feet per child 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 children are seated.

— During nap and rest time, programs should do their best to have 6 feet surrounding each child's mat or cot, but at a minimum they should have 3 feet. Children should be placed head to foot, especially when they cannot meet the spacing requirements outlined. This might mean having to rearrange furniture at nap and rest time to ensure adequate spacing.

— Centers must have enough space for instructional materials and furnishings (e.g., pretend kitchen, table and chairs, library shelf, blocks) and for children to play and use the materials without crowding.

> **Head Start Programs:**
>
> • Head Start programs must have a minimum of 35 square feet per child.

Religious Symbols

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

• The exterior entrance designated to be used by children

• Any part of the interior of the building to be used by children as part of your program

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, OCFS), 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: Facility Requirements

Child Care (Article 47), and School-Based (Article 43) and Group Family Day Care Providers

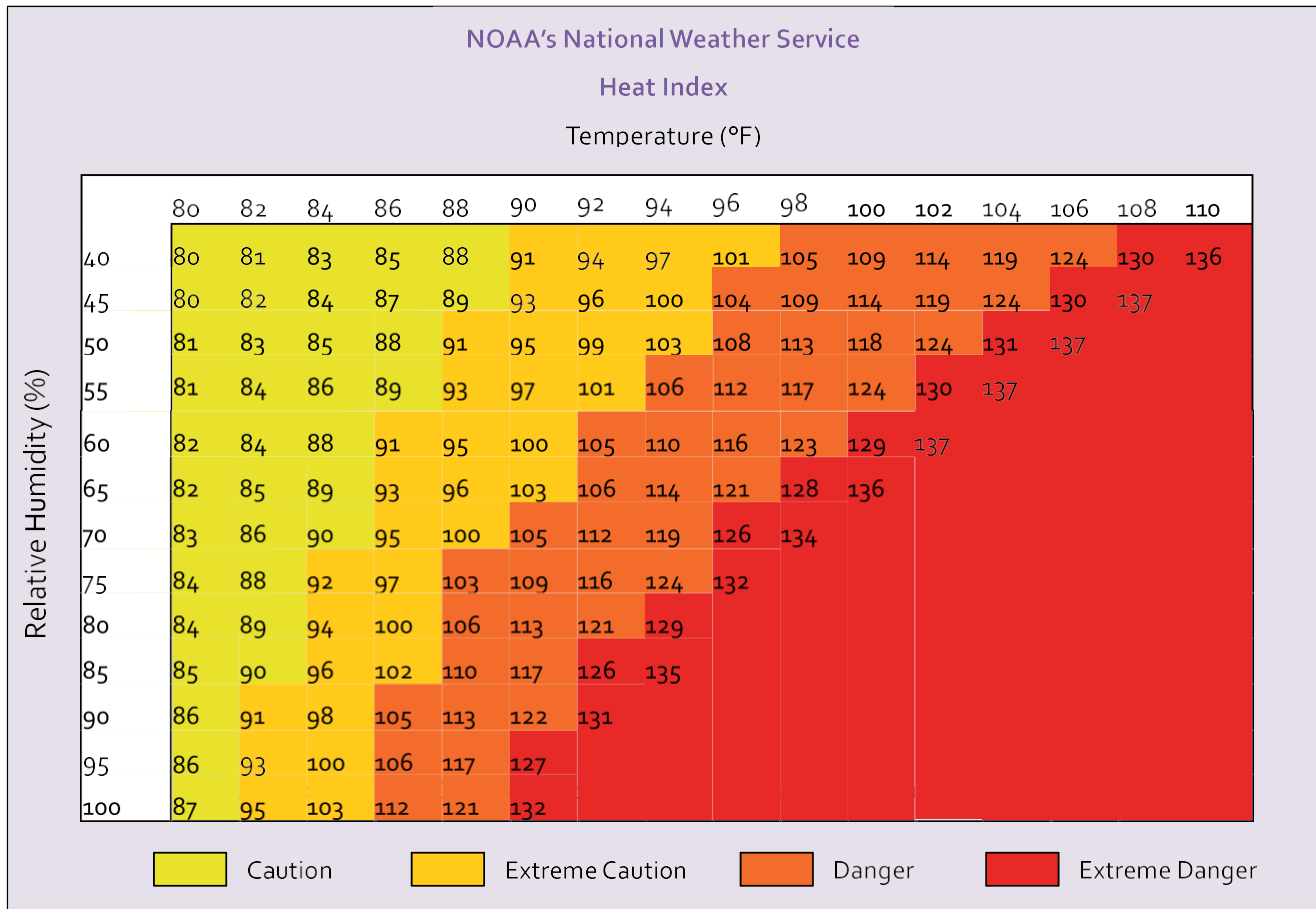|	
Location of Classrooms in the Building	**A43/47**:You may not operate your program above the third floor or in the basement of a building unless you have received written approval from the DOHMH and the DOE. Infant/Toddler classrooms must be on the first floor.
	GFDCs: Programs can operate up to the 5th floor in an apartment building. Programs cannot operate above the 2nd floor of a single-family dwelling.
Modes of Egress	**A43/47**: Your facility must have at least two modes of egress (not including fire escapes) that provide access out of the building. Egress paths should be free and clear of any obstructions. There must also be readable, lighted exit signs on all exits, and a panic bar (an easy-push, latch-releasing crossbar) between 34 and 48 inches from the floor, on the inside of every exterior door.
	GFDCs: You must have two modes of egress. Fire escapes are considered a mode of egress.
Fire Extinguishers	**A43-47**: A minimum of two fire extinguishers must be located on each floor and inspected monthly.
	GFDCs: Multi-purpose fire extinguishers approved to be used in residences must be maintained in good working condition. Fire extinguishers with gauges must show a full charge and fire extinguishers with seals must have unbroken seals.
Emergency Evacuation	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.
Posting of Fire Exits	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.
Fire and Carbon Monoxide Detection Systems	**A43/47**: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. Programs permitted with more than 30 children must have an approved interior fire alarm system.
	GFDCs: 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. When smoke detectors operate from electrical power they must also have a battery-powered back-up energy source. Operating carbon monoxide detectors must be used in all homes when required, and located in areas of the home in accordance with applicable laws.
Sprinklers	**A47**: Infant and toddler child care programs must be equipped with a sprinkler system that complies with the NYC Building Code.
Protective Guards/ Limiting Devices/ Coverings	**A43/47**: Required for all windows (including those in hallways and stairwells), columns, radiators, pipes, and poles or other potentially harmful structures. Only City-approved types of window guards and limiting devices and installation methods are allowed.
	GFDCs: 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.

Outlet Covers/ Protective Mechanisms	All electric outlets that are accessible to children should be tamper resistant or covered when not in use.
Stairways	**A43/47**: Stairways used by children must be equipped with protective barriers and low banisters or handrails. **GFDCs**: 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.
Finishing and Materials	**A43/47**: 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. **GFDCs**: 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.
Asbestos	**All providers**: 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.
Lead-Based Paint	**All providers**: All walls, furniture, and equipment must be free of lead-based finishes. A visual lead hazards survey must be completed every year if there are any surfaces covered with lead-based paint or paint of an unknown origin. The results must be sent to DOHMH before permit renewal.
Lead Water Testing	**A43/47**: 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. **GFDCs**: Must follow OCFS regulations and make records available for inspection by the DECE.
Storage of Cleaning Supplies	**A43/47**: All cleaning supplies must be stored in their original containers and kept in closets/cabinets that are locked from the outside and inaccessible to children. Cleaning products must be put away and locked immediately after use. **GFDCs**: Cleaning materials must be stored in their original containers unless the product's use or your Health Plan indicates the product should 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.
Furniture/Play Space	**A43/47**: All furniture and play equipment must be in good repair and free from hazards such as sharp edges, pointed parts, toxic, or poisonous finishes. **GFDCs**: 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.

Classroom Temperature

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 children. If outdoor temperatures reach a "Danger" or "Extreme Danger" on the NOAA's National Weather Service Heat Index (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 children and staff.

Please see the Calendar, Hours, and Flexible Schedule section 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
Temperature (°F)

Relative Humidity (%)	80	82	84	86	88	90	92	94	96	98	100	102	104	106	108	110
40	80	81	83	85	88	91	94	97	101	105	109	114	119	124	130	136
45	80	82	84	87	89	93	96	100	104	109	114	119	124	130	137	
50	81	83	85	88	91	95	99	103	108	113	118	124	131	137		
55	81	84	86	89	93	97	101	106	112	117	124	130	137			
60	82	84	88	91	95	100	105	110	116	123	129	137				
65	82	85	89	93	96	103	106	114	121	128	136					
70	83	86	90	95	100	105	112	119	126	134						
75	84	88	92	97	103	109	116	124	132							
80	84	89	94	100	106	113	121	129								
85	85	90	96	102	110	117	126	135								
90	86	91	98	105	113	122	131									
95	86	93	100	106	117	127										
100	87	95	103	112	121	132										

Caution	Extreme Caution	Danger	Extreme Danger

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 children with disabilities from your program.

- You must make reasonable modifications to your facility to integrate children 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](#) (fully accessible) if your building was constructed <u>prior</u> to January 26, 1993. You must be in **strict compliance** if your building was constructed <u>after</u> January 26, 1993.

<u>If Your Facility Was Constructed Prior to January 26, 1993</u>

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 child in a wheelchair to participate in your program.

<u>If Your Facility Was Constructed after January 26, 1993</u>

You must meet the [ADA Standards for Accessible Design](#). 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

Children must have access to an outdoor space large enough to allow them to freely run and use their large muscles for vigorous gross motor activity 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.

If no outdoor play space is available, you must provide an indoor play space and, if possible, provide community walks for children. Indoor play spaces must be big enough to provide at least seventy-five (75) square feet of play space per child (**not applicable to GFDCs**).

To ensure the health and safety of children, outdoor play areas must be maintained and in good condition. Space must be free of broken glass, other debris, free of poisonous plants, pests, or other hazards.

For mobile infants and toddlers, consider safety in the outdoor space for crawlers and unsteady walkers. *Please see additional resources at the end of this section.*

<u>Fences (For A47s, strongly recommended for A43s and GFDCs)</u>

- • The outdoor space must be enclosed by climb-proof fencing at least 5 feet high.

- • Razors or barbed wire may be used only on fences that are more than 6 ½ feet high.

<u>Rooftop fences (For A47s, strongly recommended for A43s and GFDCs)</u>

- • Be climb-proof

- • Be at least 10 feet high, with an added 45-degree inwardly angled panel

Rooftop play areas are allowed on fireproof buildings with the approval of the Health Department, Department of Buildings, and the Fire Department.

Stationary Equipment

Age-appropriate equipment challenges children to develop and practice large muscle skills safely without putting them at risk for unnecessary injury.

Mobile infants and toddlers should also have access to age-appropriate equipment during outdoor gross motor activities and must not be confined to a stroller.

The following equipment is not appropriate for any birth to 5 age group:

- Freestanding arch climbers
- Dome climbers
- Freestanding flexible climbers
- Fulcrum seesaws
- Log rolls
- Track rides
- Spiral slides with more than one 360 degree turn
- Parallel bars
- Vertical sliding poles
- Trampolines
- Swinging gates
- Giant strides
- Climbing ropes not secured at both ends
- Animal figure swings
- Multiple occupancy swings
- Rope swings
- Dual exercise rings
- Trapeze bars
- Horizontal ladders and overhead rings are not appropriate for children 3 years and younger.

In addition to the equipment listed above, the following equipment is not appropriate for infants and younger toddlers (6–23 months):

- Rung ladders

- Merry-go-rounds

- Rotating tire swings

- Spiral slides with a full 360 degree turn

- Balance beams

If stationary equipment that is not considered developmentally appropropriate for children's use exists in the outdoor space(s) used by the program, staff should provide careful supervision so that children do not use this equipment and should provide alternative portable equipment (balls, hula hoops, tricycles) if needed to ensure that all children are actively engaged.

Examples of appropriate gross motor equipment for infants and toddlers:

- Small push toys, balls, sturdy things to pull up on, ramps for crawling

- Riding toys without pedals, large push-pull toys, balls, climbing equipment less than 32 inches high, tunnels

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Resource ▮ & Action Item ✅:

▮ This document provides clarification and guidance about when the DECE indicates children should participate in outdoor activities. Weather Policy for the ECERS

▮ This document provides a link to information about New York City weather alerts. Watches, Warnings or Advisories for New York

▮ Safety Guidelines for Outdoor Space and Equipment

▮ Playground Information to Use with the Environment Rating Scales

▮ Consumer Product Safety Commission Playground Safety Handbook

Classroom Furniture and Materials

Overview

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

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

All Head Start programs must also comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1302.31(d). The section below aligns with §1302.31(d)'s requirements.

Required Furniture for All Age Groups

Your classrooms must have ample furniture for routine care, play, and learning to provide opportunities to safely support infants, toddlers, and preschool children to work independently and with their peers, in small or large groups. All furniture should be sturdy and in good repair and condition with no problems that could cause serious safety or health concerns. Available furniture in the classrooms must meet the needs of the total number of enrolled children and the instructional staff supporting each class.

Generally, furniture requirements are consistent across all age groups being served by your program. However, when choosing furniture, programs should take into consideration the height and age of children and how to support their learning and developmental needs. To allow all children to be included in activities, adaptive equipment or furniture should be provided if there are children enrolled in the class with diagnosed disabilities requiring these adaptations.

The following furniture must be available in all classrooms.

- All tables, chairs and other equipment should be age- and size-appropriate, finished with nontoxic, lead-free surface coverings, and cleaned and sanitized as needed.

- Cubbies for storage of children's personal items and creative work

  — If possible, children should have individual cubbies or storage space large enough to store all their personal belongings, so that their personal belongings do not touch another child's belongings.

  — If possible, these cubbies should be within the classroom, so that children can access their belongings without leaving the teacher's supervision.

  — Cubbies should be secured with a hook or nail.

- Storage shelves

  — Low open storage shelves should be set up to provide materials for centers including but not limited to, block play, art, manipulatives, and science. The height of the shelves should be adapted to meet the developmental needs of the children enrolled in the classroom.

  — Storage shelves used by children 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 and allow for visual supervision of children.

— In **mixed aged classrooms**, materials considered to be choking hazards or hazardous to children under the age of 3 should be placed out of reach.

— 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 children 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.

▪ The DECE recommends that rugs have solid/one color designs, rather than excessive print, to avoid over stimulating children or limiting play.

— An adult-size chair for each instructional staff member (as classroom space allows).

— The DECE recommends instructional staff members sit at child level whenever possible.

— Teacher's easel (as classroom space allows).

• Furnishings for relaxation

— Programs should provide clearly defined classroom space containing soft furnishings that provides substantial softness for children to relax or play quietly. The soft furnishings should be in good condition with no rips or tears that could cause health concerns (e.g., exposed padding).

— Individual cots or mats for rest or nap.

▪ Mats should be labeled with children's names and in good repair with no rips or tears.

▪ 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 naps and to provide a smooth transition.

• **Additional furnishings to facilitate play and learning during center time include but are not limited to (all items may vary by age group):**

— 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 applicable)

EARLY LEARN • **Additional furnishings for infants and young toddler:**

— Crib or bassinet per child (Infants and young toddlers)

▪ The crib or bassinet must be approved by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission, and comply with standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International for infant sleep equipment

- Firm crib mattress specifically designed for the equipment used, covered by a tight fitting sheet

- The crib or bassinet must be free of bumper pads, pillows or sleep positioning devices not medically prescribed, loose bedding, blankets, toys and other possible suffocation risks.

— Soft and safe places to rest non-mobile infants where they can be positioned while engaging in activities or to watch other children playing, if needed

Chair and Table Requirements by Age Group	
Pre-K	• Chairs should allow for most children's 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 children can rest their elbows on the top of the table (table height should be approximately **20 inches**)
3-K	• Chairs should allow for most children's feet to touch the floor while they are seated (seat height should be approximately **10 inches**) • Tables should be an appropriate height so that most children can rest their elbows on the top of the table (table height should be approximately **18 inches**)
EarlyLearn (Infant and Young Toddler)	**Younger Toddler Classrooms** • Chairs should allow for most children's feet to touch the floor while they are seated (seat height should be approximately **6-7 inches**) • Tables should be an appropriate height so that most children can rest their elbows on the top of the table (table height should be approximately **14-15 inches**) **Infant Toddler** • Chairs/feeding chairs should allow for most children's feet to touch the floor while they are seated (seat height should be approximately **5 inches**) • Tables should be an appropriate height so that most children can rest their elbows on the top of the table (table height should be approximately **12 inches**) • High chairs may only be used for children who are able to sit up independently. They must have a sturdy and steady base and a safety strap to be fastened around children who are seated in them.

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

Purchasing Furniture

While you may purchase furniture from whichever vendor you choose, some vendors have agreed to sell furniture and materials at select DOE rates to all providers. You should contact your DECE Operations Analyst for additional information. Any furniture purchased with DOE funds must be labeled as "Property of DOE."

Accounting for Property

Any furniture and equipment purchased with DOE funds or provided by the DOE, including start-up funds, should be inventoried. The inventory should include:

- Source(s) of funding;

- Invoice number;

- Description of the item;

- Make and model;

- Cost and date of purchase; and

- Quantity and the location of the item(s).

All furniture and equipment purchased with DOE funds should be labeled "Property of DOE" and may not be sold or transferred. Programs should follow instructions from their Borough Office about accounting for furniture and equipment during year-end fiscal reporting.

Instructional Materials and Cleanliness

You must provide adequate instructional materials to implement your program curriculum and to enable children to select from a range of developmentally appropriate activities during center time. Materials must be plentiful enough to allow children to play cooperatively without competing over resources. Instructional materials must be complete, intact, and in good condition for children's use. Children must have access to these materials for a substantial portion of the day as defined by the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Third Edition (ECERS-3).

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:

- <u>Rotate</u> throughout the year, according to individual and group skill levels, needs, and units of interest or study.

- <u>Reflect</u> the cultural and linguistic diversity of families, the community, and the city.

- <u>Support</u> meaningful independent and cooperative play in learning centers and be developmentally appropriate for children in the age group.

Staff supporting infants and young toddlers must be careful not to provide children with instructional materials that may pose a choking hazard.

For each classroom, you are required to provide the majority of the following instructional materials, to support learners based on the age-appropriate DECE curricula in each of the categories below:

Instructional Materials		EarlyLearn (Infants and Young Toddlers)

Books	• Books with songs, poetry, and/or rhymes
	
	• Books that support diversity representing
	
	   — Various cultures and languages spoken by families, differing abilities, ages, and non-stereotypical gender roles. Fiction and non-fiction texts to support current topics of exploration and discussion
	
	   — Audio books
		• Board, vinyl, and soft books for infants and toddlers
		
		• Sensory blocks such as those that make noises

Early Literacy Materials	• Puppets and/or a magnetic/flannel story board • Magnets (e.g., symbols including upper and lower case letters, numbers, and mathematical symbols and magnetic write and wipe boards) • Writing materials (e.g., letter stamps and washable stamp pads, child-size pencils, crayons, washable markers, paper)	
Fine Motor Materials	• Classroom set of hardwood blocks • Interlocking building materials (e.g., tabletop building blocks, bristle blocks, Duplos, magnetic blocks, interlocking cubes/blocks, Lincoln Logs) • Manipulatives (e.g., beads and strings of different sizes, sewing/lacing cards, toys that snap or link together, pegs with peg boards, tangram puzzle shapes) • Puzzles of varying levels of difficulty (e.g., framed, interlocking, floor puzzles) • Art materials (e.g., scissor, markers, crayons, pencils)	• Rattles, grasping toys, Busy boxes, nested cups, containers to fill and dump • Shape sorting games, large stringing beads, large pegs with peg boards, pop beads, stacking rings, nesting toys, medium or large interlocking blocks • Chunky, knobbed puzzles • Chunky crayons • Chunky brushes • Stacked rings

Instructional Materials	Pre-K / 3-K	EarlyLearn (Infants and Young Toddlers)
Math Materials	• Counting/Comparing Quantities (e.g., unifix cubes with number trays, small objects to count with numbered containers, peg boards with numbers, puzzles and books with written numbers and items to count and match, patterning games, dice, graphing activities) • Measuring/Comparing Sizes/Fractions (e.g., measuring cups, spoons, with items to measure, balance scale with things to weigh, tape measures, rulers with things to measure) • Familiarity with shapes (e.g., puzzles with geometric shapes, geoboards, attribute blocks, parquetry blocks with patterns, magnetic shapes, shape stencils, unit blocks and labeled shelves with outlines of shapes)	• Rattles of various shapes, numbers and shape board books, simple shape puzzles, shape sorters, toy telephones and cash registers

Art Materials	• Drawing materials (e.g., crayons, washable markers, colored pencils)
	
	• Paint materials (e.g., tempera paint, water color, finger paint)
	
	• Paper (various sizes, colors, textures)
	
	• Collage materials (e.g., yarn, fabric, cotton balls, sequins, foam shapes, glitter, etc.)
	
	• Tools
	   — Child-safe scissors, hole punches
	   — Glue and/or paste
	   — Brushes
	   — Letter/Design stamps and washable stamp pads
	
	• 3 dimensional objects
	   — Play dough or clay
	   — Wood pieces
	
	• A place for drying paintings and art projects	

Music and Movement Materials	• Child-sized instruments • CD player (preferably with MP3 output) and headphones for one or more children • A variety of music on CDs or on a digital music player • Ribbons, scarves	

Instructional Materials	Pre-K / 3-K	EarlyLearn (Infants and Young Toddlers)
Dramatic Play Materials	• Dress up clothing (e.g., clothing for various careers, clothing representing various cultures, gender-specific clothing, and clothing for fantasy play) • Toys to support children's 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, house cleaning set, dolls and doll clothing, toy phone, mirror) — Dolls and materials representing race and cultural diversity	
Nature Science Materials	• Collections of natural objects (e.g., sets of leaves, rocks, seashells) • Sand/water table or basin — 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 children's 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 DECE staff member may request that you provide additional instructional materials to children.

Technology Tools

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

- Technology in the classroom must support children's hands-on learning and creative expression. Consider the strengths, preferences, experiences, linguistic diversity, and needs of your child 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 children, their peers, and teachers. Children 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 child may not exceed 30 minutes in a week. Children's 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 children with disabilities who require assistive computer technology as outlined in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

  — **Children under the age of 2 years old should not be exposed to technology during the program day.**

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 161.01, 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

GFDCs Domestic Pets

- All animals present at the program that require a license must be licensed.

- The program must provide families with a written description of all animals prior to a child's enrollment in the program.

III. Staffing

a. Staff Qualifications, Hiring, and Substitutes

b. Program Staffing and Supervision

c. Aspire

d. Professional Learning and Staff Trainings

e. Security Clearances
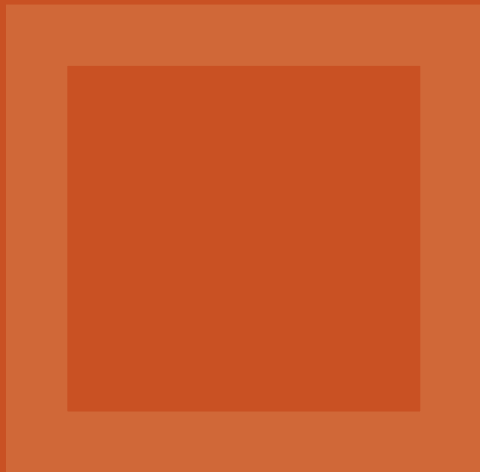
Staff Qualifications, Hiring, and Substitutes

Overview

Qualified staff are essential to providing high-quality care at your program. Staff with education qualifications and certifications appropriate to the age of the children in their care are trained to recognize developmental milestones. This specialization allows them to create appropriate social and developmental learning environments for children.

All Head Start programs must also comply with HSPPS, including 45 C.F.R. §1302.91. The section below aligns with the HSPPS requirements and differentiates, where applicable.

Staffing Qualifications

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

Education Director

The Education Director is responsible for the coordination and development of an age and developmentally appropriate curriculum and program, training of teaching and other staff, and supervision of teaching staff. If your program is co-located with another DOHMH-licensed child care program (i.e., a single organization with both an infant/toddler and a preschool in the same facility), your Education Director may oversee both programs. Please be sure to talk with DOHMH about this ahead of time if you want your Education Director to oversee both programs. An Education Director assigned to two co-located programs cannot have teaching responsibilities (including acting as a substitute for an absent teacher).

<u>Qualifications</u>

- Education Directors overseeing *3-K* , *Pre-K* or older toddler services must have all of the following credentials:

    — Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or related field of study;

    — Teaching license or certificate valid for services in early childhood or childhood grades pursuant to New York State Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) regulations; **and**

    — At least two years of lead teacher experience in a program for children less than six years of age.

- Education Directors overseeing <u>only</u> infant and/or younger toddlers (under 24 months) must have all of the following credentials:

    — Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or related field of study; and

    — At least one year of teaching experience (lead or assistant teacher) in a program for children under 24 months of age, **or** 6 college credits in infant/toddler coursework, or a DOHMH-approved study plan leading to 6 college credits in infant/toddler coursework.

<u>Requirements</u>

Group Child Care (Article 47) Programs	• Your program must employ an on-site 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.
School-based Child Care (Article 43) Programs and Group Family Day Care	• You must employ an on-site Education Director if one or more lead teachers are on a study plan. • You are not required to employ an on-site Education Director if all of your lead teachers are fully certified. • *Article 43*: If you are required to employ an on-site Education Director AND your site serves more than 40 children (of any age), the on-site Education Director may not have teaching responsibilities, including acting as a substitute for an absent teacher.

<u>Education Directors Who Have Teaching Responsibilities:</u>

The Education Director can have teaching responsibilities, including acting as a substitute for an absent teacher, if their program has less than 40 children in attendance (of any age).

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 to meet required child-to-staff ratios until the Education Director returns to work.

<u>Education Director Coverage Policies (all setting types):</u>

Short Term Absences
At any time when the Education Director is not on the premises to supervise your program, you must designate an individual to act as the Education Director. This individual must be a certified group teacher or a group teacher whose application for certification is fully submitted and pending certification by the State Education Department or other accreditation organization or whose application for certification is fully submitted and pending approval by the Department and completed all required security clearances.

If the interim Education Director is a lead teacher, they 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.

You must always notify DOHMH prior to utilizing the Education Director designee.

Frequent or Long-term Absences by the Education Director
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 their 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 DECE to implement an alternative plan for oversight of instruction, family engagement, and other key program functions.

Lead Teachers

Lead teachers are responsible for planning and supervising age and developmentally appropriate activities for a given group of children. These teachers, with the support of other members of their teaching team, are tasked with extending children's thinking and communication skills through intentional interactions and facilitating play-based learning and inquiry. In addition, lead teachers must ensure there are opportunities to connect with families and share resources that support the needs and development of their children.

> 🏠 For GFDCs, where the lead teacher is also serving as the Education Director, please note that the lead teacher must meet Education Director qualifications.

EarlyLearn (Infant/Toddler) Lead Teacher Qualifications

A lead teacher for infants or toddlers must be at least 21 years of age and have one of the following qualifications:

1. Associate degree in early childhood education; or

2. Child Development Associate (CDA) certification and a study plan leading to an associate degree in early childhood education within 7 years; or

3. High school diploma or equivalent (GED) with:

— 9 college credits in early childhood education or child development; 2 years' experience caring for children, and a study plan leading to an associate degree in early childhood education within 7 years; or

— 5 years of supervised experience in an infant/toddler classroom if currently employed in a permitted child care program; or

— Study plan that is acceptable to the DOHMH leading to 9 credits in early childhood education or childhood development within two years; and a study plan leading to an associate degree in early childhood education within 7 years, if currently employed in a permitted child care program.

> 🎪 **Head Start Programs:** In addition to meeting the requirements above, Early Head Start teachers must have a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or comparable credential, and have been trained or have equivalent coursework in early childhood development with a focus on infant and toddler development.

3-K Lead Teacher Qualifications

All *3-K* lead teachers must meet the 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* classes, including those in Article 43 programs and GFDCs.

• Lead teachers must have ONE of the following:

— Baccalaureate degree and State certification

■ A bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or related field of study (approved by DOHMH) 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 Children with Disabilities (Birth-Grade 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.

— 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.

— Approved study plan

• To be eligible for a study plan, a person must have:

▪ An associate's (AA or AS) degree in Early Childhood Education, practicum included; or

Head Start Programs:

▪ Ninety or more undergraduate college credits and one year of classroom experience teaching children up to third grade. *Head Start 3-K teachers must have at least 30 credits in early childhood course work.*

▪ A bachelor's degree in any other academic subject and one year of classroom experience teaching children up to third grade. *Not allowable for Head Start 3-K teachers per the HSPPS, unless the teacher is part of the TFA program.*

• 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.

*Pre-K Le*ad Teacher Qualifications

• All *Pre-K* lead teachers must adhere to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) regulations. Each lead teacher 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); (n-6); or (Pre-K-6) certification.

— Teaching license or certificate for Children with Disabilities (Birth-Grade 2) or Students with Disabilities (All Grades).

— 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, 2022 or

▪ By three years from their date of hire as a lead teacher in a city-contracted pre-K class

Out of State Certification

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 DOE. 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.

Dual Language (DL) 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

> • Have or be in the process of obtaining a Bilingual Extension.

Programs with DL classrooms must be able to provide proper documentation of the lead teacher's certifications.

Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessionals play an integral role in the classroom by promoting positive interactions with children 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 children by facilitating whole and small group lessons and activities. Paraprofessionals include assistant teachers, teaching assistants, and teacher aides.

Of note, in Public Schools and Pre-K Centers, paraprofessionals or teacher assistants are required to have the NYS Teaching Assistant Certification. However, in NYC Early Education Centers (NYCEECs), the NYS Teaching Assistant Certification is encouraged but not required. For reference, more information on the Teaching Assistant Certification can be found on the NYSED website. The required qualifications within NYCEECs and Head Start programs are shown below. Please also consult Article 47 of the NYC Health Code for additional details, and reach out to your DOHMH consultant with any questions.

Qualifications
> • All paraprofessionals 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 and prevention, and other subjects related to child health, safety, and early childhood development (Article 47 providers only).

Additional **Head Start** Qualifications. In addition to the above requirements, paraprofessionals in Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms must also meet one of the criteria below:

> — Have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or state awarded certificate that meets or exceeds the requirements for a CDA credential (e.g., NYSED Teaching Assistant Certification).
> — Or be enrolled in a program that will lead to an associate or baccalaureate degree in any field.
> — Or be enrolled in a CDA credential program to be completed within two years of the time of hire.

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:

- It is your responsibility to confirm that substitutes working in your program are appropriately qualified and have completed all necessary security clearance procedures before beginning work.

- If your Education Director does not have teaching duties in another classroom, and your program has fewer than 40 children (of any age) in attendance, your Education Director may fill in when either a lead teacher or paraprofessional 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 on-site to ensure that all classrooms fulfill staff-to-child 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 on-site to ensure that all classrooms fulfill staff-to-child 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.

- Qualified substitutes for 3-K or pre-K lead teachers must have at least a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood or a related field.

- Qualified substitutes for infant/toddler classes, and all paraprofessionals, must meet the qualifications included in the Staff Qualifications section of this Handbook.

- All substitutes must have completed the mandatory two hours of training in child abuse maltreatment identification, reporting and prevention, and requirements of applicable statutes and regulations.

- **GFDCs:** Substitutes 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.

Recruiting and Hiring Qualified Staff

Recruiting Qualified Teachers

Program leadership teams and teaching teams build and use organizational culture, structure, and resources to promote and execute a shared vision for quality.

To assist you in making optimal teacher hiring decisions for your program, you can access the DOE's free online tool, Early Childhood Teacher Finder (ECTF). 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 DOE 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 networking events 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.

Faith-Based Organizations

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

Additional Resources

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.

Staff Compensation

Details on staff compensation can be found in the Fiscal 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 EarlyLearn (infant/toddler), *3-K* and/or *Pre-K* program, you must document all the employee's time spent in the additional program(s).

Program Staffing and Supervision

Supervision

To ensure the safety and well-being of all children, it is required that program staff have constant and competent supervision of children throughout the day.

Staff must supervise children directly and keep them within their line-of-sight at all times including when they are sleeping. If a child is in any physical or medical distress, take immediate emergency response as needed. The use of monitors does not relieve your program from observing sleeping children and noting the observations.

An Education Director or individual with equivalent qualifications must be present at all times during your program's operation.

All Head Start programs must also comply with HSPPS, including 45 C.F.R. §1302.21(b). The section below aligns with the HSPPS requirements and differentiates, where applicable.

Child and Staffing Ratio Requirements

To ensure classrooms are appropriately staffed and children are adequately supervised, there are strict requirements for staff-to-child ratios.

Center-Based Class Size and Staffing Ratio Requirements:

Age of Children	Maximum Group Size	Staffing Requirements
Under 12 (Infants)	8	1:4 or 1:3 (one lead teacher and one paraprofessional are required)*
12 to 24 months (Younger Toddlers)	10 * Early Head Start programs must not have more than 8 children enrolled	1:5 (one lead teacher and one paraprofessional are required)
2 years to under 3 (Older Toddlers) *not eligible for 3-K	12 * Early Head Start programs must not have more than 8 children enrolled	1:6 (one lead teacher and one paraprofessional are required)
3-K	15	Classes must have one lead teacher and one paraprofessional.
Pre-K	20	In classes of 18 children or less, one lead teacher and one paraprofessional are required. In classes of 19 or 20, one lead teacher and two paraprofessionals are required.

When children 12 months of age and older are in a group of mixed but contiguous ages, the minimum staff/child ratio and group size is based on the predominant age of the children in the classroom.

*Programs that maintain a staff/child ratio of 1:4 for children under 12 months of age must demonstrate through the Emergency Procedures of their Written Safety Plan that they have sufficient staff in the program at all times to provide a staff/child ratio of 1:3 for the safe evacuation of children younger than 12 months of age during emergency situations.

You may not serve more children than allowed for on your DOHMH or OCFS license (based on the size of your classrooms and/or facility).

Extended Day and Year Staffing:

To promote a stable learning environment for children and families, <u>the same instructional staff members must be assigned to a class throughout the designated Core Days (180 days) and Core Hours (6 hours and 20 minutes)</u>.

Extended Day and Year programs must designate 6 hours and 20 minutes each day as **Core Hours**. During this time:

- Teaching staff must be consistent throughout these hours.

    — To allow for staff breaks, the regularly assigned instructional staff members do not need to be present in the classroom during meal and rest time.

- Programs offering *Pre-K* must meet the group size and staff qualification requirements set by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) for UPK programs.

- Programs must follow DOE-provided daily scheduling guidelines.

During non-Core hours, Extended Day and Year programs offering CCBG or Head Start-eligible services for Birth-Five aged children (outside of the Core 6 hours and 20 minutes) can have:

- Staff members that differ from teaching staff who are staffing the classroom during Core Hours.

- During extended hours, lead teachers in *Pre-K* classrooms need to meet health code qualification requirements. Lead teachers must have one of the following:

    — Bachelor's degree with certification valid for service in the early childhood grades. This includes: Early Childhood (Birth-Grade 2), (Nursery-6), and (Pre-K-6)

    — Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood or a related field of study approved by DOHMH and 2 years of experience

        ▪ Before a program moves forward with a candidate without a degree in Early Childhood, they should confirm that their field of study is approved with their DOHMH Early Childhood Education Consultant.

    — Approved study plan by an accredited college. To be eligible for a study plan, the candidate must have:

        ▪ Associate degree in early childhood education, practicum included; or

        ▪ Ninety or more undergraduate college credits and one year classroom experience teaching children in prekindergarten, kindergarten, or grades 1-2; or

        ▪ Bachelor's degree in any other academic subject and one year classroom experience teaching children up to third grade.

- Children should have opportunities to engage in additional play-based centers, gross motor activities, outdoor play, and quiet activities in alignment with the ELOF for 3-year-olds and/or the NYSPLS for 4-year-olds. Additionally, a meal or snack must be provided to children.

GFDC Class Size and Staffing Ratio Requirements:

- The maximum class size is 12 children.

- One lead teacher (who meets Education Director qualifications) and one paraprofessional are required.

- The maximum class size is inclusive of:

  — *3-K for All* and *Pre-K for All* children

  — Additional children 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 children under 13 years old who are enrolled in kindergarten or a higher grade) are present, only 4 school-aged children may be present at any one time.

- You may not serve more children than your GFDC license allows for.

Class Composition

Private Pay: Children funded directly by the DOE and private pay funded children may be served in the same classroom, pending the approval of your DECE Operations Director.

Mixed Age Classrooms (Article 47 and Article 43 programs)

If you have been approved by DECE, you may offer a mixed age class of three- and four-year-old children.

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

- Class size and ratio requirements must be based on the predominant age of the children in the class.

  — If the number of four-year-old children exceeds the number of three-year-old children, *Pre-K* staff to ratio requirements apply; the maximum class size is 18 children with one teacher and one paraprofessional, or 20 children with one lead teacher and two paraprofessionals.

  — If the number of three-year-old children exceeds the number of four-year-old children, *3-K* staff-to-child ratio requirements apply; the maximum class size is 15 children with one lead teacher and one paraprofessional.

- Infants may not be mixed with any other age group.

- DOE expectations for high-quality services, including meeting the developmental and instructional needs of children of different ages within the same classroom.

Line-of-Sight Supervision

Children 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 children is maintained by a staff member with the required security clearances, at all times.

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

A child 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 child to the bathroom, the remaining staff member(s) must be able to adequately supervise the remaining children in the classroom. Staff should not have their back to children 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-3), sufficient supervision to protect children's safety requires that staff strategically position themselves to observe children during both routines and play. Staff should be positioned to:

- See all areas where children may be located

- Move around as needed to keep a close eye on children

- Remain attentive to children's basic safety needs

Meal and Rest Time Staffing Requirements

You must adhere to the required staff-to-child 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-child ratios are maintained; and

- a certified teacher or administrator is on-site and on-duty in the program.

During meal and rest times ONLY, properly cleared family engagement staff members may count toward fulfilling ratios.

- *3-K* and EarlyLearn

    — Two instructional or family engagement staff members must supervise children.

- *Pre-K*

    — For a class of 18 children or less, two instructional or family engagement staff members must supervise children.

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

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

Staffing of Field Trips

During field trips, children must be accompanied by staff at all times. Appropriate and adequate supervision must be provided throughout the trip.

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

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

Volunteers in the Classroom

Utilizing volunteers in the classroom, especially family members of children, can provide enhanced learning opportunities for children. In addition, providing family members with this opportunity to volunteer in the classroom can support their involvement in their child's learning. Volunteers must have the appropriate background checks.

Guidance on Including Volunteers in the Classroom

Effective volunteer engagement 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 they 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 children.

- 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 they are 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 children, they should know what particular skills or knowledge children are developing and how they can help.
  - Volunteers should also be made aware of appropriate behavior guidance strategies for children, aligning with the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance.
  - *For further information, please see the Child Behavior section of the Handbook.*

Aspire

Aspire is an online system designed to track and promote the education, training, and experience of program staff. Aspire helps determine whether staff at your program meet all required qualifications and provides a resource for staff to track their progress towards certification and professional development.

Overview

Aspire is New York's registry for early childhood professionals and 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 and teaching teams 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 following these 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 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 DOE 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.

Professional Learning and Staff Trainings

Professional learning supports sites in meeting the Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ) and advancing child learning based on the NYS Preschool Learning Standards (NYSPLS) and Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF). Staff are expected to attend and participate in ongoing professional learning and mandated trainings to be prepared to meet the needs of children and families.

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 EFQ, the NYSPLS, and ELOF. In addition, staff are expected to attend and participate in all trainings provided and/or mandated by their licensing agency.

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 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 early childhood classrooms, each DOE program is assigned to a professional learning series. Each professional learning series supports the implementation of the NYSPLS and ELOF, and allows staff to delve deeper into content alongside expert facilitators and their colleagues.

Please contact DECEPL@schools.nyc.gov with any questions. For more information on the number of professional learning days/hours for your program, please see the Calendar and Daily Program Hours section 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.

Provider Type	Type of Training	Staff Requirements	Course Information
All Providers	CPR and First Aid	• All staff must receive basic CPR/FA training before providing services, and every two years thereafter. • At least one staff member certified in CPR and first aid must be onsite at all times. Staff must renew certification to remain current.	• Programs should contact the American Red Cross and their licensing agency for course information
All Providers	Child Abuse and Maltreatment Identification, Reporting, and Prevention	• Required for staff who have the potential for unsupervised contact with children (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

Provider Type	Type of Training	Staff Requirements	Course Information
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	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 • GFDCs can receive this training through OCFS
All Providers	SIDS/Safe Sleep/ Shaken Baby	• Required for all staff members	• Programs should reach out to their licensing agency for assistance
All Providers	Allergic Reactions	• Required for all staff members	• Programs should reach out to their licensing agency for assistance
All Providers	Infection Control and Reporting Infectious Diseases	• Must be completed at least once by lead teachers, assistant teachers, and teacher aides within three months of hire	Online courses are available via: • The American Academy of Pediatrics • Infectious Control Training Solutions • VMD Health Care Training
All Providers	Medication Administration and Training	• Recommended for all Article 47 Day Care Centers and GFDCs • Required for all Article 47 Day Care Centers who serve one or more children requiring non-emergency medication administration	• Programs should contact a Child Care Resource and Referral Consortium (CCRR) for training information

Provider Type	Type of Training	Staff Requirements	Course Information
A47 and A43 Providers	All Staff Bi-Annual Training	• 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 • Early childhood development	• Programs should reach out to their licensing agency for more information
A47 and A43 Providers	OSHA Blood-Borne Pathogen	• Required for all staff involved in assisting children 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
A47 and A43 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
A47 and A43 Providers	Emergency Preparedness	• Required for all staff members	• For more information, programs should visit PDP Early Childhood Education and Training Program and search for the course: Foundations in Health and Safety e-Learning

Provider Type	Type of Training	Staff Requirements	Course Information
GFDC Providers	Lead Teacher and Paraprofessional Bi-Annual Training	• 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: — Childhood development — Business record maintenance and management — Statutes and regulations pertaining to child day care — Statutes and regulations pertaining to child abuse and maltreatment — Child health and nutrition	• All trainings must be approved by OCFS as per OCFS policy • Programs should contact their licensing agency for more information

Security Clearances

To ensure the safety of children and staff at DOE-contracted early childhood programs, all staff must receive the appropriate security clearance. Depending on whether your program is a school-based child care program, a center-based child care program, or a directly-contracted Group Family Day Care program, your security clearance requirements may differ but some level of clearance will still be required. Please pay special attention to the specific requirements based on your license type.

Security Clearance Overview

All individuals who have contact with DOE children, who work in DOE buildings, who need access to DOE systems, who work for the child care program, and/or have access to confidential information about DOE-funded staff or children, must complete required eligibility clearance procedures prior to starting work regardless of program type. All staff, including substitute teachers and consultants (e.g., an art or dance teacher who visits), must complete the procedures listed in this chapter prior to beginning work.

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 their background.

All Programs

Every individual employed or volunteering at your child care program must be Active and Eligible in the Personnel Eligibility Tracking System (PETS) prior to beginning work. For more information on how to use the PETS system, please refer to the Support tab in PETS. Below is a breakdown of specific security clearances that programs need depending on license type.

Provider Type	DOE fingerprinting required?	Additional fingerprinting required?	Comprehensive Background Checks required?	Additional Notes
Article 47 providers	YES	NO	YES	A-Series packets must be submitted to CCU@health.nyc.gov
Article 43 providers	YES	NO	NO	No additional clearances required at this time
Directly-Contracted Group Family Day Cares	YES	YES	YES	6000 packets must be submitted to CCU@health.nyc.gov using fingerprinting through IdentoGo
Charter Schools	NO	YES	NO	TEACH is the system of record for fingerprints of charter school staff

NYC DOE Fingerprinting

The NYC DOE HR Connect Service Center and the Office of Personnel Investigation (OPI) both play a role in granting security clearance for all staff hired by the NYC DOE and NYC DOE-contracted vendors. OPI will review fingerprint results, work history, military history, and other background information that may affect security clearance. If the NYC DOE's security clearance assessment identifies one or more areas in the applicant's background that require additional review, a more detailed background investigation may be required. Additional information regarding what is required around 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 DOE clearances and fingerprinting, please review the section titled **Onboarding a Prospective Hire**.

Candidates *must* be listed on your program's PETS roster before they can schedule an appointment for fingerprinting.

All candidates must be Active and Eligible in PETS. Only DOE fingerprinting is accepted—no outside fingerprinting will be accepted. DOE fingerprinting is required to remain Active and Eligible in PETS.

Personnel Eligibility Tracking System (PETS)

PETS is a DOE web-based application that tracks and shares real-time information regarding the eligibility status of employees working in DOE-funded programs. If your program receives direct funding from the DOE, your program is responsible for designating vendor representatives to manage the program's PETS roster and track background security of your staff on an ongoing basis.

Keeping an up-to-date PETS roster for your program is a contractual obligation. It is critical that you maintain an accurate PETS roster that reflects your current staffing so that any staff member deemed ineligible based upon any notification generated by PETS is removed from contact with children and child or staff information immediately. Failure to do so could result in immediate termination of your contract(s) with the DOE.

<u>Onboarding a Prospective Hire</u>

Step One: All prospective hires must be added to the program's PETS roster. For additional details on how to add staff please review the support tab in PETS or the Security Clearances webinar found here.

Step Two: The prospective hire will receive a nomination email that begins the background check process with the DOE.

- Create or log into their existing DOE Applicant Gateway System account
- Complete and submit all required forms to get fingerprinted

Step Three: PETS system must reflect that the prospective hire is Active and Eligible prior to beginning work.

*For Article 47 providers and directly-contract GFDCs, please see additional steps that must be taken prior to a prospective hire beginning work.

<u>Article 47 Child Care Providers</u>

All Article 47 providers are required to have their employees, consultants, volunteers, and anyone else with the potential for unsupervised contact with children go through a Comprehensive Background Check (CBC) prior to beginning employment at the child care program and every 5 years thereafter. The CBC combines all the required background clearances needed to begin employment at a child care program. The CBC

clearances must be renewed every 5 years or sooner if there is a break in service that lasts more than 180 days.

<u>A-Series Packets</u>

A-Series packets must be completed by Article 47 providers and submitted to the NYC Department of Health (DOHMH) Central Clearance Unit (CCU) for processing and an SCR must be completed online. These results will go directly to DOHMH and programs should no longer expect to receive results as in previous years. SCRs are now processed every 5 years as opposed to the former 2 year requirement. The only exception is for an individual with a CBC approval letter who begins employment at a new program. They will be required to complete the A-3 form and have a new SCR and SEL submitted for them, but they will not need to do a new CBC unless they are separated from service for more than 180 days.

When submitting the A-Series packets:

- Include your DCID and permit numbers in the subject line as well as "A-Series Packet."

- Ensure all packets are complete prior to submission.

- Submit one email for each individual packet.

- Include proof of DOE fingerprint receipt.

- Submit packets at least 1 month prior to the desired start date of the individual. These forms take time to process.

- Check and respond immediately to any correspondence from CCU.

If an individual has lived outside NY in the past 5 years, there may be additional steps that need to be taken, and immediate action is required.

If your program is still receiving SCR results, please reach out to Statewide Central Registry (518) 474-1567 to request the appropriate access. CCU will not process the A-Series packet if they are not able to retrieve results.

<u>A-3 form</u>

The A3 is an additional form within the A-Series packet that is only submitted under certain circumstances:

- A prospective new hire has an existing CBC approval letter from another A47 program and needs to have the approval transferred over to your program

- An individual needs approval to work at more than one Article 47 program.

🏠 Directly-Contracted Group Family Day Cares

Directly-contracted GFDCs, their staff and household members over the age of 18 are also required to complete Comprehensive Background Checks (CBC) through their licensing agency, OCFS. The CBC must be completed prior to beginning employment and for household members beginning at the age of 18 at the Group Family Day Care and every 5 years thereafter. This is in addition to being fingerprinted by NYC DOE and found Active and Eligible in PETS.

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.

To gain access to SCR, 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 a username 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.

This fee can be paid online at the time of submission to expedite processing. If you choose to mail a check or money order it should be sent 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, the results will be sent to DOHMH's CCU to be processed in conjunction with the CBC. You should not receive any results.

Comprehensive Background Check Approval Letters

The CBC approval letter will be issued to both the program and the individual. A copy of the approval letter must be kept on file and made available upon request by the DOE, DOHMH, or OCFS. This letter will indicate the individual's level of clearance and date of approval.

As a part of your onboarding process, you should inquire if a prospective new hire already has a CBC approval letter from their former employer. If they do, and it is still within 5 years of the date of issuance and there has not been a break in service of more than 180 days, you can request that the approval be transferred to your program. You do that by submitting the A-3 form included in the A-Series packet. Please see additional information on the way to use the A-3 form on page 81.

If an individual is moving from a GFDC to an Article 47 program and they have a CBC approval letter, they will be required to go through the CBC process again to receive a new CBC approval letter for the Article 47. The CBC approval letters do not transfer between different regulatory bodies.

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 DOE-contracted programs, we highly recommend that candidates get fingerprinted directly with NYC DOE and then request the OSPRA 104 to transfer prints to NYSED. For more information on how staff may obtain NYSED fingerprinting, please review the NYSED fingerprinting webpage.

Special Education Itinerant Teachers (SEITs) and Related Service Clinicians

Related service clinicians deliver special education services such as physical, occupational, and speech therapy to children with disabilities as required to assist children in 3-K and pre-K. Special Education Itinerant Teachers (SEITs) are certified special educators who work closely with assigned children on academic, emotional, and social skills as needed. Related service clinicians and SEITs are assigned to children by the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) and travel to children's programs to provide on-site services during the school day in accordance with children's 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 children 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.

As it pertains to 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.

<u>SEITs and Related Service Clinicians can provide support in these ways:</u>

- • 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 family and program sign additional consent forms, the child can receive services by being pulled out of the classroom setting and receive services with the clinician without line-of-sight supervision.

- • If the professional consultant does not present the Notification of Professional Consultant Assignment, you may not deny the consultant access to their assigned child(ren). **You must permit the consultant to provide services to children within line-of-sight supervision of a fully cleared staff member.**

<u>All Providers</u>

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 children:

- • 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 child(ren) 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 child in your program, you must contact the employing agency. Please contact EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov if you have any questions or require further guidance.

IV. General Program Oversight

a. Enrollment

b. Diversity and Inclusion

c. Calendar, Hours, and Flexible Schedule

d. Attendance

e. Fees

f. Uniforms

g. Data Management Systems and Child Privacy

h. Program Assessments

Enrollment

Providers are required to build a trusting community in which all children, families, and staff feel welcome and included, embracing diversity in many forms, including, but not limited to: race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, home language, country of origin, immigration status, ability, special needs, religion, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, housing status, and cultural background and experience.

As part of this process, programs are required to actively participate in the DOE admissions process and welcome all families that have received offers to their program. Failure to admit a child who has been extended an offer, for any reason, is considered a breach of your contract.

All Head Start programs must also comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1302.12 - §1302.15. The section below aligns with §1302.12 - §1302.15's requirements. *For more information on these requirements, please see the Head Start Implementation Guide.*

Overview

New York City offers infant, toddler, 3-year-old, and 4-year-old children high-quality early childhood services through the EarlyLearn (Infant/Toddler), *3-K* , and *Pre-K* programs. For 3-K and pre-K, programs can either be School Day and Year or Extended Day and Year, which includes CCBG and Head Start.

This includes children with disabilities and children whose home language is a language other than English. Families may apply to School Day and Year and Extended Day and Year programs at District Schools, New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs), Family Child Care Networks, and Pre-K Centers using the same application via the DOE admissions process operated centrally by the Office of Student Enrollment (OSE). Please note that not all programs offer all program options.

To participate in the Extended Day and Year program, families must meet all applicable federal and state eligibility requirements, including the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) and the requirements of the New York State Child Care Block Grant (CCBG) and Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).

Eligibility requirements are tied to income requirements that change year-to-year. The following teams can serve as a resource to help families understand if they are likely eligible for these services:

> — For more information about Child Care eligibility, please contact CCapplication@schools.nyc.gov.

> — For more information about Head Start eligibility, please contact HeadStart@schools.nyc.gov.

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.

*Half-day pre-K classrooms do not participate in the DOE admissions process operated centrally by OSE. Programs operating half-day classrooms are responsible for complying with all enrollment policies outlined by OSE. *For more information on half-day enrollment, please contact your program's analyst.*

EARLY LEARN For infant/toddler services, all programs are Extended Day and Year and are either Child Care Block Grant (CCBG) or Early Head Start (EHS). Additionally, infant and toddler slots are currently not handled in the centralized enrollment system. Families interested in infant or toddler seats may contact your program directly; you can share information about the eligibility process for your infant or toddler seats. These may vary depending on whether your program has Extended Day and Year or Early Head Start seats. *Programs serving infants and toddlers are responsible for complying with all enrollment policies outlined by OSE. For more information on infant and toddler enrollment, please contact ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov.*

Outreach and Recruitment

Programs are expected to engage in outreach and recruitment on an ongoing basis. 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. The DOE encourages programs to host tours and open houses for prospective families, in-person and/or virtually.

You are responsible for:

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

- Sharing information with families to help them navigate the admissions process. Families should be provided with information on how to access the MySchools Directory.

- Sharing, at a minimum, the following information about your program with families to assist them in making an educated enrollment decision:

  — Curriculum and instructional approach

  — Schedule and daily activities

  — Languages spoken by staff

  — Family engagement opportunities

  — For extended day/year programs, applicable eligibility requirements

All outreach practices must be objectively fair and transparent to families and must align with the information in the DOE outreach and enrollment materials, including the MySchools 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: socioeconomic status, race, creed, color, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, national origin, alienage, 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 for EarlyLearn (Infant/Toddler), *3-K*, and *Pre-K* children, the DOE 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.

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

- Increase visibility throughout the community; for example, post an EarlyLearn (Infant/Toddler), *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 EarlyLearn (Infant/Toddler), *3-K for All* and/or *Pre-K for All*, ask questions, and tour the facility

- Provide materials (e.g., signs, flyers, brochures) in multiple languages 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 *3-K* or *Pre-K* programs at District Schools, Pre-K Centers, Family Child Care Networks, and NYCEECs by ranking up to 12 programs on their application in order of preference.

You must be prepared to help families complete their 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 at MySchools.nyc

- Over the Phone by calling 718-935-2009

- In Person at a Family Welcome Center

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.

Family members, program staff, and other community organizations are welcome to help families/legal guardians create email accounts and walk them through completion of the online application, as long as the family/guardian is submitting their own information and using their own email account. Program staff cannot submit multiple applications from one account or email address for multiple families. Only the parent or legal guardian of the child may create an account and submit an application on their 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 parent/legal guardian.

Extended Day and Year programs operate for 8 or 10 hours per day year-round. This program type includes Head Start and Early Head Start programs. In all 32 school districts, there are Extended Day and Year programs available to families that qualify based on income and needs.

These programs are available in two settings:

• Center-based care for children aged six weeks to four years old.

• Home-based care for children aged six weeks to three years old through Family Child Care Networks.

Although families may have selected up to 12 programs for their child, they may not be eligible for all of them. The DOE includes pre-screening questions to determine the family's household income and potential reasons for care. A family must be deemed likely eligible to receive an offer to an Extended Day and Year program.

Once a family receives an offer for Extended Day and Year programming at your site, they must complete a Child Care application; this can be done directly with assistance from a program or through Family Welcome Centers. Applications can be scanned and emailed to CCapplication@schools.nyc.gov. Please visit the InfoHub for additional information and guidance on submitting a Child Care application. Please note: If a family submits a Child Care application to a program directly, the program should submit the application through email or at a Family Welcome Center for processing.

For more information on home-based care please see the Family Child Care website.

Head Start Extended Day and Year programs only:

Families that apply to Head Start programs are also pre-screened through the DOE's application process. Families that meet the poverty guidelines and/or fall into an area of categorical eligibility are deemed likely eligible. After offers go out, eligibility for Head Start and Early Head Start seats is determined by the program. Families should submit documents needed for eligibility determination directly to programs. If a child is found to be eligible, they can enroll and begin to attend.
For additional information about Enrollment, please visit our website.

Admissions Priorities and Offers for *3-K* and *Pre-K*

The DOE is committed to providing a 3-K and pre-K seat 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 program is not guaranteed.

Children are considered for admissions at each program they have listed on their application. For each program, children are considered for admissions in priority group order. Children who fall in the first priority group will be considered for placement first; children 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).

Families are asked additional questions on the application to identify which priority group they should fall into for your program. 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 3-K or pre-K website 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* program. Families that submit an application by the deadline receive a 3-K results letter. This letter may include an offer and will tell a family where their child is waitlisted, if applicable. Due to limited seat availability, we may not able to make offers to all applicants.

- Each family will receive a single offer letter from the DOE for each child applying.

- Families get an offer to the program that they ranked highest on their application that had an open seat for their child.

- In some cases, no seats may be available at the sites listed on a family's application. To ensure that all children receive placement, families may receive an offer to a site to which they did not apply.

- You must review OSE guidance on the list of children receiving an offer to your site via the MySchools Portal.

- Offer letters for Extended Day and Year programs, including Head Start, are only sent to families that are likely eligible based on the family's eligibility screener. All offer letters to Extended Day and Year programs, including Head Start, refer families to the program for the next steps in the eligibility determination.

Registration

After offer letters are distributed, you are expected to contact all families with offers to your 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, the acceptance deadline passes or, for Extended Day and Year programs, they do not meet the applicable eligibility requirements.

Families can accept their offer through MySchools or by contacting their program directly. In order to finalize their enrollment, families will need to register and provide required documentation.

For a list of all required documentation, please review the Enrollment website.

Your program staff are responsible for completing the registration process for children who have been offered a seat at your site. This process is completed in Pre-KIDS and includes the entry of child 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.

> Children who apply to Extended Day andYear or Head Start seats must fulfill eligibility requirements in order to register.

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. Children 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 MySchools (school.myschools.nyc). MySchools is designed to support programs in managing enrollment processes. Programs cannot create independent waitlists apart from the waitlist in MySchools.

Families can add their children to additional waitlists through the family application website, MySchools.nyc. Families can also contact the DOE program(s) of interest to have their children placed on the waitlist(s), after waitlists open. A step-by-step guide to managing waitlists in Mychools will be shared in advance of waitlists being made available.

> For programs with Extend Day andYear seats, including Head Start, we encourage programs to share more about their eligibility requirements prior to extending waitlist offers.

Single Gender Classrooms

Single gender programs may operate single gender classrooms after obtaining written approval from the DECE.

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

Special Student Populations

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

- The child has a disability (stated or perceived)

- The child has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP), regardless of IFSP or IEP recommendation

- The child's or family's home language is a language other than English

- The child 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 child 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 child while the issue is resolved.

Children Whose Home Language Is a Language Other than English

The DOE 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. We call them Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLLs).

In all programs, the DOE provides a range of support for EMLLs, including access to translation and interpretation services. We also provide tailored supports for EMLLs in programs designated as Dual Language (DL), where teaching teams 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.

If a program offers both a DL classroom and a general education classroom, and families wish to apply to both, they must list the program twice on their application.

Programs may have other options to support EMLLs and their families, and should provide information to all families interested in enrolling about the available services that meet their child's specific needs.

Children with Disabilities

Early Intervention (ages 0-3)

In New York City, children with developmental delays and disabilities under three may receive supports through Early Intervention (EI), run by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). If your program has a concern about a child aged 0-3's development, the Early Intervention Program can help by providing a free evaluation, with the families' consent, to find out if the child is eligible for services. Families, doctors, and community members can make a referral by:

- Calling 311 and asking for Early Intervention.

- Completing the Early Intervention Program Referral Form (PDF) and faxing it to a regional office in the family's home borough.

Upon referral to the Early Intervention all families are assigned a Service Coordinator to help them navigate the program. If found eligible, EI will work with the family to develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), which outlines the EI services they will receive. Eligible children can receive services in a child care program, home, and across other natural environments where typically developing children are found. To learn more about EI, visit https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/early-intervention.page.

Program staff must participate in EI reviews for both initial referrals and requested annual reviews.

Preschool Special Education Services (ages 3-5)

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 DOE. Special education services include:

- Related services (e.g., physical therapy, speech-language therapy, etc.) – available to children in any District School, Pre-K Center, Family Child Care Networks, or NYCEEC 3-K or pre-K program

- Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT) – available to children in any District School, Pre-K Center, Family Child Care Networks, or NYCEEC 3-K or pre-K program

- Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS) – serves general education and special education children in District Schools, Pre-K Centers, and some NYCEECs

- Special Class (SC) – solely special education children

The Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) will assign children with an IEP recommendation for SCIS class seats throughout the program year. General education children will be offered seats in the SCIS classes through the admissions process.

If a child 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.

Please do not make offers for seats reserved for children with an IEP recommendation for a SCIS class.

NYCEECs without SC or SCIS Programs

If a child 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.

Children who have Limited Mobility and/or Require Medical Accommodations

Under Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, children 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 that they may participate in program activities on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers.

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

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

For detailed information on how to support children with medical needs, please see the Child Health chapter of the Handbook.

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

If you are unsure if your program can serve a child'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 child while the concern is resolved.

Students in Temporary Housing

Children 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 Additional Child Supports Chapter of the Handbook. Please contact a STH Regional Manager with any questions on the enrollment of students in temporary housing.

Repeating 3-*K* or *Pre-K*

Eligibility to apply and enroll in *3-K*, *Pre-K,* and kindergarten are based on a child's year of birth.

- Children are only eligible to apply to and enroll in *3-K* during the calendar year in which they turn 3 years old.

- Children are only eligible to apply to and enroll in *Pre-K* 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 2016 are only eligible for kindergarten (not public pre-K) in the 2021-2022 programming year. Enrollment in kindergarten is not mandatory, but is strongly encouraged so that children have the time and support needed to develop and adjust to learning in a more structured environment.

For the 2021-2022 programming year, if a family wishes to withdraw their child born in 2016 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 program. Children born in 2016 are not eligible to enroll in DOE-funded pre-K during the 2021-2022 programming year.

If a family wishes to re-enroll their 2016-born child in kindergarten during the 2021-2022 programming year, they may do so at any time. Should the family return to the public school system in the 2022-23 programming year, children born in 2016 will be eligible for Grade 1.

School Quality Snapshot

The School Quality Snapshot helps families understand different aspects of program quality to help them make informed decisions for their children. The School Quality Snapshot provides a concise overview of each program's quality in alignment with the DOE's research-based Framework for Great Schools and the Early Childhood Framework for Quality. The Snapshot features data on aspects of your program quality that we know from research support child learning and draws information from program assessments (ECERS-3/CLASS) and the NYC School Survey to present a multifaceted overview program.

The School Quality Snapshots are updated on an annual basis. The School Quality Snapshot will be accessible through the MySchools Directory and the School Quality Reports Search Tool.

For more information about the School Quality Snapshot, its purpose, and how it relates to your program, visit the School Quality Snapshot website. If you have further questions about the Snapshot, reach out to your DECE Instructional Coordinator, Social Worker, or PSS.

Diversity and Inclusion

Overview

The Division of Early Childhood Education has a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion. Diversity is about all of us. Inclusion is about all of us. We strive to create diverse and inclusive environments that value the experience, perspective, and contributions of all employees, applicants, children, and families. Respect for diverse backgrounds and ideas is crucial to educational excellence. We seek to foster an inclusive environment where the individual differences among us are understood, respected, and recognized as a source of strength that enriches early childhood care and education.

DECE Expectations

Programs are expected to:

- Provide equal opportunity to all qualified persons

- Provide services in inclusive, racially and socioeconomically diverse classroom environments to the maximum extent possible

- Ensure every family with an offer of admission from the DOE is welcomed by you and your staff and allowed to present documentation for registration. A child with an offer may not be turned away

All children benefit from diverse and inclusive education programs. Socioeconomic, racial and ethnic diversity within preschool classrooms not only supports children's cognitive skills but has the potential to foster social equity. Diversity comes in many forms, including those named in Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ) Element 1: Respect and Value Differences. In order to create a culturally responsive learning environment, program leaders and teaching teams need to integrate children's experiences, knowledge, and perspectives in an effort to be responsive to all children's identity lines.

While all elements of the Early Childhood Framework for Quality are rooted in promoting equitable opportunities for all children, families, and staff, Element 1: Respect and Value Differences is explicitly aligned with our system-wide Equity and Excellence for All initiative, and the New York State Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education Framework. Element 1 of the Early Childhood Framework for Quality states that:

> *High quality programs respect and value differences. Providers and staff build trust by creating a community in which all children, families, and staff feel welcome and included, embracing diversity in many forms — including, but not limited to: race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, home language, country of origin, immigration status, ability, special needs, religion, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, housing status, and cultural background and experience.*

In an effort to support the implementation of the EFQ Elements of quality, the Examples of Practice provides suggestions or practices to work toward adopting on a regular basis. Programs are encouraged to incorporate these examples of practice into their daily work, in support of creating diverse, equitable, and inclusive environments.

Policies Related to Diversity & Inclusion

There are several federal, state, and city regulations and laws and DECE policies that programs must adhere to. Some of these policies are found in and include:

- Contract(s) with the DOE for early childhood services

- Chancellor's Regulation A-830

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

- New York State Human Rights Law §296.4

- New York City Human Rights Law §8-107

Examples of unlawful discrimination against a protected class by an educational institution, include taking any of the following actions:

- Refusing to admit a child to your program, if that child is otherwise qualified for the program

- Expelling or suspending a child from a program

- Permitting the harassment of a child because of any protected characteristic

- Treating a child or applicant differently because of any protected characteristic

DECE takes allegations of discrimination very seriously. Should your program be found to have engaged in unlawful discrimination, there could be contractual consequences.

Please reach out to the earlychildhoodpolicy@schools.nyc.gov with any questions.

Resource ◼ & Action Item ✅:

◼ The **Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ)**: Programs are encouraged to use the EFQ to guide their practice in a way that advances positive outcomes for all children and families.

◼ The **EFQ Examples of Practice:** In an effort to support the implementation of the EFQ Elements of quality, the DECE has developed the EFQ Examples of Practice to provide suggestions or practices to work toward adopting on a regular basis.

◼ The **Early Childhood Professional Learning Toolkit: High Quality Programs Respect and Value Differences**: As part of the Chancellor's mission to Advance Equity Now, this Toolkit of activities is one piece of the larger effort to create an anti-racist system of early childhood education.

◼ Professional Learning Opportunities on Protraxx

◼ In situations where you need more support to implement positive behavior guidance strategies, you should contact decemhw@schools.nyc.gov.

◼ For additional guidance on serving children whose home language is a language other than English, please email prekduallanguage@schools.nyc.gov.

Calendar, Hours, and Flexible Schedule

Overview

Infant/Toddler, *3-K*, and *Pre-K* offer high-quality early childhood education for children on days and hours in alignment with state and federal requirements. Where programs have choice in scheduling, they are encouraged to solicit feedback and make choices that align with the needs of the community they serve.

Program's calendar and hours of operation must meet the operational requirements listed below, unless otherwise approved in writing by your DECE Borough Office.

All Head Start programs must also comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1302.21(c). The section below aligns with §1302.21(c)'s requirements.

Days and Hours of Operation

There are two service models:

- School Day and Year services: This option is open to all families and provides services aligned with the DOE school year calendar for three- and four-year-olds.

> - Extended Day and Year services: This option is open to all families that meet income and other eligibility requirements in alignment with Child Care Block Grant or Head Start eligibility requirements. Services are provided to eligible children birth to 4 years old for 8 or 10 hours a day, 225 or 261**days per year.
>
>   — Extended Day and Year programs must designate six (6) hours and twenty (20) minutes of each program day that will constitute Core Hours and 180 program days between September and June as Core Days.

Hours per Day and Days per Year

Programs must provide programming aligned with the service model designated in their contract:

Service Model	Hours per Day	Days per Year	Ages Served	Other Requirements
School Day and Year	6 hrs 20 min	180 days	3-year-olds and 4-year-olds	NYC residency
Extended Day and Year	8 hrs	225 days	All ages, 0-4	Head Start or CCBG eligibility requirements for children in these slots*
	10 hrs	225 days	All ages, 0-4	Head Start or CCBG eligibility requirements for children in these slots*
	8 hrs	261 days**	All ages, 0-4	Head Start or CCBG eligibility requirements for children in these slots*
	10 hrs	261 days**	All ages, 0-4	Head Start or CCBG eligibility requirements for children in these slots*

**The program year depends on how holidays fall in a given year, and the occurrence of a leap year.

Types of Days by Service Model

The following chart summarizes the number of program days, professional learning days, clerical days, and holidays, if applicable, based on each service model. Programs have the ability to schedule these days based on the needs of the program community. These days should be set in advance and included on the program calendar that is shared with DECE and families and made available in any languages spoken in your program community.

Service Model	Program Days	Professional Learning Days	Clerical Days	Holidays
School Day and Year: **180 days**	176	A minimum of 4 days (or 25 hours of professional learning activities)	None	None
Extended Day and Year: **225 days**	A minimum of 217 days required	A minimum of 4 days (or 25 hours of professional learning activities) required; and a maximum of 8 professional learning days	No minimum number required; Programs may schedule up to 4 clerical days	None
Extended Day and Year: **261 days****	A minimum of 238 days required	A minimum of 4 days (or 25 hours of professional learning activities) required; and a maximum of 12 professional learning days	No minimum number required; Programs may schedule up to 8 clerical days	Up to 10 holidays can be counted towards service days

** The program year depends on how holidays fall in a given year, and the occurrence of a leap year.

Program Days: On program days, the program is open for children to receive care and instruction.

Professional Learning (PL) Days/Hours: Program staff may participate in professional learning or training activities offered by the DECE, another City agency (e.g., DOHMH), or planned by your program. You are not required to offer care and instruction to children on these days/hours, but may choose to offer regular services on professional development days with qualified substitute teachers.

Clerical Days: Extended Day and Year programs may choose to schedule clerical days for family-teacher conferences or other family engagement activities; data entry for authentic assessment or developmental screening; meetings and/or collaborative planning time for staff; and/or furniture arrangement and displays. You are not required to offer care and instruction to children on these days, but may choose to offer regular services on professional development days with qualified substitute teachers.

Holidays: Extended Day and Year programs providing 260 service days may take up to ten (10) paid holidays annually. For programs offering 225 service days, holidays cannot be scheduled as part of the 225 required service days.

- In years with 260 weekdays, up to 10 holidays may be credited. Programs operating with a collective bargaining agreement that guarantees 11 holidays for staff will be able to use one clerical day as the 11th holiday.

- In years with more than 260 weekdays, additional holidays may be credited. Your program calendar that is submitted for approval to DECE through Pre-Kids must account for these holidays.

- In cases where an additional holiday becomes recognized federally, another clerical day can be used as a holiday. There must be a total of at least 260 program days each year, beginning July 1 and ending June 30.

- SDY programs and EDY programs offering 225 service days have no holidays included within their service days. These programs can close their programs on any holiday as long as they meet their minimum service day requirements (180 or 225 days).

Days per Week

- Programs must operate 5 days (Monday to Friday) in a typical week.

- You may request approval from DECE to operate for 6 days per week in a typical week (Monday through Friday and either Saturday or Sunday). See Flexible Schedule on page 102 for additional details.

  — Half-day programs may not operate 6 days per week in a typical week

Hours per Day

The actual hours each program is open is dependent on the program model. Sample hours might be:

- Pre-K and/or *3-K* School Day and Year services: 8:00 am - 2:20 pm

- Extended Day and Year services for 8 hours per day: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

  — Providers must designate 6 hours and 20 minutes of each program day that will constitute Core Hours

- Extended Day and Year services for 10 hours per day: 8:00 am - 6:00 pm

  — Providers must designate 6 hours and 20 minutes of each program day that will constitute Core Hours

- Half-day programs must provide a minimum of 2 hours and 30 minutes of *Pre-K* services each day.

Depending on the needs of the families being served, these hours may be shifted. Hours of service must be consistent throughout the year, clearly communicated to families, and approved by the DECE. Programs must commence no earlier than 7:00 am and no later than 10:00 am unless approved by the DECE.

Providers must ensure that they operate for the number of required hours, based on their approved program model: no less than eight (8) or ten (10) hours for Extended Day and Year services, and no less than six (6) hours and twenty (20) minutes per day for 3-K and/or pre-K School Day and Year services. Extended Day and Year programs must designate six (6) hours and twenty (20) minutes of each program day that will constitute Core Hours and 180 program days between September and June as Core Days.

- You may request approval from your DECE Borough Office to operate for less than your required contracted hours per day as long as you are meeting the required hours on a weekly basis. See Flexible Schedule page 102 for additional details.

Summary of Required Daily Program Hours

School Day and Year
Core Hours
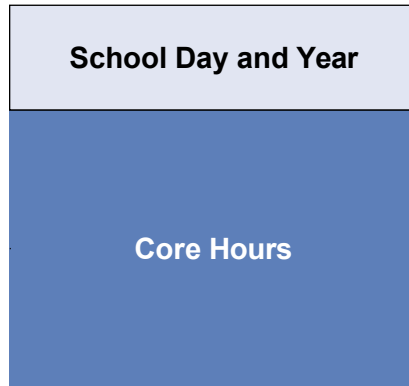
Core Hours = 6 hours and 20 minutes
Core Hours/Week = 31 hours and 40 minutes

Extended Day and Year (8 or 10 hours)

	Extended Hours Before Core Hours	**Some Extended Hours Before Core Hours**
Core Hours	Core Hours	Core Hours
Extended Hours After Core Hours		**Some Extended Hours After Core Hours**
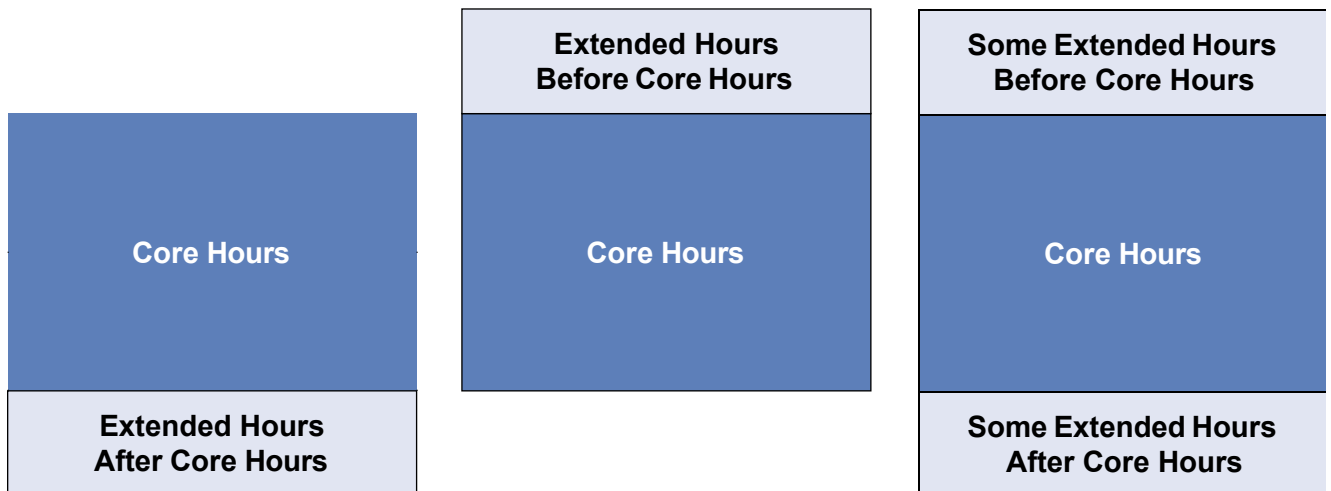
Core Hours = 6 hrs and 20 min, **Core Hours/Week** = 31 hrs and 40 min
Extended Hours (8 hours) = 1 hr 40 min
Extended Hours (10 hours) = 3 hrs and 40 min
Total Daily Hours = 8 hrs or 10 hrs

Federal Government Holidays

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• Juneteenth • Independence Day

Programs may refer to federal holidays in planning the annual calendar, and may also choose to close for religious holidays or other events celebrated by families in the community, as long as the total number of required service days is met. In determining when to schedule holiday closures, you should take into consideration the cultural and religious backgrounds of the families you serve.

Program Closures

- Programs may close due to inclement weather or other events beyond your control, and the safety of your children, families, and staff should be your highest concern in determining whether to close. It is strongly recommended that on days when the DOE district schools close, you also close your program.

- You must have a policy in place for informing families and staff when your program unexpectedly closes.

- If the unexpected closure brings the total number of scheduled program days to less than the required program days as stated in your contract, you must schedule a make-up day and revise your calendar in PreKIDS to reflect the change.

> — For Extended Day and Year programs providing a 260 day model, because there are not additional days in a year to reschedule services, DECE will work with programs facing closure circumstances. In some instances, payment may be deducted.

- If DOE district schools close and move to a remote learning option, programs may choose to provide remote learning on that day rather than scheduling a make-up day. This is not an option for programs needing to close for reasons outside of city-wide closures; for example, if a pipe bursts and the building needs to close, these days must be rescheduled.

- Programs cannot modify their schedule in a way that would decrease the required number of service days as outlined in your contract. If a program is found to be doing so, they risk a decrease in payment and may be subject to contractual consequences.

Flexible Schedule

Programs must obtain DECE approval prior to implementing a flexible schedule. Approval of flexible schedule shall be at DECE's sole discretion. If DECE approves a flexible schedule, the terms of the approval shall take precedence over the provisions of the required days and hours of service. Additional attendance and time-keeping requirements may apply.

Programs can:

- Schedule a short break in the middle of the day for non-DOE-contracted activities.

    — Time spent on non-DOE-contracted 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 modified hours of instruction on a given day (Monday to Friday). However, programs must:

    — Continue to provide the same total number of hours of instruction per week as required by your contract.

    — 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).
  Not applicable to half-day programs

- Schedule programming on federal holidays.

Short Break

Programs can request approval from earlychildhoodpolicy@schools.nyc.gov to schedule a short break in the middle of the day for non-DOE-contracted 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 children, including those participating in the short break, receive the required contracted hours of weekly instruction, programs must:

    — Extend the length of the program day beyond your contracted hours;

    — Provide program hours on a Saturday or Sunday to ensure you provide the same total number of hours per week as required by your contract

- Programs must clearly identify the short break as a separate activity from the regular program day for participating children.

<u>**Parent/Legal Guardian Consent**</u>

- No child can participate in the short break unless their parent/legal guardian provides written consent.

- Programs must neither encourage nor discourage participation in the short break.

<u>**Length of Short Break**</u>

- The short break must last for no more than 20 minutes.

  — This includes transition time into and out of the break.

<u>**Supervision of Short Break**</u>

- **If one or more children enrolled in the program opts not to participate in the short break**, programs must use a space separate from the classroom for the short break. DOE-contracted classrooms must be utilized only by those children who participate exclusively in DOE-contracted programs.

- **If all children enrolled in the program participate in the short break,** programs are strongly encouraged to use a space separate from the classroom for the short break and designate staff, other than the staff providing City-funded program instruction, to oversee the short break.

Faith-Based Instruction

- Programs may not lead, require, organize, or call children for prayer during the program day. This means that staff members may not pray with or in the presence of children during the program day.

- Programs must utilize a short break for any activity where program staff may lead, require, organize or call children for prayer, as described above.

  — For example, children 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 EarlyLearn, *3-K* and *Pre-K* classrooms.

  — While your staff members may not lead, require, organize or call for blessings before a meal, they should not prevent children who wish to pray before meals from doing so.

Religious instruction is not permitted during DOE-contracted hours and services must be delivered in a non-sectarian manner. Programs 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 DOE-contracted services 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 Preschool Learning Standards (NYSPLS). Instruction may not promote or inhibit any particular religion, or religion generally.

- Programs must utilize a short break for any instruction that includes texts from a single religious tradition, as described above.

The DECE Suggests:

• Soliciting family feedback through a survey or focus group before setting your program hours and annual calendar each year to ensure your program is aligned with the needs of your community

• Tentatively scheduling make-up days in case of inclement weather closures during the programmatic year.

• Reminding families at least one week in advance about any planned closures; consider including these updates in regular family communications such as newsletters.

Resource ▊ & Action Item ☑:

☑ Prior to the start of the programming year, programs must get approval of the proposed calendar and hours of operation by submitting your proposal to your DECE Borough Office via Pre-KIDS.

☑ Prior to the beginning of the programmatic year, programs must share their calendar and program hours with families.

    • Program's calendar should be made available in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish and/or Urdu upon request by a participating family.

☑ Programs must maintain documentation on file of written consent from every parent/legal guardian.

▊ [DOE School Calendar](#)

Attendance

To ensure children get the most out of early childhood services, programs must stress the importance of regular attendance.

All Head Start programs must also comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1302.16. The section below aligns with §1302.16's requirements.

Attendance Overview

Children in regular attendance benefit most from the services offered in EarlyLearn (Infant/Toddler), *3-K* , and *Pre-K* . These program years are an irreplaceable time for children's growth and development. A high-quality early childhood education provides children with stronger math, reading, language, and social- emotional skills going into elementary school. Attendance is critical to ensure children receive this foundation to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

By collecting attendance data, developing strategies for improving attendance, and proactively building a welcoming and engaging environment for families and children, you have the ability to improve child attendance at your program.

Clearly communicating attendance policies, along with collaboration with families, is crucial to improving child 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 child is absent, late, or must leave early.

- • Your communications with families during orientation, family-teacher conferences, home-visits in Head Start programs, and via written/online communications should clearly articulate the expectation that children attend 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 early childhood experience. In particular, program leaders must carefully monitor and support the attendance of children involved in child welfare.

Children and families must never be treated in a negative manner due to a late arrival. You must work with families to develop strategies for assisting them to arrive on time.

Please refer to the Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting chapter of the Handbook for more information on supporting children in child welfare.

Attendance Expectations at the Beginning of the Year

Smooth transitions into your program lay the foundation for a successful year. Your program should be prepared to assist children and families with their transition to early childhood services.

Staggered Schedule

— All programs should begin the school year with full days of school to support working families and others.

— If a family or guardian specifically requests a staggered or transition schedule for their child, a program can work with the family/guardian to implement this schedule on a short-term basis of one to three weeks.

— Families cannot decide to only attend 3K or Pre-K programs on a shortened schedule for the full year without a medically or developmentally documented reason. Please contact earlychildhoodpolicy@schools.nyc.gov before agreeing to any alternative schedule.

— For further assistance with staggered entrance, programs should contact the DECE at EarlyChildhoodPolicy@schools.nyc.gov.

Ongoing Responsibilities

You are responsible for setting policy, tracking child 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 child attendance.

Maintaining Accurate Records of Child Attendance

You must maintain accurate records of daily attendance for all enrolled children utilizing all of the following methods.

- Daily attendance must be recorded for each child on a Daily Attendance Record Form.

  — 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:

  - Child illness (for more information on when children should be asked to stay home, please see the Excluding Children Due to Infectious Illnesses section below.)

    ğ Any child who is out for three or more days due to illness must provide a note from a physician.

    · With respect to COVID, programs should consult available guidance from the DOE and/or DOHMH regarding return to the program.

  - Family emergencies

  - Transportation or weather emergencies

  — You should communicate to families what absences are considered excused and any documentation required.

- Daily attendance must also be entered in Pre-KIDS for children in School Day and Year and Head Start seats.

- A Daily Attendance Record Form must be filled out to include at minimum each child's name, date of attendance, and time of arrival and departure or notation of full day absence.

> - For Child Care Block Grant funded Birth to Five Extended Day and Year ("Birth to Five Extended Day and Year") services, programs are responsible for entering daily time-in/time-out attendance in a DOE-designated web application. The data entered must be verified monthly and match the data collected on the attendance cards.

Responding to Child Absenteeism

When a child is absent or regularly late, it is important that you communicate with their family to understand the reason for the absence and determine if the child and family require additional supports or services.

Please note: You may not discipline a child for arriving late or prohibit them from entering the classroom. Children and families must never be treated in a negative manner due to a late arrival. You must work with families to develop strategies for assisting them to arrive on time.

Unless a family has notified you in advance of a child's absence, you must call their family:

- Within an hour, on the first day of an absence

- On each day of additional absence

HeadStart Programs:

- For Early Head Start or Head Start children with multiple unexplained absences, for a home visit or other direct contact with a child's families/guardians

Automated calling systems may not be used as a substitute for calling families.

If you fail to reach a child'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 child's family successfully, you must document that you have attempted to reach the family.

Frequent Absenteeism

Regular participation in early childhood programs enables children to get the most out of daily learning opportunities.

You should take a proactive approach and work with families of children who are frequently absent. In these cases, you should discuss the following with the family:

- The nature of the child's irregular attendance

- Actions to be taken by the family

- Actions to be taken by staff

- Actions to be taken in the event the absences continue

- 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 early childhood education programs predicts later academic progress.

Planned Family Absences Due to 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 child's absence.

- At this meeting, you should determine with the family if/when the child 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 child 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 child to remain enrolled. If you determine a child should be discharged, you must follow the discharge protocol as defined below. In making this decision, the following should be considered:

        - How long the child will be absent.

        - How the child might benefit from the program upon their return and the number of days remaining in the program year upon their return (e.g., if the child will return late in the program year and have only a few weeks back before the program service ends, the transition may not work well).

        - Potential benefit to a child on the waitlist.

Contact decemhw@schools.nyc.gov for assistance in supporting smooth transitions for both the child absent for an extended period of time and the child's classmates.

Recurring Absenteeism and Discharge Review Conferences

In EarlyLearn (Infant/Toddler), 3-K and pre-K, recurring absence is defined as:

- 10 consecutive non-excused absences

- 20 non-excused absences

If a child 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 child 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 child's absences reach recurring absenteeism thresholds, you must:

- Report the case of recurring absenteeism in writing and by telephone to your designated DECE Borough 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 child is absent, including calling the family within an hour on the first day of a child's absence.

- Request that the family come to your site for a Discharge Review Conference to determine if the child should be removed from the program in order to permit a child on a waiting list to be registered and enrolled in their 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 child and document all of your efforts. Documentation must be sent to your designated DECE Borough Office.

    — *If you have reasonable suspicion that a child 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 Mental Health and Wellness team at decemhw@schools.nyc.gov if you need assistance engaging a family for a discharge review conference or support planning a conference. **No child will be discharged before the family is given an opportunity to explain the recurring absenteeism and without DECE social worker and DECE Borough Office approval.**

- The following documentation is required for a child discharge and should be sent to your DECE Borough 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 child.

Contact decemhw@schools.nyc.gov *if you need further guidance.*

Strategies for Improving Attendance

You must monitor and analyze child attendance data with the goal of developing interventions and strategies toward improving attendance at your program. Both long-term and short-term analyses of child attendance data can guide your attendance strategies.

<u>Analysis</u>

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 child is approaching frequent absenteeism

- Cases of recurring absenteeism

- Classrooms with low and high attendance rates

- Other attendance patterns

<u>Head Start Absence Data Analysis and Action Plans</u>

For Head Start and Early Head Start programs, within the first 60 days of program operation, and on an ongoing basis thereafter, you must use individual child attendance data to identify children with patterns of absence that put them at risk of missing 10% of program days per year and develop appropriate strategies to improve individual attendance among identified children, such as direct contact with families or intensive case management, as necessary.

- Head Start programs must set up systems to analyze attendance data on a regular basis. If a program's monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85%, program leadership in collaboration with their DAPC and Governing Board, must analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify any systemic issues that contribute to the program's absentee rate. The program must use this data to make necessary changes in a timely manner.

- If a child experiencing homelessness is unable to attend classes regularly because the family does not have transportation to and from the program facility, the program must utilize community resources, where possible, to provide transportation for the child. *Please see the Additional Child Supports chapter for more information on transportation options for children experiencing homelessness.*

Improvement Strategies

You should work with families in an effort to improve child 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.,children 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

Children Involved in Child Welfare

The attendance of children involved in child welfare must be carefully monitored and responded to in order to ensure child safety and well-being. Children 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 children involved in child welfare include the following:

- The program director should assign a site-based staff member to monitor the attendance of children involved in child welfare.

- Consistent with NYCEEC policy for all children, unless a family has notified you in advance of an absence, you must call their family within an hour, on the first day of an absence and on each day of additional absence. For children 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 children 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 child with an open child welfare case, you must notify reportabuse@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 the program

- For a child whose parent/guardian has been the subject of a substantiated report or a child in foster care, you must notify reportabuse@schools.nyc.gov immediately if you fail to reach the family when the child has been absent for 3 consecutive days, or you are not satisfied with the outcome of your communications, as above.

- All communication to reportabuse@schools.nyc.gov must include the full name of the child, the child'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 children involved in child welfare is strongly encouraged to build familiarity with each child'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 Children Due to Infectious Illnesses

To promote child health, and avoid the spread of illnesses in the program, your program may request that children with contagious diseases stay home until the symptoms are gone or until a doctor approves readmission into the program. With respect to COVID, programs should consult available guidance from the DOE and/or DOHMH regarding return to the program.

Families must report to the program within 24 hours any absences due to the following illnesses:

- COVID-19, chicken pox, conjunctivitis, coxsackie, 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 Children Due to Lice

To avoid the spread of lice and/or nits (eggs):

- Children who have live head lice are not allowed to go to their program until they are lice-free. Children with nits are still allowed to attend.

- Children may return to their program the day after treatment for head lice as long as there are no live lice upon re-inspection by designated staff member.

- A note from a physician is not a requirement for a child who has had lice to return to your program.

Bed Bugs

Bed bugs are not known to cause or transmit disease and the risk of person-to-person transference in programs is very low. This is NOT a communicable disease. In case of the possibility of bed bugs:

- You should not exclude a child from attending your program or send a child home, nor does the child need to see a physician when there are bed bugs in the home.

Excluding Children 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 Child Health chapter of the Handbook.

Fees

In partnership with NYCEECs, district schools, pre-k centers, family child care providers and 4410 providers, New York City offers free and low-cost, high-quality early care and education for three- and four-year-olds across the five boroughs. All School Day and Year services for three- and four-year-olds are free for families. Head Start Extended Day and Year services are also free; however, families must be determined eligible for these services. Child Care Block Grant funded Birth to Five Extended Day and Year ("Birth to Five Extended Day and Year") services are available to families with children six weeks to five years old that meet eligibility criteria and pay a family fee set on a sliding scale.

All Head Start programs must also comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1302.18. The section below aligns with §1302.18's requirements.

Programs may not charge any other fees or require contributions of any kind from families to access DOE-contracted services.

Specifically, your program is not allowed to charge families for:

- Application and enrollment to any DOE-contracted program

    — Birth to Five Extended Day and Year programs are only able to charge fees as stipulated by the Child Care Block Grant (CCBG).

- Any services provided during DOE-contracted program hours (e.g., instruction, celebratory activities, and special events)

    — If a special celebration is taking place outside of program hours, you may request a fee from families.

- Any materials and supplies (e.g., supplies, art materials, paper)

    — 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 children to enroll in or attend your program.

- Purchasing School Uniforms from your program

    — You may not charge a fee for school uniforms but you may ask families to purchase uniforms from a vendor. If you do request that children 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.

- 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.

    — Families may not be charged for participation in field trips that occur during DOE-contracted program hours

- Meals

  — You must provide children with all required meals and snacks daily, free of charge.

- For information about permissible voluntary fundraising activities, see the Fundraising section of this chapter on page 119.

Early Drop-Of f 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 for your program hours.

You may charge a fee to families that consistently drop off their children before DOE-contracted operating hours begin and/or pick up their child after DOE-contracted services have ended.

The DOE strongly encourages you to do the following when establishing an early drop-off/late pick-up fee policy:

- Establish policies to ensure the adequate supervision of children beyond your program's regular hours of operation should a family be late.

- 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.

- Work collaboratively with families to establish this policy. Any such policy set at a Head Start program must be approved by the Delegate Agency Policy Committee.

- Establish clear protocols families must follow if they are running late or would like to drop off early. This can include:

  — A phone call as soon as they identify they will likely be late.

  — Next steps if the family is extremely late with no prior communication (i.e., call all emergency contacts)

A family's inability to pay a fee for early drop-off/late pick-up is not cause for removing or excluding a child from DOE-contracted program services. **Under no circumstances may you remove a child from your program for their family's inability to pay an early drop-off/late pick-up fee**.

Additional Services Provided before and after DOE-Contracted Operating Hours

You are allowed to offer services before and after DOE-contracted hours. However, a family's participation in these additional services is always voluntary.

- You may charge a fee for services provided before and/or after program hours.

- You may charge a fee for services provided on days beyond those included in DOE-contracted services.

- You may not discourage enrollment or refuse registration to any child whose family does not plan to participate in any non-DOE-contracted 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 DOE-contracted services and that they are free, or in the case of Birth to Five Extended Day and Year services, available at a low-cost rate.

- Hours of additional 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-DOE-contracted services.

If you offer additional services, you may be required to share the following with DECE:

- A roster of families/children participating in non-DOE-contracted services who also participate in city-funded programming.

- Rates for any non-DOE-contracted services.

Birth to Five Extended Day and Year Services

In all 32 school districts, there are EarlyLearn, *3-K* , and *Pre-K* programs offering year- round care for 8 or 10 hours a day. These services are provided to families that qualify based on income and needs, and are free or low-cost.

Families of children participating in Birth to Five Extended Day and Year services may pay a fee to your program. The fee will be based on family size, family income, and priority code (a code assigned to a family based on reason for care and used to calculate family share).

Your program is responsible for collecting fees from families on a weekly basis.

- Families of participating infants and toddlers will pay a full-time fee to cover all hours of service provided.

- Families of participating 3- and 4-year-old children will pay a part-time fee to cover the additional hours of care they receive through the Extended Day and Year model (beyond the core 6 hours and 20 minutes per day). Participating families will also pay a full-time fee for days beyond the core 180 day service model.

These fees are set based on individual family characteristics and the Child Care Block Grant law and regulations.

Programs may not require children or their families to participate in fee-based or religious activities or services as a condition of participating or gaining any advantage in your program.

Head Start programs offer Extended Day and Year services free of charge to all eligible families. For additional information on fees related to Extended Day and Year services please see the DOE's FAQ.

Family Communication Regarding Fees

Once a family is determined eligible for Birth to Five Extended Day and Year services, they will receive written communication with their fee amount from the DOE or ACS.

Family fees are set based on the youngest child in the family. For instance, if a family has both a two-year-old and a four-year-old enrolled in services funded by the Child Care Block Grant, the family will pay one fee to the two-year-old's program for those services. In this instance, no fee will be paid to the program where the four-year-old attends unless it is the same program.

Families with only a three- or four-year-old will pay a part-day fee for services in the core 180 day program model. This is because the Core Day (6 hours and 20 minutes) is part of the City and State's *Pre-K* and *3-K* program which is provided free of charge for all three- and four-year-olds. The part-time fee covers the additional hours for those days. In addition, families will pay full-time fees for days beyond the 180 days of service.

Extended Day and Year programs must establish consistent and clear fee collection procedures and policies. Programs must share their written fee collection policies with eligible families and make them available for the DOE review upon request. Please note the following:

- Programs are responsible for the collection of the weekly fees.

- Fees are due weekly and shall be paid in advance.

- Programs should share information about general fee processes and procedures with all families that pay a fee. Any follow up with families about fees due should be conducted individually and privately.

- A receipt for the fees collected shall be provided to the families.

- Unpaid weekly fees are the responsibility of the Provider.

- Programs must provide their DECE Borough Office with all records relating to the collection and expenditure of fees on a monthly basis.

Programs operating both School Day and Year and Extended Day and Year services should provide consistent services and communication to families whenever possible. Children must receive services in the same classrooms and staff should never refer to children based on whether they pay a fee or not.

Child Discharge Due to Family Inability to Pay Fees

If a family fails to consistently pay their weekly fee for DOE-contracted Extended Day and Year services, it may result in the discharge of their child from your program, as required by law. Prior to discharging the child for failure to pay, you must:

- Negotiate an alternative payment plan with the family.

- Obtain approval from the DOE prior to discharging a child for failure to pay the fee. In these instances, the program should email earlychildhoodpolicy@schools.nyc.gov with a clear and detailed description of the communication and reminders shared with the family (including modes of communications and dates).

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 children 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 children 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 child/family must never be excluded from any activity for not providing funds.

- Food served as a part of any fundraiser must meet the nutritional guidelines for children outlined in the Meals Services chapter of the Handbook.

- Items purchased with DOE funds may not be sold or offered in connection with fundraising activities and children should not be charged for the use of these items.

- Costs incurred for fundraising activities are not reimbursable by the DOE.

Per Chancellor's Regulation A-610 , the following fundraising activities are prohibited:

- The sale of tickets for children's attendance at movie theaters 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 DOE regulation on fundraising activities and collection of money from children/families or Chancellor's Regulation A-610.

Uniforms

Overview

Programs can request that Infant/Toddler, *3-K,* and *Pre-K* children wear uniforms. DECE strongly discourages uniforms for infants. Uniform policies must align with the requirements below, be clearly communicated to families, and may not prevent any child from fully participating in DOE-contracted services.

> **Head Start Only:** Head Start programs must have approval from their Delegate Agency Policy Committee in order to institute a uniform policy.

Uniform Policy

If a program requests that children wear a uniform, they 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 child whose family would prefer that their child not wear a uniform.

- No child may be denied a uniform because of economic hardship.

    — Programs must develop a plan to obtain uniforms for families that demonstrate that they are unable to purchase them.

    — For any child whose family cannot afford to pay for a uniform, the program must purchase the uniforms for them directly from the vendor.

    — You must purchase a sufficient number of uniforms for that child.

    — Costs for these uniforms may not be charged to the Infant/Toddler, *3-K,* or *Pre-K* budget and will not be reimbursed by the DOE.

- You cannot collect fees for uniforms directly from families. They 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:

        - Uniforms are available for purchase directly from the vendor and not through the program.

        - 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 the program provide a uniform for their child.

- Families can request an exemption from the uniform requirement.

Families may not be sent home, excluded, disciplined, or penalized in any way if they fail to wear a uniform to your program.

Uniform Wear

Programs must select a developmentally appropriate uniform that aligns with the intended goals of their uniform policy. Programs 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 gender-specific clothing: girls must have the option to wear pants or shorts and boys must have the option to wear skirts.

- Contain offensive slogans or pictures.

- Contain religious symbols or text.

  — Unless the name of the program has religious text references, which may be displayed as text only, absent any religious symbol.

Data Management Systems and Child Privacy

Overview

Programs are responsible for maintaining accurate and timely data utilizing the appropriate New York City Department of Education (DOE) data systems for pupil accounting and other purposes.

All Head Start programs must also comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1303.20 - §1303.24. The section below aligns with §1303.20 - §1303.24's requirements.

Data Systems

Pre-K Integrated Data System (PreKIDS)

The PreKIDS (Vendor Portal) is a DOE online management tool for vendors. Payments to programs are made based on the data your program enters into PreKIDS.

PreKIDS must be used to:

- Enter child enrollment information

- Create and amend budgets

- Submit mid-year (Head Start programs only) and year-end expenditure reports

- Record child attendance for School Day and Year and Head Start children on a monthly basis

- Submit invoices on a monthly basis

- Submit Annual Calendar (DECE approval)

- Enter developmental screening outcomes

- Manage staff rosters (must be maintained monthly)*

* Only staff members with a status of "Active" and "Eligible" in the Personnel Eligibility Tracking System (PETS) can be listed in the Administrative and Instructional Staff sections of your PreKIDS budget. PreKIDS will not allow a program to list a staff member in these sections who has a status of "Inactive" or "Ineligible" in PETS. See Personnel Eligibility Tracking System (PETS) on page 123 for additional details on the PETS system.

The only section of the PreKIDS budget where it is possible to list staff members who are not "Active" and "Eligible" in PETS is the Facility Staff section; however staff in this section who are not "Active" and "Eligible" in PETS may not be in the facility at the same time as children. If the DOE becomes aware that a staff member who is not "Active" and "Eligible" in PETS is scheduled to be on the premises at the same time as children, there may be financial and contractual consequences.

For questions about how to utilize PreKIDS or manage staff rosters in PreKIDS and PETS, please contact your assigned analyst at your designated DECE Borough Office.

Personnel Eligibility Tracking Systems (PETS)

PETS is a DOE web-based application that tracks and shares real-time information on the eligibility status of employees working in Infant/Toddler, *3-K*, and *Pre-K* programs. 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 DOE security clearance. For Article 47 programs and directly-contracted Group Family Day Cares, PETS does not contain the status of your staff's Comprehensive Background Check (CBC). That clearance is managed by the Central Clearance Unit (CCU) at the DOHMH.

All staff members who may have unsupervised contact with children, have access to DOE systems, work in a DOE building including our City owned and leased (COL) facilities, or who have access to children 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 "Active" and "Eligible" in PETS. If an employee is terminated or resigns, you must immediately mark them as "Inactive" in PETS.

You must immediately remove staff from contact with children, access to children information and/or, if appropriate, access to PETS, or from the COL facility, 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 Borough Office, DOE Office of Personnel Investigation, or other designated office.

Please email PETS@schools.nyc.gov for PETS questions, including requests for assistance if you have forgotten your PETS login information or are having trouble logging in.

DOE Accounts for NYCEEC Program Staff (@doeexternal accounts)

DOE Accounts (also known as @doeexternal accounts) are issued to program staff at Early Childhood programs contracted with the DOE (NYCEECs, FCCs, 4410-Early Childhood Special Education Programs) for the purpose of accessing DOE-supported technology, applications, and a secure email address to exchange sensitive child and family information with the DOE and your families (See Section on Receiving Sensitive Student and Family Information from the DOE to learn more).

DOE accounts enable program staff to access applications, including:

- Secure Gmail account
- Google Meet
- Google Classroom
- Google Drive and Early Childhood curricular resources on the Drive
- Zoom
- Protraxx (for Early Childhood professional learning)
- Remote Learning Device Report (to manage devices lent to children for remote learning)
- MySchools

To receive an account, program staff must be cleared to work for the DOE and be in PETS (Personnel Eligibility Tracking System). Program admins will be granted access to create DOE accounts for their staff.

Enrollment System

MySchools supports programs in managing enrollment processes. Additionally, MySchools is the application tool through which families apply to *3-K* and *Pre-K*.

Programs must utilize MySchools to:

- Verify admissions priorities,

- Track children offers, and

- Manage children waitlists.

Programs can access MySchools through the School Portal: school.myschools.nyc. MySchools trainings are offered throughout the year. If you need help or a new account, please email ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

To support child learning and provide staff with easily accessible information on child health and safety needs, it is required that programs maintain all required children's records. Additionally, programs must comply with all applicable regulations and protect the privacy of children's records in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Chancellor's Regulation A-820, including protecting the confidentiality of child records when they are maintained on-site, discarded, or placed in storage.

Programs must maintain children's records in an easily accessible and confidential space on-site. In accordance with FERPA, no part of a child'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 family

  — 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 children or other individuals

- Another reason permitted by law

Please note: A record of each request and each disclosure of personally identifiable information from the child's records must be maintained.

The original child data below must be maintained on-site through the end of the program year in which the child is enrolled, and for six years after the termination of the provider contract or in alignment with the Retention and Disposition Schedule for New York Local Government Records (LGS-1) — whichever is later:

- • Child Health and Safety

  — Emergency Contact Card

  — Child and Adolescent Health Exam Form (CH205)

  — Immunization Records (if not provided on CH 205)

- • Child Information

  — Individualized Education Program (IEP)

  — Home Language ID Survey

  — Parent/Guardian Child Ethnic Identification Form

- • Child Educational Data

  — Attendance Card

  — Cumulative Record (see below for more information)

The child data below must be maintained at all times through the end of the program year in which the child is enrolled, and for one year thereafter:

- • Child Screening Data

  — Parent/Guardian Questionnaire

  — Scoring Sheet

- • Authentic Assessment Data

  — Child Portfolio Items

  — Developmental Summary Reports

  — Hard Copy Child Portfolio Items

After maintaining child records for the required period of time, you must properly dispose of 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 child 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.

Safeguarding Sensitive Child and Family Information

In order to preserve child and family confidentiality, any sensitive information from the DOE will be shared using the secure Gmail associated with the DOE Account (@doeexternal.nyc accounts). Similarly, any sensitive child or family information transferred between program staff and families should be exchanged using the DOE Account Gmail. Examples of cases when DOE Account Gmail should be used include:

- Receiving and accessing child IEP information from CPSE administrators

- Receiving virtual registration packets from families

- Communicating about personally identifiable information of child or family with families, with other program staff, or the DOE

    — "Personally identifiable information" includes, but is not limited to:

        - the name of the child

        - the name of the child's parent/guardian or other family members

        - the address of the child or child's family;

        - a personal identifier, such as the child's Social Security number, student number, or biometric record

        - other indirect identifiers, such as the child's date of birth, place of birth, and mother's maiden name

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, Instagram, YouTube, Google+, and TikTok. All early childhood 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 their program or a teacher establishing a blog for their 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 child information may be posted.

If any child's image is posted, there must be a <u>media consent form</u> on file signed by the parent/guardian of each child featured. Photographs of children may only be taken using a DOE-owned device; program staff may not use personal cell phones or other personal devices to take photographs of children.

<u>Personal Social Media</u>

Personal social media use is any non-work-related social media activity (e.g., an administrative employee or teacher establishing a Facebook page or a Twitter account for their 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 child information or confidential information, including child images, on personal social media sites.

Program Assessments

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.

To assess the quality of *3-K* and *Pre-K* programs, DECE is currently using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Third Edition (ECERS-3) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). This includes both School Day and Year and Extended Day and Year classrooms.

For infant and toddler programs, DECE is finalizing plans about which research-based assessment tools will be used. Once decided, the plan and available training will be communicated to programs.

In addition to these tools, DECE may collect additional classroom data, such as information on classroom schedule and learning environment, to provide greater insight and feedback to programs.

Overview

The DECE utilizes ECERS-3 and CLASS to measure the extent to which programs are successful at implementing many of the standards included in the Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ).

- ECERS-3 measures the extent to which programs are successful at implementing practices outlined in the EFQ relating to a supportive environment and rigorous instruction.

- CLASS measures the extent to which programs are successful at implementing practices outlined in the EFQ relating to interactions between teachers and children.

ECERS-3 and CLASS are widely used in early childhood settings across the country. Data shows that there is a consistent relationship between ECERS-3 and CLASS scores and child development and learning outcomes.

Notification and Scheduling Procedures

Notification and Initial Scheduling

The DECE will notify programs via email when they are selected to receive an ECERS-3 and/or CLASS assessment.

Assessments must take place on a typical day of programming for all children. This means that the usual daily schedule should be followed and that the program operations take place as normal.

A typical day **does not** include:

- Program days where some children have been asked to stay home from the program, 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, such as a day when family members are invited to participate in an activity and/ or read with children;

- Programming days when fewer than 50% of children are in attendance.

A typical day **does** include:

- Program days as defined by the DOE or program calendar, including program days on, before, or after holidays;

- Program days that include regular schedule changes for children (such as one day of the week that is consistently shortened);

- Regularly scheduled special and cluster classes;

- Days when the program leader is off-site;

- Small schedule fluctuations, such as a late meal delivery, that could feasibly happen any program day.

Evaluators will contact programs at least two weeks in advance of the assessment date to request information on days the program will operate under a typical schedule and/or days when there would be a conflict to conduct the observation, as stated above. Programs are requested to reply within two business days of notification with required information, including their daily/weekly schedule, number of classrooms, teaching staff, and approximate time most children arrive, among other things, as stated below.

As part of the DECE's procedures to ensure and maintain consistent calibration and quality implementation, more than one evaluator may observe in the same classroom at the same time.

Program Information

Prior to the assessment date, programs will be asked to provide the following information to DECE staff:

- Number of *3-K* and/or *Pre-K* classrooms;

- *3-K* and/or *Pre-K* hours;

- Languages other than English spoken during instruction;

- *3-K* and/or *Pre-K* classroom daily/weekly schedule;

- Name of the staff member who will meet and greet the evaluator (e.g., lead teacher, Education Director);

- Approximate time most children arrive;

- 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.

Programs that are selected to be assessed will receive a notification email which will include resources they can expect. For questions on specific ECERS-3 and/or CLASS resources available to them, programs can email programassessment@schools.nyc.gov.

Training Opportunities

The DECE Performance Team offers a variety of professional learning opportunities to help programs gain a better understanding of the assessment tools currently used. Programs can access the growing list of tool-specific resources, trainings, and information on how to register through the DECE's website and/or Protraxx.

In order to accommodate participants' needs, preferences, and schedules, different modalities are used to offer tool-specific professional learning opportunities, such as:

- • Scheduled in-person or remote trainings;

- • Self-directed webinars (that can be done any time);

- • Bite-sized resources;

- • Individualized support via email and/or during office hours.

Rescheduling an Assessment

If an assessment needs to be rescheduled for any reason (e.g., major facility issue, a significant number of teaching staff absences, less than 50% of children in attendance), programs should contact the evaluator as soon as possible via email or phone. The evaluator will work with the program to reschedule the assessment as soon as possible, based on the reason given.

In the event of an unexpected program closure, the evaluator will contact the program 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 – Third Edition (ECERS-3)

The ECERS-3 is an assessment tool developed by the Environmental Rating Scales Institute (ERSI) designed to assess the learning environment in early childhood programs.

The ECERS-3 measures the quality of the learning environment across six subscales: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language and Literacy, Learning Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure.

Assessment Details

- • A random selection will be conducted on the morning of the assessment to determine which *3-K* and/or *Pre-K* classroom will be observed;

- • The selected classroom will be observed during three hours as a "time sample" of regular practice during a meal, play time, gross motor activity, and a transition. This may mean that an evaluator may not be at the program at the start of the day, but instead come later in the day, based upon the schedule.

For more information on the ECERS-3 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 child learning. CLASS measures classroom interactions across three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support.

Assessment Details

- Most or all of the *3-K* and/or *Pre-K* classrooms will be observed.

- Assessments take anywhere from two to eight hours. The assessment may take place over more than one day, or by more than one evaluator depending on the number of classrooms at the 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.

Number of Classrooms	Number of observation cycles per classroom	Amount of time in each classroom (approximately)
1	4	80 minutes
2	2 in one class, 3 in the other	40 minutes & 60 minutes
3 or more	2 cycles per classroom	40 minutes
7 or more	75% or more classrooms will be observed	40 minutes

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.

Additional Classroom Data

Beginning in 2021, DECE will be using a selection of supplemental assessment scales alongside the CLASS assessment tool called the CLASS+. The CLASS+ for 3-K & pre-K combines selected elements of the CLASS Environmental Scales, the ECERS-3 tool, and the Adapted Teaching Style Rating Scale (A-TSRS), a collaboration between New York University and the New York City Department of Education. CLASS+ measures aspects of teacher/child interactions, the classroom environment, and practices that support children's social-emotional development.

The CLASS+ allows CLASS evaluators to collect information on critical aspects of the classroom environment, health and safety practices, and practices that support the emotional well-being of children while conducting a CLASS assessment in various classrooms.

Results and Reports

Following the observation, programs will have an opportunity for a brief (approximately 15 minute) debrief to receive feedback of observed highlights/trends as well as recommendations based on best practices identified in the assessment tools.

Programs and Borough Staff will receive a detailed report within six weeks after the day of assessment. Program staff are expected to use ECERS-3 and CLASS results to inform program goals.

Scores from the ECERS-3 and CLASS assessments will be made publicly available on an annual basis and through a publicly available school quality snapshot.

ECERS-3

ECERS-3 reports will include:

- An overall average ECERS-3 score;

- Average scores for each of the subscales;

- Areas of strength (where applicable);

- Detailed observation notes for lower scoring items;

- General recommendations for next steps, and

- Feedback on the daily program schedule.

CLASS

CLASS scores are the averages of observations collected across all *3-K* and/or *Pre-K* classrooms observed. CLASS reports will include:

- 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;

- Additional information as part of the CLASS+ to support classroom and program practices;

- 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* and/or *Pre-K* classrooms.

For more information regarding results and reports, or any other ECERS-3 and CLASS questions, please contact programassessment@schools.nyc.gov.

The DECE Suggests:

• Participating in the wide range of trainings offered on the assessment tools as well as periodically checking the DECE's website for a list of available resources.

• Using the data and evidence in the reports to strategize and set program goals.

Resource 🟦 & Action Item ✅:

🟦 DECE's website

🟦 ERSI

🟦 Teachstone
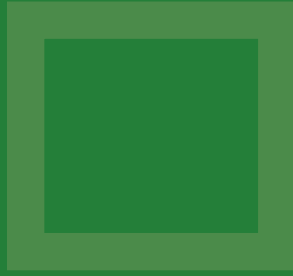
V. Comprehensive Services

a. **Family Engagement**

b. **Child Behavior**

c. **Meal Services (CACFP)**

d. **Toileting and Diapering**

e. **Field Trips and Neighborhood Walks**

Family Engagement

Proactive partnerships between families and staff establish a solid foundation for children's success in early childhood and beyond.

The New York City Department of Education's (DOE) Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) strives to support early childhood leaders and staff with training and resources to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to foster trusting, strength-based relationships, a key element of a successful high-quality program. Family engagement is an essential component of all program models within the DECE's portfolio of programs.

Engaging families is one of the most effective steps a program can take for children's long-term, academic success. When programs adopt various and robust policies to communicate and collaborate with families, the benefits of family involvement in school also extend to children's social-emotional development. When families involve themselves in the classroom, for example, children are more likely to express self-confidence and motivation to learn and try new things.

The DECE requires programs to adopt certain family engagement practices to ensure you are laying the foundations for success in your partnership with families:

- Your program must provide families with a warm and respectful environment.

- Your program must provide information to families throughout the program year.

- To the extent possible, your program should provide policies, communications, and services in the language in which the family is accustomed to communicating.

Family engagement is a cornerstone of the Head Start program; Head Start programs are required to implement a robust family engagement program. All Head Start programs must also comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1302.34. The section below aligns with §1302.34's requirements. For more information on these requirements, please see the Head Start Implementation Guide.

Engaging and Empowering Families

An effective family engagement plan will more deeply involve families in your program's community, and by ensuring they have a voice in shared decision making, families will feel empowered. Empowering families means that leadership and staff create regular opportunities for families to learn about major decisions and needs for which the program staff and administration are actively planning, giving families meaningful opportunities to offer their perspective, and have that perspective inform the direction of the program. An empowered family is an asset to their child's learning (at home and at school) as well as to the program community.

Communication with Families

Programs are required to communicate with families before the program year begins and on an ongoing basis. Teachers and staff should orient families to program policies, goals, and classroom themes, content, and lesson plans so they understand what their child is learning. Communications with families should be delivered consistently, in their home language, and with a tone and presentation that is appropriate. This could include minimizing use of acronyms, jargon, or specialized language.

Programs should utilize various formats to communicate with families. Before selecting the formats you will employ, learn more about families' preferred methods. Communication formats can include, but are not limited to:

- Monthly newsletters
- A family bulletin board
- Family meetings
- Flyers
- Telephone calls
- Family engagement features in services like Classroom Dojo or Remind App
- Authentic Assessment Tools (e.g., Teaching Strategies Gold, CORE, Work Sampling, Educa, etc.)

You can also find translations of commonly used communications here: https://infohub.nyced.org/in-our-schools/translations/early-childhood.

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 program year to complete and return:

- Health Information Child & Adolescent Health Examination Form (CH-205)
- Additional Medical Forms (as applicable). *For more information see the Child Health section of the Handbook.*
- The Emergency Home Contact Card
- Neighborhood Walk Consent Form
- Media Consent Form
- Home Language Survey
- Housing Questionnaire

Additional forms may be required depending on the age group your program serves. *Please see the Program Operation Registration Packets website for more information.*

A special note to remember to share a child's end-of-year questionnaires (as applicable) with their new teacher if that child will continue in your program.

Information to Share:

Additionally, it is important that families are provided with the following information about services at your program prior to the beginning of the program year (typically during your Welcome or Orientation session):

- General Operational Information Program calendar and hours, identifying the first day of services and any professional learning days, clerical days, or holidays when the program will not be in session

- Daily Schedule

- Program contact information, including information on how program staff will communicate with families and how families can best communicate with program staff

- A copy of the Commitment to Families (see Appendix C)

- Attendance Policy and Expectations

- Policies/procedures on how un-planned closures are communicated

Instruction:

- Information on your program's instructional curriculum and how the curriculum your site utilizes advances and supports learning

Key program policies, including:

- Meals and snack served and general food policy, including information on food safety, preferences, allergies and family style dining, vendors utilized (if applicable). *For more information, please see the Meal Services section of the Handbook.*

- Any early drop-off or late pick-up policy and information about any additional services offered beyond DOE-contracted services. This policy must state that participation in DOE services can not be denied or suspended related to any fee policy or refusal to participate in additional services. *For more information, please see the Fees section of the Handbook.*

- Birth to Five Extended Day and Year programs must provide families with their family-share collection policy. *For more information, please see the Fees section of the Handbook.*

- Child Behavior management policy (see Appendix B). *For more information please see the Child Behavior section of the Handbook.*

- Clothing or uniform policy (if applicable). *For more information, please see the Uniforms section of the Handbook.*

Health Information

- Immunization Compliance Requirements

- Physical Examination Requirements

- How illnesses, injuries, and child allergies will be managed and communicated. *For more information, please see the Child Health section of the Handbook.*

Safety Information

- Evacuation plan

- Lock in and lock down

- Emergency plans

- Fire and safety drills

- Volunteer/Visitor policy

Supporting Families with Transitions

Supporting families through transitions is a critical part of the roles of program leadership and staff. When transitions are supported by caring professionals, those impacted can excel and thrive. It is vital that program administrators and staff have a well-communicated plan to support families and children into, through, and out of your program. Transitioning children from their typical home environment to a structured classroom setting can be both exciting and overwhelming for families. Additional transitions may also occur- such as the transition between classrooms and transition out of the program into a new educational setting such as a 3-K, a private-, charter-, or district-based pre-K or kindergarten program. Consider ways to support children and families through these times during their time at your program to help make adjustment to a different setting easier.

As always, be sure to ask families questions to help you and your colleagues understand how best to serve the needs of each child.

Work with your program leadership and staff to:

- Develop a plan for engaging and supporting families that leverages best practices and is tailored to their needs. Try out our Beginning of Year Family Questionnaire.

- Promote professional learning opportunities for teaching staff and other family-facing staff as it relates to family engagement.

- For more strategies and sample documents to support children and families to successfully transition to your early childhood program, see the Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ) and the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance (see Appendix B).

Supporting End-of-Year Transitions

A crucial part of fostering ongoing communication from one classroom community to another is to support meaningful connections with a child and family/caregiver's new teaching team. An end-of-year questionnaire can empower families/caregivers to document key information about their child to pass on to their new teaching teams and/or program and promote continued success. To support families with this process, your program should:

- Develop an End-of-Year Questionnaire for Families/Caregivers that families can fill out with your support before the end of the programming year. Please see the Infohub for sample questionnaires and questionnaire translations.

  — Encourage your families to keep this information to share with their child's future teaching teams in the fall. Families can print the questionnaire, or fill out and save the questionnaire electronically.

  — Consider including context for future teaching teams along with the questionnaire.

  — Adapt the sample questionnaire as needed to support the families/caregivers in your community.

- Consider referring to these resources if creating a questionnaire:

  — Beginning of the Year Questionnaire for Families

  — Building Family-Community Relationships

- Introduce the questionnaire during individual meetings with families and teaching teams or a family worker. You may want to set up time before the end of the year to complete the questionnaire together.

- Ensure that teaching teams/family workers use the questionnaire as the basis for conversations with families. Consider the following when partnering with families in this conversation:

  — Discuss the information in a sensitive and respectful manner.

  — Share the rationale for supporting families in capturing this information and how it will help with the transition to the next program year.

  — Respect families that do not want to answer all of the questions.

  — Plan to provide accommodations for families that cannot complete the questionnaire in English. To support conversations with families about the questionnaire, please see more information on available language supports including over-the-phone interpretation.

Please look for more information regarding supporting end-of-year transitions in the spring. *For questions, please contact deceinstruction@schools.nyc.gov.*

Transitioning Families to Kindergarten

If your program offers pre-K, families transitioning to kindergarten will likely enter an entirely new educational environment and your program should have a special component of planning dedicated to transition planning and practices. Your program must allocate time towards the end of the program year to support *Pre-K* 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 children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

  — For additional information please visit the Moving to Kindergarten website.

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 a child's transition to kindergarten;

- • Summer enrichment activities; and

- • Local organizations (e.g., libraries) that can support families in the transition to kindergarten.

Programs should encourage families to document key information about their child in an End-of-Year Questionnaire to pass onto their child's kindergarten teacher. For information on the Supporting End of Year Transitions process, please see the Instructional Programming chapter of the Handbook.

All Head Start programs must also comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1302.71. Please see the Head Start Implementation Guide for more information.

For more information on transitioning families to kindergarten, please visit the Moving to Kindergarten website*.*

Recognize and Alleviate Barriers to Involvement

As program leaders and administrators, you should be mindful of the different backgrounds and experiences of families in your program. It is important to take steps to make them feel welcome, seen, heard, and recognized. In particular, work with program leadership and staff to develop a well-communicated plan about how you will support families and children with diverse needs such as:

- • As a child or family in temporary housing;

- • A child or family who will require non-English communications;

- • Children or families living near, at or below the poverty line, who may qualify and will benefit from referrals to other agencies, programs, and supports.

Certain families in special populations may be less likely or able to engage in your program. Others may feel less comfortable reporting their needs or concerns. Programs should be mindful of these barriers to involvement and respond with a plan to accommodate the family's needs.

Fostering Family Voice for Equity

Family empowerment is so much more than making sure families feel welcome in your program. It is also about connecting them with other families that can use their skills and experiences to make a difference. The DECE encourages teaching teams, leaders, and family-facing staff to work together to co-construct solutions. Consider how you can engage families when making program decisions. For instance, you might survey families or hold a meeting to get input and feedback.

> • Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) programs are required to provide families and caregivers orientations that focus on opportunities related to volunteering, participating in parent/guardian activities and to engage on parent committees and/or Delegate Agency Policy Committees (DAPC). *For more information, see the Head Start Implementation Guide.*

Engaging Families- Suggested Best Practices

Engaging families in your program is a critical part of program operations in all of the DOE's early childhood program types. Family engagement has far-reaching benefits for families and programs. The DECE encourages all programs to implement effective strategies to engage families in their children's education, including two generational or "2Gen" engagement. 2Gen engagement builds family well-being by intentionally and simultaneously working with children and the adults in their lives together.

The DECE urges program administrators and support staff to survey the families enrolled in their program to learn more about the types of activities and services families need. Listed below are a few suggestions for all programs.

- • Family Activities

  — Ideal opportunities to build community with all families and among families and staff.

  — Activities will depend on resources and program capacity.

  — Examples of activities could include but not be limited to: culturally respectful and appropriate celebrations, classroom events, and workshops that focus on a range of topics such as picky eaters, and coaching for expecting families.

- • Family Curriculum

  — Adopting a family curriculum, like the IncredibleYears, Parent Corp, and Ready4K, among others, can provide families with unique opportunities to build relationships with other families, gain insights on parenting techniques, and practice strategies and reflections to bolster parenting skills.

  — All Head Start and Early Head Start programs are required to implement a research-based family curriculum.

- • Fatherhood and/or Male Role Model Engagement

  — The DECE knows families come in all shapes, colors, sizes and configuration. We respect, value, and include all families, caregivers, and guardians in our program life and decision making.

  — We suggest fatherhood engagement as an inclusive strategy—not as a strategy to exclude families that may not have a male or father figure as part of their family structure. It can be powerful to uplift specific individuals in a child's life and ensure that programmatic messaging and engagement is truly inclusive.

  — Engaging fathers and/or father figures in addition to engaging mothers and mother figures in programs can have a deep impact on children, their families, and the community as a whole.

  — Head Start programs have a history of prioritizing engagement of fathers and father figures in program life to honor the lasting impact of fathers' connection to and involvement in their children's development and well-being. Both Head Start and Birth to Five programs may find the Office of Head Start's (OHS) resources on engaging fathers useful to developing a more inclusive engagement practice. Please see OHS's Fatherhood Engagement materials here.

Head Start Family Engagement Practices

Head Start programs must integrate parent/guardian and family engagement strategies into all systems and program services to support family well-being and promote children's learning and development. Birth to Five programs are encouraged to look towards Head Start requirements to develop and broaden their family engagement practices.

Head Start programs must conduct at least two home visits a year that can be conducted at the location preference of the family (e.g., school, home, or other public place) and engage all families whose children are enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start programs in a family partnership process. *For more information, please see the Head Start Implementation Guide.*

Relationships: A Foundation for Building Community

Every interaction the family has with your program, especially early on, contributes to their impression of whether they will be welcomed, receive help, and be safe with you. Developing and maintaining relationships with families is an ongoing process.

To be successful, program leaders and staff need to adopt a strengths-based approach. This means approaching every relationship with a family with the understanding that each family possesses its own strengths, goals, and aspirations. By beginning to engage families with clear, open and honest communication, noticing and appreciating the family's strengths, learning about and respecting their culture, and being sensitive to their emotions, you are investing in the many ways you hope your staff and teachers will partner with families.

The vision you set as a program leader, for relationship-building with families, lays the foundation from which families may begin to make changes. One way a relationship with a family can bring about change is through the *parallel process*.

Parallel process is a term that describes the reciprocity that develops between families, their children, and staff when the program creates an environment of respect, kindness, and thoughtfulness in its relationship with the family. In turn, that family will be able to bring these same qualities to their relationship with their child. As the vision for family engagement permeates through the services and programming, families, caregivers, and staff will begin to know each other as people and foster a sense of communal support.

All programs should focus on creating the conditions in which a parallel process can develop organically.

Managing Challenges

Relationships are the heart of early childhood. Through your relationships with families, you support families' and caregivers' relationships with their children. But relationships are not simple. There can be many celebrations and joys in partnering with families, and in some cases, you may experience challenges.

Some families may become homeless, or disappear for a while and suddenly show up again. A family may experience a crisis, such as having no money for rent, food, diapers, or oral health and medical care. All programs should have policies in place for these kinds of challenges.

Another challenge is developing and maintaining your relationships with families and caregivers. Families may habitually miss school, arrive late, or choose not to open the door when you arrive should you do home visits. Some families may have experienced unpleasant experiences with social services and do not know how to react to you. Working through these challenges can ultimately serve and strengthen your relationship with the family.

In situations where your program needs more support with managing challenges related to family engagement, you should contact decemhw@schools.nyc.gov.

Repairing Relationships

None of us are perfect. We make mistakes. You may say the wrong thing. You may say nothing when you should have said something. You may unintentionally hurt someone's feelings. You may forget something that was important to the family. You may have strong feelings or disagree with the choices a family is making.

Relationships are important, and we want to maintain them and repair any breaks when there has been a disconnection. Most of us get through these moments with an apology and by talking through what happened. We do not always understand families' values and beliefs and may be unaware of cultural differences in communication. "Best" practices are not always culturally appropriate practices, and it is important to keep that in mind. If language barriers exist, this can intensify frustration. Trust, openness, and a strong working relationship with families are critical. For teaching teams and leaders, the repair of breaks in a relationship may be up to you.

The most important thing to keep in mind is when you successfully repair a break in the relationship, it becomes stronger.

Welcome Orientation

Providing a Welcome Orientation event at or before the beginning of the program year 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 programmatic 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 programming

    — Information about the transition into early childhood program

    — Supports for coping with separation

    — How families can support their child and partner with teachers during this time

- Appropriate developmental expectations for Infant/Toddler, *3-K,* and *Pre-K.*

- How your program plans to communicate with families (e.g., newsletter, texts, emails, etc.) and methods for how families can communicate with you, inclusive of families' preferred methods of communication.

Ongoing Communication

Programs must maintain communications with families throughout the program 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.

- Authentic Assessments: *For more information, please see the Authentic Assessments section of the Handbook.*

- Child Behavior: Your program staff 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 section 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 child 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

- Your website

- Newsletters

- By phone

- At open houses or family meetings

- During family workshops, classroom celebrations, and other program events

For more information or for questions on communicating with families, please contact the Family Empowerment & Community Partnerships inbox: FECP@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 children 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 1-800-890-6867

- Provide your 4-letter site ID

- Indicate the language you need translated

- Indicate if you will need the vendor to dial out to the parent/guardian

This service is solely intended for use by DOE-contracted staff members at NYCEECs. This line must not be shared with families or the general public. For any issues or general feedback, please notify us via this form www.tinyurl.com/OPIFeedback.

If you have additional questions about early childhood education support for children 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 discuss together how they can support their child's learning and development. Conferences are a great time to discuss a child's progress and a child's individual needs that build on the shorter casual conversations that you have with families daily.

We recommend that families be offered two or more opportunities for family-teacher conferences throughout the program year. All programs should strongly encourage families to participate in family-teacher conferences, as it is an important way to have conversations about their child's learning and developmental progress.

> **Head Start Programs must offer two opportunities for a family-teacher conference for every family per year, in addition to two home visits per year.**

When scheduling conferences and/or home visits, consider the following:

- Your program should use authentic assessment data, including children 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 appropriately cleared substitutes on family-teacher conference days to enable teachers to meet with families during program hours.

— **School Day and Year programs:** You may schedule shortened days of instruction for children on family-teacher conference days to enable teachers to meet with families during program hours. You may schedule a maximum of three shortened 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 shortened schedule, meal times must be covered the entire week by teaching staff and there must be a certified person on-site.

> — **Extended Day and Year programs:** You may choose to schedule clerical days for family-teacher conferences or other family engagement activities; data entry for authentic assessment or developmental screening; meetings and/or collaborative planning time for staff; and/or furniture arrangement and displays. You are not required to offer care and instruction to children on these days, but may choose to offer regular services on professional development days with qualified substitute teachers.

*Half-day programs are encouraged but not required to hold family-teacher conferences.

Guidance for a Successful Family-Teacher Conference

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 the Family Empowerment & Community Partnerships inbox: FECP@schools.nyc.gov

School Survey Overview

Every year, families/guardians, teachers, and children 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* and *Pre-K* 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. 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 and families seeking early care and education services 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 families/guardians, please see nycschoolsurvey.org.

The NYC School Survey is confidential for families/guardians and anonymous for teachers. Neither the DOE nor individual programs are told which people have or have not taken the survey. It's important for the survey coordinator 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.

<u>Strategies for Encouraging Families to Complete the Parent/Guardian Survey</u>

- Distribute the surveys at in-person or virtual 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

Guidance on Increasing Family Engagement and Volunteering

- Open new communication channels.

- Start early in building relationships with families on an individual level.

- Consider multiple ways to communicate with families (e.g., email, postal mail, texts). Hard copy flyers or notes are not always effective with all families.

- Touch base frequently with your families.

- Be clear about how families can support in and out of the classroom including any security clearances required.

- 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.).

- Partner and collaborate with families on the goals they have for their child.

- Keep familes involved in making decisions about their children's progress and program experience.

- Involve families' voices in programmatic decisions.

- Remember to thank your volunteers at the end of the school or program year (or the time period to which they have committed).

Child Behavior

Programs are responsible for using positive behavior support strategies to empower children to develop a positive self-concept, and intentionally guide children to interact respectfully and constructively with peers and adults in their community and environment.

Overview

Children engaged in active learning, who feel secure, supported, and valued are more likely to demonstrate positive behaviors that promote healthy development and interactions. You should structure an environment and approach interactions in ways that build positive relationships with children and families. Children's 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 (DOE) Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance (see Appendix B), which is the guiding document on behavior management and discipline for all children enrolled in our programs, including infants and toddlers.

Children may not be expelled or suspended. In addition, children may not be sent home early as a form of discipline or strategy to manage disruptive behavior in the classroom.

Your program must develop and implement strategies for responding to behavior that is disruptive to other children or unsafe for the child and/or others. Your program should also be attentive to ongoing withdrawing behaviors that disrupt a child's development or ability to engage in program activities. 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 child behavior guidance policy that complies with the DOE DECE Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance.

Your program's child behavior guidance policy must be communicated to families and staff at the start of the program year and be made available in the home language of the families your program serves. Your policy must reflect that:

- The focus is on proactive and reinforcement strategies that promote positive behavior and interaction

- Any responsive measures and logical consequences used must relate to the child's behavior, be developmentally appropriate, and implemented by staff as immediately as possible after the behavior

- All acts of abuse are prohibited

- Room isolation in the form of punishment is prohibited

- Denial of food is prohibited

All staff, including non-instructional staff, must receive a copy of your program's child behavior guidance 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

Your program's approach to behavior management must be to promote positive behavior. *Please see the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance in Appendix B for more information.*

You must utilize the following practices and strategies throughout the program 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 program year, you must develop and implement the following proactive and developmentally appropriate strategies that promote nurturing relationships, predictable environments, and a positive classroom culture for all children.

- Establish respectful, caring relationships

- Plan curriculum that is flexible and responsive to children's needs

- Arrange and supervise the physical environment to support children

- Communicate clear expectations for children

- 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 children know that they are making progress toward a desirable new skill and encourage their effort. You must *not* use food for children 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 child.

- Using *activity reinforcements* as a recognition for desired positive behaviors, such as being able to choose a song or activity for the group during center time. There should already be room in the curriculum for following a child's interests or ideas for learning. These reinforcements are therefore a logical way to incorporate positive reinforcement into your program.

- Using *material reinforcements* such as stickers, small notes, etc. in a way that is respectful to children and guides them using positive language can reinforce individual behaviors that are particularly challenging for a child. These should be free and small items.

Please see the Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance in Appendix B for more information.

3. Responsive Strategies to Promote Positive Behavior

You 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 that are age-appropriate or intentional risk-taking necessary for learning new skills, such as infants pulling themselves up when learning to stand or older children climbing a ladder during gross motor activities, which are appropriate with adult support and supervision.

These responsive strategies should be logical to the behavior being responded to and implemented as soon as possible after the behavior. Responsive strategies include supporting children's sense of safety and giving in-the-moment instruction or support to use new skills. 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 learning.

Teaching staff should collaborate with a child's family to help the child 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.

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).

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 support children in modifying behaviors to mitigate against those triggers. Asking the question "what happened?" instead of "what is wrong?" may help the observer be able to reach emotionally responsive interventions more easily.

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, intensity, frequency of the behaviors 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 children (e.g., kicking, hitting, biting)

Teaching staff should also work together with families to understand any additional factors contributing to a child's behavior and to provide consistent behavior guidance strategies.

Documentation of child 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 child enters a behavioral crisis and engages in unsafe behavior that poses a substantial risk of serious injury to the child and/or others, every effort must be made to safely de-escalate the behavior when possible using predetermined strategies and interventions for addressing behavioral crises.

The DOE 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 where children in crisis may be safely isolated from others;

- Program staff trained in de-escalation techniques;

- Program and community resources available to the program and families/legal guardians; and

- Details for how crisis de-escalation and response protocols are communicated to program staff.

Behavioral crisis de-escalation plans must align with 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 Children

With consistent positive behavior support, most children will be able to thrive and engage positively in their learning environment. If a child continues to engage in unsafe behaviors after consistent support as outlined above, your program is encouraged to develop an individual behavior support plan in collaboration with the child's caregivers whenever possible. When doing so, your program staff must take into consideration the unique developmental level of the child and the child's familiarity or relationship with responding staff when developing the strategies specifically for them.

For more information and additional resources please see the DOE'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 your program year.

Education Directors should consider proactive training for staff in behavior crisis de-escalation techniques to proactively promote the developmentally appropriate instruction of children's social-emotional learning and development of positive behaviors.

Program staff must prevent and report corporal punishment and verbal abuse. You must immediately report any case where a staff member has allegedly engaged in corporal punishment or verbal abuse of a child 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. Incidents that occur in Head Start programs will be reported to the Office of Head Start. *For more information, please see the Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting chapter of the Handbook.*

Shortened/Truncated Schedules

You may not shorten or truncate the school day or modify the daily schedule of any child, on a temporary basis or otherwise.

As you may know, in very rare circumstances with parental consent, the DOE previously permitted programs to seek approval from the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) to apply a shortened school schedule as a temporary measure (not longer than three weeks), while the program was working to implement a plan of support for that student.

This policy is now repealed. As of May 2023, DOE early childhood programs **may not** apply truncated schedules for infant, toddler, 3K, and Pre-K children. A truncated schedule is defined as a shortened schedule determined by school or program-based staff that prevents a child from attending the full school day (which includes extended hours for students in EDY seats).

Meal Services (CACFP)

Overview

Meal time should be a welcoming and learning experience shared with children and program staff. Children need nourishing food for their healthy development. Providers must follow the New York State Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and New York City Food Standards guidelines to ensure every child is provided with nutritious meals. Serving portions should be appropriate to the nutritional needs and age of the child. Staff must always provide adequate and competent supervision during meals to prevent choking hazards and support young children to develop self-feeding skills. Staff must never use food or drink as a reward or punishment.

Sharing Meal Information with Families

Providers should have a Meal Policy that is shared with families indicating:

- The number of meals and snacks served during program hours;

- The types of food served;

- Protocols if families choose to supply their own food

- If families choose to provide breast milk or formula it should be prepared and stored properly and in alignment with Article 47;

- Precautions taken regarding food allergies;

- How the menu for all meals served during program hours will be shared;

- The process developed for families to know how much their child ate on any given day (ie. a chart, uneaten food returned);

- How staff plan to use meal time to assist children in building social and self-help skills.

Meal Requirements

Providers are required to participate in the CACFP and should be prepared to show proof of participation upon request from the DECE. Programs can request a waiver from DECE to opt out of participating in the program, but this must be approved and your program could be asked to reapply if the make-up of your program changes. An approved opt-out is only for participation in the CACFP program. All programs are still expected to adhere to CACFP nutritional guidelines and must provide the required number of meals and snacks daily.

- All Head Start programs must participate in CACFP.

- All participating programs must reapply to CACFP annually.

NYC Food Standards and CACFP Reporting Requirements:

CACFP Application:

Programs can apply to CACFP at any time during the year. Programs should email or call CACFP to request an application. All participating programs must reapply by November 30th annually. For more information about the Child and Adult Care Food Program in New York State, please contact: CACFP via phone: 1-800-942-3858 OR (518) 402-7400 and/or email cacfp@health.ny.gov.

For additional information on CACFP, please see this link.

CACFP Participation Guidance:

- Train meal/nutritional staff on CACFP participation requirements.

  — This includes record keeping (i.e., income eligibility applications, attendance, and meal counts), and meal pattern requirements.

- CACFP participants can claim for reimbursement within 60 days following the last day of the month covered by the claim.

- CACFP participants must maintain adequate documentation to support all data reported and claimed as well as the details and reasons for all adjustments made to final claims or reports.

  — Please note: CACFP will periodically review this documentation and perform other oversight activities to monitor and enforce Program compliance.

For Additional Information on CACFP and requirements to participate in the program please see their website. You can also review the CACFP monitoring checklist to see what you are required to keep on file monthly.

NYC Food Standards Requirements:

Every year the DOE reports to the Mayor's Office of Food Policy on the status of the DOE's contracted programs' compliance with the NYC Food Standards by completing the annual Food Metric Report.

Daily Meal Requirements

School Day and Year (6 hours and 20 minutes per day) programs must offer one of the following approved meal patterns to children to ensure that their nutritional needs are met:

- Two meals and one snack (e.g., breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack); or

- Lunch and two snacks (e.g., morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack).

DECE strongly suggests that all children are offered a nourishing breakfast/snack upon their arrival to the program.

Half-Day programs must offer, at a minimum, one of the following to children to ensure that their nutritional needs are met:

- One meal (e.g., breakfast or lunch); or

- One snack.

> **Extended Day and Year programs must offer one of the following approved meal patterns to children to ensure that their nutritional needs are met.**
>
> - Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack; or
>
> - Morning snack, lunch, and supper.
>
> **Programs offering both School Day and Extended Day and Year services must provide two meals and one snack to all children enrolled. All children must be fed every 2-3 hours unless they are sleeping.**

You may choose to work with a food vendor or prepare meals in your program, with the appropriate licenses and certificates. Regardless of the vendor you work with or if you are preparing meals yourself, you are responsible for ensuring that all meals and snacks served to children meet the nutritional requirements and fit within your budget. All programs must keep records of all reimbursements received from CACFP or National School Lunch Program/alternate meal funding source and be prepared to provide documentation of reimbursement to their DECE Borough Office as part of their end of year reporting. Programs should also be prepared to provide year to date records upon request.

Reminder: Meals and snacks expensed to other programs such as CACFP or National School Lunch Program cannot be expensed to your DOE budget.

Meals and Feeding for Infants and Young Toddlers

Meals and Family Communication

During the first three years of life, children are growing more rapidly than at any other period in their life. Together with the child's family, providers must ensure that the children in their care are receiving adequate and healthy food that supports their growth and helps them develop lifelong healthy habits.

Providers should also talk with families about their feeding routines so that to the greatest extent possible, those same practices are applied while the child attends the program. **Decisions to introduce new foods, at the age-appropriate time, must be discussed and approved by the child's family**.

Responsive Feeding

Before children have language, they use many verbal and non-verbal signals to communicate when they are hungry and when they have had enough. Responsive feeding is the practice of learning what these signals are and responding to them promptly and consistently. By practicing responsive feeding, caregivers help children develop healthy eating habits, lower children's risk of becoming overweight as they get older, help children learn self-feeding skills, and bond with the children in their care. Working with families on their child's meal plans can also be beneficial so that you know how to consider the balance between breast milk/formula and solids as well as the types of food and quantities.

Responsive feeding consists of the following caregiving practices:

- Watch for baby or young child's cues of hunger or fullness.

- Respond warmly and promptly.

- Feed them the right amount and type of food for their age and stage.

- Let them stop when they're full.

- Focus on being affectionate and nurturing, including holding infants during bottle feeding.

Infant Feeding

All infant meals and snacks must adhere to CACFP nutritional guidance. Infant food must be appropriate for the individual infant's nutritional requirements and development. Providers must work with the family to create an individualized feeding plan for infants in care and keep on record written statements from the family of each infant in care indicating the formula, breast milk, and feeding schedule/instructions. These statements must be updated regularly to reflect the infant's dietary needs. When infant formula is required, such formula may be prepared and provided by the family, or the program, when agreed to in writing by the family.

Water should not be offered to children under 6 months; providers can offer children under 6 months additional formula or breast milk instead.

Bottle Feeding

Formula, breast milk, and perishable infant food must be kept refrigerated. All containers and cups must be clearly marked with the child's first and last name and the date the contents were brought in.

Heating infants' bottles or food in a microwave is prohibited. All devices for warming bottles and infant foods must be kept away from children's reach. Devices warming formula, breast milk, or food for infants must be kept at a temperature not exceeding 120°F. Providers must not hold children while removing warm bottles from warming devices.

Infants 6 months and younger must always be held when bottle-feeding and should be fed by the same staff member daily, if scheduling allows. Staff members should cradle the infant in their arms during feeding while also singing or chatting in a gentle voice. Engaging with an infant during feeding builds on their social and emotional development and helps the infants feel safe and secure.

Infants over 6 months must be held to bottle-feed until they demonstrate appropriate mastery of self-feeding with the bottle. Children must be taken out of cribs, nappers, bouncy chairs, etc., to be fed. Bottles must never be propped. Staff members should also incorporate breaks that allow for burping during feeding which teaches the infant that a trusting adult will help meet their needs.

Supporting Breastfeeding

Providers must have a designated place set aside for breastfeeding mothers who want to visit the program during the workday to breastfeed, as well as a private area with an outlet for mothers to pump their breast milk. The private area should have access to soap and running water or hand sanitizer.

Non-frozen breast milk should be transported and stored in the containers to be used to feed the infant, identified with a label which will not come off in water or handling, bearing the date of collection and child's full name. Breast milk should be defrosted in the refrigerator if frozen, and then heated briefly in bottle warmers or under warm running water so that the temperature does not exceed 98.6°F. If there is insufficient time to defrost the milk in the refrigerator before warming it, then it may be defrosted in a container of running cool tap water, very gently swirling the bottle periodically to evenly distribute the temperature in the milk.

Feeding Solid Foods

Providers must work with families to create a plan for introducing solids to infants or young toddlers. It is recommended that age-appropriate solid foods other than human milk or infant formula be introduced no sooner than 6 months of age, or as indicated by the individual child's family and nutritional and developmental needs.

Uneaten portions of infant food from which children have been spoon-fed must be discarded or returned to the family at the end of the day. Food should not be reheated.

Providers should encourage self-feeding by older infants and toddlers by practicing:

- • Holding and drinking from an appropriate child-sized cup;

- • Using a child-sized spoon; and

- • Using a child-sized fork.

To allow for the proper development of motor skills and eating habits, children should be allowed to practice feeding themselves. Children can also use their fingers for self-feeding. Children should be provided with opportunities to serve and eat a variety of food for themselves. Foods served should be appropriate to the toddler's developmental ability and cut small enough to avoid choking hazards.

Remember that learning to self-feed can be difficult for children. Continue to encourage children to self-feed even if they make a mess. Refrain from expressing frustration if a child produces a mess from self-feeding.

High chairs

High chairs, when used, must have a sturdy and steady base and be used only for infants and toddlers who are able to sit up independently.

A safety strap must be fastened around infants and toddlers who are seated in high chairs. High chairs must be age- and size-appropriate and no infant or toddler should be left unattended for any amount of time.

Feeding chairs or toddler tables with built-in seating are also acceptable alternatives. If children are able to, they can also sit at the age-appropriate sized tables and chairs located within the classroom.

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 Infant/Toddler, *3-K, and Pre-K* children. 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 meal components for children twelve months and older. Please note the nutritional standards for CACFP and NYC Food Standards are subject to change. Refer to their websites for additional nutritional guidance.

As noted earlier in this section, all infant meals and snacks must adhere to CACFP nutritional guidance. Infant food must be appropriate for the individual infant's nutritional requirements and development. The following meal components reflect required minimum quantities.

Breakfast Meal Patterns

	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup
Vegetables, fruit, or both	¼ cup	½ cup
Grains	½ oz eq*	½ oz eq*

Oz eq = Ounce equivalents

Lunch and Supper Meal Patterns

	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup
Meat and meat alternates	1 oz	1 ½ oz
Vegetables	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Fruits	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Grains	½ oz eq*	½ oz eq*

*Meat and meat alternates may be used to substitute the entire grains component a maximum of three times per week.

Snack Meal Patterns

Select 2 of the 5 components for snack.

	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5
Milk	½ cup	½ cup
Meat and meat alternates	½ oz	½ oz
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits	½ cup	½ cup
Grains	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

For 3-K children that have not yet turned 3, please be mindful of the difference in food portions during meals.

Overall Requirement for Meals

- Water must be available to children at all meal and snack times and upon request throughout the day. Children under 6 months should not be offered water

- 100% juice is limited to once per day and is only permissible for children aged 2 and older

- Unflavored whole milk must be served to 1-year-olds; unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk must be served to children 2 through 5 years old

- Non-dairy milk substitutes that are nutritionally equivalent to milk may be served in place of milk to children with medical or dietary needs

- Whole-grain rich grains must be served daily

    — Grains-based desserts no longer count towards the grain component requirement

- Yogurt must contain limited amount of sugar

- Breakfast cereals must contain limited amount of sugar

- No food containing artificial trans-fat may be served

- Deep frying may not be used to prepare children's meals

- No fruit canned in light or heavy syrup may be served

- Reduced amount of sodium must per day

For more detailed nutritional requirements, see the CACFP Child Meal Pattern and NYC Food Standards.
Please note: The guidelines are subject to change.

Providing Meals to Children with Dietary Restrictions

Children 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).

Children With Disabilities

Food substitutions and meal pattern modifications are <u>mandatory</u> 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 their 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 Children

Food substitutions are <u>permitted</u> but not mandatory by the reprogram to accommodate non-disabled children's food preferences.

- Programs should develop a written policy as to whether they will accommodate non-medical dietary requests.

In unique cases, meal pattern modifications are permitted, but not mandatory, to accommodate non-disabled children. In these cases, a medical order must be provided and include:

- The child's medical or other special dietary need which restricts their diet

- The food(s) to be omitted and the food(s) that may be substituted

- Children with a doctor's note about lactose intolerance must have a substitute milk alternative made available to them.

In all cases, families may opt to provide meals for their child 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 child's food is properly refrigerated, in alignment with any food restriction policies, 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 child's family indicating that the child 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.

Please note: The family can change their mind at any time and meals/snacks must be available if the family forgets to bring their child's meal/snack from home.

Providing Meals to Children with Food Allergies

Programs must have a process in place to identify any children with food allergies. Upon being notified that a child has allergies, programs should take the following steps to collect information and plan collaboratively with the child's family and physician to support their 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 the child's 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 child 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 child allergies must be made available to all staff that come in contact with the child in a manner that respects child privacy. For example, a list of children's allergies must 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 Child 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 children. In addition your menu should be posted for the families and staff to be aware of the food being served on any given day.

It is important that your menu is culturally diverse and meets the needs and preferences of children and families. Menus must:

- Contain a sufficient amount of detail to be helpful for families.

    — Example: Instead of "fruit," you should include details such as "sliced apples."

- Be sent 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.

Programs should consider sharing with families the number of meals and snacks their child will be provided and the approximate times. Families often use this information to plan their own home schedule. They also may not be aware of CACFP or the NYC Food Standards and the requirements so sharing that information might be a helpful way to communicate the nutritional value of foods being served at your program.

Promoting Learning during Meal Time

Meal time is an opportunity for staff members to promote children's 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 children. Your program may be informed from time to time to pause family-style meal service for safety reasons (e.g infectious disease in the community). In those cases, you will receive guidance when to resume family-style meal service. However, even if family-style meals are paused, interaction between staff and children at meal times is still expected.

During meal time, staff should:

- Sit with children

- Model healthy eating habits, such as showing enthusiasm for trying new foods

- Promote positive social interactions

- Support children, as needed, to develop skills to feed and serve themselves independently

Children 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 children 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 children.**

For additional guidance on staffing requirements and expectations during meal time, please see the Program Staffing and Class Composition section of the Handbook.

Food Safety and Sanitation

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, and the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Third Edition (ECERS-3). Failure to prepare, store, and serve food in a safe and sanitary manner may lead to harmful health consequences for children. 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 regardless of distance.

- Food moved to serving areas should be discarded after meal service and may not be re-served. For families that bring food from home, it can be saved and returned to the family at the end of the day, but 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 a 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. If using an alternative sanitization solution, it should be an EPA-registered product and manufacturer's instructions should be followed for its use on food contact surfaces.

    — 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 to dry is required for each table unless you choose to allow it to air dry.

<u>Handwashing Practices Before and After Meal Time</u>

In accordance with ECERS-3, the following handwashing practices should be followed by children and staff before and 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 (children 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.

Sanitizers should not be used as a substitute for handwashing before and after meals, 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.

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.

Please note: This is a requirement for all programs, including GFDCs.

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 children on special occasions. If you choose to allow families to provide food, your policy must include the following:

•	Families must provide a list of ingredients included in the food to ensure the health and safety of children with dietary restrictions.

•	Families must provide permission in advance allowing their child to eat food provided by families of other children.

The DECE Suggests:

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:

- Children may expand their food preferences by trying different foods.

- If the meals are served family style, the child can choose how much and what they want to eat.

- Your program's meals may be more nutritious.

- Meal time is more cohesive when all children are eating the same meal. If one child brings in food, others may request to do the same, increasing the difficulty of serving a family-style meal.

- If any children in your program have allergies, families may need to be mindful not to send those foods with their child.

Resource ▇ & Action Item ✅:

▇ DOHMH has developed a Nutrition and Physical Activity Best Practices document that can be referred to for recommendations on meal time best practices.

▇ NYC Foods Standards

▇ Handbook for the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) reflects the updated CACFP meal pattern requirements, which became effective October 2017. The Handbook plays an important role in helping CACFP program operators to improve the health and nutrition of children and adults in the program, while promoting the development of good eating habits through nutrition education.

▇ For variations in meal requirements for programs having dietary restrictions due to religious dietary law, see DOH-CACFP-Memo 170.

▇ DOHMH has developed a Nutrition and Physical Activity Best Practices document that can be referred to for recommendations on meal time best practices.

Toileting and Diapering

Programs must provide a safe and healthy learning environment that supports positive experiences and the learning and developmental progress of all children. Progress toward independent toileting is an important element of developmental growth, one that for infants and younger toddlers is typically several years away but for older toddlers and preschools, one that children will make over the course of the program year. To that end, all staff must complete diapering of children and assist all children with toileting regardless of a child's acquired toileting skills or their age. Additionally, programs are required to practice and demonstrate proper sanitary practices.

Overview

Children enter Infant/Toddler, 3-K and pre-K programs at varying stages of proficiency in toileting and diapering. Assisting children 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 child because they have not yet mastered all of their developmental milestones, including their ability to use the toilet independently.**

> • All staff must be prepared to change diapers and help children after bathroom accidents as necessary.

Supervision

Children 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 children who can toilet independently:

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

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

Staff 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 children do not complete the toileting procedures (including handwashing) correctly and responsibly.

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

Staff Responsibilities

Staff must assist <u>all</u> children with toileting, handwashing, and other critical self-care routines over the course of the year, regardless of a child's acquired skills or age, in a patient and encouraging way. 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.

- All staff involved in diapering and helping children after accidents must receive training in Infection Control and Reporting Infectious Diseases, and Bug Busting in Early Childhood Settings which is inclusive of OSHA Blood borne Pathogen training. In addition, staff must receive the Hepatitis B vaccine free of charge.

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

Toileting Routines

3-K and *Pre-K Toileting* Guidance

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

Toilet facilities must be kept clean at all times, and must be supplied with toilet paper, soap, and towels accessible to the children. The use of potty chairs is not permitted.

- All staff members assisting with toileting or diapering clean-up must follow the <u>Universal Precautions</u>.

  - 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 children's 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 children 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.

  - 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 child 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 a child's toileting assistant need on the day that it occurs. For toileting needs that demonstrate symptoms of illness and may require the child to be picked up, families should be notified immediately.

Children must be kept clean and comfortable at all times. Diapers must be changed when wet or soiled and must be checked at least every 2 hours. The diaper changing area must be as close as possible to a sink with soap, and hot and cold running water. This area or sink should not be used for food preparation, if possible. Diaper changing surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected after each use with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered product or bleach and water solution.

Providers should keep track on a chart the number of times a child's diaper was changed and if the child was wet and/or had a bowel movement. Providers should let infants and toddlers know you notice that they need to be changed. Smile, chat lovingly, sing throughout the diaper change. As infants become older, having staff narrate their actions as well as the infant's actions throughout the diapering process will help the child develop an understanding of what is happening.

When disposable diapers are used, soiled diapers must be disposed of immediately into an outside trash disposal or placed in a tightly covered plastic-lined trash can inaccessible to children until outdoor disposal is possible. If the child requires ointment to be placed on them, the program must receive parent/guardian consent in advance.

Communication to Families Regarding Diapering and Toileting

It is important to have frequent, open communication with families about diapering and toileting progress. Diapering and toileting routines at home and at the program should be as similar as possible. Providers should inform families about diapering and toileting policies and procedures prior to the beginning of the program year.

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 they have an accident?

Teaching young children to use the bathroom is an important and intimate skill. As teaching staff, it is important to respect the privacy of children, while also encouraging their self-esteem and independence. Working together, families, teaching staff, and program leaders should encourage children to be fully independent in toileting.

The following guidance supports and encourages toilet learning in a safe and appropriate manner and includes visual aids, sample vocabulary words, and routines.

When preparing to work with a child who is ready for toilet training, consider the following:

- Keep training directions simple

- Establish a consistent routine

- Identify vocabulary words with families to provide continuity at home and at school

- Praise children for their accomplishments, even if an accident happens

- Narrate actions to convey messages and meaning that encourage and affirm child progress through this toileting process (e.g., "First, you pull down your pants and then, you sit down on the toilet." or "You pulled up your pants when you finished using the bathroom.")

- Empower children through this process by promoting success at each step, being patient, and remaining positive about the process

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

Handwashing Practices

Providers must ensure that staff and children wash their hands immediately after toileting or diapering. Children should be taught how to correctly wash their hands after using the bathroom. Visual and verbal prompts should be used to assist children.

The following handwashing practices should be followed by children and staff:

- Moisten hands with water and apply liquid soap to hands

- Rub hands together, away from the water stream, vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for a minimum of 20 seconds (children can sing "Row, row, row your boat," twice)

- Rinse hands, and dry with individual paper towels that are not shared

- The paper towel should be used to turn off the faucet when done

- Throw paper towels in the wastebasket

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

Facilities and Materials

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

Equipment

Programs should have the following developmentally appropriate equipment:

3-K and *Pre-K*:

- 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:

    ǧ A changing table/area that allows teaching staff to change children on an elevated, sanitary surface, without having to lift a child physically off the floor. The surface should be firm, non-absorbent, and easily cleanable

    ǧ A disposable covering for diaper changing counters to be changed after each use ǧ

    A source of running water

    ǧ 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.

Infant/Toddler

- An infant/toddler changing table that allows teaching staff to change children on an elevated, sanitary surface, without having to lift a child physically off the floor. The surface should be firm, non-absorbent, and easily cleanable. This can be located in the bathroom or in the classroom.

- Changing Table: Classrooms must have a table/area to change children's clothes and diapers without leaving the classroom.

  — This area must include:

    - A changing table/area that allows teaching staff to change children on an elevated, sanitary surface, without having to lift a child physically off the floor. The surface should be firm, non-absorbent, and easily cleanable

    - A disposable covering for diaper changing counters to 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.

<u>Materials</u>

Programs should have the following materials easily accessible to 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)
- Disposable gloves
- Sanitizing spray and towels to disinfect surfaces
- [Ointment Agreement](), if applicable
- Diapering log/chart for EarlyLearn (infant/toddler) providers
    — Log the number of wet diapers, bowel movements

Please note that program staff may request that families 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.

Additional Diapering Guidance

Recommended from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Prepare	Cover the diaper changing surface with disposable liner If you will use diaper cream, dispense it onto a tissue Bring your supplies (e.g., clean diaper, wipes, diaper cream, gloves, plastic or waterproof bag for soiled clothing, extra clothes) to the diapering area
Clean Child	Place the child on diapering surface and unfasten diaper Clean the child's diaper area with disposable wipes Always wipe front to back Keep soiled diaper/clothing away from any surfaces that cannot be easily cleaned Securely bag soiled clothing
Remove Trash	Place used wipes in the soiled diaper Discard the soiled diaper and wipes in the trash can Remove and discard gloves

Replace Diaper	Slide a fresh diaper under the child
	Apply diaper cream, if needed (with parent/guardian consent)
	Fasten the diaper and dress the child
Wash Child's Hands	Use soap and water to wash the child's hands thoroughly
	Return the child to a supervised area
Clean Up	Remove liner from the changing surface and discard in the trash can
	Wipe up any visible soil with damp paper towels or a baby wipe
	Wet the entire surface with disinfectant; make sure you read and follow the directions on the disinfecting spray, fluid, or wipe
	Choose disinfectant appropriate for the surface material
Wash Your Hands	Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water

The DECE Suggests:

- Providers should let infants know you notice that they need to be changed. Smile, chat lovingly, sing throughout the diaper change. As infants become older, having staff narrate their actions as well as the infant's actions throughout the diapering process will help the child develop an understanding of what is happening.

- 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)

Field Trips and Neighborhood Walks

Overview

Field trips are an instructional strategy used to provide children with hands-on opportunities to apply and deepen learning outside of the classroom. It is important that all New York City Department of Education (DOE) field trip policies are followed to ensure that children are safe and gain the most from any off-site experience. While field trips are encouraged, they are not required.

All field trips require written consent from families and should be planned to ensure the health, safety, and adequate supervision of all children at all times.

Field trips involving transportation are not permitted for Infant and Toddler children.

All field trips and neighborhood walks must:

- Contain an educational component supporting NYSPLS and the Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF), align with 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

    — Programs must budget for field trips in advance and identify all required funding in their proposed annual budget.

    — No child may be excluded from a trip.

    — Programs are responsible for providing meals and snacks.

Children requiring assistance may not be excluded from field trips or neighborhood walks. Programs should plan to support children with disabilities to participate in all activities.

Field Trips Involving Transportation for 3-K and Pre-K Children

If programs choose to transport children as a part of any trip, they are required to adhere to the following policies:

- All children 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.

    — Programs may not purchase car seats to use. Car seats must be provided and installed by the private bus operator.

    — Please note that the weight and size of children can vary substantially, resulting in significantly different Child Safety Restraint System (i.e., car seat) requirements.

- Programs are responsible for securing an appropriate bus vendor for field trips.

    — Programs are not entitled to use DOE Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT)-contracted buses for field trips.

    — Families cannot take their own child to a field trip destination.

- Programs may not provide more than three field trips involving transportation in a given program year. Extended Day and Year programs may offer up to two additional field trips on additional days.

- Under no circumstances may children utilize public transportation to get to or from an off-site location.

- Travel time for **3-K** services either to or from a field trip location must not exceed 45 minutes (one way).

- Travel time for **Pre-K** services either to or from a field trip location must not exceed one hour (one way).

- Transportation of children must be in compliance with all applicable federal, state, local, and DOE laws, rules, and regulations. There are NYS Department of Transportation rules and regulations, DOE 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, NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law 1229-c, and 45 C.F.R. Part F (for Head Start programs only).

  — If programs transport children with the program's own vehicle at any time, they must maintain Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance.

    - The Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance insures your program, program staff, and names as additional insureds the DOE 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 children at any time, you must ensure that the private company maintains Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance that meets the above requirements.

  — If the program retains another company to transport children at any time, they must ensure that the private company maintains Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance. Details of insurance are the same as the above bullet point.

    - 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 children.

- Any driver who has or may have the potential for any unsupervised contact with children 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.

- Programs must maintain a daily transportation log of children placed aboard vehicles documenting:

    — Names of children transported

    — Arrival and departure dates and times

    — Name(s) of transportation staff

    — Identifying information for transportation service

- Programs must maintain daily transportation logs and make them available for inspection by the DOHMH upon request.

The DOE recognizes that the updated car seat requirements may present logistical and funding challenges in arranging bus transportation for field trips. **The DECE strongly encourages programs to utilize neighborhood walks and push-in visitors as an alternative to field trips requiring transportation.**

- 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

<u>Approval from the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE)</u>

Prior to taking children on a field trip involving transportation, you must receive approval from your designated DECE Borough Office.

- To receive approval, you must submit a <u>Field Trip Authorization Form</u> 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 Vendor or Provider

    — ***3-K On**ly:* One Toileting Plan per field trip

        ğ Three-year-olds cannot wait long periods of time before using the bathroom. To that end, programs must develop a plan for addressing the toileting needs of children while on an off-site trip that includes:

            · When children will be provided opportunities to use the toilet.

            · How children 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)

            · Toileting procedures that meet all sanitation requirements.

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 children.

2. Notify proper authorities and your DECE Borough 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 children who were in their charge to other chaperones. The 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 family cannot be reached by phone. All programs must submit an Occurrence Report of any instances of injuries.

Neighborhood Walks

The DECE strongly encourages programs to utilize neighborhood walks to provide enriching opportunities for all children in Infant/Toddler, 3-K, and pre-K. Neighborhood walks are a valuable instructional strategy for deepening children's connections to the curriculum and the community. Teaching staff can use these opportunities to engage children 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

Health and Safety Considerations

• The distance of a walk should not exceed ½ mile (about 10 blocks) from your facility.

• Plan a walking route that is developmentally appropriate, takes into account feeding, nap, and diapering schedules, avoids large avenues, busy streets, or throughways.

• Ensure that children are accompanied at all times during a walk.

Parent/Legal Notice

If you plan to take children on a field trip involving transportation or a neighborhood walk **(field trips involving transportation are not permitted for EarlyLearn children)**, you must:

• Notify children's families at least two weeks in advance of any planned neighborhood walk or field trip

• Prior to each field trip, obtain written permission on a family consent form that includes, at a minimum, all information contained on the DOE Parent Notification/Consent Form

• If neighborhood walks are to take place on a regular basis (e.g., trips to an off-site playground), programs only need to collect one family consent form for neighborhood walks taking place at that location and indicate the proposed schedule of neighborhood walks on the consent form

Child Supervision

Programs must ensure that children are accompanied at all times during field trips and neighborhood walks. No child 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.

- Children should never be left unsupervised with an adult chaperone (e.g., a parent/guardian 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-child supervision ratios.

    — DECE will review all proposed staffing of field trips involving transportation. If needed, the DECE will contact you for additional information.

A system for maintaining accountability for children 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 children with a piece of clothing and/or other item that identifies and provides contact information for your program.

    — A child or family's name should not be included in the contact information.

    — Examples include:

        ğ T-shirts with the program name and contact information

        ğ Stickers displaying the program name and contact information Programs

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 children on field trips and incorporating these guidelines and procedures into the written safety plan(s).

- Accompanying children on field trips to improve accountability and lower the risk of leaving children 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 children 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 Child Emergencies

Upon a report that a child is missing, the responsible adult or trip coordinator will:

1. Designate the chaperone who will conduct the preliminary search and reassign that chaperone's children to another group and chaperones.

2. Concurrently notify security guards or supervisors at the site.

3. If, after the preliminary search the child is not found, all staff members not required for the immediate supervision of the other children must be called together and given information as to the lost child's last whereabouts. The entrances, exits, and insides of buildings must be checked, as well as the surrounding area.

4. If the above mentioned search is unsuccessful, the trip coordinator or designee must notify the police, giving a full description of the child: clothes, height, weight, hair color, and when last seen. The trip coordinator should notify the director, who will call the DECE Borough Office and/or their PSS, and notify the family. Also, the Child Abuse hotline (1-800-635-1522) must be called. All programs must submit an Occurrence Report of any instances of lost or missing children.

> 5. All Head Start programs must submit an Occurrence Report of any instances of lost or missing children. These incidents will be reported to the Office of Head Start. Head Start programs must comply with any requests for additional information or corrective action steps that result from this process.

First Aid

The New York City Health Code mandates that all staff with regular child contact must receive basic CPR and first aid training before providing services, and every two years thereafter.

In addition, 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 children are present. CPR and first aid (CPR/FA) certifications must be based on successful completion of training that includes hands-on skill tests, and must be appropriate to the ages of the children in care and be maintained on file for review. It is required that a staff member certified in CPR and first aid go on all trips.

VI. Instructional Programming

a.   Developmental Screening and Authentic Assessment

b.   Authentic Assessment

c.   Curriculum

d.   Daily Schedule for Children

e.   Nap and Rest

f.   Extending Learning to Home

g.   Report Cards

Developmental Screening and Authentic Assessment

By July 2024, all early childhood programs within the DECE portfolio will use a singular, developmental screener (Ages & Stages Questionnaire – ASQ 3), authentic child assessment system (Teaching Strategies GOLD), and curriculum (*The Creative Curriculum*). These specific tools are research-based, inclusive of the birth- to-five-year-old portfolio, ensure alignment between curriculum and assessment, support a two-way family communication system, and provide embedded professional development. Leaders have the option to choose for their early childhood programs to be in one of two cohorts:

- Cohort 1: Full-scale implementation in school year 2023-2024 of ASQ-3, GOLD, and *The Creative Curriculum*

- Cohort 2: Implementation of ASQ-3 in school year 2023-2024 and full-scale implementation of GOLD and *The Creative Curriculum* in school year 2024-2025

Programs in Cohort 2 that are shifting to full-scale implementation *of The Creative Curriculum* in school year 2024-2025 may continue to use a previously DECE approved curriculum during school year 2023-2024 except as described below. DECE is fully funding the purchase of all ASQ-3 and Teaching Strategies' assessment and curriculum materials (both digital access and print materials) for all early childhood education programs for Cohort 1's implementation in the 2023-2024 school year and for Cohort 2 in preparation for the following school year. Effective 2023-2024, DECE will no longer be centrally funding any other screening, assessment, and curricula.

All Head Start programs must also comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1302.33. The section below aligns with §1302.33's requirements

Developmental Screening

What You Need to Know

Developmental Screening Tools Overview

Developmental screening is a key part of a child's transition into your program. All Infant/Toddler, 3-K, and Pre-K programs must use the ASQ-3, a valid and reliable developmental screening tool, to support educators with informing and guiding critical supports and learning experiences for all children based on their individual strengths, interests, and needs.

Developmental screening is a snapshot, facilitated annually, within 45 days of a child's enrollment, to identify potential risks for developmental delays, and thereby, helping to inform appropriate resources, supports and/or interventions.

Screening Materials & Training

> Early Head Start and Head Start programs must also use Ages and Stages Questionnaires-Social Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ: SE-2). Please refer to the Head Start Program Performance Standards at 45 C.F.R. §1302.33 for more information about Head Start screening and assessment.

The DECE provides ASQ-3 materials to all programs. Programs that do not have ASQ-3 materials will receive the starter kit, which includes copy-ready print masters of the questionnaires and their scoring sheets, User Guides, and the Quick Start Guide. Programs that have previously received ASQ-3 materials may photocopy and reprint material

The DECE provides materials and training for the ASQ-3 tool; see the DECE Developmental Screening webpage for more information.

Key Requirements

- Programs must administer the ASQ-3 developmental screener to all children within 45 calendar days of enrollment.

- Developmental screenings do not have to be administered to children currently receiving Early Intervention services or preschool special education services.

- If a child's screening results indicate that they need to be rescreened for any reason, then it is required that they be rescreened between 56 - 70 calendar days following the initial screening.

- Children must be screened each school year.

- Programs should consider the needs and backgrounds of the children they are serving and ensure that the facilitation of the developmental screening is implemented using culturally, linguistically, and developmentally responsive methods.

If the screening is not available in a child's primary home language, see the information on Language Considerations on page 186.

Developmental Screening Timeline

Dates	Requirement
First Day of School	Send the Introduction to Developmental Screening letter to families, located on the [DECE Developmental Screening and Authentic Assessment webpage](#). Begin screening enrolled children.
45 Calendar Days from Enrollment	All children must be screened within 45 calendar days of enrollment.
21 Calendar Days from Screening	Screening outcomes are to be submitted via Pre-KIDS or the Vendor Portal within 21 days of each child's screening.
Between 56 and 70 Calendar Days from Screening	All children who were screened with an outcome indicating a need for rescreening must be rescreened in this two-week period.
After December 1st	All children enrolled after December 1st must be screened within 15 calendar days of enrollment. Screening outcomes for these children must be submitted within 21 calendar days of screening. If applicable, rescreening for these children must occur 8 to 10 weeks from the initial screening.

Staff Requirements

Leaders are responsible for ensuring that staff implementing the ASQ-3 questionnaires meet the following minimum requirements:

- Must complete self-paced training. Please see the [DECE Developmental Screening and Authentic Assessment webpage](#) for more information.

- Must create a screening plan for inviting families and caregivers to complete the ASQ-3 questionnaires. Note that questionnaires should be completed in partnership with families and caregivers. Family and caregiver input is critical, and the screening plan must include invitations for caregivers to participate.

Screening Results

Submitting Screening Outcomes

- All screening outcomes must be submitted to the DECE via PreKIDS or the Vendor Portal within 21 days of the screening.

  — For additional guidance about screening data submission, please refer to the guidance posted on the [DECE Developmental Screening and Authentic Assessment webpage](#).

- 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 Considerations

If a child speaks a language other than English, a program should use any resource available, such as a family member, qualified bilingual staff, translation line, or consultant to conduct the screening in partnership with the family. If there is no qualified bilingual staff, contractor, or consultant, the program must use an interpreter in conjunction with a qualified staff person. If there is no qualified bilingual staff, and no interpreter, then screenings may be conducted in English. Questions can be restated and rephrased to improve comprehension. Be sure to maintain the intent of the item.

If the screening is not available in a child's home language, and you have exhausted all other resources, programs may mark a language exception for the child in the Portal. Programs should work to provide the child with language support and instruction.

For more information, see the DECE Developmental Screening and Authentic Assessment webpage.

• For Head Start programs, screenings must be valid and reliable for the population for which they will be used and be culturally and linguistically appropriate. If a child speaks a language other than English, a program must use qualified bilingual staff, contractor, or consultant to assess language skills in English and the home language, and for domains other than language skills, in the language that best captures development and skills. Staff conducting screenings must know and understand the home language and have sufficient skill to accurately administer the screening. If there is no qualified bilingual staff, contractor, or consultant, the program must use an interpreter in conjunction with a qualified staff person. If there is no qualified bilingual staff, and no interpreter, then screenings may be conducted in English. The program must also gather and use other information in evaluating the child's development. Please refer to the Head Start Program Performance Standards at 45 C.F.R. §1302.33 for more information about language considerations.

- • You must use authentic assessment to monitor ongoing developmental progression and provide the child with language support throughout the school year.

Referrals

Families/caregivers and programs can use developmental screening scores to help determine potential referrals. Referral cutoffs are available in the ASQ-3's user manual and are differentiated by age. Methods of referral are at the discretion of the site leader.

- If a child scores below the referral cutoff on the ASQ-3, families/caregivers and programs should work together to collect information, support the child, and determine next steps. If, after implementing a variety of strategies and/or supports, programs and/or families/caregivers still have concerns regarding a child's progress and believe that they may need additional support, the family/caregiver can make a referral for special education services. Please see DECE Developmental Screening and Authentic Assessment webpage for more information.

> • For Head Start programs, if warranted through screening and additional information and with direct guidance from a mental health or child development professional and parent/guardian consent, the program must promptly and appropriately address any needs identified through referral for formal evaluation. If a child is determined to be eligible for services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the program must partner with families and Early Intervention for children younger than three or the Committee on Preschool Education (CPSE) for children aged three and four and deliver services. If a child is determined not to be eligible for services under IDEA, the program must seek guidance to determine if the formal evaluation shows the child has a significant delay, and if so, partner with the family/caregiver to help access services and support. Please refer to the Head Start Program Performance Standards at 45 C.F.R. §1302.33 for more information about referrals.

Communicating with Families

Prior to Screening

All families must receive the Introduction to Developmental Screening letter prior to any screening beginning at your program, which can be found on the DECE Developmental Screening and Authentic Assessment webpage.

- Translated letters in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu can be found on the DECE Developmental Screening and Authentic Assessment webpage. In response to this letter, families and caregivers may opt out of developmental screening.

- Programs should also use this opportunity to complete the Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile Protocol (EMLLPP) to gain valuable information about Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLLs), promote strong instructional and family engagement practices, and strengthen the language and literacy development of children in their home language and in English. Families are not required to complete the EMLLPP home language survey and may opt out if they choose to. Please be sure to share the benefits of participation and assure families that any information collected will be strictly confidential and will only be used by teaching teams to inform instruction in the classroom.

After Screening

Methods of communicating screening and rescreening results are at the discretion of the Education Director of your program.

Authentic Assessment

The purpose of authentic assessment is to learn, understand, and meet the needs of all children. Authentic assessment provides educators with a system to provide ongoing support of children's developmental progress across all domains of learning to inform instruction throughout the program year.

What You Need to Know

Authentic Assessment Overview

Early childhood programs 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 supports teaching teams to gather information about children's development during everyday activities through observation notes, photos, and work samples that capture a child's developmental progress across all domains of learning. By utilizing authentic assessment, teaching staff deepen their shared understanding of children's development and learning to inform instruction and family engagement. Please note that traditional standardized tests must never be administered to children. Children should only be assessed utilizing approved authentic assessment systems and approved developmental screenings.

Authentic assessment is an ongoing process that provides information about children's growth and development over time. This data collection cycle continuously informs individual and group learning experiences.

For the 2023-2024 school year, the DECE-approved authentic assessment systems include:

- Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG), available for use with infants, toddlers, 3-year-olds, and 4-year-olds

- COR Advantage, available for use with children in infant, toddler, 3-year-old and 4-year-old classrooms

- Ounce, available for use with infants and toddlers, along with Work Sampling System (WSS), available for use with children in 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds

Please note: By July 2024, all programs will be required to use Teaching Strategies GOLD, which will be the singular authentic assessment system citywide. DECE will continue to provide all programs with digital access, required materials, and professional learning for Teaching Strategies GOLD and no other assessment other systems.

Authentic assessment systems support teachers to:
- Strategically collect observational data and children work samples
- Analyze that information along a developmental continuum
- Plan instruction that is responsive to the needs of an individual child and groups of children
- Inform family engagement practices

The DECE provides online subscriptions and resources to assist teachers in authentic assessment work. Your program must use the same authentic assessment system across all classrooms.

The DECE-approved authentic assessment systems include:

- Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG), available for use with children in infant, toddler, 3-year-old and 4-year-old classrooms

- COR Advantage, available for use with children in infant, toddler, 3-year-old and 4-year-old classrooms

- Ounce, available for use with children in infant and toddler classrooms, along with Work Sampling System (WSS), available for use with children in 3-year-old and 4-year-old classrooms

By September 2024, all programs will have shifted to using Teaching Strategies GOLD, which will be the singular authentic assessment system citywide. DECE will provide materials and professional learning for Teaching Strategies GOLD and will not provide materials for other systems.

Teaching Strategies GOLD has been selected to support teachers in observing children's skills and behavior, documenting and analyzing that data, and continually supporting children with informed, differentiated instruction across vital early learning domains. The platform allows educators to capture, organize, and store notes, photos, videos, and digital samples of children's work.

Please note: Teaching Strategies GOLD aligns with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF) and the New York State Prekindergarten Learning Standards (NYSPLS).

Assessment Requirements

Authentic assessment data consists of low-inference notes and high-quality work samples (including photographs).

Lead teachers are responsible for inputting the authentic assessment data. Paraprofessionals/teaching assistants can assist with collecting children's work samples and observations as well as the uploading of most authentic child portfolio items under the direction of the lead teacher and through the lead teacher account. Please discuss with your teaching team how paraprofessionals may work together to support authentic assessment work.

Authentic assessment data must be used to develop:

- Child Portfolios

    — Teachers must:

    - Take low-inference notes and collect work samples regularly throughout the program year. Please note, teaching staff may not use personal cell phones or other personal devices to document a child's observations and work samples. Programs should provide appropriate technology for each classroom to support teaching staff with documenting children's learning and work products.

    - Align child portfolio items to the authentic assessment system domains and indicators.

    — Child 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 child portfolio items to assess each child'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. 12-month programs have the opportunity, but are not required, to complete a fourth Checkpoint during the summer.

    - Use the data to individualize practice and set goals that address the needs of each child.

    — Developmental Summary Reports are stored online and in the child's cumulative folder.

The DECE recommends that leaders meet regularly with teaching staff to:

- Review child portfolio items and children's developmental progress.

- Use children's developmental progress to inform ongoing instruction and support.

Additionally, teachers should communicate children's developmental progress to families regularly and during family-teacher conferences.

- Programs should refer families to the Authentic Assessment: Measuring My Child's Growth and Development letter for additional information on authentic assessment. Please see the [DECE Developmental Screening and Authentic Assessment webpage](#) for more information.

- *For more information on how to communicate about authentic assessment with families, see the Comprehensive Services chapter of the Handbook.*

For Head Start programs, please refer to the [Head Start Program Performance Standards](#) at 45 C.F.R. §1302.33 for more information about conducting authentic assessments and using data for continuous improvement.

Learning Standards and Curriculum

All instruction in early childhood classrooms must be grounded in age-appropriate learning standards.

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF)

Infant/Toddler, 3-K, and all Head Start classrooms must use the [Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF)](#) to understand and facilitate children's learning and development.

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 programs must foster in children from ages birth to five and outlines the expected developmental progress in each central domain. These domains are aligned with the holistic domains of learning and development in the NYSPLS, which programs must use in their Pre-K classrooms.

New York State Prekindergarten Learning Standards (NYSPLS)

Pre-K classrooms must use the [New York State Prekindergarten Learning Standards (NYSPLS)](#) to understand and facilitate children's learning and development. The NYSPLS consolidates all learning standards for four-year-old children into one document. This is the updated version of the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core Learning Standards, published in 2012. The NYSPLS offers a uniform format for learning standards across all developmental domains. These domains are aligned with the holistic domains of learning and development in the ELOF, which programs must use in their Infant/Toddler and 3-K classrooms.

Curriculum

By July 2024, all early childhood programs within the DECE portfolio will use a singular, developmental screener (Ages & Stages Questionnaire – ASQ 3), authentic child assessment system (Teaching Strategies GOLD), and curriculum (*The Creative Curriculum*). These specific tools are research-based, inclusive of the birth- to-five-year-old portfolio, ensure alignment between curriculum and assessment, support a two-way family communication system, and provide embedded professional development. Leaders have the option to choose for their early childhood programs to be in one of two cohorts:

- Cohort 1: Full-scale implementation in school year 2023-2024 of ASQ-3, GOLD, and *The Creative Curriculum*

- Cohort 2: Implementation of ASQ-3 in school year 2023-2024 and full-scale implementation of GOLD and *The Creative Curriculum* in school year 2024-2025

What You Need to Know

Curriculum Overview

The Creative Curriculum is a research-based, whole-child curriculum that serves children from infancy through kindergarten. Rooted in exploration and discovery as a way of learning, the curriculum supports educators in developing children's confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical-thinking skills. It is designed to help educators at all levels of experience plan and implement a developmentally appropriate, content-rich program for children with diverse backgrounds and skill levels. It also comes with a suite of resources to engage families in their child's learning at school and at home.

Programs in Cohort 2 that are shifting to full-scale implementation of Teaching Strategies GOLD and *The Creative Curriculum* in school year 2024-25 may choose to use previously approved DECE curriculum described below during school year 2023-2024. DECE is fully funding the purchase of all ASQ-3 and Teaching Strategies' assessment and curriculum materials (both digital access and print materials) for all early childhood education programs for cohort one's implementation for the 2023-24 school year and for cohort two in preparation for the following school year. Effective 2023-2024, DECE will no longer be centrally funding any other screening, assessment, and curricula:

- **Connections: Infant and Toddler Curriculum for Responsive Care** – a curriculum designed to guide caregivers in supporting infant and toddler development through the practice of responsive caregiving.

  The use of Units of Study: Instructional Guidance for Pre-K and Explorations: Instructional Guidance for 3-K is <u>not</u> applicable or appropriate for infant and toddler classrooms.

- **Explorations: Instructional Guidance for 3-K** – a curriculum designed to provide interdisciplinary instructional opportunities for program staff, children, and families to connect, explore materials, and learn together.

  The use of Connections: Infant and Toddler Curriculum for Responsive Care and Units of Study: Instructional Guidance for Pre-K is <u>not</u> applicable or appropriate for 3-K classrooms.

- **Units of Study: Instructional Guidance for Pre-K** - supports learning in all domains using developmentally appropriate practice for pre-K classrooms, providing opportunities for teachers to tailor the content to the interests and needs of the children in their class.

  The use of Connections: Infant and Toddler Curriculum for Responsive Care and Explorations: Instructional Guidance for 3-K is <u>not </u>applicable or appropriate for Pre-K classrooms.

Holiday Guidance

Incorporating Seasonal Holiday Celebrations in Early Childhood Programming

The Division of Early Childhood Education does not require early childhood programs to celebrate or acknowledge holidays. As you determine whether or how your program will celebrate holidays, it is the responsibility of your program's leadership and staff to be sensitive to the impact of holiday celebrations on all our city's families. This includes being aware of and sensitive to the significance of seasonal observances and religious holidays as you work to foster mutual understanding and respect for your community's diverse religious, racial, ethnic, and cultural heritages. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that early childhood programs are culturally responsive to the many values, perspectives, faiths, backgrounds, and traditions in our communities, and affirm learners' identities as we celebrate.

The following resources can be helpful when making thoughtful decisions about whether and how to celebrate holidays at your program:

- NAEYC, https://www.naeyc.org/resources/blog/anti-bias-and-holidays

- *Holidays and Anti-Bias Education, Being Thoughtful and Creative,* http://www.antibiasleadersece.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Holidays-and-ABE-Bisson-Derman-Sparks.pdf

- Chapter 4: *Tourist Curriculum Is Hazardous to Growing Children* in <u>Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves</u> by Louis Derman Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards

If you recognize holidays in your classrooms, it will be important to ensure that holiday displays, celebrations, and activities embrace diversity and do not reinforce harmful stereotypes or make families feel unwelcome and unseen. Please also be mindful that early childhood programs may not endorse or promote a particular religion or belief system. Therefore, please ensure that you adhere to the following guidelines regarding the display of cultural and holiday symbols:

- The primary purpose of any displays should be to promote accurate and factual understanding and respect for the rights of all individuals regarding their beliefs, values, and customs.

- The display of holiday symbol decorations with secular dimensions is permitted. Permitted symbols include, but are not limited to, Christmas trees, kinaras, dreidels, menorahs, and the star and crescent. Displays that depict images of deities, other religious figures, or religious texts are prohibited.

- Holiday displays must not appear to promote or celebrate any single religion or holiday. Therefore, any permitted symbol or decoration must be displayed simultaneously with other symbols or decorations reflecting different beliefs or customs. All holiday displays should be temporary in nature.

Celebrating holidays can support children to develop a positive self-image and social identity when planned thoughtfully. However, early childhood programs need to ensure that celebrations do not perpetuate harmful stereotypes or historical inaccuracies, or make children, families or staff feel unwelcome or unseen.

It is critical for children to see themselves represented in any celebration you engage in. This can be a driver in how you plan for meaningful interactions with the children in your program. To inform your planning, you should:

- Consider creating new traditions in which all children and families can participate. You might also invite families to share their home traditions to help you ensure representation in everything you do.

- Ensure that all information shared with children and families is accurate, factual, and takes into account multiple perspectives about historical events.

- Plan celebrations that are culturally responsive and affirming of children's identities, do not perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and do not appropriate the cultural practices of marginalized groups.

- Spend time with staff to reflect on and address any impacts of structural racism and implicit bias on the program.

For example, if you are thinking about creating activities or having discussions around Thanksgiving, consider teaching about topics that children can make connections to and represents their identity, such as the value of family and how family-style meals promote opportunities to build community and positive social/group identities. It is also important to share accurate information regarding Thanksgiving. For example, acknowledging that New York is native to various indegenious tribes. You can type in your program's zip code here to accurately learn about the history of the land we are on. Additionally, the language used to celebrate is critical and must be respectful for all. This may look like, "Honoring Our Families" get-togethers; "Thanking the People Who Make Our School Work" (cook, janitor, bus driver, etc.) days; or occasions for "Recognizing Family and Neighborhood Heroes."

By incorporating these considerations into our programming, NYC's early childhood programs can advance the vision of the Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ) and NYSED's Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education Framework by providing care and education in settings that are safe, healthy, nurturing and responsive for all children and families.

The DOE requires early childhood programs to provide equal opportunity to all enrolled children and families, and does not tolerate discrimination towards any class of people protected by federal, state, or local law. For additional guidance, please see Chancellor's Regulation A-830. DOE-funded early childhood programs may not promote or endorse a particular religion or belief system.

If you have questions regarding this policy, please contact your program's DECE support team (instructional coordinator, social worker and/or policy support specialist) or email earlychildhoodpolicy@schools.nyc.gov.

Daily Schedule for Children

Overview

During program hours, you must offer activities which are culturally responsive, appropriate to the age level and individual needs of children, and that build on children's interests, backgrounds, and ideas for learning. Activities provided should support the development of skills and knowledge described in the age-appropriate standards and adhere to the corresponding guiding principles.

All Head Start programs must also comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), including 45 C.F.R. §1302.31(e). The section below aligns with §1302.31(e).

EarlyLearn (Infant and Toddler) Classrooms

Daily Schedule Requirements

While the DECE does not mandate that your program follow a specific schedule, your program must offer each of the required daily activities listed below. Please review the information to ensure that your program provides the required activities for the appropriate amount of time (where applicable).

All daily activities represented are aligned with key age-appropriate Environment Rating Scale requirements and should advance children's learning and development as described in the ELOF.

Infant Six Weeks-12 Months

Activity	Recommended Length
Greeting Routine/ Arrival	There is not a specific length of time recommended for any part of an infant day. **Infants' schedules should be individualized** and made at the beginning of each day. Each infant's eating and sleeping schedule should be made according to family reporting and their natural sleeping and eating cycles.
Feeding	Caregivers should plan for diaper changing at regular intervals throughout the day, and as necessary. Diapers should be visually inspected at least every 2 hours.
Diaper Changing	Indoor and outdoor play activities should be planned according to the infant's interests and to advance developmental growth. These activities can be done between or during caretaking routines. Caregivers should pay attention to infant's cues such as eye avoidance, turning their head away, crying, etc. to tell them when an infant is no longer interested in an activity.
Sleeping	
Playing	Caregivers should use opportunities during caretaking routines, such as diaper changes and feeding, to engage with the infant and support their developmental growth.

Young and Older Toddler (8 or 10 hour day)

Activity	Recommended Length
Snack and Meal Time	15 minutes for snack and 20-30 minutes for meals • To facilitate learning, meals should be served in an environment conducive to interaction between staff and children. — Provision of snacks can be integrated into center time • For more information on snack and meal time (e.g., sanitary practices), see the Meal Services section of the Handbook. Younger toddlers may need to be fed based on their individual needs and should have multiple opportunities to eat. These should be incorporated into the schedule and met on an individual basis. Meals should be planned no longer than 3 hours apart. Children must have access to water throughout the day.
Nap and Rest Time	120 minutes and allowing for young children's natural sleep cycles. Naps should meet the needs of the children. Children should be allowed to sleep or rest whenever they are tired.
Gross Motor Time	A minimum of 60 minutes (including transitions) of Gross Motor Time. Two 30 minute periods can be provided.
Free Choice Time	240 minutes of Free Choice Time (should not be offered all at one time).
Music and Movement	A maximum of 10 minutes a day, including transitions. Music materials should be accessible throughout the day.
Whole Group (Circle Time/ Story Time)	A maximum of two meetings per day lasting a maximum of 10 minutes each. *This is inclusive of transition time.* Children should have the option to opt out of meeting time and there should be additional activities available.

Sample Schedules

While the DECE does not mandate that your program follow a specific schedule, the sample schedules below can be utilized to guide the development of your infant and toddler classroom schedules. These schedules are recommendations and are not intended to be mandated schedules.

EARLY LEARN Infants Six Weeks-12 Months Sample Schedule

There is not a sample schedule for infants since everything is individualized. Rather, programs are expected to create opportunities throughout the day for both indoor and outdoor activities that build on the developmental milestones and interests of the child, while also meeting the needs of the infant.

Young & Older Toddlers (beginning at 12 months) Sample Schedule

Time - 10 hour day	Time - 8 hour day	Activity - 10 hour day
40 minutes (approx. 20-30 minutes for meal)	40 minutes (approx. 20-30 minutes for meal)	Arrival Activities/Greeting Routine/Diaper Check/Handwashing/Breakfast (no more than 3 hours between meals)
90 minutes	65 minutes	Free Choice Time
10 minutes	10 minutes	Music and Movement
20 minutes	20 minutes	Handwashing/Snack (no more than 3 hours between meals)
50 minutes	30 minutes	Gross Motor Time
20-30 minutes	20-30 minutes	Handwashing/Lunch (no more than 3 hours between meals)
15 minutes	15 minutes	Diapering/Toileting and Handwashing **Head Start programs must incorporate toothbrushing.**
120 minutes	120 minutes	Nap/Rest Time (and according to children's natural sleep cycle)
20 minutes	20 minutes	Diapering/Toileting and Handwashing/Snack
90 minutes	65 minutes	Free Choice Time
50 minutes	30 minutes	Gross Motor Time
15 minutes	15 minutes	Diapering/Toileting and Handwashing
15 minutes	15 minutes	Snack (no more than 3 hours between meals)
35 minutes	35 minutes	Free Choice Time/Departure

Free Choice Activities

During Free Choice Time, infants and toddlers should have daily opportunities to explore materials and interact with peers and adults. When considering activities, be sure to avoid choking hazards. The tables below offer examples of recommended age-appropriate free choice activities.

Infants Six Weeks-12 Months

Examples of Recommended Activities
Infants' schedules should incorporate many opportunities for play throughout the day. The examples below are appropriate for infants ranging from six weeks-12 months. Select activities to implement based on your observations of the infants, paying careful attention to development and interests of individual infants. • Put the infant on the floor and ensure overhead lights are dimmed or not shining in their eyes. Hold an object so the baby can see it, but not too close to their face. Slowly move the object side to side and back and forth while calmly saying the infant's name. See if the child follows the object either with their eyes or with a head turn while you move it. • Sing a song and gently clap the infant's hands together to the rhythm. Stop if the infant shows any signs of distress. • Hold the baby and read a book with them. If possible, select a book that includes high contrast and black and white illustrations. Ensure that they can see the pages. • Provide a variety of instruments or materials that can make different sounds. Invite the baby to explore with you. • Create a small ramp and provide an assortment of balls. Invite the baby to explore how to make the balls roll down the ramp. Demonstrate how the balls can roll down the ramp, then give a ball to the baby and let them try. • Use a mirror to play peek-a-boo with the baby. Hide their body parts and then reveal them with phrases such as, "Peek-a-boo! I see [baby's name]'s eyes!" and pointing to their eyes in the mirror. • Provide a baby doll and a few items for baby care such as a bottle and a blanket. Model a couple of ways to use the items to care for the baby and then let the baby explore. • Invite the baby to engage in water play. Provide a few simple objects (e.g., cups and scoops) for the baby to explore.

Young & Older Toddlers (beginning at 12 months)

Content Area	Examples of Recommended Activities
Art	Provide materials that children can use for creative expression through various artistic media and representations. Sample materials can include: • Crayons/markers • Paints • Three-dimensional materials • Recycled and natural materials • Tools for exploration
Music and Movement	• Opportunities for children to experiment with instruments, musical toys, or rattles • Opportunities to listen to recorded music; finger plays/clapping to a rhythm; singing songs; movement/dance
Math and Manipulatives	• Opportunities to explore puzzles of varying shapes and difficulties for manipulation, reasoning, and problem solving • Opportunities to explore 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 • Opportunities to explore connecting toys for manipulating and building fine-motor skills
Block Play	• Opportunities to explore the properties of blocks, how they feel and look, and the effects of physical forces like gravity and weight • Opportunities to explore materials to support block play: trucks, cars, etc.
Nature/Science	• Opportunities to explore properties of sand and water • Opportunities to dig and pour with various size containers and tools • Opportunities to explore the natural world (go for a walk outdoors, fish or plant in classroom, talk about outdoor plants and animals that can be seen from classroom) • Opportunities to explore materials that support toddlers' understanding of nature/science concepts (books, toys, pictures)

Content Area	Examples of Recommended Activities
Library and Literacy	• Utilizing the library independently and with teaching teams • Opportunities to explore class-made books on shared experiences • Opportunities to explore materials to support language and literacy: magnet surface and large magnet pieces, puppets, stuffed animals • Access to writing materials in appropriate areas
Relaxation and Comfort	• Using a cozy corner for alone time • Relaxing on soft toys or furnishings with transitional objects, as needed • Looking through books on a soft rug with throw pillows • Opportunities to explore quiet activities in a comfortable space
Dramatic Play	• Opportunities to explore child-size kitchens, dishes, and other items related to homes and care-taking • Opportunities to explore items that relate to children's lives: stethoscope, train conductor, MetroCards, dresses, ties, glasses • Opportunities to explore activities and materials where children can see themselves and their home culture reflected • Opportunities to explore fantasy play such as stuffed animals, animals costumes, open-ended fabric pieces

3-K and *Pre-K* Daily Schedule Requirements

Children learn best when they have the opportunity to work independently and in a variety of group settings facilitated by teachers. High-quality daily schedules offer children opportunities for individual, small, and whole group learning through a balance of child and adult-initiated activities. Daily program schedules must include a variety of both child and adult-initiated activities that are appropriate to the age levels and individual needs of each child and advance child learning and development.

Additionally, your program's daily schedule must be:

- Shared with families during the application and enrollment period. This supports them in making informed choices during enrollment.

- Shared with families during family orientation or welcome events and should be prominently posted in the classroom for reference.

- Displayed prominently in the classroom at a child's eye level, using both words and pictures to describe activities.

While the DECE does not mandate that your program follow a specific schedule, your program must offer each of the required daily activities listed in the following pages. This list includes recommended lengths for each activity based on full and half-day schedules. All daily activities represented are aligned with key Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Third Edition (ECERS-3) requirements and should advance child learning and development as described in the ELOF and NYSPLS standards. According to the ECERS-3 tool, high-quality programs prioritize offering children daily free play activities, with a variety of materials, for at least one-third of the day, as well as time outdoors for gross motor play in the morning and afternoon. This means that during any given three-hour period (both in the morning and afternoon), children have at least one hour of center time and at least 30 minutes of outdoor gross motor play.

Please review the following information to ensure that your program provides the required activities at the appropriate activity lengths, noting the separate tables for 3-K and pre-K schedules.

Activity	Recommended Length (Including Transitions)
Snack and Meal Time	School Day and Year programs: Approximately 30 minutes for meals and 15 minutes for snacks (unless snack/breakfast is integrated into other activities) Extended Day and Year programs: Approximately 30 minutes for meals and 15 minutes for snacks (unless snack/breakfast is integrated into other activities) A meal/snack should be made available during additional hours (time after Core Hours) Half-day programs: Approximately 30 minutes for meals and up to 15 minutes for snacks

Activity	Recommended Length (Including Transitions)
Nap and Rest Time	<u>School Day and Year programs:</u> Approximately 45-60 minutes allowing for individual differences <u>Extended Day and Year programs:</u> Approximately 70-80 minutes allowing for individual differences Should offer additional rest time/quiet time after their Core Hours
Gross Motor Time	<u>School Day and Year programs:</u> Minimum of 60 minutes per day (two 30-minute periods offered in the morning and the afternoon) <u>Extended Day and Year programs:</u> Minimum of 60 minutes per day (two 30-minute periods offered in the morning and the afternoon) <u>Half-day programs:</u> Minimum of 20 minutes per day
Center Time	<u>School Day and Year programs:</u> Minimum of 2 hours and 20 minutes required per day <u>Extended Day and Year programs:</u> Minimum of 2 hours and 40 minutes required per day (8 hr programs) Minimum of 3 hrs and 20 min (10 hr programs) <u>Half-day programs:</u> Minimum of 60 minutes required per day Reminder: This is inclusive of transition time Two periods of center time are recommended for all program settings
Whole Group (Meeting/ Circle Time)	<u>All full-day programs:</u> At least two meetings per day lasting a maximum of 15 minutes each for pre-K At least two meetings per day lasting a maximum of 10 minutes each for 3-K <u>Half-day programs:</u> At least one meeting per day lasting a maximum of 15 minutes Reminder: This is inclusive of transition time

Sample Schedule

While the DECE does not mandate that your program follow a specific schedule, the sample schedules below can be utilized to guide the development of your *3-K* and *Pre-K* program schedules.

When developing your schedule, keep in mind the following general notes:

- Transition time will vary depending on the space and number of children

- Consider alternating active and less active times

- Email deceinstruction@ schools.nyc.gov for more information on how to align daily schedules with ECERS-3

Core Day 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.

Pre-K SDY	*3-K* SDY	Activity
20 minutes	20 minutes	Arrival Activities/Greeting Routine/Breakfast
20 minutes	10 minutes	Large Group Meeting (including transitions in and out of the activity)
75 minutes	70 minutes	Center Time/Small Group
10 minutes	10 minutes	Clean-Up/Handwashing (including transition in/out of activity)
30 minutes	30 minutes	Gross Motor Play (with age-appropriate equipment)
30 minutes	40 minutes	Lunch (family style)/Toileting/Handwashing
10 minutes	10 minutes	Story Time
45 minutes	60 minutes	Nap/Rest Time (including transition in/out of activity)
75 minutes	70 minutes	Center Time/Small Group
20 minutes	20 minutes	Clean-up/Handwashing/Snack (including transition in/out activity)
30 minutes	30 minutes	Gross Motor Play (with age-appropriate equipment)
15 minutes	10 minutes	Closing Meeting/Dismissal

3-K for All and *Pre-K for All* Extended Day and Year Programs

Extended Day and Year programs must include additional time for meals, rest, and gross motor play. Please refer to the DECE infohub page on Beginning the Year for sample Extended Day and Year schedules.

Half-Day *Pre-K* Programs

The following sample *Pre-K* schedule is based on a 2 hour and 30-minute day. The schedule is a recommendation and is <u>not</u> intended to be a mandated schedule.

Time	Activity
25 minutes	Arrivals/Greetings/Breakfast (includes time for handwashing and cleanup)
10 minutes	Meeting/Circle Time #1
60 minutes	Center Time/Small Group (includes 10 minutes for clean-up and transitions)
30 minutes	Outdoor Play (includes 10 minutes for transition time)
10 minutes	Toileting and Handwashing
15 minutes	Circle Time #2/Debrief meeting/Prepare for dismissal

Center Time Activities

3-K Programs

During center time children 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.

Content Area	Examples of Recommended Activities
Art	• Painting/drawing • Using three-dimensional materials • Making collages • Modeling with play dough Staff should provide materials that children can use for creative expression through various artistic media and representations.

Content Area	Examples of Recommended Activities
Music and Movement	• Experimenting with instruments • Dancing • Exercising to music (e.g., yoga, Zumba) • Acting out the content of songs • Opportunities to listen to recorded music
Nature, Science & Discovery	• Using magnifying glasses to investigate the properties of natural materials • Exploring natural materials (e.g., rocks, leaves, shells) according to various characteristics (be mindful of choking hazards) • Exploring vocabulary and information through senses (e.g., soft/hard, wet/dry) • Planting a garden and caring for it • Reading science books
Math and Manipulatives	• Opportunities to explore puzzles of varying shapes and difficulties for manipulation, reasoning, and problem solving • Opportunities to explore 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 • Opportunities to explore connecting toys for manipulating and building fine-motor skills
Block Play	• Opportunities to explore and create three-dimensional structures, experiencing the effects of physical forces like gravity and weight • Opportunities to explore materials to support block play (e.g., trucks, cars, signs, etc.) • Opportunities to have conversations about the structures they created, including the relevance to their lived experiences, and any related mathematical and physical concepts

Content Area	Examples of Recommended Activities
Computer	• Using technology to do research, gather information, or play developmentally appropriate learning games on: 　— Computers 　— Tablets 　— iPads 　— Interactive whiteboards See page 208 for additional information on the use of technology tools.
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 explore music • Exploring class-made books on shared experiences • Exploring materials to support language and literacy: writing utensils, flannel/magnetic storyboards, puppets Library and listening activities may be separate or combined literacy centers, depending on classroom size and set-up. If these centers are combined, headphones should be used in the listening center so it does not cause interruption to children who wish to look at books. Drawing/writing explorations should be integrated within centers.
Relaxation and Comfort	• Using a cozy corner for a child's private time • Relaxing on soft toys or furnishings with transitional objects, as needed • Looking through books on bean bags • Exploring quiet activities in a comfortable space
Dramatic Play	• Exploring with child-size kitchens, dishes, and other items related to homes and care-taking • Exploring dress-up clothes and materials that can be used to reflect a variety of professions and genders • Playing with a pretend register and/or store supplies

Content Area	Examples of Recommended Activities
Art	• Painting/drawing • Using three-dimensional materials • Making collages • Modeling with clay/play dough Staff should provide materials that children can use for creative expression through various artistic media and representations.
Music and Movement	• Experimenting with instruments • Dancing • Exercising to music (e.g., yoga, Zumba) • Acting out the content of songs
Nature, Science & Discovery	• Using magnifying glasses to investigate the properties of natural materials • Sorting natural materials (e.g., rocks, leaves, shells) according to various characteristics • Completing a weather chart with teacher support • Planting a garden and caring for it • Reading science books
Math and Manipulatives	• Offering puzzles of varying shapes and difficulties for manipulation, reasoning, and problem-solving • 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 • Providing small connecting toys for manipulating and building fine-motor skills • 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.)

Content Area	Examples of Recommended Activities
Block Play	• Building structures related to the current unit • Encouraging children to build structures that reflect their neighborhood • Talking with children about the spaces they created • Using materials to support block play (e.g., trucks, cars, signs, etc.)

Computer	• Doing research, gathering information, or playing developmentally appropriate learning games on:
	
	    — Computers
	    — Tablets
	    — iPads
	    — Interactive whiteboards
	
	See page 208 for additional information on the use of technology tools.

Sand and Water	• Digging and pouring • Conducting sink and float experiments • Having children observe how many teaspoons of sand or water are needed to fill various measuring cups • Encouraging children to make patterns in the sand
Literacy Centers	• Utilizing the library with books for children to read or for the teacher to read aloud • Listening to books and music • Making books from child work • Providing materials to support language and literacy: writing utensils, flannel/magnetic storyboards, puppets Literacy centers are inclusive of library and listening centers, which may be separate or combined depending on classroom size and set-up. Listening centers should include headphones. Writing activities should be integrated within centers.
Relaxation and Comfort	• Using a cozy corner for a child's private time • Lounging on soft toys or furnishings • Reading on bean bags • Conducting quiet activities in a comfortable space

Content Area	Examples of Recommended Activities
Dramatic Play	• Pretending with child-size kitchens • Playing with dress-up clothes and materials that can be used to reflect a variety of professions and genders • Playing with a pretend register and/or store supplies Children can develop the dramatic play area to align with 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.).

Transitions

Transitions occur when children switch from one activity period to another activity. Staff should establish routines yet remain flexible, maximizing children's engagement in their learning and creating smooth transitions between portions of the day.

• Providers must ensure that staff handles transitions between activities in a developmentally appropriate way. Suggestions include:

— Reviewing norms and routines prior to each transition

— Giving children 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 children

— Scheduling transitions so that only a few children transition at a time (when appropriate)

— Engaging children with a developmentally appropriate, short activity if they transition at different paces

— Ensuring wait times during the transition are less than 1-2 minutes and that children remain consistently engaged

— Allowing for children to transition in smaller groups, rather than having the whole group wait for everyone else

— Adjusting transition times to reflect the needs of individual children

— Using 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

— Having children participate in getting things ready for the next activity, as appropriate

Use of Technology Tools

Infants and Toddlers under 2:

Children under the age of 2 years old should not be exposed to technology during the program day. Please note, a child with an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) requiring assistive technology is exempt from this requirement.

Toddlers over 2 years, 3-K and pre-K:

Children's 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 children's learning experiences. Technology may be used to extend children's knowledge of curricular content through interactive activities.

- Children's use of technology tools must be limited to <u>no more than 15 minutes per day and no more than 30 minutes per week.</u>

    — A child 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 should support hands-on learning and creative expression. Consider the classroom content, strengths, preferences, experiences, linguistic diversity, and needs of the children 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 children, their peers, and teachers. Children should not be isolated from peers or teachers while using technology or interactive media.

- Lead teachers and paraprofessionals should supervise and engage with children when they are using technology tools.

Outdoor Play Policies

Infants and Toddlers:

In addition to the following considerations for *3-K* and *Pre-K* on the next page, when determining an outdoor play policy for infants and toddlers, consider how outdoor play for immobile, crawling or unsteady walkers may be impeded by weather conditions such as snow, ice or water, or weather-appropriate clothing. If these conditions will not allow infants and toddlers to engage in active and free play, teaching teams should consider alternatives to outdoor activities.

_3-K_ and _Pre-K_:

When developing a policy for outdoor play, consider the following:

- Adequate periods of outdoor play should be provided daily for all children.

- Be flexible where there is bad weather and, if necessary, try to reschedule play time for a different time of the day.

- Children should be dressed properly and be allowed to play outdoors unless there is a "danger associated with the outdoor exposure."

- 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.

- Low temperatures should not be a barrier to outside play, as long as children are appropriately dressed. In inclement weather, active play should be encouraged and supported in safe indoor play areas. Children should not play outside on days when there is ice on the playground in areas where children typically play.

- Whenever possible, previous rain should not prohibit outdoor play provided there is no active precipitation during the scheduled time for outdoor play. All attempts should be made to dry equipment and sweep water from the outdoor play surfaces so that children have access to space and equipment outdoors.

- 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 children out in the heat and 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 children away from any objects that pose a safety hazard.

- ECERS-3 and ITERS-3 recommend that programs minimize the days when children are unable to play outside.

Nap and Rest

Regularly scheduled nap and rest time is important to ensure children are able to relax, rest, and replenish their energy. Children should be allowed to rest when they are tired, and infants and young toddlers should follow their natural sleep cycles.

Nap and rest time plays a crucial role in enhancing the memory, alertness, as well as the cognitive and physical development of children. Your program must have a regularly scheduled nap or rest time during which you must provide an environment conducive for children to nap and rest. Quiet activities must be provided for children who do not wish to nap or rest.

While nap must be a part of the daily routine, it must be flexible enough to meet the varying needs of individual children. Your staff should accommodate individual needs by, for example, letting one child go to sleep earlier than others or allowing a child who does not wish to rest participate in an alternate activity. Flexibility can also be provided as your staff gives attention to a particular child for a longer period of time than is needed by others, to help the child relax.

It is recommended that nap and rest be scheduled with flexibility and discretion:

- At a consistent time each day and when children show that they are tired

- Allow for children to nap and rest for as long as needed (inclusive of transition time)

- The length of nap and rest time may vary depending on the changing needs of children over the course of the year and the length of the program day.

- If most children 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 children are not ready to wake up at the end of nap and rest time, this period may need to 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, while being responsive to children's needs.

Early risers and non-nappers are those children who sleep less than others and who are ready to engage in an activity while others sleep. This may change from day-to-day with children's sleep cycles, so teaching teams should work to ensure these provisions are available to all children in the classroom whenever needed. Children should not have to stay quietly on their cots or mats with nothing to do. You should provide ways for these children to be appropriately involved and supervised while others are sleeping. This may include:

- Children quietly reading books or playing quietly with soft toys on their mats or cots.

- Children reading or playing quietly in a separate part of the room that is away from sleeping children.

Additional Considerations for Infants and Toddlers:

- Infants should be allowed to follow their natural sleep cycles. Avoid waking infants whenever possible.

- Children may not be left in cribs while they are awake.

Additional Considerations for 3-K and *Pre-K*:

- Half-day *Pre-K* programs must not have nap and rest time included in their daily pre-K schedule.

- Extended Day programs should offer their children additional time for nap/rest.

- *3-K* and *Pre-K* : At the end of the designated rest period, teaching teams can begin to turn on classroom lights and gently wake children. Children who demonstrate a need for additional sleep and remain sleeping through the gentle waking process should be allowed to continue sleeping in a quiet part of the classroom where they will not interfere with other children's access to centers.

Supporting Children with Nap and Rest

It is important to create a classroom environment that helps children to relax, rest, and replenish their energy. The following provisions can be implemented to help children rest well:

- Help children 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 child's back

    — Rocking (infants and young toddlers)

- Offer children a transitional object from home (e.g., family picture, special blanket, pacifier, etc.) that they can use during nap and rest time.

- Collaborate with the families of your children to develop a routine that meets the varying needs of your individual children.

- 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/cribs in the same area every day so children can go to the same spot as part of their routine.

- Handle any disruptions calmly.

Equipment and Furnishings

During nap and rest time, all children must be offered the following items to allow them to relax comfortably:

- A separate cot, mat, or crib must be provided for the exclusive use of each child.

    — Cots, mats, and cribs must be cleaned and sanitized regularly and if soiled or contaminated.

- A clean sheet and blanket

    — You are required to provide clean sheets for every child enrolled. Families may provide their own sheets should they choose to do so.

    — You may request that families provide blankets.

- All sheets and blankets must be:

    — Provided for each child's exclusive use and labeled with the child's name.

    — Stored separately to minimize spread of illness.

    — Washed (either at home or at your program) at least once a week.

    — Programs should be mindful of children's allergies to detergent.

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 children's personal items and bedding are not touching each other, and that sleeping surfaces (i.e., the side of a mat that a child sleeps on) do not touch the floor.

Additional Considerations for Infants:

- Programs are required to provide clean fitted crib sheets for every child enrolled sleeping in cribs.

    — Families may provide their own fitted crib sheets should they choose to do so.

- Infants may not use blankets or have anything in their crib.

- For infants 12 months and younger, staff must record the time the infant went to sleep and the time they wake up. Additionally, they must check on the infant every 15 minutes, and make a record of the check for each 15 minute interval.

Staffing

- Staff-to-child ratios must be adhered to at all times, including nap and rest time.

- During nap and rest time, family engagement staff members may count toward fulfilling required ratios.

For additional information on program staffing please see the Staffing chapter on page 61.

- In 3-K and pre-K programs, 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.

- Family engagement staff members can be anyone who has a Comprehensive Background Check to work with children, is familiar with your children/families, and is trained on your safety plan/emergency procedures. This may include receptionists, paraprofessionals, etc. <u>Instructional or family engagement staff members present during nap and rest time must maintain line-of-sight supervision of children at all times.</u>

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. Find resources to support learning outside the classroom on the Early Childhood Family Toolkit on Growing Up NYC.

What You Need to Know

Extending Learning Overview

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 for children and families as an extension of the curriculum. 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 ELOF (for infants, toddlers, and *3-K* or NYSPLS for *Pre-K*).

- Extended learning opportunities offered to families and children should be based on authentic learning activities. Children should not be provided with worksheets.

- Children 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.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice When Extending Learning to Home

Your program is encouraged to design activities for families and children that extend upon the learning in the classroom.

Appropriately designed extended learning opportunities should:

- Be grounded in research about how young children benefit from active learning and interactions with others

- Allow for differences in children's individual characteristics, abilities, and needs

- Build on children's 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 children

Extended learning opportunities must be communicated with families as optional and enriching experiences that can help children extend their learning outside the classroom. A benefit of providing extended learning opportunities for home is building the capacity of families as their child's primary teacher and advocate for their learning.

The DECE's research-based Interdisciplinary Units of Study support child 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.

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 children 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"

The DECE expects that your program will offer extended learning opportunities based on authentic learning activities.

If you have questions about extending learning to home, please contact the DECE by emailing deceinstruction@schools.nyc.gov.

Report Cards

Programs should promote two-way sharing of information between staff and families, in a culturally and linguistically responsive manner. In order to ensure that families receive developmentally appropriate summaries of their child's experience, families <u>must not</u> be issued written report cards. Teaching staff should prioritize individual conversations with families to discuss children's play, interests, and further curiosities to explore and develop.

Please see the Family Engagement chapter of the Handbook for more information on family-teacher conferences.

Dual Language Classrooms

Dual Language (DL) classrooms are currently only available in *Pre-K* programs. Dual Language programs provide instruction in two languages: English and a target language determined by the program and based on the community's interests or needs. The goal of pre-K Dual Language programs is for children to receive high-quality early childhood instruction in English and a target language, with the aim of enabling all children to become bilingual over the course of their education.

Pre-K Dual Language programs are open to children whose home language is English and children whose home language is the target language. Through their interactions, each group of children provides a linguistic role model for the other, supporting all children's development in both languages.

DL classrooms support children whose:

1. Home language is a language other than English

2. Families are interested in their child learning a second language

Pre-K programs that are approved and designated by the DECE to offer DL programming must have a minimum of one pre-K classroom that follows the DL model. There are many ways to structure your classroom space and time for dual-language instruction. For support selecting a model that works best for your program, email prekduallanguage@schools.nyc.gov. Two common DL instructional models in pre-K:

1. 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.

2. 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 instruction, please contact prekduallanguage@schools.nyc.gov.

DL 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

- have or be in the process of obtaining a Bilingual Extension.

Programs with DL classrooms must be able to provide proper documentation of the lead teacher's certifications.

Enrollment

The DECE places children in Dual Language classrooms based on a number of factors and priorities, including a child's home language. The DECE aims to enroll DL classrooms with a balance of children whose home language is English and children whose home language is the target language. Families may select a DL pre-K classroom for their child during the pre-K application process. If they choose a program providing DL, they are asked about their child's home language. This information is considered, along with the additional admissions priorities, when placing children in a DL classroom. Additional information can be found in the Enrollment section of the Handbook.

Language Support

Language Support (LS) programs are only available in NYCEEC programs. LS programs serve EMLLs by supporting continued development of their home language (the "target" language). If your program is approved and designated as offering Language Support (LS), you must offer targeted language support in all classrooms in your program.

LS programs support children and families in a target language in a variety of ways. LS programs must have:

- At least one staff member who is fluent in the target language and regularly available on-site to meet with families and provide additional supports

- Interpretation services for family meetings

- Translated communications in the target language

- Teaching staff who support continued development of both English and the target language during instruction, which may include:

  — the use of the target language during story time, music and movement, or other whole group activities

  — opportunities for families to share language, stories, food, music, and other artifacts from their culture in the classroom, in celebrations, and meetings throughout the school year

  — schedules, labels, music, and a wide range of books in both English and the target language

Information on how to apply to provide an LS program will be provided through the Early Childhood Bulletin. If you have questions about becoming an LS program, please contact prekduallanguage@schools.nyc.gov.

VII. Additional Child Supports

a.   Special Education Services for Children Ages 0–5

b.   Language Services

c.   Immigrant Populations

d.   Students in Temporary Housing

The Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ), Element 1, describes how program leadership teams and teaching teams build trust by creating a community in which all children, families, and staff feel welcome and included, embracing diversity in many forms. In this chapter, you will find additional information about how programs support children and families with specialized needs, including children who receive special education services, are part of an immigrant population, living in temporary housing, or are Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLLs).

Special Education Services for Children Ages 0-5

The infant, toddler, and early childhood years are a time of incredible development and growth. During this time, many children benefit from additional supports to help them learn and thrive.

EARLY LEARN __Early Intervention (ages 0-3)__

In New York City, children with developmental delays and disabilities under three years old may receive these supports through the Early Intervention Program (EIP), run by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). If a family in your program has a concern about an infant or toddler's development, the EIP can help by providing a free evaluation to find out if the child is eligible for services. Families, doctors, and community members can make a referral by:

- Calling 311 and asking for Early Intervention.

- Completing the Early Intervention Program Referral Form and faxing it to a regional office in the family's home borough.

Upon referral to the Early Intervention Program, all families are assigned a Service Coordinator to help them navigate the program. If found eligible, EI will work with the family to develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), which outlines the EI services they will receive. Eligible children can receive services in a child care program, home, and across other natural environments where typically developing children are found. To learn more about EI, visit: https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/early-intervention.page.

__Preschool Special Education Services (ages 3-5)__

For children with additional needs aged 3 and older, your program must support families to access services through the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) process, which includes the special education referral and evaluation processes. Families with children transitioning from Early Intervention may also refer to the CPSE if their family believes they may need additional services in preschool.

Overview

The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) is committed to supporting and serving all children, including children with disabilities who require special education services. All children, regardless of disability, are welcomed and encouraged to join 3-K and *Pre-K* programs. For families that consent, special education services are available for children who have disabilities or developmental delays that impact their ability to learn. The Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) is responsible for coordinating and carrying out the special education referral and evaluation process for children.

Regional CPSE offices serve families in the district in which the family resides, regardless of where their child attends *3-K* or *Pre-K* .

For CPSE contact information, including contact information for Community Coordinators who can support families that have made a referral for evaluation, please see the CPSE website*.*

CPSE Process

At any time when children are between three and five years old, families can choose to make a referral for evaluation to the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE), which would then trigger the CPSE process. Programs are required to follow all policies outlined by the CPSE and support families in navigating the CPSE process. If a child is found eligible for preschool special education, in most cases, the child can receive their services at the 3-K or pre-K program they attend.

Details of the CPSE process can be found in the Committee on Preschool Special Education Guidance document at the end of this chapter. Resources for families, including the NYC DOE Family Guide to Preschool Special Education Services and the DOE Guide to the EI to Preschool Transition, are available in several languages on the DOE's preschool special education webpage: www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/ special-education/preschool-to-age-21/moving-to-preschool.

The CPSE process consists of four steps:

1. Referral

2. Evaluation

3. CPSE Meeting

4. Programs and Services

Preschool Special Education

Preschool special education services are available for children ages 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 (DOE). Regardless of whether or not a child needs services, all children turning three are encouraged to apply for free or reduced cost *3-K* programs.

Children benefit greatly from learning in the least restrictive environment (LRE) appropriate for their individual needs. LRE means learning in settings where children with disabilities are educated alongside children without disabilities to the greatest extent possible. This often means learning in a 3-K or *Pre-K* class with special education programs or related services.

Committee on Preschool Special Education

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. A chairperson oversees the office, including the CPSE in it. CPSE Community Coordinators support families through the CPSE process. After a child has made a referral to the CPSE, the family can contact the Community Coordinator at the CPSE they are referred to for support.

For CPSE contact information, including Chairperson and Community Coordinator information, please visit https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/special-education/help/committees-on-special-education.

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/guardian, principal of a DOE school, or CPSE administrator.

In a referral, a parent/guardian 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.

A referral package 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

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 referral to special education to the CPSE. A child referral request 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 parent/guardian contact or involvement prior to the request for referral.

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/guardian with a copy of the request

for referral, inform the parent/guardian of their right to refer the child for an initial evaluation, and offer the parent/guardian an opportunity to meet.

Note that families cannot be expelled from a 3-K/pre-K program for refusing to refer to CPSE or for refusing to participate in any aspect of the CPSE process.

<u>Evaluation</u>

The parent/guardian 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 DOE 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/guardian's preferred language; and

- Provide copies of the evaluation reports, including the summary report, to the parent/guardian and CPSE.

These evaluations include exams such as:

- A comprehensive psychological evaluation that looks at what a child knows and their cognitive abilities;

- A social history interview, which provides background on a child's developmental and family history, often from birth to present;

- A physical evaluation, which is a health examination form often completed by a child's doctor;

- An observation of a child in their current educational setting or childcare location; 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.

<u>CPSE Meeting</u>

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/guardian 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.

CPSE meeting participants include the parent/guardian, 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/guardian member, etc.). At a CPSE meeting, teachers can share knowledge of the child and their development, curriculum and interventions used, and day-to-day workings of the classroom.

To be found eligible, the CPSE must determine that a child is a "preschool child with a disability." This determination is based on evaluations showing that they have a significant delay in development or an educational disability, which is a delay or disability that affects learning. Children may be eligible for preschool

special education programs and services if they are showing substantial delays in one or more of the following areas:

• Cognitive development (thinking and learning);

• Language and communication development (understanding and using language);

• Adaptive development (self-help skills such as toileting, eating, and dressing);

• Social-emotional development (behaviors such as getting along with others and expressing feelings); and/or

• Motor development (physical development, including delays or disorders regarding vision, hearing, and movement).

If found eligible, the CPSE will work with the child's family to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP is a written plan that discusses a child's abilities and outlines the services that the New York City Department of Education (DOE) will provide free of charge to meet the child's educational needs. The IEP document includes many sections, including the child's present level of performance, measurable annual goals, their recommended preschool special education programs and services, and any accommodations and modifications they may need.

The IEP will recommend programs and services in the least restrictive environment (LRE) appropriate. If a family currently attends a 3-K or pre-K program, at the CPSE meeting, they should tell their CPSE administrator about this and the CPSE will work with them to recommend appropriate programs and services on their IEP that can support them at the program they attend.

After a child has been identified as a preschool child 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/guardian may ask for an additional CPSE meeting. This is often called a "requested review." At any time, a parent/guardian may also ask for a re-evaluation.

Services

There is a range of education and related services available to support preschool children with IEPs. Special education services fall along a continuum from less restrictive to more restrictive. Less restrictive programs allow children to receive services alongside children without IEPs. More restrictive programs are available for children who require more specialized supports and services. The CPSE must always consider a child's **least restrictive environment (LRE)**.

• Related Services:* Related services include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech/language therapy, and others.

• Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT):* A SEIT is a special education teacher who works closely with a child on academic, emotional, and social skills. This service can be delivered in small groups or one-on-one at a child's early childhood program, at another child care location identified by the family, or at the family's home in certain situations.

• Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS): This is a classroom in which children with and without IEPs are educated together.

• Special Class: This is a classroom that only serves children with IEPs whose needs cannot be met within the general education setting or SCIS classroom.

• All 3-K and *Pre-K* programs are considered inclusive settings. Program staff are required to accommodate related service and SEIT providers that support the children in their programs.

— *Note: Children can also receive related services and/or SEIT at a private preschool or other

non-public child care setting where they enroll and pay tuition, or at home in some circumstances.

Additional supports and services could include a paraprofessional, assistive technology, bilingual services, behavioral supports, and transportation.

All services on children's IEPs are provided free of cost to families. After a child's IEP is developed, the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) will ask the parent/guardian for written permission to start services. This is called "informed consent" for services. After receiving the parent's/guardian's written consent, the CPSE will arrange for services to be provided. The CPSE is responsible for arranging all programs and services recommended on IEPs. If families do not respond to the request for consent or if they deny consent, the CPSE will not arrange for services to be provided, and no further action will be taken.

Services should begin no later than 60 school days from the date the parent/guardian provided consent to evaluate or 30 school days from the date of the initial CPSE meeting, whichever is first.

Due Process

By law, families have due process rights, which means that if they do not agree with the recommendation at the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) meeting, they have the right to challenge the decisions about their child's eligibility, evaluation, services, and placement through processes called mediation and/or an impartial hearing.

- Mediation: During mediation, a parent/guardian and a member of the DOE sit down with a neutral third party who assists and encourages the parent/guardian and the DOE to reach an agreement. The mediator does not make a determination or issue an order. Instead, the mediator's job is to help the parent/guardian and the DOE come to an agreeable solution.

    — Families can make a request for mediation in writing to a local mediation center. To learn more about mediation, please see: https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/special-education/help/your-rights.

- Impartial Hearing: Families have the right to request an impartial hearing. During an impartial hearing, a parent/guardian will appear before an Impartial Hearing Officer (not a DOE employee) and present their side of the story. The Hearing Officer will listen to the parent/guardian and the representative from the DOE, take evidence from witnesses and documents, and make a written determination regarding how to resolve the issues that they have raised. Once an impartial hearing is requested, "pendency" (sometimes called "stay put") may apply. This means that their child could remain in their current placement for the duration of any due process proceedings until the matter is resolved or the parent/guardian has reached an agreement with the DOE.

    — Impartial hearing requests must be made in writing to the Impartial Hearing Office at Impartial Hearing Office 131 Livingston Street, Room 201 Brooklyn, New York 11201 Phone: (718) 935-3280, Email: ihoquest@schools.nyc.gov

    — Parent/guardian requests for an impartial hearing must:

        • Be made in writing to the Impartial Hearing Office;

        • State their child's name, address, and student ID number (if the child has one at this time);

        • State the name of the school their child attends;

        • Describe the facts relating to their concerns and their proposed solution; and

        • Include their (the parent's/guardian's) name and contact information.

    — A recommended request form, which the parent/guardian may use to request an impartial hearing, is available from the CPSE, the Impartial Hearing Office, or online at www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/special-education/help/impartial-hearings.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and the Benefits of Inclusion

The DOE provides services in the least restrictive environment (LRE) appropriate, which means children with disabilities are educated alongside children without disabilities to the greatest extent possible. Inclusion classes are classes where children with and without disabilities learn together in the same classrooms. When children are found eligible for preschool special education services, the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) is required to recommend services to preschoolers in the least restrictive environment appropriate for a child, which for most children should be inclusion settings.

These are examples of inclusion settings:

- A general education classroom, in a program such as *3-K*, with services like speech or physical therapy;

- A general education classroom, in a program such as *3-K*, with a Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT);

- A special class in an integrated setting (SCIS), which includes children with and without disabilities; and

- A special class in an integrated setting (SCIS), which includes children with and without disabilities, with additional supports, such as services like speech or physical therapy, or the support of a paraprofessional.

Other recommendations, such as a special class program that only serves children with disabilities, are only offered to children when their needs cannot be met in a general education or SCIS setting with additional aids and services. If a child in your program receives an IEP, the CPSE will work with the family to recommend appropriate programs and services on their IEP. At any point, program staff may request to meet with the CPSE to discuss whether the child needs more support than can be provided in the program.

Inclusive settings, such as general education or SCIS classrooms, allow children with and without disabilities to learn alongside one another. Inclusion promotes academic growth, independence, and social-emotional development.

Research on inclusion in early childhood has shown that:

- BOTH children with AND without disabilities benefit from inclusion:

  — Children with disabilities learn from their peers, and develop greater communication, social-emotional, and adaptive behavior skills.

  — Children without disabilities develop a greater acceptance of diversity and more empathetic social behaviors.

- Children with disabilities educated in inclusion classrooms:

  — Develop stronger language and math skills.

  — Are more likely to have social interactions with their peers, which allows them to create larger networks of friends and acquire social skills.

  — Tend to be absent fewer days from school.

Contacts

Always first contact a child's CPSE administrator with questions about preschool special education services. CPSE contact information, including CPSE Community Coordinator information, who are staff that work directly with families, can be found at https://schools.nyc.gov/special-education/help/cpse-cse. The following **DOE contacts** are also available.

DOE Contacts for Preschool Special Education Support:

Topic	Contact Information
DOE Special Education Hotline	718-935-2007
Early Intervention (EI) Transition	EItoPreschool@schools.nyc.gov / 646-389-7171
Related Services	RelatedServices@schools.nyc.gov
Special Education	SpecialEducation@schools.nyc.gov
Students in Temporary Housing	STHinfo@schools.nyc.gov
Assistive Technology	CATpreschool@schools.nyc.gov

Resources for families, including the NYC DOE Family Guide to Preschool Special Education Services and the DOE Guide to the EI to Preschool Transition, are available in several languages on the DOE's preschool special education webpage: https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/special-education/preschool-to-age-21/moving-to-preschool.

INCLUDEnyc is the Early Childhood and School-Age Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Center for the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island, funded by the New York State Education Department Office of Special Education (NYSED OSE) to promote meaningful family involvement within the educational system, build collaborative community relationships, and provide information and training about available service options and delivery systems for children from birth to age 21.

To contact INCLUDEnyc, you can reach out and request support or ask questions in the following ways:

- Visit their website at: www.includenyc.org / Español: www.incluyenyc.org;
- Call their helpline at: 212-677-4660 / Español: 212-677-4688; or
- Email them at: info@INCLUDEnyc.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Before making a referral to the CPSE, how can programs work with children?

Referral should not be the first intervention to support a child who you suspect may need additional services.

Before making a referral to the CPSE, programs should use developmental screening to monitor children's development. Developmental screening with an evidence-based screening tool (find more information on developmental screening tools linked here) is a key part of a child's transition into an early childhood program. If a child scores below the referral cut-off of a developmental screening tool, programs should support families and children by offering age-appropriate learning activities and opportunities to practice across natural environments which include home, childcare, and community.

You should also implement strategies as a first step toward improving learning for a child suspected of having a disability. You must also work with families to collect information, support the child, and determine next steps. During this time, you should:

• Use developmental screening and analyze authentic assessments to determine the child's developmental progress and inform planning and supports;

• Collect ongoing, authentic assessments such as classroom work and observation notes;

• Implement a variety of developmental and academic strategies to support the child;

• Consult with DECE social workers and instructional coordinators; and

• Share developmental screening and authentic assessment results with families.

As a reminder, all children are welcome at DOE programs, regardless of disability. If, after implementing suggested strategies and/or supports, the program still has concerns regarding a child's progress and believe that they may need additional support, children birth-3 should be referred with parent/guardian consent to the Early Intervention Program, or for children 3-5, the program can work with the parent/guardian to make a referral to the CPSE.

2. Can staff make requests for children to receive a CPSE evaluation?

Yes, staff can make requests for children to receive a CPSE evaluation. A written request called a "request for referral" to the CPSE may be made by a professional staff member at the program that the child 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 child. After you submit a request for referral, the CPSE will contact the family to see if they consent to a special education evaluation. Requests for referrals may or may not lead to a referral, as the referral requires parent/guardian consent. If a parent/guardian consents after a request for referral is made on behalf of their child, the CPSE process will start.

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 child 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 child's needs and home life, and share how the child 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 child's needs and answer the family's questions; and

- Assist the family in writing a referral letter.

4. Do lead teachers and other program staff participate in the CPSE meeting?

Consistent with your program's contract with the DOE, you are expected to allow the child's teacher to participate in CPSE meetings for initial referrals and for annual reviews requested by the child's parent/guardian. Teachers are part of the CPSE team and play a very important role at CPSE meetings. Often, teachers spend the most time with children and get to observe their academic, social, and behavioral strengths and needs regularly. The rich amount of knowledge teachers have about the child and their development, general education curriculum and interventions, and day-to-day workings of the classroom provides a unique and valuable perspective to the CPSE team. Note that the parent/guardian must consent to having the teacher join their child's CPSE meeting.

Preschool teachers are part of the CPSE team and play an important role in developing high-quality IEPs. Teachers spend a lot of time with children and regularly observe their strengths, needs, and interests. As IEPs are being developed, teachers provide a unique and valuable perspective because they hold a rich amount of knowledge about children and their development, classroom interventions and children responses, and how children progress (or could progress) toward IEP goals in the classroom. Teachers also hold expertise in curriculum, instruction, and the day-to-day workings of the classroom.

The IEP must describe how, through specially designed instruction, different supports will be provided to the child, which would not occur if the child were without an IEP. It describes how the child will be able to make progress within the general education curriculum, or gains educational benefit. Families may request that various professionals in their child's life attend a CPSE meeting, including teachers. If families request for teachers to attend a CPSE meeting where the IEP will be developed, it is very important that teachers be there. At the CPSE meeting, teachers should collaborate with the CPSE administrator, parent/guardian, and other team members, to ensure that classroom information is transferred to support the development of high-quality, holistic IEPs.

At CPSE meetings, teachers can share knowledge in the following areas:

- The current performance of the child in the general education environment including strengths, and needs;

- Child interactions with peers;

- Classroom operations in terms of approach, pace, and dynamics;

- Classroom interventions and supports put into place and how the child responded;

- Child progress toward IEP goals in the classroom; and

- Their work with special education providers to integrate services in the classroom, if appropriate.

Additionally, CPSE meetings are an opportunity for teachers to learn more about the child and collaborate with special education professionals and the family on how to holistically meet the child's needs.

5. Can three and four-year-olds be enrolled in the same SCIS classroom?

Most Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS) classes are available to children ages three and four with IEPs; this includes children who are currently in the "Turning 5" process. The DOE also offers threes-only SCIS classes.

6. How can I access a child's IEP?

Your program will receive a copy of the IEPs of children who are officially enrolled through your DOE external account. Your program must ensure that the content of IEPs is 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 child enrolled at your program, email specialedprek@schools.nyc. gov *and provide the child's name, child's date of birth, program name, program address, and name of the program director. For general questions, email* specialeducation@schools.nyc.gov.

7. Who determines the language in which services for children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are delivered?

The Committee of Preschool Special Education (CPSE) in accordance with an IEP team determines a child's eligibility for special education services and the language in which special education programs and services are delivered.

Language Services

A child's home language is an integral cultural asset that should be honored, sustained, and reflected in the classroom and program environment. To ensure all children receive a high-quality early childhood education, programs must be responsive to language needs, especially those of children and families from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Strong partnerships with families lay the foundation for ongoing engagement in their child's education. **Your program's policies, communications, and services should be sensitive, respectful, and responsive to the linguistic and cultural needs of families whose home language is a language other than English.**

Language Services Overview

Your program must embrace and support 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 levels. You must assist all children, including those whose home language is a language other than English, in developing the skills and knowledge reflected in the NYSPLS standards and the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF). The DECE's Core Principles for Supporting Emergent Multilingual Learners outline our beliefs about supporting children who speak a language other than English at home.

During pre-registration and the beginning of the programming year, families are asked to complete a Home Language Survey. Information from this survey and other authentic assessment data sources will help your program identify and meet the needs of your children and families. We also recommend that program staff partner with families to complete the Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile (EMLLPP), which includes a more in-depth language survey and other components that can provide valuable information about EMLLs, promote strong instructional and family engagement practices, and strengthen the language and literacy development of children in their home language and in English.

In all programs, the DECE provides a range of support for EMLLs, including access to translation and interpretation services. We also provide tailored supports for EMLLs in programs designated as Dual Language (DL), where teaching teams provide instruction in two languages.

For additional guidance on serving children whose home language is a language other than English, please email prekduallanguage@schools.nyc.gov.

Immigrant Populations

Programs must ensure that all children continue to learn in a safe, nurturing environment regardless of immigration status.

Programs should not ask about or keep a record of the immigration status of a child or family member. If a family does share confidential information, including immigration status, it should be kept confidential.

The DOE does not permit non-local law enforcement agents, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement Personnel, to enter DOE schools, except when absolutely required by law. Programs are encouraged to devise policies and appropriate plans to respond to visits from non-local law enforcement. The DOE's protocols may serve as a helpful tool, which are available online at: schools.nyc.gov/protectingimmigrantfamilies.

- Programs may want to consider taking the following steps in devising their policies:

    — Designating staff members who are authorized to speak with any immigration agent or authority;

    — Providing any needed instruction or training to staff members;

    — Identifying someone to provide legal guidance in the event of a visit from non-local law enforcement;

    — Determining how to communicate with families about any visits from non-local law enforcement; and

    — Deciding how to document any such visits.

- In addition, the following are general requirements and best practices. Programs should:

    — Update their written safety plans, as required by DECE and DOHMH;

    — Establish a process for maintaining confidential information about families, children, and staff;

    — Implement procedures for receiving visitors to the program; and

    — Maintain current emergency contacts for each child and employee in an accessible location.

Programs may not release child information unless required to by law. If a program is unsure whether or not a request for child information is lawful, the program leader should obtain legal guidance and follow up with DECE.

For additional support or questions regarding supporting families regardless of immigration status, please contact earlychildhoodpolicy@schools.nyc.gov.

Programs should ensure that all children are in a safe and supportive learning environment, 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 DECE.

Resource ▇ & Action Item ✅:

▇**If the family of a child enrolled at a program is seeking immigration legal services, you may refer them to ActionNYC.** This is a New York City 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.

▇Call 311 or visit [nyc.gov/immigrants](#) for more information from the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. Additionally, resources are available on the DOE website.

▇**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](#).

Students in Temporary Housing

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ("the McKinney-Vento Act") and DOE policy ensure that children residing in temporary living situations have access to the services that are available to permanently housed children. Children in temporary housing lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes a child who is:

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as "doubled up"), or living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or camping ground due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;

- Living in an emergency or transitional shelter, including a subsidized, publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including commercial hotels, congregate shelters, residential programs for victims of domestic violence, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);

- Abandoned in a hospital;

- Living in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation; or

- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.

Programs must comply with all applicable requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act. For example, children living in temporary housing have several important rights related to education including:

- A right to immediate enrollment in a program, even without all enrollment documents (including immunization information).

    — Please see the Enrollment Section in the General Program Oversight Chapter for additional information.

- 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. Please see the DECE Action Item and Resource chart at the end of this section for additional information on how to request MetroCards.

- A right to either remain in their program or transfer to a different program should the family become homeless or move between temporary housing locations.

Programs must have information sheets available that detail the basic rights of families living in temporary housing.

Family Fees

Families of Students in Temporary Housing are not required to pay a family share fee if attending Extended Day and Year programs. Additionally, the following families do not pay a fee:

- Families receiving cash assistance (CA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or income maintenance

- Families receiving protective services

Resource ■ & Action Item ☑:

■ To request MetroCards and MetroCard logs, programs should email non-publicschoolmetrocards@schools.nyc.gov.

— In the email please include:

- Subject: STH Parent MetroCard Request - "DOE Site ID"

- Email body: DOE Site ID, Site Name, Site Address and Main Contact, # of MetroCards

■ For questions related to enrolling students in temporary housing, you can reach out to the DOE Outreach Team, Outreachteam@schools.nyc.gov, 212-637-8000

■ 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.

■ You can also contact the NYS-TEACHS hotline at (800) 388-2014 with any questions on the rights of children residing in temporary housing.

The DOE is not responsible for the content of non-DOE resources nor does it endorse such content. Any recommended practices contained in these resources must be implemented in a manner consistent with DOE policies, practices, and procedures.

VIII. Appendix A:
Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ)

Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ)

The mission of the DOE Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) is to create the best early care and education system in the country so that every New York City child has a fair shot at living up to their full potential. To support this mission, the DECE has developed the Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ), which describes our shared vision for high quality early childhood programming in New York City.

Programs use the EFQ to guide their practice in a way that advances positive outcomes for all children and families. DECE staff use the EFQ as the foundation for the quality supports provided to programs, including on-site support and professional learning. This resource ensures that all DOE early childhood programs, regardless of setting or location, are held accountable to the same standards and supported to meet the same expectations of quality.

The EFQ is closely aligned to the following:

- The Framework for Great Schools, which is the DOE's vision for school improvement across the pre-K to 12 continuum;

- The DOE's commitment to Equity and Excellence for All;

- The Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), which are the requirements for all federally-funded Head Start and Early Head Start programs;

- The leading national research on early childhood quality; and

- The expertise and experience of DECE staff, programs, and community partners.

How is the EFQ organized?

The EFQ is comprised of 6 **Elements,** which are high-level, research-based principles of early childhood quality aligned to the Framework for Great Schools (FFGS). Each Element identifies several **Practices,** or actions that can be taken by program leadership and teaching teams to demonstrate these principles. The Elements and Practices are applicable to all early childhood age groups and settings.

The Practices under each Element are not listed in order of importance, nor are they intended to indicate that one Practice should be prioritized over another. Instead, they are interconnected and, when combined, help us better understand the actions, behaviors, and skills encompassed by each Element. As indicated in the visual, most Practices listed under program leadership teams have parallel Practices under program teaching teams.
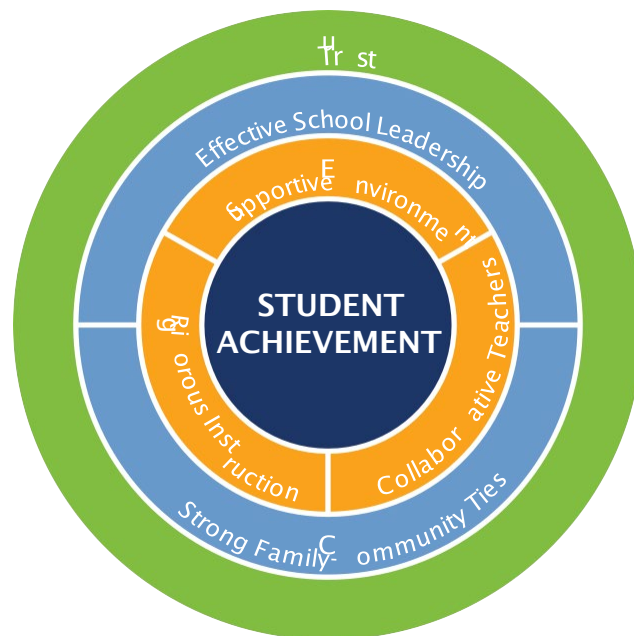
Element

3. High quality programs advance play-based learning and responsive instruction.
Program leadership teams and teaching teams engage children in a variety of play-based and developmentally appropriate learning experiences, and ensure that instruction is based on children's individual strengths, interests, and needs. {rigorous instruction}   **FFGS Element**

Program leadership teams…
(Examples: Directors, education directors, program directors, executive directors, board of directors, owners, principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, mental health professionals, parent coordinators, family service coordinators)

Practice

3.1   establish, model, and reinforce a play-based approach to learning and inquiry.

3.2   provide teaching teams with appropriate training, resources, and ongoing support to implement age-appropriate research-based curricula.

Program teaching teams…
(Examples: Lead teachers, special education teachers, itinerant teachers, family workers/educators/advocates, co-teachers, assistant teachers, paraprofessionals)

Practice

3.6   facilitate play-based learning and inquiry.

3.7   use an age-appropriate research-based curriculum to support children's learning across all areas of development.

The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) believes that high-quality 0-5 programs…

1. respect and value differences. Program leadership teams and teaching teams build trust by creating a community in which all children, families, and staff feel welcome and included, embracing diversity in many forms – including, but not limited to: race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, home language, country of origin, immigration status, ability, special needs, religion, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, housing status, and cultural background and experience.

[trust]

2. create safe and positive environments. Program leadership teams and teaching teams create healthy, nurturing, and predictable environments for all children, families, and staff.

[supportive environment]

3. advance play-based learning and responsive instruction. Program leadership teams and teaching teams engage children in a variety of play-based and developmentally appropriate learning experiences, and ensure that instruction is based on children's individual strengths, interests, and needs.

[rigorous instruction]

4. promote families' roles as primary caregivers, teachers, and advocates. Program leadership teams and teaching teams build relationships with families and communities in order to provide meaningful opportunities and resources that support children's development and the whole family's well-being.

[strong family-community ties]

5. work collaboratively towards continuous quality improvement. Program leadership teams and teaching teams use data to improve program and classroom quality in partnership with families and communities.

[collaborative teachers]

6. demonstrate strategic leadership. Program leadership teams and teaching teams build and use organizational culture, structure, and resources to promote and execute a shared vision for quality.

[effective school leadership]

243. High quality programs respect and value

Program leadership teams and teaching teams build trust by creating a community in which all children, families, and staff feel welcome and included, embracing diversity in many forms – including, but not limited to: race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, home language, country of origin, immigration status, ability, special needs, religion, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, housing status, and cultural background and experience. [trust]

Program leadership teams…

(Examples: Directors, Education Directors, program directors, executive directors, board of directors, owners, principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, mental health professionals, parent/guardian coordinators, family service coordinators)

1.1   foster a climate of trust, belonging, and collaboration in which all children, families, and staff feel welcome and included in the program.

1.2   provide training and resources to support culturally responsive instruction and family engagement, and equip classrooms with culturally and linguistically diverse learning materials.

1.3   model and support staff in reflecting on and addressing the impacts of structural racism and implicit bias in the program and community.

1.4   recruit children, families, and staff who reflect the identities and experiences of the communities they serve.

1.5   allocate program resources to promote inclusive and equitable opportunities and outcomes for all children and families.

1.6   work with NYC DOE, other agencies, and community partners to ensure all children and families have access to the services, resources, and support they need.

Program teaching teams…

(Examples: Lead teachers, special education teachers, itinerant teachers, family workers/educators/advocates, co-teachers, assistant teachers, paraprofessionals)

1.7   foster a climate of trust, belonging, and collaboration in which all children, families, and other staff feel welcome and included in the classroom.

1.8   adopt culturally responsive instruction and family engagement practices, and encourage children to engage with culturally and linguistically diverse learning materials.

1.9   continually reflect on and seek to address the impacts of structural racism and implicit bias in the classroom.

1.10   differentiate strategies and activities to meet the individualized needs of all children in the classroom, and provide opportunities for children to demonstrate learning in multiple ways.

1.11   collaborate with the program leadership team to connect all children and families to the services, resources, and support they need.

2. High quality programs create safe and positive environments.

Program leadership teams and teaching teams create healthy, nurturing, and predictable environments for all children, families, and staff. [supportive environment]

Program leadership teams…

(Examples: Directors, Education Directors, program directors, executive directors, board of directors, owners, principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, mental health professionals, parent/guardian coordinators, family service coordinators)

2.1 establish, model, and reinforce expectations for respectful interactions and trusting relationships among children, families, and all staff.

2.2 provide all staff with appropriate training, resources, and ongoing support to develop children's social-emotional learning and promote positive behavior.

2.3 coordinate schedules to effectively meet the needs of children, families, and staff.

2.4 ensure all program spaces are safe and welcoming, and meet the needs of children, families, and staff.

2.5 equip program spaces with the appropriate quantity of high quality materials.

2.6 ensure successful monitoring and management of children's health, safety, and special education requirements in partnership with families.

Program teaching teams…

(Examples: Lead teachers, special education teachers, itinerant teachers, family workers/educators/advocates, co-teachers, assistant teachers, paraprofessionals)

2.7 model and build trusting relationships among children, families, and all staff.

2.8 build a foundation for children's social-emotional learning and use developmentally-appropriate strategies to promote positive behavior.

2.9 implement a consistent yet flexible schedule that meets young children's needs.

2.10 intentionally use each part of the day to support safe and healthy habits.

2.11 arrange classroom environment so that children have opportunities to interact with others and engage in independent activities.

2.12 partner with families and other staff to support monitoring and management of children's health, safety, and special education requirements.

245. High quality programs respect and value

Program leadership teams and teaching teams engage children in a variety of play-based and developmentally appropriate learning experiences, and ensure that instruction is based on children's individual strengths, interests, and needs. [rigorous instruction]

Program leadership teams…

(Examples: Directors, Education Directors, program directors, executive directors, board of directors, owners, principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, mental health professionals, parent/guardian coordinators, family service coordinators)

3.1   establish, model, and reinforce a play-based approach to learning and inquiry.

3.2   provide teaching teams with appropriate training, resources, and ongoing support to implement age-appropriate research-based curricula.

3.3   ensure teaching teams have appropriate training, materials, and time to implement valid and reliable screening and assessment tools to inform instruction.

3.4   support teaching teams in a continuous cycle of collecting and analyzing data, including authentic assessment data, to inform practice.

3.5   ensure teaching teams have consistent and intentional opportunities to reflect and plan collaboratively within and across classrooms.

Program teaching teams…

(Examples: Lead teachers, special education teachers, itinerant teachers, family workers/educators/advocates, co-teachers, assistant teachers, paraprofessionals)

3.6   facilitate play-based learning and inquiry.

3.7   use an age-appropriate research-based curriculum to support children's learning across all areas of development.

3.8   extend children's thinking and communication skills through intentional interactions.

3.9   implement a continuous cycle of collecting, analyzing, and using data:

- **collect data** about children's knowledge, skills, and interests through observations of and interactions with children and families

- **analyze data** to understand how children are developing and learning along a continuum, using a research-based authentic assessment system

- **use data to inform** practice that supports all children's growth along a continuum

3.10   regularly collaborate with other staff within and across classrooms to reflect and plan for instruction.

4. High quality programs promote families' roles as primary caregivers, teachers, and advocates.

Program leadership teams and teaching teams build relationships with families and communities in order to provide meaningful opportunities and resources that support children's development and the whole family's well-being. [strong family-community ties]

Program leadership teams…
(Examples: Directors, Education Directors, program directors, executive directors, board of directors, owners, principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, mental health professionals, parent/guardian coordinators, family service coordinators)

4.1	provide all staff with relevant and culturally responsive training, resources, and ongoing support related to family engagement.
4.2	model and support ongoing, two-way communication with families about the strengths, needs, interests, and goals of families and their children, as well as families' and children's progress toward these goals.
4.3	develop relationships with community members and organizations that support families' interests, needs, and goals.
4.4	provide opportunities for families to connect with other families in the program and community so that they can learn from and support each other.
4.5	create an environment that affirms and empowers families as partners, leaders and advocates in the classroom, program, and community.
4.6	support and coordinate services for children and families transitioning to and from different early care and educational settings.

Program teaching teams…
(Examples: Lead teachers, special education teachers, itinerant teachers, family workers/educators/advocates, co-teachers, assistant teachers, paraprofessionals)

4.7	engage in ongoing, two-way communication with families about the strengths, needs, interests, and goals of families and their children, as well as families' and children's progress toward these goals.
4.8	invite families to observe in their children's classroom and participate in their children's everyday learning.
4.9	provide opportunities for families to build skills that support their children's learning and development.
4.10	connect families to appropriate resources in support of their needs and goals for themselves and their children.
4.11	provide opportunities for families to serve as partners, leaders and advocates in the classroom and the program.
4.12	provide families with information and connections to support the transition to and from different educational settings.

5. High quality programs work collaboratively towards continuous quality improvement.

Program leadership teams and teaching teams use data to improve program and classroom quality in partnership with families and communities. [collaborative teachers]

Program leadership teams…

(Examples: Directors, Education Directors, program directors, executive directors, board of directors, owners, principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, mental health professionals, parent/guardian coordinators, family service coordinators)

5.1 actively solicit feedback from staff and families on program strengths and areas for growth.

5.2 model reflective practice, set professional goals, and engage in learning experiences with other leaders.

5.3 regularly provide staff with formative, evidence-based feedback on individual strengths and areas for growth, with actionable next steps.

5.4 identify or provide differentiated opportunities for staff professional learning that are aligned to individual staff goals and the goals of the program.

5.5 collaborate with the NYC DOE, other agencies, and community partners to improve program quality.

5.6 engage in a continuous cycle of collecting, analyzing, and using data about program quality, in collaboration with staff, families, and communities:

- **collect data** from a variety of sources and at multiple levels (child, teacher, classroom, family, community, program)

- **analyze data** to identify program strengths and areas for growth

- **use data to plan** program goals and inform continuous quality improvement

Program teaching teams…

(Examples: Lead teachers, special education teachers, itinerant teachers, family workers/educators/advocates, co-teachers, assistant teachers, paraprofessionals)

5.7 factively solicit feedback from families on classroom strengths and areas for growth.

5.8 regularly reflect on their own individual strengths and areas for growth in order to set professional goals and improve classroom practice.

5.9 identify and engage in professional learning experiences that are aligned to their own goals and the goals of the program, and seek opportunities to learn from other early childhood professionals.

5.10 provide feedback to the program leadership team on strengths, challenges, and opportunities for quality improvement.

5.11 actively engage with support staff from the NYC DOE, other agencies, and community partners to improve classroom quality.

5.12 collaborate with the program leadership team, other staff, families, and communities to set goals and inform continuous quality improvement.

6. High quality programs demonstrate strategic leadership.

Program leadership teams and teaching teams build and use organizational culture, structure, and resources to promote and execute a shared vision for quality. [effective school leadership]

Program leadership teams…
(Examples: Directors, Education Directors, program directors, executive directors, board of directors, owners, principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, mental health professionals, parent/guardian coordinators, family service coordinators)

6.1   create and communicate a compelling vision for long-term program quality in partnership with staff, families, and communities.

6.2   recruit, hire, and retain qualified staff, and provide meaningful staff leadership opportunities.

6.3   build and maintain an organizational culture that motivates staff, families, and communities to work toward a shared program vision.

6.4   establish and communicate clear roles and responsibilities within the program, and adopt fair and consistent processes for accountability.

6.5   develop and implement systems that facilitate efficient and sustainable program operations.

6.6   use responsible budgeting and financial management practices to strategically align resources to the program vision.

Program teaching teams…
(Examples: Lead teachers, special education teachers, itinerant teachers, family workers/educators/advocates, co-teachers, assistant teachers, paraprofessionals)

6.7   collaborate with the program leadership team, families, and communities to create and communicate a shared program vision.

6.8   contribute to an organizational culture that supports the shared program vision.

6.9   build a classroom community that reflects and drives forward the shared program vision.

6.10   adopt, refine, and implement systems to support all aspects of classroom quality.

6.11   proactively identify and communicate staffing and material needs, and effectively use resources to enhance their classroom community.

IX. Appendix B: Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance

Appendix B: Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance

NYC Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education

NYC DOE Position and Policy

The NYC DOE Division of Early Childhood (DECE) believes high-quality early childhood programs establish, model, and reinforce expectations for respectful and trusting relationships among children, families, and all staff. 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 and families should feel secure, supported, and recognized as important members of a program's community.

Programs are expected to support children in their least restrictive environment and implement the principles of Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) as outlined in this document. This includes:

- Research suggests positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) are most effective for young children. All behavior support should be instructive and nurturing, giving children lots of chances to succeed. Focusing on strong proactive strategies ensures caregivers take a preventative approach to challenging behaviors.

- Successful positive behavior support 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.

- Teaching teams build nurturing learning environments through the use of developmentally appropriate strategies that advance children's social and emotional development and approaches to learning. In alignment with the DECE Early Childhood Framework for Quality (EFQ), NYS Prekindergarten Learning Standards) (NYSPLS), Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF), and NYS Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education (NYS CR-SE).

Children in NYC DOE-affiliated early childhood programs may not be expelled or suspended.
**Including:**

- In-school suspensions: Practices that involve removing or excluding the child from the classroom.

- Out-of-school suspensions: Practices that involve temporarily removing the child from the program.

- Expulsions: Permanent removal or dismissal from the program.

- Soft-expulsions: Practices that make it so that the program is not a viable or welcoming care arrangement for the family and leaves the family with little choice but to withdraw their child.

https://preventexpulsion.org/overview/

The DOE is not responsible for the content of non-DOE resources nor does it endorse such content. Any recommended practices contained in these resources must be implemented in a manner consistent with DOE policies, practices and procedures.

What is Positive Behavior Intervention & Support?

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) is a research-based approach that encourages positive behaviors, as well as social and emotional development in early childhood. This approach is found to significantly reduce challenging behaviors. Rather than taking a punitive approach to children's behavior, this approach ensures children are able to *learn and practice* behaviors that meet their needs and are socially appropriate.
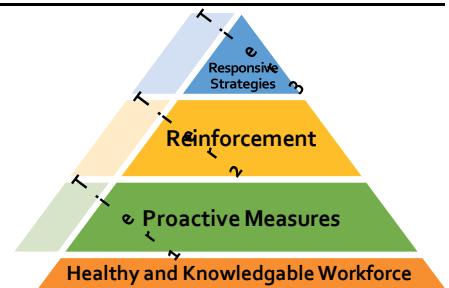
This approach is tiered, meaning all children have access to Tier 1 and 2 supports, which are built upon with more specific, data-driven individualized interventions in Tier 3, when appropriate.

Components

Healthy and Knowledgeable Workforce: A well-trained and supportive staff is the key to any effective behavior management in early childhood. This refers to the emotional wellbeing of the early childhood workforce as well as knowledge and skills gained through practice, self-reflection, and regular coaching and professional development. When educators are able to care for themselves, they are better able to provide responsive care from a place of empathy and unconditional positive regard. (EFQ 2, 6)

Tier 1- Proactive Measures: Establishing safe, nurturing, and predictable environments and relationships are the foundation for positive behavior in early childhood. All children should have intentionally-designed environments that offer age-appropriate predictability, ways to safely practice their growing independence, and support their social and emotional development. Likewise, all educators should intentionally build responsive relationships with children that affirm their identity (including ethnic, racial, cultural identity), support emotional regulation, and provide other meaningful adult support. (EFQ 1, 2, 3)

Tier 2- Reinforcement: Giving all children time to practice targeted skills related to behavior, social skills, and emotional development is key to reinforcing positive behavior expectations. Children should be reinforced for using positive behavior skills. Verbal praise, social attention, and activities are all ways to provide reinforcement. Data should be used to determine which skills small groups and individual children get additional practice in. (EFQ 2, 3)

Tier 3- Responsive Strategies: Responsive strategies can be used to help individual children practice a specific skill when a challenging behavior occurs. They should include modeling, opportunities for practice, and/or a logical consequence to the behavior and follow close after the behavior occurs. Research shows that effectively implemented Tier 1 and Tier 2 strategies provide enough support for about 80% of children to exhibit positive behaviors. (EFQ 3, 5)

Individualized Behavior Planning

When Tier 1 and Tier 2 strategies are used consistently but prove unsuccessful over time, you can implement an individualized behavior plan. Based on data, these plans can be used to help individual children develop specific skills and replace moderate to intense challenging behaviors. Educators should use observation and other data sources to better understand children's behavior and develop plans to guide children in developing positive, prosocial behaviors to meet their underlying feelings, needs and desires. For more information about how to develop and implement a behavior plan, please connect with your Mental Health Staff, your DECE social worker, or email the DECE Mental Health and Wellness Team at <u>decemhw@schools.nyc.gov</u>. Family Child-Care Providers should contact their Education Specialist or Network Educational Director.

Using a Positive Behavior Support Model helps to ensure care is…

Equitable and Culturally Responsive. Research shows implicit bias in the classroom is most prevalent when teachers are engaging in behavior management. For example, <u>one famous study fromYale Child Study Center</u> showed that when told a challenging behavior would occur in a group of children, teachers of all races spent significantly more time watching Black and male-identified children in the group. Anticipating them to engage in challenging behavior.

The <u>ELOF</u> reminds us, "Some cultures encourage children to be outgoing, others to be reserved in social interactions and emotional expression." Positive Behavior Support (PBIS) ensures a more equitable approach to behavior support and instruction by depending on data, observation, and focusing on building upon children's strengths. This mitigates implicit bias and foster healthy identity development for children of all backgrounds.

Trauma Informed. Trauma Informed Care means proactively acknowledging and mitigating the impacts of stress and trauma. PBS helps ensure a trauma-informed approach by promoting teacher wellbeing, self-awareness, and unconditional positive regard for children. It reinforces behavior management as a form of instruction and avoids restricting children's interaction in classroom activities through harmful behavior management strategies like isolation, punishment, or shortened (truncated) schedules.

Healthy and Knowledgeable Workforce

We cannot give away what we don't have. As early childhood educators, we must care for our own wellbeing in order to show up effectively with children, especially in tough moments. Personal and Professional Self-Care is necessary to engage meaningfully in caring for young children. Self-Awareness is necessary to provide equitable care.

Strategies for Fostering a Healthy and Knowledgeable Workforce

- Care for yourself first. Make time for your physical and mental wellbeing. Taking your breaks, staying hydrated, and having a quiet moment to yourself are little things that make a big difference over time.

- Practice unconditional positive regard. Invest in ongoing self-reflection to practice the belief that all children are capable of learning and deserve loving, nurturing care even when they are engaging in challenging behaviors.

- Build connections with your team. Use your team wisely to support each other in tough moments, including planning for consistent care and responses across team members.

- Engage in continuous professional development. Professional Learning, coaching, observation, and feedback can help staff feel more competent and confident in providing appropriate and effective behavior support.

Strategies for Implementing Positive Behavior Support: Infants and Toddlers

Social Development in Infants and Toddlers
Infants and toddlers develop relationship-building skills and behaviors through their earliest interactions with important adults in their lives. Critical social skills, such as compromise, cooperation, and reciprocity, are beginning to develop. Young children need support from adults as they learn and practice these skills.

Emotional Development in Infants and Toddlers
Emotional development in infants is closely tied to their social development with adults. These early relationships teach young children how to express and interpret a wide range of emotions.

Tier 1: Proactive Measures to Promote Positive Behavior in Infants and Toddlers

Children enter early childhood programs at varying developmental levels. There is a wide range of behaviors and skills that are considered "typical" for children in this age group. Each child is unique. Programs should individualize skills and strategies to advance children's learning and development across all domains. To support each child's growth in social-emotional development and promote full participation in the program, staff are required to develop and implement proactive, developmentally appropriate behavior guidance strategies such as those described below:

1. Foster respectful, caring relationships

2. Practice flexibility and responsiveness

3. Create supportive physical environments and activities

4. Use developmentally appropriate instructional strategies

5. Plan for thoughtful transitions

1. Foster respectful, caring relationships among staff, children, and families.

- Use a primary care model whenever possible, ensuring each child has one member of the teaching team assigned as their primary caregiver and main point of contact with the family. This promotes strong, healthy attachment and more comprehensive care between school and home.

- Consistently use welcoming and positive language and tone, and ensure adults in the program interact positively with each other as well as with children. Each child should be comfortable with all adults in the room.

- Practice unconditional positive regard by communicating and acting on the principle that all children are capable of learning and making developmental progress. Always communicate care in your voice and try to distinguish the child from their challenging behavior.

- Consistently acknowledge and respond to children's emotions and communication, verbal and non-verbal. When an infant makes a face or sound you might acknowledge the child by looking at them or moving closer, and respond by making a face or speaking to them.

- Explicitly welcome families into the classroom environment and foster daily two-way communications between families and teaching staff.

2. Practice flexibility and responsiveness to children's skills, interests, and needs during planning and instruction.

- Infants and toddlers rely on the predictability and responsiveness of their caregivers to begin developing their skills for interacting and expressing emotion. Working alongside families is critical to establishing continuity of care, including:

    — Maintaining the same eating and sleeping schedules.

    — Ensuring caregivers at home and school are in alignment about what their expectations are for the child so they have consistency. Respect culture and family ideas about expectations like when children should start feeding themselves, washing their own hands, etc…

- Intentional teacher placement and active supervision

    — Plan where each member of the teaching team will be in the room or play space (including outdoors) ahead of time to ensure smooth transitions and clear roles amongst staff.

3. Create supportive physical environments and activities that promote children's development and foster positive relationships.

- Create an environment that is safe for infants and toddlers to move around freely.

    — Offer infants multiple opportunities throughout the day to freely explore varied, age appropriate materials on the floor. Limit time children spend in restricted areas like cribs (see page 16).

    — Use soft, varied spaces for appropriate ages to explore and play (which includes falling, at this age) safely while developing their gross motor skills.

    — Furniture should be designed for infants and toddlers. Chairs should be the right size and type of support to hold them safely during seated activities.

- Consider sensory needs. Infants and toddlers (and some preschoolers) are still developing their sensory receptive system. Using natural colors, being intentional about lighting, and keeping wall decorations calm (mostly children's work and minimal commercially produced items) will help avoid children from being overwhelmed by sensory stimulation. Be mindful of the soundscape in the room, by using music intentionally rather than as a constant backdrop.

- Establish a consistent routine that can be flexible to meet children's needs. Sequence and loose timing of activities of the day should be as consistent as possible, while allowing for flexibility based on individual and group needs on any given day.

  — Use a visual schedule (flow of the day) of pictures to help children anticipate what is coming next. You can also use simple First/ Then charts to show what is happening now and what will happen next for individual children.

4. Use developmentally appropriate instructional strategies to establish a positive classroom culture and keep children actively engaged.

- Ensure that materials are safe and developmentally appropriate for your age group(s). Make sure children are offered varied and engaging materials meant for their age. Using materials meant for older children may be a choking hazard and reduce engagement if they require advanced fine motor skills and/or conceptual thinking.

- Ensure that there are sufficient materials so the children are not forced to share. Support children in gradually developing turn taking strategies, such as asking for a turn and making a trade or finding something else to play with while they wait. It takes time and trust for children to learn that when they let go of something they will have another opportunity to use it again.

- Whenever possible, offer older infants and toddlers choices throughout the day, such as choosing which toys to clean up or where to sit at mealtime.

  — When offering a choice, give two options that are both acceptable to you, such as "Do you want to help me pick up the blocks or the cars?" "Do you want to hold my hand or hold Ms. Maria's hand?"

- Infants and toddlers change significantly over short periods of time. Caregivers should stay closely connected to the developmental expectations for the children they care for and align their own expectations to each child.

5. Plan for successful management of transitions.

- Making transitions go smoothly takes some pre-planning about where staff will be, what roles they will play, and how to keep children engaged. Transitions are a great time to bond with a child or create a sense of belonging for the group.

  — Minimize wait times during transitions in order to maximize children's active engagement throughout all times of day. For example, integrate diapering and toileting into choice time to individualize care routine; take children in small groups to wash hands so that they don't have to wait in a long line.

  — Give children advance notice before a transition to help prepare them and reduce resistance.

  — Use songs, fingerplays or simple games to turn transition times into playful learning opportunities and keep children engaged.

- Some transitions you should plan for are:

  — Diaper changes

  — Daily activities

  — Moving from one space to another

  — Saying goodbye

Tier 2: Reinforcement Strategies for Infants and Toddlers

Positive reinforcement acknowledges and motivates further positive behavior. <u>We reinforce the behaviors we want to see again</u>. It is important to let children know that they are making progress toward a new skill and encourage their effort. Positive reinforcement can be done in many ways, and should be tailored to what is motivating to individual children. Children working on new and more complicated behaviors may need additional reinforcements.

- Respond to communication. Very young children learn about interaction and create attachments through simple and caring interactions with caregivers. When an infant or young toddler is using sounds, motions, or eye contact to communicate, a caregiver should reinforce that emerging behavior by mirroring, this includes:

    — Eye contact

    — Smiling

    — repeating or extending vocalizations

- Positively narrate what you see an infant or toddler doing to make them feel seen and cared about to build the bond between child and caregiver.

    — Give positive feedback for following directions or a positive interaction. Be specific and meaningful, "You were a kind friend waiting very patiently while they finished playing with the ball you wanted."

- Offer words to acknowledge and describe various feelings and to build children's emotional vocabulary. I.e., "You are wrinkling your face and frowning, I think you are feeling frustrated."

- Create opportunities for children to work on certain skills and celebrate accomplishments. Set up games, situations, and play opportunities where children can work on specific skills. Then celebrate their willingness to try new things with specific praise, smiles, and high-fives.

Tier 3: Responsive Strategies for Infants and Toddlers

All 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. Nearly all children engage in unsafe or challenging behavior at some time, and we must be prepared to respond in a way that keeps our environments safe while giving the child an opportunity to practice a different way of communicating. 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.

1. Understand Contributing Factors

2. Provide Individualized Support in the Moment

1. Understand Contributing Factors

- Ask the question: "What is this child trying to communicate when they demonstrate this behavior?" Factors contributing to a child's behavior may include:

- Talk with families/caregivers to understand what is going on outside of the program, including if there are recent changes to routine, family dynamics, physical health, etc...

- Talk with families/caregivers to see if they are noticing the same behaviors at home. If the child is not showing the behaviors at home, explore what might be different at home than at the program.

- Use a developmental screening tool and/or authentic assessment, to see if the child falls within the age range in most domains.

- Use [Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) charts](#) to understand what happens before the behavior, what happens after, and when behaviors occur during the day to help find triggers, patterns, and the [function of the behavior](#).

2. Provide Individualized Support in the Moment

- Adjust environmental factors that may be overwhelming or causing confusion for the child, based on observation.

    — Remove materials that may be overstimulating from the environment and observe whether that helps the child self-regulate. You can narrate what you are doing "This light is very bright, let's move it and see if that's more comfortable for you."

    — Indicate transitions to children one-on-one (e.g., instead of the whole class, ensuring that individual child understands). Help individual children anticipate transitions by giving them personal reminders of what is about to happen and how.

    — Create individual visual schedules for children so you can show what is coming next during each activity and prepare them for transitions.

- Provide physical support

    — Move closer to the child to provide support. A caregiver's physical presence nearby or gentle touch helps very young children develop their self-regulation skills through co-regulation.

- Model appropriate behavior for the child and narrate what you are doing, including how it keeps people safe.

Strategies for Implementing Positive Behavior Support: Preschoolers (3-5 years old)

> **Social Development in Preschoolers**
> As children move into the preschool years, they become increasingly interested in forming relationships with peers. Critical social skills, such as compromise, cooperation, and sharing, are developing at this time. Young children need support from adults as they learn and practice these skills.
>
> **Emotional Development in Preschoolers**
> Though children express emotions at birth, the preschool years are a critical time for learning how to manage emotions in ways that can help children build strong social skills and get the most out of their time in the early childhood program. Preschoolers are developing more concrete ideas about their own identity–who they are and what they can do. A sense of identity and belonging contributes to school readiness and learning by helping children gain self-confidence.

Tier 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 of skills and strategies used as programs advance children's learning and development across all domains. To support each child's growth, programs are required to develop and implement proactive, developmentally appropriate behavior guidance strategies such as those described below:

1. Foster respectful, caring relationships

2. Practice flexibility and responsiveness

3. Create supportive physical environments and activities

4. Communicate clear expectations

5. Use developmentally appropriate instructional strategies

6. Plan for thoughtful transitions

1. Foster respectful, caring relationships among staff, children, and families.

- Practice unconditional positive regard by communicating and acting on the principle that all children are capable of learning and making developmental progress. Always communicate care in your voice and try to distinguish the child from their challenging behavior.

- Consistently use welcoming and positive language and tone, and ensure adults in the program interact positively with each other as well as with children. Children model the relationships they see between adults.

- Consistently acknowledge and respond to children's emotions and communication, verbal and non-verbal.

- 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 developmental screenings (including Social Emotional screenings like ASQ:SE-2), authentic assessment, 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. This fosters not only trust, but positive identity development.

2. Practice flexibility and responsiveness to children's skills, interests, and needs during planning and instruction.

- The flow of the day/daily schedule should be in a predictable sequence and include ample time for both 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 peers, encouraging purposeful play.

- Use information gathered from observations and 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 encouraging children to plan, talk, and share their ideas for learning.

- Give children 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. Limit the amount of time children are expected to remain sitting during facilitated activities to short periods of about 10-15 minutes at a time.

- If children do not appear to be engaged during periods of whole-group instruction, consider:

    — Including additional whole-group movement.

    — Increasing children's participation through role play, singing, hand games, visuals, etc...

    — Shortening or changing the activity.

    — Reducing the frequency of whole-group activities.

    — If just one or two children are having difficulty, consider offering these children alternative activities to do that will not disrupt the whole group (e.g., puzzles, books, use of table toys, etc.)

3. Create supportive physical environments and activities that promote children's development and foster positive relationships.

- Arrange the environment to allow children to utilize shared space collaboratively.

  — Stock centers with diverse materials that are suitable for the range of skills, interests, and abilities of children in the group.

  — All children should have opportunities to participate without competing for materials or adult assistance. Ensure children can access materials independently, and provide duplicates of popular toys.

  — 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. For example, if the science area allows three children, ensure there is enough space for 3 children to engage with the materials within the designated area.

- Use visual displays (e.g., Tools of Autonomy) that support children in understanding how to uphold classroom/ group agreements and practice the social-emotional skills they have been introduced to.

  — Tools of Autonomy (3-K) are the supports in the learning environment that encourage 3-K and pre-K children to develop independence and self-sufficiency. They include center systems or choice charts, visual daily schedule (flow of the day), interactive attendance charts, feelings chart, and job charts.

  — Other examples of visual displays include:

    ▪ using labels for center and material organization to assist children in choosing or returning materials after their use

    ▪ visuals showing self-care or routine sequences; i.e., toileting or handwashing

    ▪ visuals to remind children of specific behavior expectations such as a mouth that can remind children to use soft voices indoors

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Class-wide behavior charts are ineffective and inappropriate in early childhood. A class-wide behavior chart- such as a traffic light where children's names or photos are moved based on their behavior throughout the day or week- are not appropriate at this age because:

- They do not provide young children with any guidance or support in how to change their behavior. Children need to be taught, shown, and reminded what they should do instead.

- The negative social and emotional impact of such systems can increase challenging behavior. Open displays of a child not meeting expectations can lead to that child being isolated from peers, feeling shame, weaken their relationship with caregivers, and harming their self-esteem.

- Establish a cozy area reserved for quiet activity or create opportunities for children to find space for privacy and relaxation.This area offers children the chance to escape the classroom environment and relax in a soft space.

- 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.

- Frequently monitor, or "scan," the classroom, and proactively intervene in situations to avoid escalation. When a potential conflict arises, you can step in to support children in practicing the relevant social and/ or emotional skills for the situation such as reminding them of calm down techniques, or giving language for them to use.

4. 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 community agreements in the classroom. Revisit, model, and practice those agreements throughout the year.

- Provide regular opportunities to model, role play, and reinforce behaviors that meet the community agreements. For example, the agreement "We are safe." may include expected behaviors like walking feet, gentle touches, blocks are for building.

- Expectations and commands should be specific and positively stated. Young children need to know what action to replace their challenging behavior with: "Use walking feet." not "Don't run". 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 materials and environment with respect, and remind children of classroom expectations frequently, especially before transitioning to another activity and at the beginning of the year.

- Throughout the year, offer children instruction on key social and friendship skills like how to initiate play with others, different ways to take turns, considering the perspectives of others, and resolving social conflicts. This may include giving children simple phrases to use when asking to play, using puppets to model navigating a common classroom interaction, or using visuals that offer solutions for resolving conflicts.

5. Use developmentally appropriate instructional strategies to establish a positive classroom culture and keep children actively engaged.

- 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.

- Use narration to demonstrate how emotions might be influencing yourself or a situation. This gives children a model and better understanding of how to navigate their emotions and relationships.

  — Narrate your own thought process, "I am sad that you ripped my picture up, I had been working hard on that. I am going to take a deep breath and get another paper, please keep your hands on your own picture."

  — Narrate a child's actions, "You tried to get a magnifying glass but there were none left! Your scrunched face tells me you might be feeling frustrated. Do you want help asking for a turn?"

- Engage children in interactive problem-solving regularly during play and establish the expectations that children talk with each other to resolve conflicts. You can "problematize" anything: how to distribute 2 kinds of fruit at snack, setting up the easel with different colors so children must engage each other to share, etc...

6. Plan for successful management of transitions.

- Give children reminders before major transitions so they have time to finish what they are doing and prepare for the next activity. Let them know 5 and 1 minutes before it is time to change activities. Consider using a visual timer like a sand timer or count down clock. Individual children may benefit from personal reminders as well.

- 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.

Tier 2: Reinforcement Strategies for Encouraging Positive Behavior

Positive reinforcement acknowledges and motivates further positive behavior. <u>We reinforce the behaviors we want to see again</u>. It is important to let children know that they are making progress toward a new skill and encourage their effort. Positive reinforcement can be done in many ways, and should be tailored to what is motivating to individual children. Children working on new and more complicated behaviors may need additional reinforcements. Developmentally appropriate reinforcements include:

- Using social reinforcements such as praise, smiles, encouragement, high-fives, or 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 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. Other examples include having time to play one on one with a teacher or go for a walk to say hello to another classroom teacher. This is a way to recognize behavior growth that goes beyond praise.

- Material Reinforcements can be used to reinforce a behavior that is particularly challenging for a child. Teaching teams should use free or very low cost items as reinforcements, and never use food. A small paper cut out, a note from the teacher, or a sticker can be used to let children know you saw them engaging in a really important skill that is tough for them. It is a simple, tangible way to say, "I see you working hard and I am proud of you."

Misconception #1: *Using reinforcement prevents children from developing intrinsic motivation for positive behavior.*

- Reinforcements are what help us see the value in taking on a new behavior. When something is really hard for a child, they may need more intense reinforcement like a heart cut out given to them by the teacher. However as the skill gets easier, a teacher may begin giving high-fives and verbal praise. Eventually as the child masters their new skill, external reinforcements become less important.

Misconception #2: *Other children will be jealous/ feel left out/ become dysregulated if an individual child gets a reinforcement.*

- Young children have a strong sense of justice. That means they may want to know why someone else is getting something and they are not, however it also means that they understand the idea of equity (everyone gets what they need, everyone doesn't get the same) when it is explained to them. Be honest with children about why someone is receiving a reward. For example you might say, "She got this sticker because she has been practicing sharing blocks really hard and I just saw what a nice friend she was to you when she gave you the block you asked for."

Tier 3: Responsive Strategies for Preschool Children

All 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. Nearly all children engage in unsafe or challenging behavior at some time, and we must be prepared to respond in a way that keeps our environments safe while giving the child an opportunity to practice a different way of communicating. 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.

1. Understand contributing factors

2. Redirection Strategies

    a. Offering choices

    b. Supporting the child's sense of security, self-regulation and self-soothing skills

3. Limiting negative attention

4. Logical consequences

5. Replacement/alternative behaviors

1. 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, room arrangement, noise level, etc.

— The child's feeling of security within the classroom or 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.

• Use Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence (ABC) charts to understand what happens before the behavior, what happens after, and when behaviors occur during the day to help find triggers, patterns, and the function of the behavior.

2. Strategies for responding to and redirecting behaviors:

• Whenever possible, offer choices. Allow children control over their own behavior, such as choosing which toys to put away or where to sit at the lunch table.

   — When offering a choice, give two options *that are both acceptable to you.*

• 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.

   — Empathize with a child's emotions, reassure them of their safety, value, and care in the classroom.

   — Write a letter to a caregiver or hold a special object from home.

3. Limiting the amount of negative attention given to children by ignoring non-disruptive inappropriate behavior and focusing on the positive.
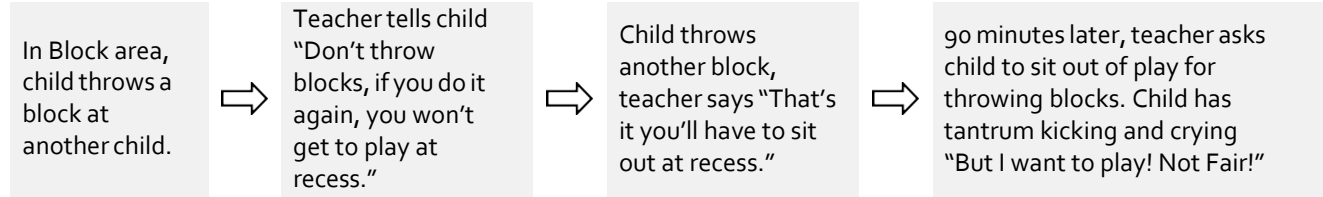
• Staff may choose to ignore non-disruptive behavior and continue to focus children on another learning activity. "Active Ignoring" means not looking at or acknowledging the behavior, and so, not rewarding it with attention. As soon as the child displays a positive behavior, it should be reinforced with positive attention immediately.

• 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.

4. Implementing logical consequences, where a child's access to an activity or resource is restricted in direct response to an unsafe or disruptive behavior.
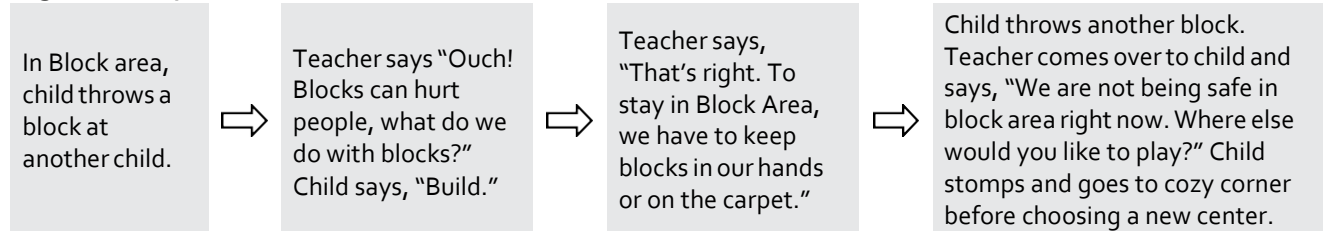
• The severity of the consequence should be appropriate and relevant (e.g., not being able to stay at the water table because they continue to pour water on other children).

• This strategy may be used along with redirecting, providing acceptable alternatives, and self-regulation skills.

Example of an Illogical vs. Logical Consequence:

Illogical Consequence

| In Block area, child throws a block at another child. | ⇨ | Teacher tells child "Don't throw blocks, if you do it again, you won't get to play at recess." | ⇨ | Child throws another block, teacher says "That's it you'll have to sit out at recess." | ⇨ | 90 minutes later, teacher asks child to sit out of play for throwing blocks. Child has tantrum kicking and crying "But I want to play! Not Fair!" |

Logical Consequence

| In Block area, child throws a block at another child. | ⇨ | Teacher says "Ouch! Blocks can hurt people, what do we do with blocks?" Child says, "Build." | ⇨ | Teacher says, "That's right. To stay in Block Area, we have to keep blocks in our hands or on the carpet." | ⇨ | Child throws another block. Teacher comes over to child and says, "We are not being safe in block area right now. Where else would you like to play?" Child stomps and goes to cozy corner before choosing a new center. |

5. Helping the child develop appropriate replacement or alternative behaviors.

- Prompt the child to use strategies that have been introduced and practiced in the classroom that would help them in the moment, e.g., "We use gentle touches to stay safe, you could ask "Can I use that?'"

- Use small groups with other children to give the child practice. E.g., you may play a turn-taking game with the child and narrate how she is utilizing her new sharing skills.

- Use visual cues like cards, personalized schedule, or Scripted Stories to help build mastery of the replacement behavior.

Moderate to Severe Challenging Behaviors: Individualized Behavior Planning

If a child's externalizing (crying, kicking, yelling, etc.) or internalizing (withdrawn, silent, etc.) behaviors are not changing with consistent attention and instruction, it's time to invest in deep observation and create a plan. **Children only continue engaging in a behavior *because that behavior is working for them*.** Our goal is to help a child meet the same need the challenging behavior is providing, but in a more appropriate, safe, or engaged way. According to research, if the 3 Tiers of support are consistent and robust, only about 5% of children will need additional supports.

Teaching staff should collaborate with a child's family to help the child develop and 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. Your Mental Health Staff and/or DECE Social Worker can help you engage in thorough observations and make a data-driven plan to support you in the process.

The Behavior Planning Process

A data cycle should be used in any plan for behavior support:

1. Collect information. Use observation, documentation, family engagement, etc. to understand what is happening

2. Analyze. Examine the evidence and how it should impact your practice

3. Inform practice. Make planned changes to your practice or program systems.
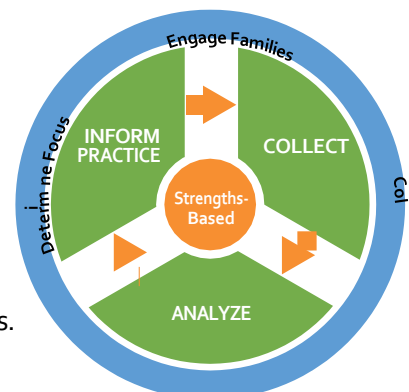
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4. Repeat cycle to determine effectiveness of your plan and make necessary changes. Plans should be used consistently for at least 3 weeks before changes are made.

- **Get a better understanding of what the child is trying to communicate with their behavior.**

  — Understand contributing factors that may be occurring for the child (see Responsive Strategies above)

  — 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.

    Use observation to examine an adult's interactions with a child, is there something about the interaction that may be leading the child to engage in challenging behavior? A caregiver's tone, way of stating demands, or physical habits may lead to a child trying to escape a situation or assert control through challenging behaviors.

    - Determine how often and at what times of day the challenging behavior is occurring to help you figure out what is being communicated or gained/ avoided through the behavior.

- **Once you have an idea of *why, when, and/or where* this pattern of behavior is occurring. Make a plan for teaching and reinforcing the replacement behavior for that child, starting at Tier 1 and working up.**

  — Individualized Proactive Strategies:

    - 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.

  — Individualized Reinforcement Strategies (see list in section above):

    - All staff working with the child should know what behaviors they are looking for and praise the replacement behavior any time the child uses it.

  — Individualized Responsive Strategies (see list in section above):

    All staff working with the child should be on the same page about what responsive strategies are going to be used in response to different behaviors to ensure consistency.

- **Include Child in Beginning Implementation of the Behavior Support Plan**

  — 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:

    Identify the inappropriate behavior in a non-judgmental, factual way.

    Calmly communicate with the child about the impact of the behavior on themselves and others.

Help the child identify contributing factors and identify an appropriate alternative behavior or way to address the situation.

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 child agree on to help remind the child to use the alternative behavior).

Collaborate with the child's family throughout the process.

Celebrate with the child when they make progress over time.

- **Track Progress**

   — Celebrate growth, even very small ones!

   — Track which interventions are done effectively

   — Implement the plan <u>consistently</u> for 3 weeks before making adjustments to the plan based on your follow up data.

Additional Supports

After implementing these positive behavior guidance strategies with the support of an assigned DECE Social Worker or other Mental Health professional, 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, referrals to counseling/ therapy, 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 their peers.

- For a child who already has an IEP, contact the child's parent or legal guardian and DOHMH/CPSE to discuss scheduling a new IEP meeting to consider whether any changes to the IFSP/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 special education evaluations may be appropriate if a child is not making meaningful progress even with the interventions that the program has implemented. In these cases, speak with the parent/guardian about making a referral to the CPSE for preschool special education evaluations.

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.

- 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 care is limited due to any characteristic or perceived characteristic of that child or family.

Please reach out to decemhw@schools.nyc.gov with any questions, concerns, and for more information.

Resources

Understanding Behavior and Development

- [What does it mean to be an infant and toddler?](#) (see introduction)

- [What does it mean to be 3?](#) (see page 2)

- [What does it mean to be 4?](#)

- [Functions of Behavior Overview](#)

- [Antecedent- Behavior- Consequence (ABC) Chart](#)

Healthy and Knowledgeable Workforce

Supporting Staff Wellbeing and Reflection

- [Hot Button Self-Reflection Activity for Staff](#)

- Racial Equity and Identity

    — [Professional Learning Toolkit:](#) High Quality Programs Respect and Value Differences*

    — [Social Identity Wheel Self-Reflection Activity for Staff](#)

- [Professional Learning Toolkit:](#) Play-Based Learning and Responsive Instruction*
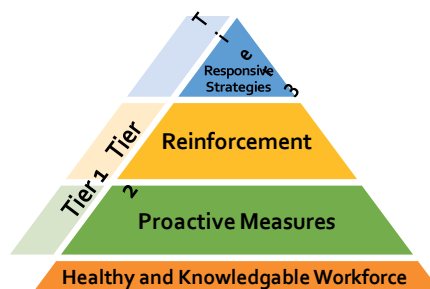
*Please note: to access the Professional Development Toolkits, you will need to log into or [create](#) a Protraxx account.

Tier 1: Proactive Measures

Environments and Routines that Promote Positive Behavior

- Setting up Nurturing Environments for Infants and Toddlers

- Cozy Corner Guidance

- Predictable Routines that Keep Children Engaged throughout the Day: Let's Play (pages 30-35)

- Tools of Autonomy for 3-year-olds

- Tools of Autonomy for 4-year-olds

- Using Effective Commands

- Visuals for Solutions to Navigate Social Conflict

Keeping Children Engaged Promotes Positive Behavior

- DECE Curriculum: Infants & Toddlers (Connections), 3-Year-Olds (Explorations), and 4-Year-Olds (Units of Study), and Family Child Care (Let's Play)

- FUN skills for Child-Led Play

Tier 2: Reinforcement

- Types of Reinforcement and Effective Praise

Tier 3: Responsive Strategies

- Responsive Strategies Based on the Function of Behavior

- Active Ignoring

- Books and stories on feelings, transitions, friendship skills, etc. Find Book Lists in DECE Curricula: Connections, Exploration 1, Units of Study Booklist

Individualized Behavior Planning

- Sample Individualized Behavior Support Plan Template

- Scripted stories

- Routines-based support guide for Birth-36 months

- Routines-based support guide for 4-8 years old
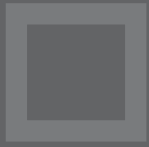
X. Appendix C: Commitment to Families

The Division of Early Childhood Commitment to Families

The mission of the DOE Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) is to create the best early care and education system in the country so that every New York City child has a fair shot at living up to their full potential. To support this mission, the DECE offers the following commitments and resources to families to ensure all young learners are receiving the highest quality care possible.

There are six commitment sections, and below is an overview of each one.

Table of Contents

Two Generation Approach

> *The DECE commits to serving the whole family to ensure families' varying needs and goals are incorporated in program design and decision-making.*

A two-generation (2Gen) approach builds family well-being by intentionally working with children and the adults in their lives together. The approach recognizes that families come in all different shapes and sizes, as defined by families themselves. The DECE recognizes that caregivers are their children's first teachers and advocates, and in order to build a high quality program, early childhood leaders and staff must establish a whole family approach for children and the adults in their lives.

- Programs will recognize families and caregivers as their child's first teacher, and partner with you to support the goals you have for your child's learning experience. See a sample Beginning of Year Questionnaire we recommend programs use to set goals with families, and End of Year Questionnaire to help families transition into the next year. See translations here.

- Program administrators will consider family voice when making programmatic decisions.

- Programs will honor and reflect the diversity of family and cultural backgrounds when sharing important information about your child's learning and the program's policies and activities.

- Programs will stay knowledgeable about resources in their communities and connect families to these resources when needed to ensure the well-being and stability of the whole family.

- Head Start programs will engage in a governance process and family partnership agreements with all families. For more information, view Head Start Program Governance Standards.

Diversity & Inclusion

> *The DECE commits to including and honoring the diverse family and cultural backgrounds in our city as we co-create early care and education programs and family resources.*

- Programs will provide a warm and welcoming environment that respects and celebrates your family's language and culture.

- Programs' efforts to engage you will focus on communication in your preferred language, and honor your family's racial and cultural identities.

- Programs will work to understand the unique needs of each community and use this knowledge to inform decision-making.

- Programs must provide equal educational opportunities without regard to actual or perceived race, color, religion, age, creed, ethnicity, national origin, alienage, citizenship status, weight, disability, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity or expression, or level of independence.[1]

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[1] Programs offering an Extended Day and Year, including Head Start, have income eligibility and other requirements that families must meet in order to enroll their child. These programs are designated in MySchools.

— For example, a program may not deny your child entry if they do not yet use the bathroom independently or if they do not yet dress themselves independently.

— If your child has a disability, they have the right to attend early childhood programs.

- Children 0-3 years old currently receiving Early Intervention (EI) services through the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) may be able to receive their services at their early childhood program.

- Children who are 3-5 years old can attend early childhood programs (1) whether or not you plan to submit a referral to the CPSE or if you have already submitted a referral to the DOE; (2) if you are currently going through the CPSE process; or (3) if your child already has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), including if they have an IEP that recommends special class in an integrated setting (SCIS) or special class.[2]

Mental & Physical Health

The DECE commits to providing an early learning experience where all children and families feel both physically and mentally healthy, safe, and nurtured.

- Programs will provide a welcoming, supportive, trauma-informed,[3] and diverse learning environment and partner with families to meet their current social and emotional needs.

- Your child's teaching team will get to know your child and their needs through responsive caregiving, and offer a nurturing relationship and learning environment that meets their physical, social, and emotional needs. For example, as your child grows, they will learn how to recognize, describe, and express strong feelings.

- Programs will offer or help coordinate with another program any necessary health or medical accommodations to allow for your child's participation.

- The adults caring for your child will hold all mandatory security and medical clearances.

- Programs will be staffed appropriately to safely care for your child by following a mandated ratio of staff to children at all times, and ensure your child is always in sight.

- Programs will maintain a clean and secure facility and follow all current health and safety guidelines to ensure the health and wellbeing of your child.

- Programs will offer a developmentally appropriate environment for young children full of materials and toys that help your child learn.

- Programs will offer your child nutritious meals and/or snacks every day.

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[2] If you believe your child may have a disability or developmental delay that impacts their ability to learn, 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 NYC DOE Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) to receive free special education services.

[3] A trauma-informed approach is where every individual in their program, regardless of title or role, will "realize the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths for recovery; recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and respond by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seek to actively resist re-traumatization." Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014.

Teaching & Learning

The DECE commits to supporting your child in play-based learning, exploration, and partnering with the whole family to ensure the goals you have for your child are incorporated into instruction.

• Programs will use the following frameworks and standards to plan for your child's learning in accordance with their age: New York State Prekindergarten Learning Standards (NYSPLS) and the Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF).

• Your child's teaching team and program/network administrators will have the appropriate qualifications for their positions.

• Your child's teaching team will provide your child with opportunities to celebrate their identity, explore their interests, and build a sense of community with their peers as they play and investigate the world around them.

• Programs will provide opportunities for your child to participate in large group, small group and independent experiences and physical activities, using a wide variety of learning materials.

• Programs will offer activities for you and your child to do together outside of the learning environment that build on their learning from the day.

• Programs will honor your family's multilingualism and encourage you to speak together in the language you prefer.

• Programs will plan with you for your child's transition into and out of the program.

Program Operations

The DECE commits to providing your family access to a free, full-day high-quality program.

• There are a variety of programs for families to choose from:

— "School Day and Year" programs will offer at least 176 days of instruction annually, for 6 hours and 20 minutes each day.

— "Extended Day and Year" programs include Early Head Start, Head Start, and other Extended Day and Year programs. These programs offer longer days (8 or 10 hours) and year-round services (225 days or 260 days).

• Programs will not collect fees for pre-registration or enrollment, or for instructional materials, school supplies, or special events. Programs funded by the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) charge a family fee, which is based on a sliding scale.

• Your family is not required to participate in any other programming offered by the provider in order to receive services offered by the NYC DOE.

📚 Resources

As advocates not only for your child, but also the communities in which you live, your voice is central to how your early childhood program meets the needs of your family and community. If you believe your child is not receiving high quality care and education, or you would like to offer us feedback, you can reach out to contacts in the following areas:

General Family	**Resources Enrollment**
Special Education	**Multilingual Learners**

General Family Resources

- Call the Parent Support Line (P311): Dial 311 and say "schools" or call (718) 935-2009. P311's hours are Monday - Friday between 8 AM and 6 PM.

- Email the Senior Executive Director of Family Empowerment & Community Partnerships at FECP@schools.nyc.gov with your family engagement questions.

- Visit the Early Childhood Learn at Home page for remote learning resources and health and safety tips, as well as the general Early Childhood page for what to expect from all programs.

- Visit the Early Childhood Family Toolkit on Growing Up NYC for hand-picked resources to keep kids learning, playing, and growing healthy.

- Sign up for Ready4K to receive a free family engagement curriculum. Each week, you'll receive short text messages with fun facts and easy tips on how to promote your child's development by building on existing family routines. Text "NYC" to 70138.

- Find resources for Students in Temporary Housing, such as public transportation support.

- Fill out this Technical Support Form to let us know what issues you have with DOE-issued iPads/devices, access to applications, and other technical problems.

3-K, Pre-K, EarlyLearn, Kindergarten, & Gifted & Talented Enrollment

- Children ages 0-2 can enroll year-round in EarlyLearn. Eligibility is based on your family's income and needs. Learn more at nyc.gov/EarlyLearn.

- Each winter, the DOE collects admissions applications for the following school year. Families can participate in admissions processes for entry into 3-K, pre-K, kindergarten and Gifted & Talented programs.

- All NYC families can apply to:

  — **3-K** the year your child turns 3. Learn more at nyc.gov/3K.

  — **Pre-K** the year your child turns 4. Learn more at nyc.gov/preK.

  — **Kindergarten** the year your child turns 5. Learn more at schools.nyc.gov/kindergarten.

- Sign up for emails to receive the most up-to-date information regarding each admissions process at schools.nyc.gov/sign-up.

- Visit the Family Welcome Center (FWC) page to get in contact with FWCs.

- Email the Early Childhood Enrollment team at ESEnrollment@schools.nyc.gov with your enrollment questions.

Special Education Resources

- For children 0-3, if you are interested in making a referral to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Bureau for Early Intervention, you can call 311 and ask about Early Intervention or visit the Early Intervention information for families page here.

  — You can also reach out to the DOE EI to Preschool team at EItoPreschool@schools.nyc.gov or 646-389-7171.

- General Special Education inquiries:

  — DOE Special Education Hotline: 718-935-2007

  — SpecialEducation@schools.nyc.gov

- Related Services: RelatedServices@schools.nyc.gov

- Assistive Technology: CATpreschool@schools.nyc.gov

- Find the contact information for your district's CPSE online here.

- To learn more about the how to access services for your child, you can review the:

  — DOE Guide to the Early Intervention to Preschool Transition

  — The DOE Family Guide to Preschool Special Education Services

  — DOE's Moving to Preschool Page

Multilingual Learner Resources

- A child's home language is an integral cultural asset that should be honored, sustained, and reflected in the classroom and program environment. Learn about your rights as a parent/guardian of an English language learner.

- You have a right to receive information or communicate with a staff member at your child's program, Family Child Care Network, school, or Department of Education (DOE) office in your language. View NYC Public Schools Speak Your Language for more information.

- Read a welcome flyer for Pre-K Emergent Multilingual Learner families from the New York State Education Department.

- Find Community-Based Organizations that support linguistically and culturally diverse families.

- View helpful links for families of English language learners.