

2024

New Mexico PreK Program Standards



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New Mexico PreK Program Background

During the 2005 legislative session, the New Mexico legislature passed the Pre-Kindergarten (PreK) Act that provided funding to develop and implement voluntary pre-kindergarten programs to advance childhood development and school readiness throughout the state of New Mexico. (See NMSA 1978, § 32a-23-1 through § 32a-23-10). ECECD has managed the PreK Program since July 2020 and continues to support high-quality standards for NM PreK programs. The PreK Act states that PreK programs must address the total developmental needs of children being served, including physical, cognitive, social, and emotional needs, and includes health care, nutrition, safety, and multicultural sensitivity programmatic and training requirements.

The Goal of NM PreK is to:

1. Increase statewide access to voluntary, quality NM PreK developmental readiness programs.
2. Focus on enrolling new children and building community capacity.
3. Provide developmentally appropriate activities for New Mexico children.
4. Focus on school readiness; and
5. Expand early childhood community capacity.
6. Program Standards were revised in July 2024. The PreK program standards support high quality services including the following:
 - Expand upon early learning experiences.
 - Honor the individual strengths and needs of young children.
 - Encourage young children to value the process of learning.
 - Ensure developmentally appropriate teaching practices.
 - Support early childhood teachers in their roles as educators and professional decision- makers.
 - Ensure equitable access to PreK.
 - Honor all cultures, languages, and abilities.
 - Align services through intentional collaboration within the early learning system.



1. Family and Community Engagement

PreK Programs must collaborate to support the establishment of a seamless continuum of quality early care and education programs in their respective communities.

Standards

1.A. Community Engagement

1.A.1. PreK program administrators must meet at least quarterly with other early care and education programs in their community including public schools, community-based early care and education providers, Head Start, including Migrant, Tribal, and Early Head Start; and Family Infant Toddler (FIT) programs, to promote collaboration opportunities and strengthen early childhood program partnerships.

1.A.2. PreK programs must collaborate with the community early care and education providers, including Head Start Programs, to coordinate services, address saturation or duplication of services in the community, and share waitlists to ensure children have access to the program that best fits their needs while honoring family choice.

1.A.3. PreK programs at capacity must share information on other early care and education opportunities in the community with families seeking services and/or families on their waitlist. Programs must create a written plan describing the processes used to ensure this collaboration occurs regularly.

1.B. Family Engagement

1.B.1. PreK programs must implement family-centered practices that support the engagement of families in all aspects of their child's learning and development. Practices must be culturally and linguistically responsive. All family engagement opportunities and communications must be accessible to multi-lingual families. Professional interpretation and translation must be provided when applicable.

1.B.2. PreK programs must provide a minimum of 90 hours of family engagement activities. PreK activities and events must be shared with families in a timely manner prior to the events. Family engagement activities aside from home visits and family and educator conferences should be planned based on feedback from families and offered in a variety of formats to provide equity in participation and access. Family engagement activities must include:

- A minimum of one family home visit for each child prior to the start of school or within two weeks of enrollment for children who enroll after the start of the school year.
- Two family and educator conferences that include a review of the child's progress and learning, the creation of joint goals with the family to support progress in all areas of development, review of results from development and health screenings, and any and transition planning.

1.B.3. PreK Programs must provide a family handbook to all enrolled families. The family handbook must be written in plain language. Families should be engaged in the development and review of the handbook. Every effort must be made to provide the handbook and any other materials in the family's home language. The handbook must

include at a minimum: a guidance policy, expulsion policy, philosophy, transition activities, toilet learning, and the program's curriculum.

1.C. ELIGIBILITY, RECRUITMENT, ENROLLMENT, AND ATTENDANCE

1.C.1. Eligibility

- Children must reside in the state of New Mexico
- Children must be age eligible to enroll, as stated below:
 - **Early PreK:** children must be three years old by 12:00 am on September 1 of the current school year.
 - **Mixed Age PreK:** children must be three- or four- years-old by 12:00 am on September 1 of the current school year.
 - **PreK:** children must be four years old by 12:00 am on September 1 of the current school year.
 - Priority for enrollment must be given to families:
 - Residing within the boundaries of a Title I school district.
 - Experiencing homelessness/displacement
 - Children who are in foster care
 - For NM PreK, a child must be no older than the age required to attend Kindergarten

1.C.2. Recruitment

PreK Programs must create and implement a student recruitment policy and plan. The policy and plan must include:

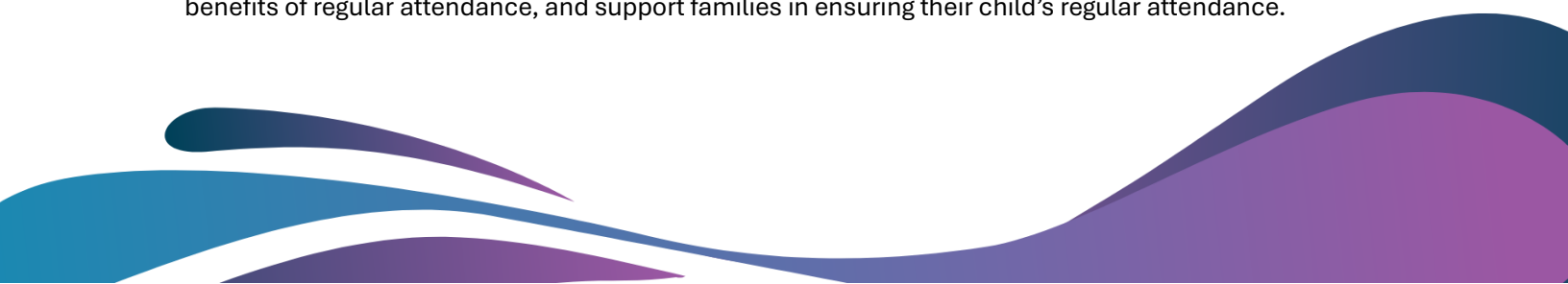
- How families are informed of the availability of the PreK program.
- Methods of recruitment.
- Ensuring recruitment efforts are linguistically responsive.
- How wait lists are maintained based on the programs established selection criteria.
- To promote equitable access for all eligible children, families on a waitlist will be provided information on all available early care and education opportunities in their community.

1.C.3. Enrollment

PreK programs must use birth certificates to verify children's date of birth and full legal name. If a child ceases to attend, the program must develop a plan to re-engage the family to resume attendance. If a child's attendance does not resume, then the program must consider the slot vacated and open the slot to a new child. Children may not be dismissed from the PreK program due to special needs or behavioral needs. (See "*Inclusive Practices for Children with Diverse Abilities*" section below).

1.C.4. Attendance

Programs must demonstrate support of families to ensure their child attends regularly at least 85% of time. Programs must clearly document the efforts they take to support the family to attend the program. NM PreK attendance does not follow PED attendance guidelines and programs must follow the standards set forth in this document or other official guidance issued by ECECD. Programs must track attendance and develop strategies to promote attendance, provide information to families on the benefits of regular attendance, and support families in ensuring their child's regular attendance.



2. Inclusive Practices for Children with Diverse Abilities

PreK programs should implement inclusive teaching and learning strategies with curricula and assessment designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant, and accessible to all.

Standards

2.A. INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

2.A.1. PreK Program personnel must understand and commit to inclusionary practices that build on each child's culture, language, experiences, and abilities. Inclusion in early childhood programs refers to including children with disabilities in early childhood programs, together with their peers without disabilities; holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities, facilitated by individualized accommodations; and using evidence-based services and supports to foster children's development (cognitive, language, communication, physical, behavioral, and social- emotional), friendships with peers, and sense of belonging. This applies to all young children with disabilities, from those with the mildest disabilities to those with the most significant disabilities.

2.A.2. All indoor and outdoor physical and learning environments must be accessible to children with disabilities or developmental delays. For children with an Individualized Educational Program (IEP), supports must be provided according to the IEP. Additional information and recommendations for increasing the inclusion of infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities in high-quality early childhood programs can be accessed via the following resource: Link: [Policy Statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs \(2015\)](#)

2.A.3. PreK program staff must complete training specific to inclusionary practices to meet each child's needs, including those with an IEP. Each PreK program's Local Education Agency (LEA) is obligated to provide training specific to each child's accommodations or the program's plans documented in an IEP. In partnership with the family, PreK programs have the right to contact the LEA to request support for children with an IEP when needed.

2.A.4. PreK classrooms must provide inclusive settings for children with developmental delays and disabilities based on the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and consistent with a child's IEP, (if applicable).

- a) IDEA mandates that the IEP team consists of a general education teacher that is knowledgeable about the child. Other entities may participate in the IEP process with parental consent.
- b) In collaboration and consultation with the special education services providers, PreK educators must integrate IEP goals and objectives into the daily schedule, classroom activities, and lesson plan. During the IEP meeting, staff may request additional training from the program's LEA specific to each student's needs, goals, and objectives. Collaborative efforts must occur to determine the child's ongoing needs.

- c) A program must develop interagency agreements, if applicable, with the LEA responsible for implementing IDEA to improve service delivery to children eligible for services under IDEA. This includes the referral and evaluation process, service coordination, promotion of service provision in the least restrictive environment, including appropriate community-based settings, and reduction in dual enrollment which causes reduced time in a less restrictive setting, and transition services as children move from services provided under Part C of IDEA to services provided under Part B of IDEA and from PreK to kindergarten.
- d) Each PreK Programs must collaborate and coordinate with its respective LEA to integrate ancillary services (e.g., occupational, speech/language, and physical therapies) within regular program activities and routines to the maximum extent appropriate, as described by the IEP team working with the individual child. Programs must develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the LEA so that each agency is aware of its responsibility for providing the special education supports and services listed in each IEP, keeping in mind the continuum of placement and services.
- e) Children may not be dismissed from a PreK program due to special needs or behavioral needs. Instead, PreK programs must make a referral to a LEA Child Find program, or the IEP team must reconvene to determine staff training needs and determine the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for the child.

2.A.5. PreK programs must inform families of the Child Find process and their legal rights of consent and refusal.



3. Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Instruction

PreK programs must leverage and support the cultural and linguistic uniqueness of each child to support learning and development.

Standards

3.A. Culture and Language

3.A.1. PreK program personnel and administration must demonstrate cultural and linguistic responsiveness in all aspects of the PreK program, including but not limited to, the use of cultural learning tools that students bring to the classroom.

3.A.2. PreK program personnel must respect each child's home language and promote development of both the child's home language and English.

3.A.3. PreK program staff must complete required professional learning related to second language acquisition to support multi-lingual children as outlined in the PreK professional development requirement document.

3.A.4. Materials, books, and visuals in the classroom must reflect the culture and language of the children and families enrolled in the program.

3.A.5. Lesson plans must be individualized to address each child's developmental progress. Modifications must be incorporated into classroom activities. Programs must document and measure a child's progress through ongoing observation and assessment.

3.A.6. The program must provide a written policy that demonstrates how the program supports children's home language while supporting English language development. The policy should include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- a) **Validation** — the intentional and purposeful legitimization of the home culture and language of the student.
- b) **Affirmation** — the intentional and purposeful effort to reverse the negative stereotypes of non-mainstream cultures and languages portrayed in historical perspective.
- c) **Building** — creating connections between the home culture and language and the school's culture and language through instruction for success in school and society.
- d) **Bridging** — creating opportunities for increased engagement by utilizing appropriate cultural and linguistic aspects of the children in the classroom.

3.A.7. Program must create and conduct an annual home language survey that each family must complete.

3.A.8. Based on the home language survey, personnel must ensure that the planning and decision making about language and early literacy practices are intentional, program wide, and based on research.



3.A.9. Personnel must build respectful relationships with children and families, ensuring that family engagement opportunities meet the cultural, language, and literacy needs of children and families.

3.A.10. Each PreK program's teaching approach must incorporate the following evidence-based strategies:

- a) Developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate practices that promote equity for all children and helps children learn and thrive.
- b) Early language and early literacy environments and experiences that are known to support children's optimal learning and development.
- c) Consistent and responsive family engagement in children's educational and social growth, especially in supporting the home language of multi-lingual learners (MLLs).
- d) Careful and intentional implementation of research-based practices that can prevent reading failure and promote school success



4. Promoting Social and Emotional Development

PreK programs must support children in understanding their emotions, developing social awareness, feeling and showing empathy for others, establishing healthy relationships, and making good decisions.

Standards

4.A. Social Emotional

4.A.1. PreK programs must promote the social-emotional competence of young children by implementing consistent, attuned, safe, and responsive interactions aligned with the New Mexico Pyramid Model or other evidence-based social-emotional model. Program personnel shall plan experiences, interactions, activities, and positive behavioral interventions and strategies that support the social- emotional development of each young child enrolled.

PreK educators must positively influence child development by using modeling techniques. In addition, children must practice the skills taught and modeled multiple times in a variety of setting in their homes, schools, and communities. These include developing children's capacity for executive function, including:

- a) **Self-confidence:** Being open to new challenges and willing to explore new environments.
- b) **Self-efficacy:** Believing they are capable of performing an action.
- c) **Self-regulation/self-control:** Following rules, controlling impulses, and acting appropriately based on the context.
- d) **Self-esteem:** Internalizing good feelings and positive information about themselves and ensuring children develop healthy cultural, racial, and linguistic identities.
- e) **Persistence:** A willingness to try again when first attempts are not successful.
- f) **Conflict resolution:** Learning to identify and label emotions and helping children to resolve disagreements in a peaceful way.
- g) **Versatile communication skills:** Understanding and expressing a range of positive and negative emotions.
- h) **Empathy:** Understanding and responding to the emotions and rights of others.
- i) **Social skills and social situations:** Making friends, getting along with others, and recognizing emotions in order to strengthen personal relationships.
- j) **Morality:** Learning a sense of right and wrong.

4.A.2. PreK programs must ensure that personnel working directly with young children demonstrate the capacity for positive relationships along with sufficient knowledge of early childhood social and emotional development.



- a) All adults working with PreK children must complete professional learning in the social-emotional development and support of young children.
- b) All adults must participate in professional development geared to increase knowledge of mental health issues in early childhood, including trauma-informed practices, attachment, and overall social- emotional and behavioral supports.
- c) All adults working with PreK children must understand positive reinforcement skills using evidence-based strategies.


4.A.3. PreK programs must implement the evidence-based practices of the New Mexico Pyramid Model or other social-emotional models to support children's social-emotional development to:

- Identify and ensure that reinforcement strategies are developmentally appropriate and motivating for each individual student
- Implement positive behavior strategies and interventions to support the development of each child.
- Identify classroom management practices with administrators and coaches to inform continuous quality improvement and classroom practices.
- Provide referrals and follow-up for children and families to the LEA Child Find program with parental consent and provide family education and information related to attachment and social-emotional support, such as the Pyramid Family Modules and resources.

4.A.4. BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS: PreK classroom staff must demonstrate positive interactions and guidance with children to:

- a) Develop their self-esteem by:
 - Actively listening to children
 - Refraining from judgmental statements
 - Responding to children's ideas
 - Recognizing children's efforts
 - Using proper names and verbally interacting with each child
 - Engaging in positive interactions that are supportive
 - Interacting with children at their eye level
 - Supporting strength-based toilet learning
- b) PreK Programs must encourage autonomy by:
 - Providing children with opportunities to make choices
 - Creating opportunities for decision-making, problem solving and working together
- c) Teaching children strategies for self-regulating or self-monitoring behaviors using visuals and toolkits, such as the Pyramid Framework. Programs must ensure that they have written policies or procedures that clearly outline their guidance practices that include the following:
 - Guidance that is consistent and age appropriate
 - Guidance that is positive with clear limits and redirection practices
 - Guidance that demonstrates the prohibited use of physical restraints or abuse
 - Guidance that demonstrates the prohibited use of humiliation, threats, sarcasm, or physical punishment.

4.A.5. Research suggests that school expulsion and suspension practices are associated with negative educational and life outcomes. If an alternative placement is being considered due to a child's behavior, programs must engage in dialogue with the PreK Specialist to ensure that the following support interventions have been implemented:

- a) Input from the family regarding placement preferences has been solicited. Adult child interactions have been evaluated.
 - b) Modifications have been made to the environment or teaching practices to support the child.
 - c) Interventions, strategies, and techniques have been implemented and evaluated.
 - d) Observations and input from the PreK consultant or coach have been implemented.
 - e) Developmental, academic, and social/emotional screening results have been evaluated.
 - f) Results of referrals (Child Find, family physician, behavioral specialist, etc.) were used as intervention guidelines for children who do not qualify for special education services and do not have an IEP. With parent permission, a functional behavior assessment (FBA) has been conducted and, if warranted, a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) was developed. All staff who provide services to the child must have implemented the BIP in all settings the child interacts within the school day (including staff in community-based programs).
 - g) Any other documentation to demonstrate that all avenues for child success have been exhausted.
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5. Health Promotion and Developmental Screenings

PreK programs must comply with appropriate local, state, and federal regulations pertaining to health, safety, and nutrition for young children, including -but not limited to- buildings and grounds, equipment, sanitization, water quality, fire protection, storage, and handling of food

Standards

5.A. Health Screenings

5.A.1. PreK programs must ensure each PreK participant has a current health screening completed within 90 days from the date of enrollment, including:

- Annual Well Child Check
- Vision Screening
- Dental Screening
- Hearing Screening
- Current Immunization Record or Public Health Division approved exemption, unless the child is experiencing homelessness. PreK programs must enroll a child experiencing homelessness regardless of the lack of immunization records.

5.B. Safety

PreK programs must continue to be in substantial compliance with the applicable state regulations, rules, standards, and federal regulations that govern the program, services provided, and fiscal responsibilities. PreK programs must notify their PreK program specialist at ECECD within three days if they have been sanctioned, placed under a condition of operation, or have encountered an inability to comply with the regulations.

5.B.1. Applicants must comply with all appropriate city, county or other state authority approvals such as fire-prevention, NM Environmental Department, or other environmental or health authorities. PreK Programs must ensure that they have a written policy for reporting to ECECD the following incidents as soon as possible but no later than 24 hours from the date and time of the incident occurrence:

- Lost, missing, or unattended child
- Serious injury to a child that requires medical attention or hospitalization
- Abuse or neglect of a child
- Environmental incidents such as fire, flood or other disaster that creates structural damage or poses a health hazard for staff and children
- Any known incident that could affect the background check eligibility of staff on site

5.C. Health and Nutrition

All NM PreK programs must provide at least one meal for children in the 540-hour program (either breakfast or lunch) and two meals for children in the 1080-hour program (breakfast and lunch) that meet the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or New Mexico Child Care Licensing requirements for children. For children in the 1380-hour program, breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack must be provided to meet CACFP and Child Care Licensing requirements for children.

5.C.1. Programs must participate in [USDA School Lunch Program](#) or [CACFP](#) and comply with all regulatory requirements. Meals provided must reflect the cultural diversity of the children in the classroom and promote a variety of nutritional options.

1.a.1 Family style meals must be developmentally appropriate for children. To the extent possible, programs should implement family style meals. PreK programs must include scheduled mealtimes in their NM PreK instructional hours. Mealtime presents an opportunity to engage in conversations with children to enhance vocabulary and social emotional development.

2.a.2 PreK programs must support toilet learning in classrooms, including working in partnership with families to create supportive environments to ensure successful toilet learning. PreK programs may not refuse to enroll children that are not toilet independent. PreK programs must include a written policy concerning toilet learning in the family handbook.

3.a.3 PreK programs must include nap or rest time in their scheduled instructional hours. Children under the age of six years old, who are on site more than five hours must have a scheduled rest period each day. PreK programs must allow children who do not sleep during the nap or rest time to get up and participate in quiet activities that do not disturb the other children and must provide illumination equivalent to a soft night light for children who are not sleeping. Such illumination must provide enough light to see the entire room, clearly observe sleeping children, and allow for non-sleeping children to engage in quiet activities.

6. Professional Qualifications: Administrators and Educators

Professional personnel must be qualified to work with children and families based on education, training, and experience.

Standards

6.A. Professional Development Compliance

6.A.1. PreK teachers must hold a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or be actively pursuing a bachelor's degree in early childhood education.

- a) If a PreK teacher does not hold a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, they must be actively pursuing a degree in early childhood education and must complete a minimum of 6 credit hours per semester.
- b) A PreK teacher holding a bachelor's degree in a field other than early childhood education must complete a total of 18 college credit hours of early childhood education or follow PED licensure requirements, when applicable, as outlined in their professional development plan (PDP). A minimum of 6 credit hours must be completed per semester.
- c) Educational Assistants (EA) must hold an associate's degree in early childhood education, or be actively pursuing a associate's degree in early childhood education.
- d) If a PreK EA does not hold a associate's degree in early childhood education, they must be actively pursuing a degree in early child education and must complete a minimum of 6 credit hours per semester.

6.A.2. All PreK program educators must have a current professional development plan (PDP). Personnel must document ongoing activities to increase knowledge, specialization, and qualifications in early childhood education, individualization of instruction, and family support. PDPs must be updated throughout the academic year to include specific coursework that must be entered into ECECD's locally utilized database and/or Professional Development Information System (PDIS) upon successful course completion and as goals are met. This requirement is effective January 1, 2025.

6.B. Training Requirements Compliance Indicators

6.B.1. Each PreK teacher, coordinator or administrator, educational assistant (EA), and PED or ECECD approved long-term substitute must successfully complete all required training as required in ECECD's annually updated PreK professional learning plan. A minimum of 24 professional learning hours must be completed annually for PreK teachers and educational assistants. Please refer to the ECECD NM PreK Required Training document for examples of acceptable training hours. PreK administrators must attend the ECECD NM PreK Administrators' Meeting(s) and complete all required professional development trainings mandated by ECECD.

6.B.2. PreK business managers and billing specialists must attend all required ECECD fiscal or grant trainings.



6.C. Administrator Qualifications Compliance Indicators

6.C.1. PreK administrators must have early childhood knowledge and experience or have administrative personnel with early childhood knowledge and experience. Administrators must support quality early childhood practices.



7. Intentional Teaching Standards

PreK programs must implement thoughtful and purposeful teaching practices based on knowledge, judgment, and expertise while recognizing and taking advantage of spontaneous learning opportunities for children.

Standards

7.A. Physical Environment


7.A.1. PreK classrooms must conduct an annual environmental assessment using one of the recommended environmental rating scale tools. The purpose of the environmental assessment is to identify areas to enhance and support children's learning and development of adult-child interactions. NM PreK classrooms must include:

- a) Intentional, developmentally appropriate, individual, small-and large-group activities.
- b) Provision of adequate materials and equipment that are accessible to children—such as books, dolls, toys, and wall displays-- ensuring that such materials represent diverse cultures, ethnic groups, gender roles, family configurations, and abilities.
- c) Provisions for adequate space for indoor and outdoor activities, adult planning and management activities, and for privacy.
- d) Classroom environments, ensuring there are identifiable learning centers that are flexible and designed for children to self- select activities.
- e) Accommodations, modifications, and adaptations, ensuring they are evident as needed for individual children.

7.A.2. PreK program's daily schedule must include a balance of indoor and outdoor time, with at least 60 minutes of self-selection time.

7.B. Curriculum

7.B.1. Each PreK program must have curricula based on all of the following:

- a) Developmentally appropriate early childhood practices, as reflected in all lesson plans.
 - b) The needs, interests, desires, and relevant life experiences of the children and families served.
 - c) The language, home experiences, and cultural values of the children served, ensuring that each child's culture is represented.
 - d) The program's goals and objectives.
 - e) Family engagement.
 - f) Individualized instruction for all children.
 - g) Social emotional development strategies and supports.
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7.B.2. PreK program's curricula must be research or evidence based, culturally and linguistically responsive, and align with the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines: Birth through Kindergarten (ELG).

- PreK program administrators must ensure that the curriculum does not include any religious, sectarian or denominational instruction or materials.

7.C. Planning and Observation

Culturally and linguistically responsive learning experiences must be intentionally planned and flexible with the selection of materials and experiences reflecting diversity, individual differences, and the unique interests and preferences of the group. Play is a valued context for learning. PreK programs must:

7.C.1. Develop curriculum plans based on observed and documented interests and needs of children.

7.C.2. Provide lessons and activity planning that intentionally reflects the needs for the whole group and individual children. Lesson plans must support the development of cognitive skills, encouraging each child to understand concepts and to develop language fluency, literacy, numeracy, problem solving, and decision-making skills.

7.C.3. PreK programs must include curriculum planning time in the program schedule. This must include at least two hours for PreK educators per week without children present. PreK programs must include classroom preparation time in the program schedule. This is in addition to the minimum scheduled planning time. Teachers with morning and afternoon sessions should have additional planning time built into their schedule due to the increased number of children.

7.C.4. PreK programs must complete and post weekly lesson plans in alignment with the New Mexico PreK Lesson Plan Components Checklist. The lesson plan must, at a minimum, include the following:

- The New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines Essential Indicators
- Family engagement activities
- Individualization
- Large and small group activities
- Learning centers
- Mealtime activities
- Oral Language – key vocabulary words
- Oral Language-key questions
- Outdoor / large motor activities
- Reading plan (first, second, third read-aloud)
- Transition activities
- Heggerty Phonological and Phonemic Awareness (if applicable)

7.C.5. PreK programs must ensure daily, intentional, developmentally appropriate early literacy practices that include the following:



- a) Daily phonological awareness activities (e.g., songs, finger-plays, rhyming, beginning sounds, and syllable work)
- b) Oral language and vocabulary activities
- c) Alphabet knowledge activities
- d) Concepts of print activities
- e) Daily read aloud with comprehension strategies
- f) Daily, ongoing individual and small group (two to three children) read aloud, with documentation that each child is read to at least once weekly in 540-hour programs and twice weekly in 1080-hour programs, in addition to larger group reading activities
- g) Opportunities for developmentally appropriate writing activities

7.D. Assessment and Screenings

7.D.1. PreK personnel must complete observations of each child's progress in all developmental areas and in multiple settings, using the PreK Observational Assessment to evaluate the effect of the program on the child's development and learning. Children's gains over time must be continuously documented over the course of the academic year and not just upon exiting the program.

7.D.2. All PreK programs must assess children utilizing the PreK Observational Assessment recorded in EPICS or ECOT. This PreK observational assessment must be incorporated into the early childhood outcomes (ECO) report for each child with an IEP.

7.D.3. All PreK teachers must complete child observational assessments, including portfolio forms and report data, into the respective system. Data must be entered:

- a) Within 45 calendar days of enrollment.
- b) For extended day (1080 and 1380 hour) programs, by the first Friday in February.
- c) Ten days prior to program end date.

7.D.4. PreK programs must use observational assessments in a continuous, dynamic process, in which results are used to inform instruction, improve teacher practices, and modify curricula for all children. Assessment results must also be used by the interdisciplinary team, which includes family members, to develop the child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

7.D.5. PreK program staff must screen each child with a valid developmental screening instrument that includes a social- emotional component, within 45 calendar days of the child's enrollment date. Programs must screen for early detection of children at risk for developmental delays. When possible, the dominant language of the child must be used during the screening. PreK programs must make appropriate referrals to address all identified concerns. All developmental screening instruments must be valid, reliable, non-biased, linguistically, culturally appropriate, and individually administered by trained personnel.



7.D.6. PreK programs must immediately inform families of screenings and observational assessment results no later than the next family conference. If there are concerns, or if the child screens outside typical parameters, the PreK program must make a referral for further screening or evaluation.

7.D.7. PreK programs must use an ongoing, formative assessment aligned with the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines of children's progress and as a primary source of information for individualized lesson planning.

7.D.8. PreK program administrators, teachers, educational assistants, and long-term substitutes must complete the required observational assessment training.



8. Program Administration

PreK program administrators must ensure that administrative tasks are successfully accomplished, and that the program is in compliance with all federal, state, and local requirements.

Standards

8.A. Program Administration

8.A.1. PreK programs must notify the ECECD PreK Bureau Chief within three calendar days if they've been sanctioned, placed under a condition of operation, or have encountered an inability to comply with the standards or regulations.

8.A.2. PreK program teachers must participate in the consultant or coaching model of job-embedded professional development.

- a) PreK consultants or coaches must implement the job-embedded professional development model designated by ECECD.
- b) Internal consultants or coaches may be required to travel to outside programs/districts to complete environmental assessments.
- c) School Districts must ensure that all internal PreK coaches adhere to the policies, procedures, and coaching models designated by ECECD, including the use of designated data systems (e.g. TORSH Talent for Practice Based Coaching and My Teachstone for CLASS) to ensure objectivity and consistency in data collection and reporting.

8.A.3. PreK programs must inform their assigned ECECD NM PreK Specialist within 10 calendar days of a long-term substitute teacher or educational assistant being hired or assigned to a PreK classroom, and any changes to the staff assigned to the NM PreK administration.

8.A.4. PreK program administrators must maintain an inventory of equipment purchased using PreK funds.

8.A.5. PreK programs must inform their assigned NM PreK Specialist immediately upon all unscheduled closures.

8.A.6. PreK programs must inform their assigned NM PreK Specialist of asynchronous learning days that require children to participate in virtual learning. Asynchronous learning may not exceed 5 days a program year. Programs must submit a asynchronous learning plan, and any questions, to their assigned NM PreK Specialist for approval prior to implementing it.

8.A.7. PreK program administrators must ensure that all PreK staff successfully complete the required PreK trainings.

8.A.8. PreK program administrators must ensure the confidentiality of all children's information in compliance with all federal and state confidentiality and privacy laws. For example, a secure filing system must be maintained, and all PreK program personnel and other professionals must maintain discretion and confidentiality when sharing information about children and their families.



8.B. Administrative Enrollment, Staffing, and Ratio Compliance Indicators

8.B.1. PreK program administrators must ensure that classroom enrollment, staffing, and ratios comply with all requirements set forth in each respective program's contract or grant agreement with ECECD.

8.B.2. PreK program administrators must share copies of the items below with each PreK teacher and educational assistant:

- NM PreK Program Standards*
- PreK Lesson Plan Template or lesson plan components checklist*
- NM PreK Essential Indicators with Rubrics*
- New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines: Birth through Kindergarten. *
- Family Handbook

*Copies of these documents are available on nmececd.org/pre-k.

8.B.3. PreK program administrators must provide the teacher in each classroom a minimum of 30 minutes release time (without responsibility for direct supervision of children) for consultation with the assigned consultant or coach immediately following each visit.

8.B.4. PreK program teachers and educational assistants assigned to PreK classrooms must not be assigned to non-PreK duties during scheduled PreK hours.

8.B.5. PreK program's group and class sizes for four-year olds must not exceed 20 children, with an adult-child ratio no greater than 10:1, one lead teacher and, if the group size is 11 or more, one educational assistant.

8.B.6. PreK program group and class sizes for Early PreK (three-year-olds) and Mixed Age PreK (three- and four-year old's) must not exceed 16 children, with an adult-child ratio no greater than 8:1, one lead teacher and, if the group size is 9 or more, one EA.

8.B.7. PreK programs must maintain a minimum of 95% enrollment. Programs must submit monthly enrollment and Transportation Ridership reports to their assigned NM PreK Specialist by the 5th of each month.

8.B.8. PreK program teachers and EAs assigned to NM PreK classrooms must be employees of the program, school district, or charter school.

8.C. Budget/Finance Compliance Indicators

8.C.1. PreK program administrators must ensure that all of their budget and finance policies, tasks comply with their contract or grant agreement with ECECD. Program administrators must ensure that all business managers have the correct and current information regarding the requirements set forth in the program's contract or grant agreement with ECECD.

8.C.2. PreK programs shall coordinate with federal Head Start and all other school and community based PreK providers to avoid duplication of effort and maximize the use of available resources in the implementation of the Early PreK and PreK programs.

8.C.3. All PreK teachers who meet the ECECD NM PreK educational requirements must be paid at least \$50,000 a year without consideration of benefits, and no PreK teacher without a bachelor's degree in early childhood education may be paid more than

\$50,000 a year before benefits. PreK educational assistants must be paid a minimum of \$15 per hour, or an equivalent annual salary without consideration of benefits. NM PreK salaries must be cost-allocated to NM PreK Hours only and reflected in monthly invoices.

8.C.4. Any curriculum materials purchased using NM PreK funds must align with the NM Early Learning Guidelines and be approved by the ECECD prior to purchase. Purchased curriculum must be evidence-based and culturally and linguistically appropriate.

8.C.5. Approval must be granted by ECECD prior to purchase for any single item over \$5,000. Equipment expenditures over \$5,000 are considered capital outlay and ECECD will not approve such expenditures for purposes of direct services.

8.C.6. Indirect costs for NM PreK programs cannot exceed 7 percent of the overall annual program budget.

8.C.7. PreK funds cannot be used for out-of-state travel costs or for in-state travel other than early childhood conferences, home visits, internal coach travel, or training approved by ECECD prior to expenditure. PreK program administrators or School District Business Managers must submit invoices and requests for reimbursements (RfRs), no later than the 15th of every month for reimbursement of program costs.

8.D. Data Entry/Reporting Compliance Indicators

8.D.1. PreK program administrators must ensure that all data entry and reporting comply with all contractual and grant agreement obligations. Failure to submit data in a timely manner may result in a finding of non-compliance by ECECD.

8.D.2. PreK program administrators must ensure that current program, child, and personnel data is entered accurately and maintained and updated in the database by the 5th of each month. The PreK databases (EPICS or NOVA) are the official record of enrollment, child assessment data, personnel education, and license information. Personnel changes must be updated in the respective database and reported to each program's assigned NM PreK Specialist within 10 days.

8.D.3. PreK program administrators must report program progress by responding to Administrative Reports in a format and due date designated by the ECECD.



9. Continuous Quality Improvement Standards

PreK program sites must have specific goals and objectives within a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Plan that is evaluated annually by the State. All program components shall be evaluated, including professional development, family satisfaction, and children's progress using both formative and summative approaches.

Standards

9.A. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Plan

9.A.1. PreK programs must use multiple measures to evaluate program compliance and quality. Child demographics and assessments, information about personnel qualifications, administrative practices, classroom assessments, and coaching and monitoring reports must be used for evaluation purposes. PreK programs must develop and implement a CQI plan which includes a data analysis process focusing on improving child outcomes. **The CQI Plan must include all of the following:**

- All goals must be data driven and written using the SMART goal process.
 - At minimum, a program must have one program or administrative goal and one classroom goal.
 - Goals must reflect data points from BOY (Beginning of the Year/Fall), MOY (Middle of the Year/Winter), and EOY (End of the Year/Spring).
 - All CQI Plans must be reviewed on a quarterly basis with reflections and progress towards goals provided.
 - These steps must be developed within the first 60 days of the PreK program year and will be monitored by the ECECD NM PreK Specialist.
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