

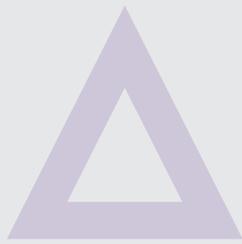


Pre-K for All Policy Handbook

Part I, 2015-2016

NYC
Department of
Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**PRE-K
FOR ALL**



Dear Pre-K for All Leaders,

Through the Pre-K for All Initiative, for the first time in history, New York City is providing every four-year-old access to a life-changing opportunity—free, full-day, high-quality pre-K.

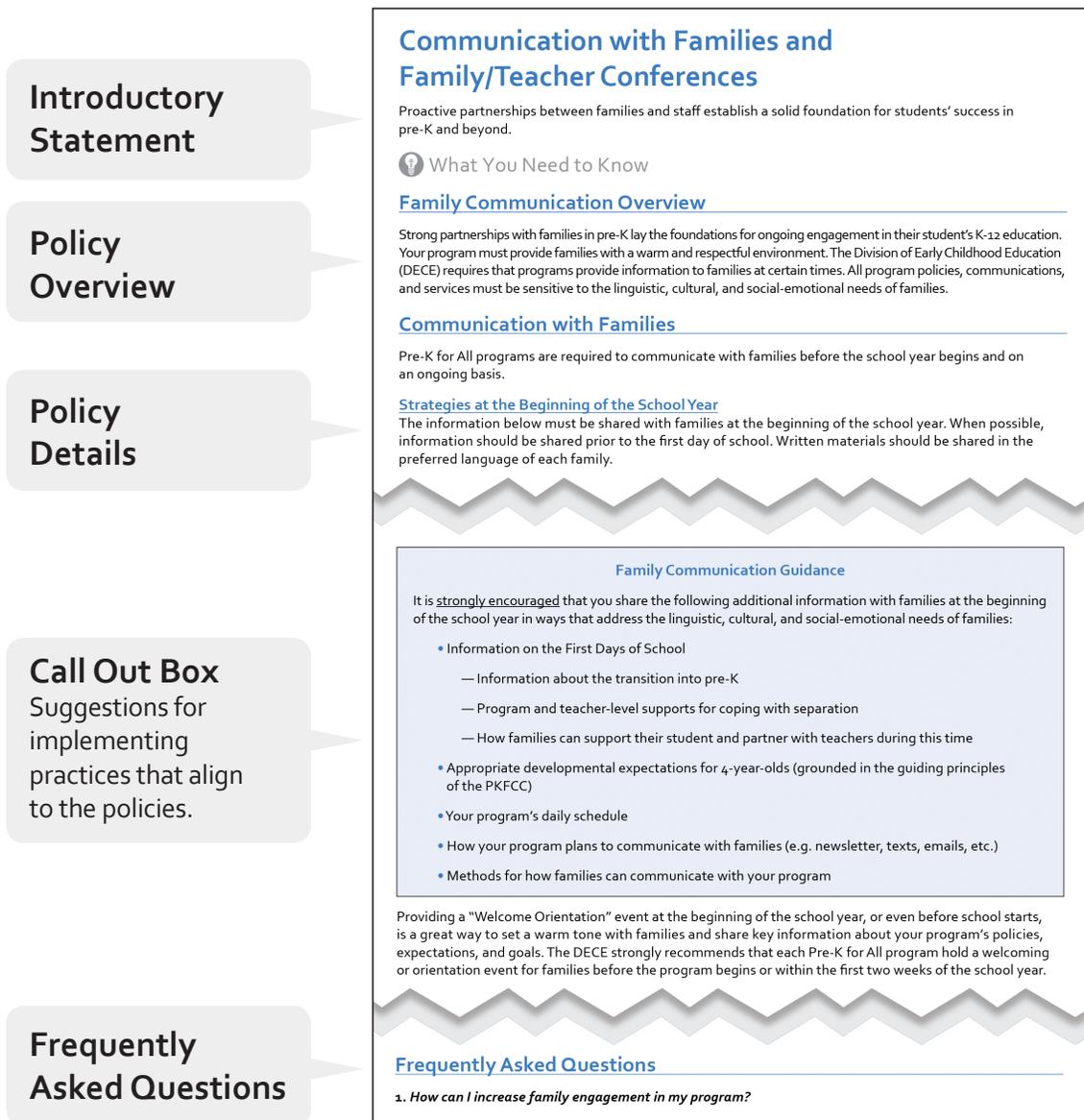
This Pre-K for All Policy Handbook will assist your pre-K program by (1) clearly articulating pertinent policies and (2) highlighting operational guidance and promising practices on a variety of policy topics. By providing full day Pre-K for All programs with a structured resource for accessing key policy requirements of the State, City, and Pre-K for All program, we hope that this guide will serve as an important resource for your program.

The Pre-K for All Policy Handbook will be released in two parts. Part I, released here, highlights information that will deepen your program's understanding of pertinent policies for the beginning of the school year. Part II, to be released in early 2016, will highlight additional policies to assist in operating your program.

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

How to Use Part I:

- In Part I, you will find policy information on health and safety, facilities and materials, staffing, general program oversight, and instructional programming.
- Each section is structured in the following way:



To access the hyperlinks throughout the Policy Handbook, please reference the online version.

Please note that the Policy Handbook only applies to full-day Pre-K for All classrooms in New York City Early Education Centers (NYCEECs). The guide helps to build one system of high quality programs by clarifying policies that apply across NYCEEC settings. Notes are included in cases where EarlyLearn NYC policy significantly differs from NYCDOE policy.

We want to thank you for your passion, dedication, and enthusiasm for our City's youngest learners. Without your efforts, this initiative would not have been possible.

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

Regards,

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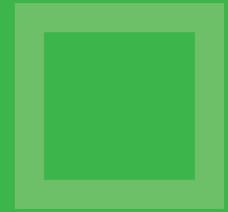
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I. Health and Safety

Licenses, Certification, and Permits

Safety and Security: Plans and Procedures

Staff Health Requirements

Student Immunizations

Toileting



Licenses, Certification, and Permits

Pre-K for All programs must comply with the licensing and permitting requirements of their Licensing Agency, the NYC Department of Buildings (DOB), and the Fire Department of New York (FDNY).

What You Need to Know

Licenses and Permits

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

Provider Type	Licensing Agency/Permit
Child Care Centers (Article 47 Providers)	NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH") Article 47 Child Care Services Permit
Group Family Day Care (GFDCs)	NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Group Family Child Care License
School Based Providers (Article 43 Providers)	NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH") Article 43 School-Based Filing Certificate for Children Ages 3 through 5

Department of Building Certificates (Article 47 only)

Your Pre-K for All site must receive one of the following from the NYC Department of Buildings certifying that your Pre-K for All site may be used as a Child Care Center:

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

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

If for any reason your Certificate of Occupancy, Temporary Certificate of Occupancy, or Letter of No Objection is cancelled, is revoked, or expires, the DECE may immediately suspend your program's Pre-K for All services.

Procedures to Follow if Your License or Permit is Suspended or Revoked

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

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

1. Inform your DECE Field Office
2. Remedy any violations
3. Obtain a new license or permit

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

FDNY Inspections

You will receive an annual FDNY inspection from your local Fire Department. Fire Department approvals must be kept on-site.

If an inspection reveals a violation, a copy of the report must be sent immediately to your designated DECE Field Office. You must correct the violation within the required period of time.

Reporting of Violations

Fire and Building Code Violations

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

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

Licensing Agency Violations

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

You must immediately start to correct any violations and complete corrections within the required timeframe set by DOHMH or the New York State OCFS.

Insurance

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

Please contact your designated DECE Field Office or ACS Operations Manager if you have any questions regarding insurance requirements.

Safety and Security: Plans and Procedures

Pre-K for All programs must ensure a safe learning environment for both students and staff by having comprehensive safety and security policies, procedures, and staff trainings.

What You Need to Know

Safety Plans

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

Safety plans must be updated annually and kept in an accessible location at your facility where they may be used by staff for reference and be available for inspection.

NYCDOE Early Childhood Safety Plan¹

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

- Establishing an emergency chain of command
- Developing daily security procedures
- Screening visitors to the building
- Emergency equipment
- Emergency preparedness drills
- Sheltering-In plans
- Evacuation plans
- CPR training

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

Child Care (Article 47)² and School-Based (Article 43)³ Providers

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

1 If your site only includes classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC, you do not need to develop an NYCDOE Early Childhood Safety Plan. EarlyLearn NYC – Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide Pre-K for All services.

2 Child Care (Article 47)- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (“DOHMH”) Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

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

4 The DOHMH recognizes that many non-public schools are subject to and regulated by State and Federal law, and has no intention of duplicating and imposing a further layer of regulation where there are applicable similar laws and rules already in place. For example, some federal funding programs require school safety plans, particularly for evacuations in emergencies. If a school has a comprehensive safety plan (meeting all requirements of Article 47.11 of the NYC Health Code), DOHMH will not require school-based programs to duplicate or amend it.

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

1. Staffing, including child supervision policy, staff/student ratios, and staff schedules
2. Maintenance, inspections, and safety
3. Fire safety
4. Health Plan, including first aid, emergency response, and medication administration procedures
5. Child abuse prevention, identification and reporting procedures
6. Food safety
7. Plan to respond to DOHMH Corrective Action Plan (if applicable)
8. New employee orientation
9. Age-specific emergency evacuation plans
10. Parent/Child orientation guide
11. Child/Facility accountability procedures, including missing child procedures
 - Including how you will ensure students are only picked up by their parent/guardian or persons that the parent/guardian has designated in writing.

Please see Appendix A of this section for a detailed list of the safety plan requirements included in Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

Group Family Day Care Providers⁵

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

1. Develop a written emergency plan using the template provided by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). The emergency plan must include the following information:
 - How students and adults will be made aware of an emergency
 - A designation of primary and secondary evacuation routes
 - Methods of evacuation, including where students and adults will meet after evacuating the home and how attendance will be taken
 - A plan for the safe evacuation of students from the premises for each shift of care provided (day, evening, night)
 - The designation of primary and secondary emergency relocation sites to be used in the case of an emergency, which prohibit re-entry into the premises, and how the health, safety, and emotional needs of students will be met in the event it becomes necessary to evacuate to another location
 - A plan for 'shelter in', including how the health, safety, and emotional needs of students will be met in the event it becomes necessary to shelter in place⁶
 - A plan for the notification of students' parents/guardians in the case of an emergency

⁵ Group Family Day Care- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Group Family Child Care License.

⁶ Shelter in place procedures involve selecting a small, interior room, with no or few windows, and taking refuge there. This is a precaution aimed to keep students and staff safe while remaining indoors due to a dangerous situation outside.

2. Develop an Emergency Evacuation Diagram using the template provided by the New York State OCFS.
 - The Emergency Evacuation Diagram must be posted in a visible location.

Safety Plan – Communication and Training

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

- All staff must be informed of and trained on the safety plan(s) as part of your orientation for new staff, at the beginning of each school year.
- Current staff must be trained annually on the safety plan(s).
- All staff must be informed any time changes are made to the safety plan(s).
- Prior to the start of the school year, families must be provided with a summary of the safety plan(s) and trained on the aspects of the plans relevant to them (e.g. emergency evacuation locations and emergency contact plans).
- The safety plan(s) must be provided to families upon request.

Monitoring and Securing your Program

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

You are required to secure all entrances to your facility to prevent unauthorized visitors from gaining unconstrained access to 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 parents/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 the time of arrival and departure of all guests.
- Secure all entrances to your facility with pass key identification or another system.
- Develop policies and procedures on how to handle an unauthorized adult who attempts to enter your facility.
- Address how to handle an unauthorized adult who refuses to leave the facility and tries to enter a classroom. **In these situations, you should always contact the NYPD by calling 911 and providing your pre-K program name and address.**

Adults allowed in your facility are limited to:

- Staff
- Parents and/or guardians

- Parent/guardian-authorized escorts (e.g. family friend, babysitter, or relative)⁷
- Special Education Itinerant Teachers (SEITs) and related service providers providing services pursuant to a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Visiting instructors (e.g. music teachers, art teachers, and community members)
- Student teacher trainees or observers
- Credentialed Department and other public inspectors (e.g. coaches, support personnel, DOHMH staff, etc.)
- Persons providing services to the center (e.g. maintenance personnel, delivery personnel, etc.)
- Other individuals as appropriately determined by the program director

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

Please see the [Staff Security Clearances](#) section for additional information.

Emergency Preparedness

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

‘Shelter In’ Plans

- ‘Shelter in’ emergency procedures take effect if a dangerous incident occurs *outside* of your facility.
- You are required to develop a ‘shelter in’ plan that ensures no one (other than emergency personnel) is able to enter or exit your facility should a situation arise where this may be required.
- It is strongly encouraged that you conduct ‘shelter in’ drills during the school year. If you choose to do so, the drill must be age-appropriate and take into consideration the emotional response of pre-K students.

Lockdown Plans

- Lockdown emergency procedures take effect when there is a dangerous incident inside of your facility.
- You are required to develop a lockdown plan to ensure staff and students are aware of safe places to go inside classrooms or in common spaces should a situation arise where this may be required.
- 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 pre-K students.

Additional guidance on ‘shelter in’ and lockdown plans is forthcoming.

Emergency Evacuation and Fire Plans

- You are required to develop and maintain on-site evacuation procedures to ensure that staff and students are aware of their roles during an evacuation and routes they should take.
- 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 pre-K students.

⁷ Parents or Guardians must fill out the [Authorized Escort List form](#) in order for escorts to be allowed on-site.

- Evacuation procedures should implement recommendations from the local Fire Department responsible for the area in which you are located.
- Fire drills should be held at different times of the day.

Frequently Asked Questions

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

All safety plans should be reviewed on an ongoing basis (at least once per year) and must be updated in accordance with changed circumstances, conditions, activities, or as required by the NYCDOE, DOHMH, and/or OCFS. Should updates be made to your safety plan, you must submit updates to the DOHMH and/or OCFS upon renewal of your Child Care or Group Family Day Care license.

Events that would cause you to update your safety plan include, but are not limited to:

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

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

2. *Can NYCDOE Emergency Contact Cards be used in place of the Authorized Escort List?*

No, you must complete the [Authorized Escort List](#) in order for escorts to be allowed on-site.

Appendix A: Safety Plan Requirements – Article 47.11 of the NYC Health Code

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

- Staff organization chart, job descriptions, responsibilities and supervisory responsibilities
- Schedules and designated staff for facility inspection, cleaning and maintenance, schedule for boiler/furnace and HVAC system maintenance, maintenance of adequate water pressure, protection of the potable water supply from submerged inlets and cross-connections in the plumbing system
- Schedule for the annual lead paint survey, inspection of window guards, indoor and outdoor equipment inspection and replacement schedule, evaluation of injury prevention procedures, equipment and structures, identification of procedures for transportation vehicle maintenance
- Food protection procedures, identity of individuals certified in food protection, schedule of sanitation procedures of food prep areas and identification of approved food sources
- Evacuation plan of buildings and property, assembly, supervision, and accounting for children and staff
- Fire prevention and electrical safety policies and coordination with local fire officials

- Fire alarm and detection systems and their operation maintenance and routine testing
- Type, locations, and maintenance of fire extinguishers and inspection and maintenance of exits
- Health care plan
- Actions to be taken to protect children upon receipt of reports of alleged and confirmed teaching and other staff criminal justice or child abuse histories
- 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
- New employee orientation procedures, which must include procedures for: ensuring that children are supervised at all times, developing a behavior management system, recognizing and reporting child abuse, providing first aid and emergency medical assistance, reporting child injury and illness, fire safety and fire drills, child and staff evacuation procedures, activity-specific training for assigned activities, and a process for documenting staff attendance at trainings.
- Age-specific plans for removal of children from the premises for each shift of staff, primary emphasis must be placed on the immediate evacuation of children in premises which are not fireproof.
- Emergency evacuation procedures must be posted in conspicuous places throughout the facility. The emergency evacuation plan shall include the following:
 - How children and staff will be made aware of the emergency
 - Primary and secondary routes of egress
 - Methods of evacuation, including where children and staff will meet after evacuating the building, and how attendance will be taken
 - Roles of the staff and chain of command
 - Notification of authorities and the children’s parents/ guardians
- Procedures for child supervision and accountability related to daily attendance records for the arrival and departure of children, transportation, securing and monitoring the facility, and off-site activities. Also detail the role of the “trip coordinator” and child accountability system(s).
- Family orientation procedures, which must include: curriculum outline, tour of premises, reporting and management of illnesses, injuries and other incidents; evacuation plan; lost child plan; lightning plan; fire safety and fire drills; evacuation procedures; activity specific training for assigned activities; trips (if provided).

Staff Health Requirements

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

What You Need to Know

Staff Health Overview

All Pre-K for All programs are required to:

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

Staff Health Requirements

Child Care (Article 47)⁸ and School Based (Article 43)⁹ Providers

Prior to beginning employment:

- Each prospective staff member and volunteer with a regular presence in the classroom must present a certificate from a licensed health care provider certifying that:
 - On the basis of medical history and physical examination, the staff member is physically and mentally able to perform his/her assigned duties.
 - The staff member has received immunizations in accordance with the recommendations of the [Center 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)
 - Varicella (Chicken Pox)
 - Tetanus and Diphtheria (Td) or Tetanus, Diphtheria and Acellular Pertussis (Tdap)

While employed:

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

For information on immunization exemptions and substitutions please see [FAQ #1](#).

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

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

Group Family Day Care (GFDC) Providers¹⁰

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

- All staff, volunteers with a regular presence in the home, and household members must complete the [Office of Children and Family Services \(OCFS\) Staff, Volunteer, and Household Member Medical Statement](#).
 - Only a licensed health care provider (physician, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioner) may complete/sign the Medical Status section.
 - A registered nurse is not authorized to sign the Medical Status section but can sign the TB Test Information.
 - A health care professional may use an equivalent form as long as all required information is included.
- For all staff, contracted volunteers, and household members the Medical Form must provide:
 - Satisfactory evidence that the individual is physically fit to provide child day care and has no diagnosed psychiatric or emotional disorder which would preclude such an individual from providing day care.
 - An indication that the individual is free from communicable diseases unless his or her health care provider has indicated that the presence of the communicable disease does not pose a risk to the health and safety of children.
 - 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 (staff only)

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are there any immunization exemptions and substitutions available for staff working at Child Care (Article 47) and School Based (Article 43) Providers?

The following immunization exemptions and substitutions are available for staff working at Child Care (Article 47) and School Based (Article 43) Providers:

- Persons born on or before December 31, 1956 who have a history of measles or mumps disease shall not require such vaccines.
- A history of having varicella, measles, or mumps disease (documented by a health-care provider) shall be accepted in lieu of varicella, measles or mumps vaccines.
- A history of having rubella disease shall not be substituted for the rubella vaccine.
- A laboratory test demonstrating detectable varicella, measles, mumps, or rubella antibodies shall also be accepted in lieu of varicella, measles, mumps and rubella vaccine.

An employee may be exempted from this immunization requirement for medical contraindications upon submission of appropriate documentation from a licensed physician.

¹⁰ Group Family Day Care- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Group Family Child Care License.

Student Immunizations

The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) is committed to ensuring that Pre-K for All programs adhere to state and local public health laws, including requiring vaccination of students prior to pre-K admission. Programs must take appropriate measures to protect the health of New York’s students.

What You Need to Know

Immunization Requirements

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

- Prior to allowing a student to attend your Pre-K for All program, you must ensure that he or she has:
 - Obtained all [required immunizations](#), or
 - Obtained, at a minimum, the provisional immunizations to enroll, or
 - Received an exemption for any missing immunizations.
- You must collect immunization records at pre-registration.
 - If the family is not able to provide the immunization records at pre-registration, you can collect the immunization records in September before the student starts school.
 - If a family is unable to locate their child’s immunization records, please inform them that they can contact the Citywide Immunization Registry, which can provide a copy of the records.
- As of May 2015, immunization requirements for entering 4-year old students include:

Immunization	Doses Required	Notes
DTaP (diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis) OR DTP (diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis)	4 doses	
IPV (inactivated poliovirus) OR OPV (oral poliovirus)	3 doses	
MMR (measles-mumps-rubella)	1 dose	On or after 1st birthday
Hib (Haemophilus influenza type b)	1 to 4 doses	Number of doses depends on the child’s age at first dose
Hepatitis B	3 doses	
Varicella	1 dose	On or after 1st birthday
Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV)	1 to 4 doses	Number of doses depends on the child’s age at first dose
Influenza	1 dose	Between July 1 and December 31 of the school year. Depending on their influenza vaccine history, some children may need 2 doses of the influenza vaccine

Provisional Immunization Requirements

Pre-K for All students must have the required immunizations in order to participate in Pre-K for All. Students may enter school provisionally with documentation of at least one dose of each of these initial series of immunizations:

Immunization	Doses Required
DTaP (diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis) OR DTP (diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis)	1 dose
IPV (inactivated poliovirus) OR OPV (oral poliovirus)	1 dose
MMR (measles-mumps-rubella)	1 dose
Hib (Haemophilus influenza type b)	1 dose
Hepatitis B	1 dose
Varicella	1 dose
Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV)	1 dose
Influenza	1 dose ¹¹

Once a student starts school, subsequent vaccines must be administered in accordance with the Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) ["catch up" schedule](#) for the student to be considered "in process" and continue to attend Pre-K for All.

Under no circumstances, can a student attend a Pre-K for All program if immunization information has not been provided for that student.

Influenza Vaccine

The influenza vaccination mandate requires that all children 6 months to 59 months old enrolled in child care receive at least one dose of the influenza vaccine between July 1st and December 31st each year.

- In calendar year 2015 (January-December 2015), the Health Department's Bureau of Child Care will enforce the influenza vaccination requirement by educating child care staff during routine inspections.
 - No violations will be issued in calendar year 2015 to pre-K programs that fail to ensure all students receive the influenza vaccination.
 - Beginning January 1st, 2016, the Department of Health will begin issuing notices of violation and potential fines to child care facilities that fail to ensure all enrolled students receive the influenza vaccination.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Must all students attending Group Family Day Care providers receive the influenza vaccination?*

No, influenza vaccination requirements apply only to providers overseen by the DOHMH. Group Family Day Care providers are licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Families and therefore, the influenza mandate does not apply to their program.

¹¹ Received between July 1 and December 31 of the school year

2. Are any immunization exemptions available?

Section 2164 of the New York Public Health Law, which governs New York Pre-K programs, permits the following two exemptions to mandatory immunization requirements:

1. If the parent objects to the immunization because the parent holds genuine and sincere religious beliefs which are contrary to the requirement that the child be immunized.

OR

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

An exemption may not be granted based on a philosophical objection or reservations about the efficacy of the immunization(s).

Additional information on the immunization exemption application and approval process is forthcoming.

Toileting

Pre-K for All programs must assist all students in their varying stages of proficiency in toileting. Programs must also practice and demonstrate proper sanitary practices.

What You Need to Know

Toileting Policy Overview

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

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

All staff members should be involved in helping children learn how to use the bathroom.

Students should never be reprimanded if they are not successful in using the toilet.

- These times should be treated as teachable moments for students, and indications to staff that they need to increase the frequency of reminders and trips to the bathroom.

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

Sanitary Practices

The following sanitary practices must be followed to facilitate proper hygiene and to protect the health and safety of staff and students.

Handwashing Practices

- All students should be taught how to correctly wash their hands after using the bathroom. Visual (e.g. pictures) and verbal (e.g. songs) prompts should be used to assist students.
- All students need to wash their hands immediately after using the toilet by:
 - Using running water and liquid soap;
 - Scrubbing all parts of their hands for 20 seconds;
 - Rinsing the soap off and drying with a paper towel; and
 - Using the paper towel to turn off the faucet.
- Handwashing signs must be prominently posted in each restroom and by each sink.
- If the same sink is used by either students or adults for both toileting and other handwashing routines (e.g. art activities, food-related routines, etc.), it must be sanitized by spraying with a bleach solution or sanitizer approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Cleaning Up After Supporting Students with Toileting

- All staff members assisting with toileting clean-up must follow the [Universal Precautions](#) that are prescribed for health care workers.
 - Appropriate supplies (e.g. disposable gloves, bleach, non-scented/non-allergenic wipes, mild soap) must be provided for staff use.
 - All staff members must wear disposable gloves when changing students' clothes or diapers and wash hands after cleaning up.
 - Diluted bleach and water or an EPA-approved disinfectant must be used to clean up all soiled surfaces.
- Use a spray bottle with one quart water and a capful of bleach or ¼ cup of bleach per one gallon of water. If you can smell the bleach you know you need more water.
- Check the label of EPA-approved disinfectants and follow all instructions for use.
- Spray surface with solution and air more than 10 seconds before wiping with disposable towel or allow to air dry.
- All cleaning supplies should be stored in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Facilities section of the Policy Handbook.
 - Mild soap and water or non-scented wipes should be used to clean the child.
- The student must put on a clean set of clothes, including underpants.
 - The program should request that families provide a seasonal change of clothes (e.g. pants, underwear, etc.) for their child in the event of an accident.
 - Programs should always have a clean set of unisex clothes available in case of an emergency.
 - Staff must assist the student in putting on clean underpants, as needed.
- Demonstrate and help the student wash his/her hands as described above.
- Families may be asked to provide pull-ups and/or diapers if their child is not toilet trained.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What additional guidance can you provide on helping students learn to use the bathroom?

Please see the [DECE Toileting Guidance](#) for additional guidance on helping students learn to use the bathroom.

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

All staff involved in diapering and helping students after accidents must receive [OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Training](#) and the Hepatitis B vaccine free of charge.

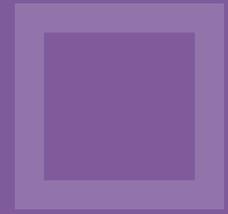
3. How should I supervise students who are able to use the restroom without help?

For students who use the restroom without help, staff should leave the door ajar and assist as needed. Staff should provide closer, more helpful supervision if students do not complete the toileting procedures (including handwashing) correctly and responsibly. All students must stay in the line of sight of teaching staff. Student privacy must be maintained.

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

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

- A referral to special education is only appropriate when families and teachers believe the student has a disability or developmental delay that impacts the student's ability to learn. Before making a referral, a variety of developmental and academic interventions should be put into place to support the student.
- Some students who receive special education services will require assistance with toileting. The student's needs, goals, and special education services regarding toileting will be outlined in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).



II. Facilities and Materials

Facilities

- Indoor Facility Requirements
- General Facilities Safety
- Outdoor Play Space



Instructional Materials and Classroom Furniture

- Classroom Furniture
- Instructional Materials and Technology Tools



Facilities

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

What You Need to Know

Indoor Facility Requirements

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

Indoor facilities at your pre-K program must:

- Be in good repair. This means that:
 - The indoor space must not present any health and safety risks such as:
 - Tripping hazards
 - Sharp corners or edges
 - Furniture that students can stand on or pull on that might topple over
 - There should be no substantial damage to the walls, ceiling, floors, floor covering, furniture, or other features of the space.
- Be in good sanitary condition. This means that:
 - Classroom floors, floor coverings, and other surfaces should be cleaned regularly and whenever they become dirty.
 - Tables should be washed thoroughly before and after meal time and whenever there is a spill.
 - Trash is not stored in areas accessible to students and families and is removed from the site regularly.
 - Instructional materials and furniture (e.g. easels) should be cleaned regularly and whenever they become dirty.
- Provide sufficient space for students, adults, and furnishings. Specifically:
 - A minimum of 30 square feet per student of usable indoor space must be available in the classroom. *For example, if 18 children are enrolled in a Pre-K for All class, at least 540 square feet of usable indoor space must be available.*
 - During meal and snack time, there should be enough room for staff to walk between the tables while students are seated.
 - Centers must have enough space for instructional materials and for students to play. *Please see the [Classroom Furniture and Instructional Materials](#) section for more information.*

General Facility Safety

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

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 Safety Requirements
Child Care (Article 47)¹² and School-Based (Article 43)¹³ Providers**

Location of Pre-K for All Classrooms in the Building	You may not operate your pre-K program above the <u>third</u> floor or in the basement of a building unless you have received written approval from the DOHMH and the NYCDOE.
Modes of Egress	Your facility must have at least two mode of egress (<u>not including fire escapes</u>) that provide access out of the building. Egress paths should be free and clear of any obstructions.
Fire Extinguishers	A minimum of two fire extinguishers must be located on each floor and inspected twice a year.
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	Each 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.
Protective Guards/Coverings	Required for all windows (including those in hallways and stairwells), columns, radiators, pipes, and poles.
Stairways	Stairways used by students must be equipped with protective barriers and low banisters or handrails.
Finishing and Materials	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.
Asbestos	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 contaminates and other environmental health risks.
Lead-Based Paint	All walls, furniture, and equipment must be free of lead-based finishes.
Storage of Cleaning Supplies	All cleaning supplies must be stored in their original containers and kept in places that are locked and inaccessible to students.
Furniture/Play Space	All furniture and play equipment must be in good repair and free from hazards such as sharp edges, pointed parts, toxic, or poisonous finishes.

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

¹² Child Care (Article 47)- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH") Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

¹³ School-Based (Article 43)- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH") Article 43 School-Based Filing Certificate for Children Ages 3 through 5. These programs are regulated by Article 43 of the NYC Health Code.

Facility Requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)

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

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

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

You must be in **readily achievable compliance** with the [ADA Standards for Accessible Design](#) (*fully accessible*) if your building was constructed prior to January 26, 1993. You must be in **strict compliance** if your building was constructed after January 26, 1993.

If Your Facility was Constructed Prior to January 26, 1993

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

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

If Your Facility was Constructed After January 26, 1993

You must meet the 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

Pre-K for All students must have access to space where they can use their large muscles for at least 60 minutes a day.

You are required to provide outdoor play space that is:

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

The 2 block radius requirement does not apply to classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC¹⁴. Please contact your ACS Operations Manager for more information.

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

To ensure the health and safety of pre-K students, outdoor play areas must be maintained and in good condition.

In all cases, outdoor play space must meet the following requirements:

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

All equipment in an outdoor play space must:

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

¹⁴ EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide Pre-K for All services

Frequently Asked Questions

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

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

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

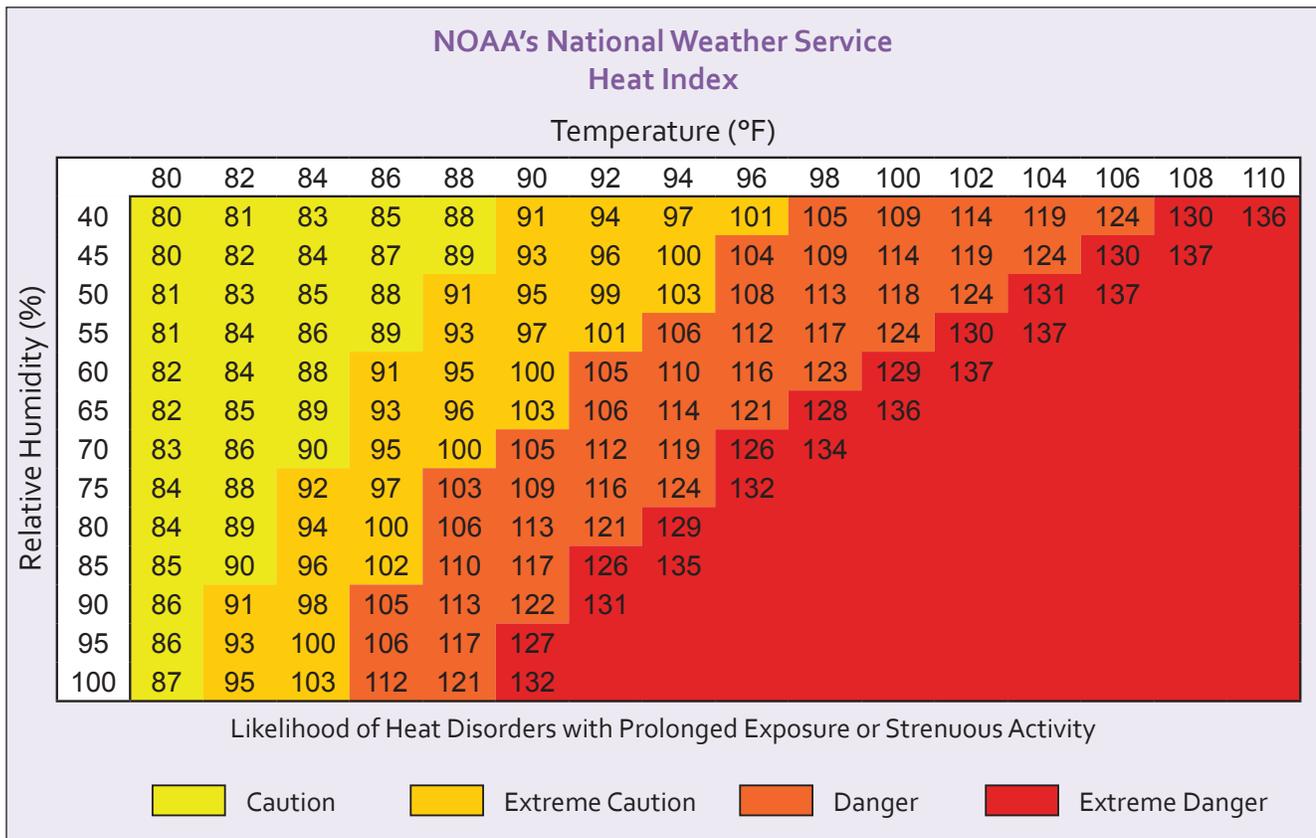
Cleaning products containing hazardous materials must be stored in teachers' closets/cabinets and locked from the outside. The cleaning products must be put away and locked immediately after use.

3. Is there a classroom temperature that must be maintained?

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

During hot weather, you need to maintain a comfortable indoor air temperature for your staff and students. If outdoor temperatures reach a "Danger" or "Extreme Danger" on the NOAA's National Weather Service Heat Index¹⁵ (see below), and you do not have a way to maintain cool indoor air temperatures, you should consider closing for the day to ensure the health and safety of your students and staff.

Please see the Calendar/Hours section of the Policy Handbook for more guidance on what to do if your program closes due to inclement weather.



¹⁵ NWS Heat Index. National Weather Service: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Retrieved from http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/heat/heat_index.shtml

4. When is it appropriate to cancel outdoor play?

Adequate periods of outdoor play should be provided daily for all students. Low temperatures should not be a barrier to outside play, as long as students are appropriately dressed. In inclement weather, active play shall be encouraged and supported in safe indoor play areas. Students should not play outside on days when there is ice on the playground.

In instances of extreme heat, you are encouraged to utilize the NOAA's National Weather Service Heat Index (see above) to determine if outdoor play is appropriate. You should use caution when taking students out in the heat and should make sure they are hydrated and in the shade (if available). Metal surfaces and other playground materials may become dangerously hot in direct sunlight. Test all equipment before use and keep students away from any objects that pose a safety hazard.

Considerations When Developing an Outdoor Play Policy

In developing a policy for when it is appropriate for students to be outside, you should consider the following:

- The DECE encourages programs to follow the recommendations of the New York City Office of Emergency Management or the National Weather Service when inclement weather is predicted.
- The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R), one of the DECE's primary tools for assessing program quality, recommends that programs minimize the days when students are unable to play outside.
- Students should be dressed properly and be allowed to play outdoors unless there is a "danger associated with the outdoor exposure."
- You should be flexible where there is bad weather and, if necessary, try to reschedule play time for a different time of the day.

Appendix A: Group Family Day Care (GFDC) Facility Safety Requirements

It is important that GFDC programs understand all applicable facilities requirements of the [New York State Office of Children and Family Services \(OCFS\)](#), the [NYC Building Code](#), [NYC Fire Code](#), their Pre-K for All contract, and all other applicable city, state, and federal regulations.

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

Table 2: GFDC Facility Safety Requirements

Location of Pre-K for All Classrooms in the Building	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	You must have two modes of egress. Fire escapes are considered a mode of egress.
Fire Extinguishers	Multi-purpose fire extinguishers approved to be used in residences must be maintained in good working condition and placed in the kitchen and outside the furnace room. Fire extinguishers with gauges must show a full charge and fire extinguishers with seals must have unbroken seals.
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.
Fire and carbon Monoxide Detection Systems	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.
Protective Guards/Coverings	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 carriers or restrictive locking devices which prevent a window from opening fully.
Stairways	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	Toxic paints or finishes must not be used on room surfaces, furniture, or any other equipment, materials, or furnishings which may be used by children or are within their reach.
Asbestos	Programs must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding the inspection, containment and removal of friable asbestos containing materials. Programs must ensure that facilities do not contain any contaminants and other environmental health risks.
Lead-Based Paint	All walls, furniture, and equipment must be free of lead-based finishes.
Storage of Cleaning Supplies	Cleaning materials must be stored in their original containers unless the product's use or your Health Plan indicates the product be mixed with water before use. In this case, the container used for the mixed product must state the name of the cleaning material. Cleaning materials must not contaminate play surfaces, food, or food preparation areas, or constitute a hazard to children. They must also be kept in a place inaccessible to children.
Furniture/Play Space	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.

Instructional Materials and Classroom Furniture

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

What You Need to Know

Classroom Furniture

Pre-K for All classrooms at your site must be equipped with adequate furnishings to support Pre-K for All programming. Furniture in the classroom should support students' growing independence in meeting their routine care needs and in conducting their daily activities.

Required Furniture

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

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

- Tables and chairs for meals/snacks and learning centers
 - Tables and chairs should be child-size;
 - Chairs should allow for most students' feet to touch the floor while they are seated (seat height should be approximately 12")
 - Tables should be an appropriate height so that most students can rest their elbows on the top of the table (table height should be approximately 20")
- Cubbies for storage of students' personal items and creative work
 - If possible, students should have individual cubbies with their own hooks, so that their personal belongings do not touch another child's.
 - If possible, these cubbies should be within the pre-K classroom, so that students can access their belongings without leaving the teacher's supervision.
 - Cubbies should be secured with a hook or nail.
- Furnishings for whole group learning
 - Carpet for whole group meetings
 - An adult size chair for each instructional staff member (as classroom space allows)
 - Teacher's easel (as classroom space allows)
- Furnishings for relaxation
 - A clearly defined space containing soft materials that allows students to relax or play quietly
 - Individual cots or mats for rest or nap
 - Mats/cots should be stored in or near the room for easy access by staff. If mats are located in the classroom, it is easier to prepare for nap and to provide a smooth transition.
 - Mat/cots should be labeled with students' names.

- Storage shelves
 - Storage shelves should be set up to provide materials for centers including, but not limited to, block play, art, manipulatives and science.
 - Storage shelves used by students should be easily accessible, neatly organized and labeled with developmentally appropriate words or pictures.
 - Placement and arrangement of the storage shelves in the classroom should provide definition of space for learning centers.
 - When possible, the art and sensory centers should have an easy-to-clean floor, and be placed near a sink.
- Furniture to facilitate play and learning during center time, including but not limited to:
 - Furniture for sensory play (e.g. sand and water tables)
 - Display library bookcase and additional storage for books
 - Play kitchen set (including a small table and chairs) and furniture to display and store dramatic play props
 - Early Literacy Center
 - Painting easel
 - Computer station for developmentally appropriate activities
 - Block area

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

Furniture Safety

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

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

Instructional Materials and Technology Tools

You must provide adequate instructional materials to implement your pre-K curriculum and to enable students to select from a range of developmentally appropriate activities during center time. Materials must be plentiful enough to allow students to play cooperatively without competing over resources. Instructional materials must be complete, intact and in good condition for students' use. Students must have access to these materials for a substantial portion of the day as defined by the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R)¹⁶ (2 hours, 7 minutes daily minimum for programs operating 6 hours and 20 minutes per day).

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

All instructional materials must:

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

For each classroom, you are required to provide the majority of the following instructional materials in each of the categories below:

- A wide selection and quantity of books, including:
 - Books with songs, poetry, and/or rhymes
 - Books that represent various cultures and languages spoken by families
 - Books that show people with different abilities
 - Fiction and informational texts to support current topics of exploration and discussion
- Early literacy materials, including:
 - Puppets and/or a magnetic/flannel story board
 - Magnets (e.g. symbols including upper and lower case letters, numbers, and mathematic symbols and magnetic write and wipe boards)
 - Writing materials (e.g. letter stamps and washable stamp pads, child-size pencils, crayons, washable markers, paper)
- Manipulative materials, including:
 - Small building toys (e.g. bristle blocks, magnetic blocks, interlocking cubes/blocks, Lincoln logs)
 - Toys that promote fine motor development (e.g. beads and strings of different sizes, toys that snap or link together, pegs with peg boards, tangram puzzle shapes)
 - Toys allowing students to make comparisons related to attributes such as size, shape and color (e.g. attribute blocks, pattern games, geoboards, sets of objects with varying characteristics, color paddles)

¹⁶ The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R) is an observational tool used to assess early childhood learning environments. The assessor observes the pre-K classroom and looks for specific indicators of quality across the following areas: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, and Program Structure.

- Toys to support students' exploration of quantity, measurement, and numerals (e.g. counting games, abacus, balance scale, tape measure, play money)
- Puzzles with varying levels of difficulty
- Art materials, including:
 - Crayons, washable markers
 - Paint materials (e.g. tempera paint, brushes, "dot art" painters, finger paint)
 - Paper (various sizes, colors, textures)
 - Collage materials (e.g. yarn, fabric, cotton balls, sequins, foam shapes, glitter, etc.)
 - Child-safe scissors
 - Glue and/or paste
 - Play dough or clay
 - A place for drying paintings and art projects
- Music and movement materials, including:
 - CD player (preferably with MP3 output)
 - Music CDs and books on CDs
 - Child-sized instruments
 - Headsets
- Blocks and accessories, including:
 - Classroom set of hardwood unit blocks
 - Vehicles, traffic signs, buildings
 - Play people and animals
- Dramatic play materials, including:
 - Dress up clothing (e.g. clothing for various careers, clothing representing various cultures, and clothing for fantasy play)
 - Toys to support students' exploration of careers and community helpers (e.g. doctor's office kit, tool kit, classroom mailbox, cash register)
 - Toys to explore housekeeping (e.g. materials for play food, dishes and utensils, housecleaning set, dolls and doll clothing, toy phone, mirror)
- Nature/science materials, including:
 - Collections of natural objects (e.g. sets of leaves, rocks, seashells)
 - Sand/water toys (e.g. scoops, funnels and containers of different sizes/shapes, objects that sink and float, sponges, shovels, rakes, sifters, sand/water wheels)
 - Toys to support students' scientific observations (e.g. magnifying glasses, magnets, color mixers, simple microscope)

- Nature games, toys, and books
- Living things, if appropriate for your setting (e.g. plants, a class pet, window bird feeder)

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

Technology Tools

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

- Technology in the pre-K classroom must support students' hands-on learning and creative expression. Consider the strengths, preferences, experiences, linguistic diversity, and needs of your pre-K students when selecting a technology tool or interactive media activity to include in your classroom.
- Technology must be used in pre-K classrooms to support social interactions between students, their peers, and teachers. Students should not be isolated from peers or teachers while using technology or interactive media.
- Technology tools allowed in the classroom include:
 - Computers
 - Tablets
 - Interactive whiteboards
 - Mobile devices
 - Cameras and recording devices
- Program staff may not use personal cameras, cell phones, or other devices to record images of pre-K students. Programs should provide appropriate technology for each classroom.
- Total screen time for any pre-K student may not exceed 30 minutes in a week. Students' use of the technology tools listed above should be limited to no more than 15 minutes per day in total. Exceptions to this limit may be made for students with disabilities who require assistive computer technology as outlined in their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Where can I purchase furniture?*

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



III. Staffing

Hiring and Staff Qualifications

Security Clearances

Program Staffing and Class Composition

Aspire



Hiring and Staff Qualifications

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

What You Need to Know

Education Director Qualifications

Education Director qualifications depend on your pre-K program license.

Child Care (Article 47)¹⁷ Providers

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

School-Based (Article 43)¹⁸ and Group Family Day Care Providers¹⁹

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

Lead Teacher Qualifications

All Lead Teachers must have ONE of the following:

- Teaching license or certificate valid for service in the early childhood grades as set forth by [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\) regulations](#). This includes: Early Childhood (Birth- Grade 2); (n-6); or (Pre-K-6) certification.
- Teaching license or certificate for students with disabilities valid for service in the early childhood grades.
- Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood or a related field and a written study plan for obtaining Early Childhood (Birth-Grade 2) certification.
 - Teachers first hired in any city-funded pre-K class prior to March 31, 2014 must have their Early Childhood Education certification by June 30, 2017.
 - Teachers first hired in any city-funded pre-K class on or after March 31, 2014 must become certified within 3 years of their start date as a pre-K Lead Teacher.

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

In addition, all Lead Teachers must complete the mandatory 2 hours of training in child abuse maltreatment identification, reporting, and prevention. Information on this training is available at www.nysmandatedreporter.org.

17 Child Care (Article 47)- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH") Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

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

19 Group Family Day Care- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Group Family Child Care License.

Paraprofessionals

In full-day NYCEEC pre-K programs, there are two kinds of Paraprofessionals that may support pre-K classrooms: Assistant Teachers (also called Teaching Assistants), and Teacher Aides. Paraprofessionals play an integral role in the pre-K classroom by promoting positive interactions with pre-K students and families, implementing health and safety procedures, facilitating smooth transitions between activities, and planning collaboratively with Lead Teachers. Paraprofessionals often provide direct instructional support to students by facilitating whole and small group lessons and activities.

Assistant Teacher Requirements

All Assistant Teachers must:

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

Teacher's Aide Requirements

All Teacher Aides must:

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

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can you recruit qualified teachers?

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

The ECTF includes two groups of teacher candidates:

1. Those who hold or will hold New York State teacher certification by September 1, 2015; and
2. Those who do not yet hold certification but who hold a Bachelor's degree and have passed a rigorous quality screening by NYCDOE staff.

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

2. If a teacher is certified in a state other than New York do they need to become certified in New York?

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

Security Clearances

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

What You Need to Know

Security Clearance Overview

All staff members and volunteers who have contact with pre-K students, or who have access to confidential information about these students, must complete required eligibility clearance procedures prior to having any unsupervised contact with students. Outlined in the chart below, you can find your site's clearance procedure requirements based on your site setting and funding.

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

- NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE): Fingerprinting and security clearance for New York City Early Education Center (NYCEEC) staff members using the Personnel Eligibility Tracking System (PETS – more information below)
- NYC Department of Investigation (DOI): Fingerprinting for certain NYCEEC staff members
- New York State Education Department (NYSED): Fingerprinting for staff in district schools and charter schools through the TEACH system
- New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS): Administers the NY Statewide Central Register (SCR), which is a required additional security clearance procedure for all NYCEEC staff members

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

Security Clearance Procedures by Provider Type²¹

	Provider Type	NYDOE Fingerprinting Required?	DOI Fingerprinting Required?	Tracking System	SCR Clearance Required?
Funded by DOE only	Article 47 ²⁰ and Group Family Day Care ²¹ providers with NYCDOE contracts (no ACS contract)	YES	See additional guidance on following page	PETS	YES
	Article 43 School-Based ²² providers (not including charter schools)	YES	NO	PETS	YES
	Pre-K programs offered by charter schools	NO	NO	TEACH	YES
Funded by DOE and ACS	Article 47 Child Care providers with NYCDOE and ACS contracts	See additional guidance below			YES
Funded by ACS only	Article 47 Child Care providers with ACS contracts (no DOE contract)	NO	YES	N/A	YES

Additional Guidance for Article 47 Providers with DOE Contracts

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

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

Additional Guidance for Article 47 Providers with EarlyLearn NYC (ELNYC)²³ and NYCDOE Contracts:

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

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

²⁰ Child Care (Article 47)- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH") Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

²¹ Group Family Day Care- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Group Family Child Care License.

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

²³ EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide Pre-K for All services.

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

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

DOE Fingerprinting

The NYCDOE HR Connect Walk-In Center and the Office of Personnel Investigation (OPI) conduct background investigations for all staff hired by the NYCDOE and NYCDOE vendors. OPI will review fingerprint results, work history, military history, and other background issues that may affect clearance. Applicants with a criminal record may require additional screening. Additional information regarding arrest and conviction information for both applicants and current employees can be found in [Chancellor's Regulation C-105](#).

For more information on how staff may obtain NYCDOE clearances and fingerprinting, please review the [HR Connect Walk-In Center webpage](#).

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

Personnel Eligibility Tracking System (PETS)

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

You must maintain up-to-date information about all of your staff members in PETS at all times. Conditionally hired staff may NOT start working at your Pre-K for All program until their security clearance is marked "Satisfactory and Eligible" in PETS. If an employee is terminated or resigns, you must immediately mark him/her as "Inactive" in PETS.

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

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

DOI Fingerprinting

The Department of Investigations conducts fingerprinting and subsequent background checks on individuals who work at child care, home care, and family care facilities, including those that are under contract with the City of New York. Staff are screened for criminal convictions and/or pending criminal actions against the New York State and Federal criminal record databases.

For more information on how staff may obtain DOI Fingerprinting please review the [DOI Fingerprinting Unit](#) web page.

NYSED Fingerprinting and the TEACH System

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

For more information on how staff may obtain NYSED fingerprinting please review the [NYSED fingerprinting](#) web page.

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.

The NYC Health Code sections 47.19 and 43.13 requires that all persons associated with center-based or school-based child care services undergo a check with the SCR prior to having any unsupervised contact with children. If you are an Article 47 provider, you must repeat these checks every two years for each current employee.

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

Additional Guidance for Article 47 Providers

If you are an Article 47 provider, you must submit an electronic request to the SCR about each of your prospective employees using the [Online Clearance System](#). SCR will issue response letters directly to you confirming if they either do or do not find a person to be the subject of an indicated case of child abuse and maltreatment. If you receive a letter stating that one of your prospective employees is the subject of an indicated case of child abuse and maltreatment, you should inform the prospective employee of the results of the SCR clearance and notify DOHMH. Refer to the NYC Health Code [47.19](#) for more information.

Additional Guidance for Article 43 Providers

Currently, the SCR does not recognize school-based childcare services operating pursuant to Article 43 of the NYC Health Code as legal recipients of the SCR inquiry results. However, individuals are entitled to copies of information concerning themselves. The DOHMH recommends that Article 43 providers require as a term of employment or volunteer status that persons associated with a school-based program inquire into their own SCR background reports and submit the results of the clearance inquiry to the pre-K program administrator. The school-based Article 43 provider should retain a copy of the inquiry request results for their records as proof of compliance.

Special Education Itinerant Teachers (SEITs) and Related Services Providers

Some pre-K students in your Pre-K for All program may have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed by the NYCDOE to support a student with an identified learning disability. These students may receive services from a SEIT or a therapist (also called a related services provider) while attending your pre-K program. These services are funded through the NYCDOE.

You are not required to maintain any security clearance information on file for SEITs and related services providers who visit your program to assist pre-K students with disabilities, as security clearance is tracked by the NYCDOE and the employing agency. However, you should request that all SEITs and related services providers visiting your program show photo identification when entering your facility, and provide you with the following information before working with any of your students:

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

You may not deny access to a SEIT or related services provider who visits your program to provide mandatory services to one of your pre-K students.

If you have a concern about a SEIT or a related services provider working with a student in your program, you must contact the employing agency. As a mandated reporter, you are required to call the SCR to report any suspected case of child abuse or maltreatment.

Frequently Asked Questions

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

Program staff positions or titles that must complete the procedures listed in this section include, but are not limited to, Education Directors, Lead Teachers, Assistant Teachers, and all staff who have contact with NYCDOE students or student records, including office staff, food service workers, custodial staff, social services workers, substitute teachers and consultants (e.g. an art or dance teacher who visits your program on a regular basis).

2. Must substitute teachers be cleared through the processes described above?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Send your check or money order to the Office for Children and Family Services, Capital View Park, Attn: Bureau for Financial Operations, 52 Washington Street, Rensselaer, NY 12144 within 2-3 business days. After the SCR conducts its search, you will receive an electronic notification of the search result directly from the SCR. You should review the information provided by the SCR and keep a copy on file at your site. If your site is not yet permitted by your licensing agency, please contact your Field Office for additional information on how to obtain data from the SCR.

5. *How can individuals request a copy of information concerning themselves from the SCR?*

Individuals may make inquiries of the SCR by submitting a written request to:

New York State Office for Children and Family Services
New York State Central Register
P.O. Box 4480
Albany, NY 12204

Inquiries from individuals concerning their own SCR records must contain:

- The individual's full name, and any aliases or previous names they may be known by
- The individual's date of birth
- All current and previous home addresses
- Name and address of any child care facility or school the individual has previously been associated with as an employee or volunteer
- The names and dates of birth of any children of the individual making the request
- Any SCR identification number associated with the individual's name (if known)

Program Staffing and Class Composition

It is mandatory that your pre-K program has consistent and sufficient supervision of students throughout the day to ensure safe and enriching environments in Pre-K for All classrooms.

What You Need to Know

Class Size and Staffing Ratio Requirements

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

Child Care (Article 47)²⁴ and School-Based (Article 43)²⁵ Providers

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

Group Family Day Care (GFDC)²⁶ Providers

- The maximum class size is 12 students.
- One teacher and one paraprofessional are required.
- The maximum class size is inclusive of:
 - Pre-K for All students
 - Non-Pre-K for All students provided services at the home
 - Your own children who may be present during Pre-K for All hours
- You may not serve more students than allowed for on your GFDC license.

Class Composition

Programs with EarlyLearn NYC²⁷ Students

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

- Pre-K students funded directly by the NYCDOE and pre-K students funded through EarlyLearn NYC must be served in separate classrooms unless otherwise approved by the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) and New York City Administration for Children Services (ACS).
 - In the 2015-2016 school year, at the ACS and the DECE's sole discretion and on a case-by-case basis, programs may be allowed to consolidate one directly funded NYCDOE class and one EarlyLearn NYC class into one classroom.

24 Child Care (Article 47)- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH") Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

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

26 Group Family Day Care- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Group Family Child Care License.

27 EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide Pre-K for All services

- You must request and receive written permission from the Operations Manager at your designated DECE Field Office, as well as your ACS Operations Manager.
- In these circumstances, classrooms need to maintain Pre-K for All class ratios of 18 children to 2 adults or up to 20 children with 3 adults.

Programs with Private Pay Students

- Pre-K students funded directly by the NYCDOE and private pay funded students may be served in the same classroom, pending approval of your DECE Field Office Operations Manager prior to the start of the school year.

Mixed Age Classrooms

- If the DECE and ACS provide approval for you to combine your pre-K students funded directly by the NYCDOE and pre-K students funded through EarlyLearn NYC, or pre-K students funded directly by the NYCDOE and Private Pay students in the same classroom, you must ensure that students' birth years are contiguous. For example, students born in 2011 and 2012 may be in a mixed age class together. However, students born in 2013 should not be in the same class as students born in 2011.
- Mixed age classrooms are required to adhere to:
 - All Pre-K for All staff to student ratio requirements.
 - NYCDOE expectations for a high-quality Pre-K for All program, including meeting the developmental and instructional needs of students of different ages within the same classroom.

Meal and Rest Time Staffing Requirements

- You must adhere to the required staff to student ratio requirements at all times, including during meal and rest time. At least one staff member certified in Early Childhood Education must be on-site and on-duty throughout meal and rest times. The regularly assigned Lead Teacher and Paraprofessional are not required to be in the classroom during meal and rest times as long as:
 - The staff to student ratios are maintained, and
 - A certified teacher or administrator is on-site and on-duty in the program.

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

- For a class of 18 students or less, two instructional or family engagement staff members must supervise students.
- For a class of 19 or 20 students, three instructional or family engagement staff members must supervise students.

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

Staffing of Field Trips

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

- Appropriate and adequate supervision must be provided throughout the trip.
- At a minimum, classroom staff to student ratios apply to field trips. The exact number of chaperones needed will vary depending on the type of trip and must be approved in advance by your field office.
- No student may be left unsupervised during any phase of a trip; line of sight supervision must be maintained at all times.
- (Article 47 programs only) You must designate a Trip Coordinator who will accompany students on the field trip and will be responsible for ensuring:
 - Overall student supervision
 - Accountability procedures
 - Staff oversight

For additional information on field trip requirements, see the [Field Trips and Neighborhood Walks](#) section.

Education Director- On-Site Coverage Requirements

Education Directors are responsible for the daily supervision of all staff within their pre-K program. Education Directors are required to be present on site during pre-K program hours. Should an Education Director need to be absent or off-site, please refer to FAQ #1 for additional information.

Child Care (Article 47) Providers

- Your pre-K program must employ an on-site Education Director.
- If your child care center serves 40 or more children (of any age), the Education Director may not have teaching responsibilities, including acting as a substitute for an absent teacher.

Education Directors may only be assigned to one site; you may not share an Education Director across multiple physical locations or DOHMH permits.

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

- You must employ an on-site Education Director if one or more Pre-K for All teachers are on a study plan.
- If your pre-K program serves 40 or more children, the Education Director may not have teaching responsibilities, including acting as a substitute for an absent teacher.

Substitute Teachers

In the event that an assigned Lead Teacher or Paraprofessional is absent, you must arrange for a qualified substitute Lead Teacher or a qualified substitute Paraprofessional to come into the classroom. It is your responsibility to confirm that substitute Lead Teachers and Paraprofessionals working in your program have completed all necessary Eligibility Clearance Procedures before beginning work.

- Qualified substitute Lead Teachers must have:
 - A Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood or a related field.
 - Completed the mandatory two hours of training in child abuse maltreatment identification, reporting and prevention, and requirements of applicable statutes and regulations.
- Qualified substitute paraprofessionals must:
 - Be at least 18 years old.
 - Have a high school diploma or equivalent (GED).
 - Have completed the mandatory two hours of training in child abuse maltreatment identification, reporting and prevention, and requirements of applicable statutes and regulations.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is coverage required if an Education Director is absent or off-site?

Education Directors may occasionally be off-site during pre-K program hours for professional or personal reasons (e.g., to attend a meeting or to care for a sick family member). For this reason, all pre-K programs should appoint a qualified staff member to act as the interim Education Director when the Education Director is absent. The staff member appointed must meet the education, experience, and certification qualifications of the Education Director listed above.

General guidance for Education Directors who have teaching responsibilities:

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

General guidance for Education Directors who are not permitted to have teaching responsibilities:

If the interim Education Director is a Lead Teacher, he/she may continue to fulfill teaching duties for up to 3 consecutive days, or 10 total days throughout the year, while serving as the interim Education Director.

Frequent or long-term absences:

If an Education Director has an absence exceeding 3 consecutive days, the interim Education Director may no longer have teaching responsibilities during this absence. A substitute teacher may be required to fulfill the interim Education Director's teaching responsibilities and meet mandatory student to staff ratios until the Education Director returns to work. To maintain continuity of leadership in the program, a limit has been placed on the cumulative number of absences that an Education Director may have during the school year. If an Education Director is absent for an annual cumulative total of 10 days on which Pre-K for All services are provided, the interim Education Director will no longer be permitted to fulfill his/her regularly assigned teaching responsibilities on any future days when the Education Director is absent through the end of the school year. In cases where this provision would create an undue hardship, programs must request written permission from their DECE Field Office to implement an alternative plan for oversight of instruction, family engagement and other key program functions.

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

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

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

3. May NYCEECs have one Lead Teacher or paraprofessional for a pre-K class in the morning hours and a different Lead Teacher or Paraprofessional for the afternoon hours?

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

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

Aspire

Aspire is an online system designed to verify and track Lead Teacher and Education Director certifications. Aspire helps program leaders and the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) ensure that Pre-K for All sites have qualified staff.

What You Need to Know

Aspire Overview

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

The registry is an online system designed to track and promote the education, training, and experience of all those who work with young children. Aspire enables the DECE to determine whether staff at your Pre-K for All program meet all required qualifications.

All **Lead Teachers** and **Education Directors** working at your program are required to create and maintain an active profile in Aspire. Profiles contain verified information about education, employment history, training, memberships, and other professional activities.

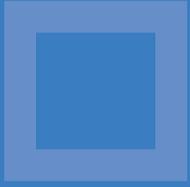
Aspire Requirements

You must use Aspire to track certifications and study plans (if applicable) by adhering to the following steps.

1. All programs must create an Organization Account in Aspire.
2. All Pre-K for All Lead Teachers must complete their Individual Professional Profiles.
3. New staff members who are not hired by August 1st must complete an Individual Professional Profile within one week of their date of hire.
4. The manager of the Organization Account must verify employment of teaching staff and specify the official NYCDOE class code for the classroom in which each teacher is teaching. All documentation must be submitted to Aspire. For staff hired after August 1st, the deadline is three weeks from their date of hire. After Pre-K for All classroom staff have completed their Profiles, their employment can be verified by logging into the Organization Account.
5. If any information in your Organization or Individual Professional Accounts changes throughout the school year, you are responsible for updating your account immediately.

The DECE will provide additional information each year about the deadlines by which you must complete each step listed above.

Your designated DECE Field Office will be following up to ensure that your program and teachers have completed all of the above Aspire requirements.



IV. General Program Oversight

Calendar, Hours, and Flexible Schedule

Meal Services

Fees

Uniforms

Attendance

- Strategies for Improving Student Attendance

Communication with Families and Family/Teacher Conference

Field Trips and Neighborhood Walks

Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance in Pre-K for All
and EarlyLearn NYC



Calendar, Hours, and Flexible Schedule

Pre-K for All offers free, full-day, high-quality pre-K, the equivalent of 6 hours and 20 minutes of daily instruction each week. Programs have flexibility when developing their annual calendar and daily hours within the operational parameters set forth by the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE).

What You Need to Know

Pre-K for All Days and Hours of Operation

Your program's calendar and hours of operation must meet the Pre-K for All operational requirements listed below, unless otherwise approved in writing by your DECE Field Office.

Days Per Year

- You must provide **at least 180 days** of Pre-K for All services, including **at least 176 days** of instruction and **4 days** of professional development for teachers.
 - You may choose to offer Pre-K for All instruction on professional development days with substitute teachers.
- The DECE strongly advises tentatively scheduling make-up days in case you must close due to inclement weather. See FAQ #3 for more information and procedural guidance on the decision to close your program during inclement weather.

Days Per Week

- You must operate **5 days** (Monday to Friday) in a typical week.
 - You may choose to schedule program hours on a Saturday or Sunday to account for days when your Pre-K for All program is closed due to a holiday.
- You may request approval from your DECE Field Office to operate for 6 days per week in a typical week (Monday through Friday and either Saturday or Sunday). See "*Flexible Schedule*" below for additional details.

Hours Per Day

- You must provide **a minimum of 6 hours and 20 minutes** and **a maximum of 7 hours** of Pre-K for All services each day.
- You may request approval from your DECE Field Office to operate for less than 6 hours and 20 minutes per day. See "*Flexible Schedule*" below for additional details.

Prior to the start of the school year, you must get approval of your Pre-K for All program's proposed calendar and hours of operation by submitting your proposal to your DECE Field Office via PreKIDS.

All pre-K programs serving students funded through EarlyLearn NYC²⁸ must also receive approval of their proposed calendar and hours of operation as instructed by ACS.

²⁸ EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide Pre-K for All services.

Flexible Schedule

To ensure Pre-K for All reaches all communities and reflects the incredible diversity of our City, you are provided with more flexibility in scheduling program hours beginning in the 2015-2016 school year.

In the coming school year, you can:

- Schedule a short break in the middle of the day for non-Pre-K for All activities.
 - Time spent on non- Pre-K for All activities during a short break cannot count toward the minimum hours of required Pre-K for All instruction.
 - *For additional information on implementing a short break, please see the "Short Break" section below.*
- Provide less than 6 hours and 20 minutes per day of Pre-K for All Instruction on a given day (Monday to Friday). However, you must:
 - Continue to satisfy the minimum weekly hour requirement of 31 hours and 40 minutes of Pre-K for All instruction.
 - Provide a minimum of 5 hours of Pre-K for All instruction each weekday (Monday to Friday).
- Schedule Pre-K for All programming for 6 days per week (Monday to Friday and either Saturday or Sunday).
 - If you operate for 6 days in a typical week, you must operate for a minimum of 216 days per year.
- Schedule Pre-K for All programming on legal holidays.

Approval from DECE Field Office

If you plan to implement a flexible schedule, you must:

- Request approval from your DECE Field Office to implement a flexible schedule. You should complete and submit an online Scheduling Policy Request Form by the DECE specified date. You will receive an e-mail with the link to the online Request Form.
- Provide families with a copy of your proposed calendar and hours of operation at pre-registration.

If your site includes classrooms funded directly by the NYCDOE and classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC, you must also request permission from your ACS Operations Manager if you plan to implement a flexible schedule in the classroom(s) funded through EarlyLearn NYC.

Short Break (Only Applicable to Programs Implementing a Short Break)

Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, you can request approval from your designated DECE Field Office to schedule a short break in the middle of the day for non-Pre-K for All activities.

- The short break will not count toward the minimum operating hour requirement and will not be supported with government funds.
- To ensure that all students, including students participating in the short break, receive the required 31 hours and 40 minutes of weekly instruction, you must:
 - Extend the length of the school day beyond 6 hours and 20 minutes (up to 7 hours), or
 - Provide program hours on a Saturday or Sunday to ensure that you have met the weekly minimum of 31 hours and 40 minutes in a typical week.

Approval from the DECE Field Office

If you plan to implement a short break in the middle of the day for non-Pre-K for All activities, you must:

- Submit an online Scheduling Policy Request Form by the DECE specified date. On the request form, you will be asked to provide the following information:
 - Your proposed daily and weekly schedule.
 - The position titles of the staff who will be supervising the short break.
 - The proposed location of the short break.
 - A description of the short break activity that will be provided.

If your site includes classrooms funded directly by the NYCDOE and classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC, you must also request permission from your ACS Operations Manager if you plan to implement a short break in the classroom(s) funded through EarlyLearn NYC.

Parent/Legal Guardian Consent

- No student can participate in the short break unless their parent/legal guardian provides written consent.
- You must request written consent from parents or legal guardians at pre-registration (or upon enrollment if the student enrolls mid-year).
 - Consent must be provided on the Parent/Guardian Consent Form issued by the DECE.
 - The consent form is also posted on the Resources section of the Vendor Portal in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Urdu.
 - You must maintain documentation on file of written consent from every parent/legal guardian.

You must neither encourage nor discourage participation in the short break.

Length of Short Break

- The short break must last for **no more than 20 minutes**.
 - This includes transition time into and out of the break.
 - If you would like to implement a break of more than 20 minutes, you must indicate this request on your Scheduling Policy Request Form.

Supervision of Short Break

- If one or more students enrolled in your Pre-K for All program opt not to participate in the short break, you must:
 - Designate staff other than the program's Pre-K for All Lead Teacher and Teaching Assistant(s) to oversee the short break. The Pre-K for All Lead Teacher and Teaching Assistant(s) must continue to provide instructional activities to students who participate exclusively in city-funded Pre-K for All.
- If **ALL** students enrolled in your Pre-K for All program participate in the short break, you are strongly encouraged to:
 - Designate staff other than the Pre-K for All Lead Teacher and Teaching Assistant(s) to oversee the short break.

Location of Short Break

- If one or more students enrolled in the Pre-K for All program opt not to participate in the short break, you must:
 - Use a space separate from the classroom for the short break. The Pre-K for All classroom must be utilized only by those students who participate exclusively in city funded Pre-K for All.
- If all students enrolled in the Pre-K for All program participate in the short break, you are strongly encouraged to:
 - Use a space separate from the classroom for the short break.

Transitioning Students to and from Pre-K for All Activities and the Short Break

- You must ensure that your staff supports transitions between Pre-K for All activities and short break activities in a developmentally appropriate way. Suggestions include:
 - Reviewing norms and routines prior to each transition.
 - Using instructional supports such as visual schedules, songs, or other strategies to actively involve students.
 - Planning transition activities into and out of the break that also support students in adapting to change in all settings.
 - Scheduling transitions so that only a few students transition at a time.
 - Ensuring wait times during the transition are less than 1-2 minutes.

Please contact your Field Office for further guidance on transitions.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Which Pre-K for All days are considered a legal holiday?

The following holidays are designated by the federal government as a legal holiday:

- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day
- Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Washington's Birthday
- Memorial Day

2. Can I close my Pre-K for All program on religious holidays or other dates when the NYC district schools remain open?

You may choose to close your Pre-K for All program for religious holidays or other events. In determining whether to close, you should take into consideration the cultural and religious backgrounds of the families you serve.

Prior to the start of the school year, you must provide families with an annual calendar that clearly indicates what days you will be open and closed. If you chose to close your program on a day on which the NYC district schools remain open, you should remind families at least one week in advance about the closure.

3. Can I close due to inclement weather or other events beyond my control? What should I consider if making the decision to close, and what is the process?

Yes, you may close due to inclement weather or other events beyond your control, and the safety of your students, families, and staff should be your highest concern in determining whether to close.

It is strongly recommended that on days when the NYC district schools close, you also close your Pre-K for All program.

You must have a policy in place for informing families and staff when your Pre-K for All program is unexpectedly forced to close. You should ensure that the method of communication is effective for all enrolled families and the time of the communication provides adequate notice for staff and families.

If the unexpected closure brings the total number of scheduled days to less than 180 (based on a 5 day week) or 216 days (based on a 6 day week), you must schedule a make-up day and revise your calendar in PreKIDS to reflect the change. It is recommended that you tentatively schedule make-up days in case of inclement weather closures during the academic year.

All pre-K sites serving students funded through EarlyLearn NYC must also notify ACS of unplanned and weather emergencies. During times of inclement weather and City emergencies, EarlyLearn NYC programs should close in accordance with the Mayor's Office declaring a "City Emergency" or the closure of all public schools. In the case of a Citywide Emergency, no follow-up documentation or reporting of the closure to ACS is required.

Meal Services

Pre-K for All programs must follow food standards to ensure that every student is provided nutritious meals.

What You Need to Know

Meal Requirements

You must offer one of the following approved meal patterns to your pre-K students to ensure that their nutritional needs are met:

- Breakfast and lunch or
- Lunch and a nutritious snack

Classrooms funded directly through EarlyLearn NYC must follow all meal provisions of their EarlyLearn NYC contract.

Overview of Nutritional Requirements

The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) has adopted the guidelines of the New York State Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to set nutritional standards for meals served to Pre-K for All students. In addition to following CACFP standards, you are required to follow the New York City Food Standards for all meals served. (The following meal components reflect required minimum quantities).

Beverages: Overall Requirements	<p>Water must be available to children at all meal and snack times and upon request throughout the day.</p> <p>No more than one 4oz. serving of 100% juice per day may be served to pre-K students.</p> <p>You may not serve pre-K students any beverages with added artificial or natural sweeteners.</p>
Breakfast: Required Minimum Components	<p>If served, breakfast must contain all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One serving of unflavored milk (fat-free or 1%) – ¾ cup • One serving of a vegetable/fruit or 100% Juice – ½ cup or 4oz. • One serving of grain/whole-wheat or whole-grain bread – ½ slice per serving
Lunch: Required Minimum Components	<p>Lunch must contain all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One serving of unflavored milk (fat-free or 1%) – ¾ cup • Two servings of vegetables and/or fruits – ½ cup total • One serving of grain/whole-wheat or whole-grain bread – ½ slice, ¼ cup pasta/grains, or ½ tortilla • One serving of meat or meat alternative – 1 ½ oz.
Snack: Required Minimum Components	<p>If served, snack must include two of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One serving of unflavored milk (fat-free or 1%) – ½ cup • One serving of vegetable/fruit or 100% Juice – ½ cup or 4 oz. • One serving of grain/whole-wheat or whole-grain bread – ½ slice per serving • One serving of meat/meat alternative – ½ oz.
Overall Requirements for All Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No food containing artificial trans-fat may be served • No use of deep fryers and/or deep frying • No fruit canned in light or heavy syrup may be served

For more detailed nutritional requirements, see Appendix A of this section.

Providing Meals to Students with Dietary Restrictions

Students with medical needs and/or food preferences may require food substitutions or meal pattern modifications to meet their dietary needs. It is important that you follow the guidelines below and understand what menu modifications are mandatory and/or permitted.

- Food substitutions are:
 - A food item from the planned menu that is replaced by another food of the same food component category (i.e. peaches replacing citrus sections).
- Meal pattern modifications are:
 - Changes to the menu which result in less than the minimum meal pattern requirements being met for food components (i.e. no serving of grain/bread is provided).

Students with Disabilities

Food substitutions and meal pattern modifications are **mandatory** to accommodate participants whose disability restricts their diet as specified in a statement signed by a licensed physician.

- Meal pattern modifications are only permitted if medically necessary for conditions such as diabetes or for potentially life-threatening food allergies.
- A medical order is required for meal pattern modifications and must describe:
 - The participant's disability and how the disability restricts his/her diet
 - The major life activity affected by the disability
 - The food(s) to be omitted and the food(s) that must be substituted

Non-Disabled Students

Food substitutions are **permitted but not mandatory** to accommodate a non-disabled student's food preferences, food allergies, or other health concerns.

- Pre-K programs should develop a written policy as to whether they will accommodate non-medical dietary requests.
- Students with a doctor's note about lactose intolerance must have a substitute milk product made available to them.

In unique cases, meal pattern modifications are permitted, but not mandatory, to accommodate non-disabled students. In these cases, a medical order must be provided and include:

- The student's medical or other special dietary need which restricts their diet
- The food(s) to be omitted and the food(s) that may be substituted

In all cases, families may opt to provide meals for their student. Please see FAQ #1 for more information.

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 pre-K students.

It is important that your menu is culturally diverse and meets the needs and preferences of students and families.

Menus must:

- Contain a sufficient amount of detail to be helpful for families.
 - Example: Instead of “fruit,” you should include detail such as “sliced apples.”
- Be distributed home to families in advance and posted prominently at your site.
 - Example: If you prepare your menu on a monthly basis, you should distribute menus to families in the last week of the preceding month.
- Accurately reflect the food that will be served with the note explaining that changes may be made based on what is fresh and available/in season.
- Be provided in the home language spoken by the family.

Promoting Learning During Meal Time

Meal time is an opportunity for staff members to promote students’ progress in approaches to learning, social-emotional development, healthy habits, fine motor skills, and language development. To facilitate this learning, meals and snacks should be served family-style and provided in an environment conducive to interaction between staff and students.

During meal time, staff should:

- Sit with students
- Model healthy eating habits, such as showing enthusiasm for trying new foods
- Promote positive social interactions; students should be encouraged to talk during meal times
- Support students, as needed, to develop skills to feed and serve themselves independently

Students have a role in managing meal time and can participate in distributing supplies, serving themselves, and cleaning up after the meal is finished.

- Instructional staff members are encouraged to eat the meals and snacks served by your pre-K program alongside students in order to model healthy eating habits.
- **Due to allergy concerns and other dietary restrictions, staff members may not share foods brought from home with students.**

For additional guidance on staffing requirements and expectations during meal time, please review the [Program Staffing and Class Composition](#) section.

Sanitation Requirements

Food safety is an important part of your pre-K program’s safety plan. Failure to prepare, store, and serve food in a sanitary and safe manner may lead to harmful health consequences for your students.

You must follow these guidelines in addition to guidance provided by your licensing agency:

- Staff members and students must thoroughly wash their hands before and after handling food.
- All food must be stored in a clean, sanitary environment.

- Food may not be kept beyond the expiration date.
- Food must be covered when transported.
- All food requiring refrigeration must be stored at a temperature below 41° F; prepared hot food must be held at a temperature above 140° F until it is served.
- Dry food must be stored in insect and rodent-proof containers with tight lids.
- Food that leaves the kitchen or food storage area to be served must be discarded after the meal and may not be re-served.
- Staff members must wear gloves and use proper utensils to handle and serve food.

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 the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) or an agency acceptable to the DOHMH. The staff member must be on-site to supervise all food storage, preparation, cooking, holding, and cleaning activities, whenever such activities are in progress.

The Food Protection course is free and available on the [DOHMH website](#). You are responsible for the cost of the final exam required to receive the certificate.

Food Served on Special Occasions

Food provided on special occasions such as holidays and birthday celebrations must:

- Include a healthy option such as fresh fruit and/or vegetable slices.
- Be served with water as a beverage option.
- Be served at the same time as lunch or snack; the program's food must also be served.

The DECE strongly recommends that programs choosing to serve sweets/desserts at special occasions do so in moderation and offer child-sized portions. Inform families in advance if sweets/desserts will be served on a special occasion and provide families with the option not to have these foods served to their child.

You must develop a program policy on whether families will be allowed to provide food to your students on special occasions. If you choose to allow families to provide food, your policy must include the following:

- That families must provide a list of ingredients included in the food to ensure the health and safety of students with dietary restrictions.
- That families must provide permission in advance allowing their student to eat food provided by families of other students enrolled in pre-K.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Can families provide meals for their students?*

Yes, families can provide meals as long as they have been informed that the program is providing a healthy meal and snack for their student at no cost. If a family prefers to provide meals for their student, you are responsible for ensuring that the student's food is properly refrigerated, and that the family is informed of age-appropriate nutritional guidelines.

If a family prefers to provide a meal and/or a snack for their student:

- You should request a note from the student's family indicating that the student will be provided with a meal and/or snack from home.
- The note should state that you, the program, are not responsible for providing the meal and/or snack since the family intends to provide it on a daily basis.

Guidance on Family Provision of Meals

The DECE and the CACFP recommend that you encourage families not to send food in with their student for the following reasons:

- Students may expand their food preferences by trying different foods while at pre-K.
- If the meals are served family style, the student can choose how much and what he/she wants to eat.
- Your program's meals may be more nutritious.
- Meal time is more cohesive when all students are eating the same meal. If one student brings in food, others may request to do the same.

2. *Are there any restrictions on where you can purchase food?*

The DECE does not place restrictions on the food vendor(s) that you utilize. However, you are responsible for ensuring that all meals and snacks served to students meet the nutritional requirements and fit within your budget.

3. *What are some additional recommended best practices to implement during meal times?*

The DOHMH has developed a [Nutrition and Physical Activity Best Practices](#) document that can be referred to for recommendations on meal time best practices.

Appendix A: New York City Nutrition Requirements²⁹

Regulation	Article 47 Child Care Programs ³⁰	New York City Food Standards (Required of all programs)	New York State Child and Adult Care Food Program (if participating)
BEVERAGES			
Do not serve beverages with added sweeteners, whether artificial or natural.	✓	✓	✓
Serve only 100% fruit juice.	✓	✓	✓
Do not serve more than 4 ounces of 100% juice a day.	✓	✓	✓
Do not serve juice more than once a day.		✓	✓
Serve only unsweetened/unflavored 1% or non-fat milk to children aged 2 and older. Milk with a higher fat content is allowed when medically required.	✓	✓	✓
Milk substitutes (such as soymilk) must be unflavored.		✓	✓
Specify the type of milk served on the menu. Milk substitutes must be nutritionally equal to milk.	✓		
Have water available throughout the day, including at meals.	✓	✓	✓
Serve water with snack if beverage is not one of the required snack components. Specify water on the menu.			
MEALS PREPARED AT THE CENTER			
Limit total sodium per day to 1,700 mg or less. Breakfast can contain no more than 425 mg sodium, snacks no more than 170 mg sodium, lunch no more than 600 mg sodium and dinner no more than 600 mg sodium.		✓	
Serve at least 19 grams of fiber per day.		✓	

²⁹ Appendix A is based on the NYC.gov's, "New York City Nutrition and Physical Activity Requirements" chart, which can be found at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/dc/childcare-phys.pdf>.

³⁰ Child Care (Article 47)- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene ("DOHMH") Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

Regulation	Article 47 Child Care Programs	New York City Food Standards (Required of all programs)	New York State Child and Adult Care Food Program (if participating)
Limit total fat to no more than 35% of total calories.		✓	
Limit saturated fat to less than 10% of total calories.		✓	
Serve a minimum of two servings of fruits and vegetables per meal for lunch and dinner.		✓	✓
Serve a minimum of five servings of fruits and vegetables per day for programs serving breakfast, lunch and dinner.		✓	
Programs serving meals on five days per week or fewer: Offer a minimum of three servings of non-starchy vegetables weekly at lunch and at dinner.			
Programs serving meals on more than five days per week: Offer a minimum of five servings of non-starchy vegetables weekly at lunch and at dinner.		✓	
Do not deep fry foods.		✓	
FOOD PURCHASED FOR MEAL SERVICE			
Serve low-fat or non-fat yogurt that contains no artificial sweeteners.		✓	✓
Serve items that contain no more than 480 mg sodium per serving.		✓	
Serve sliced sandwich bread with no more than 180 mg sodium per serving. Bread must be whole wheat/whole grain and contain 2 or more grams of fiber per serving.		✓	
Serve other baked goods (such as dinner rolls, muffins, bagels, and tortillas) with no more than 290 mg sodium per serving.		✓	

Regulation	Article 47 Child Care Programs	New York City Food Standards (Required of all programs)	New York State Child and Adult Care Food Program (if participating)
Serve cereal with no more than 215 mg sodium per serving and at least 2 grams of fiber per serving.			
Serve cereal with no more than 6 grams of sugar per serving.		✓	✓
Limit sweet grains served at breakfast and snack to no more than twice a week.		✓	✓
Do not serve fruit canned in syrup. Serve canned fruit in unsweetened juice or water.		✓	
Serve canned and frozen vegetables and beans with no more than 290 mg of sodium per serving.		✓	
Serve canned and frozen seafood and poultry with no more than 290 mg of sodium per serving.		✓	
Serve canned beef and pork and luncheon meat with no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving.	✓		
Serve portion-controlled items (such as breaded chicken, chicken nuggets, frozen French toast and waffles) with no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving.		✓	
Serve salad dressings with no more than 290 mg of sodium per serving.		✓	
Serve sauces with no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving (except soy sauce).		✓	
Purchase snacks, such as crackers, chips and salty snacks, with no more than 200 mg of sodium per serving.		✓	

Regulation	Article 47 Child Care Programs	New York City Food Standards (Required of all programs)	New York State Child and Adult Care Food Program (if participating)
Purchase grains (such as granola bars, cookies and muffins) for snacks with no more than 10 grams sugar and at least 2 grams fiber per serving.		✓	
Do not use artificial trans fat. Do not store, distribute or use it to prepare any menu item.	✓	✓	
FOOD SERVED AT CELEBRATIONS			
Do not serve beverages with any added sweeteners, whether artificial or natural.	✓	✓	✓
Give nutritional guidelines for food and drink brought into the child care center to parents.	✓		
Serve health options, like fresh fruit, leafy green salads and/or vegetables slices, at specials occasion celebrations.		✓	
Serve water at all special occasion celebrations.		✓	

Fees

Pre-K for All programs provide New York City families with free, full-day, high-quality, pre-K. You are prohibited from charging families fees for Pre-K for All.

What You Need to Know

Pre-K For All Services

You can never charge families a fee for New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE)-funded Pre-K for All services. Specifically, your Pre-K for All program is not allowed to charge families for:

- Pre-K for All application and enrollment
- Any services provided during Pre-K for All operating hours (e.g. instruction, celebratory activities, and special events)
- Any materials and supplies (e.g. art supplies or paper)
 - Families may not be required to provide materials or supplies.
- Field Trips
 - The cost of all field trips must fit within the scope of your budget.
 - You should plan field trips in advance and identify all required funding in your proposed annual budget.
- Meals
 - You must provide Pre-K for All students with a minimum of a lunch and a snack free of charge.

Early Drop-Off And Late Pick-Up

You should establish clear expectations for families regarding drop-off and pick-up times. You should make it clear that families are expected to drop-off and pick-up their children within the specified time.

- You may charge a fee to families who consistently drop-off their children before Pre-K for All hours begin and/or pick-up their child after Pre-K for All hours have ended.
 - You must establish policies to ensure the adequate supervision of students beyond your program's regular hours of operation should a family be late.
 - You must inform families of the policy and emphasize that children need to be dropped-off and picked-up on time.
 - If you plan to charge a fee in certain circumstances (e.g. when a child is picked-up more than ten minutes after program hours end), you must clearly communicate that to families.
- A family's inability to pay a fee is not cause for removing or excluding a student from a Pre-K for All program. Under no circumstances may you remove a student from your pre-K program for his or her family's inability to pay any such fee.

Services Provided Before and After Pre-K For All Operating Hours

You are allowed to offer services before and after Pre-K for All hours. However, a family's participation in these extended services is always voluntary.

- You may charge a fee for services provided before and/or after Pre-K for All hours.
 - You may not discourage enrollment or refuse registration to any student whose family does not plan to participate in any non-Pre-K for All services.
- If you offer services for a fee before or after Pre-K for All operating hours, you must communicate the following in writing to families:
 - Hours of Pre-K for All and that they are free.
 - Hours of extended services and any related fee. You must remind families that these services are opt-in and further, that enrollment and registration are not contingent upon participation in any non-Pre-K for All services.
- If you offer extended services, you may be required to share the following with your Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) Field Office:
 - A roster of families/students participating in non-Pre-K for All services who also participate in Pre-K for All programming.
 - Rates for any non-Pre-K for All services.

Please direct any questions about this guidance document to your DECE Field Office Operations Analyst.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *If my program operates a short break in the middle of the day, may I charge a fee for any services provided?*

No, you may not charge a fee for any services provided during the short break.

2. *What should I consider in establishing a "late pick-up" fee policy?*

Students may not be suspended or expelled due to a family's inability to pay a late fee.

The NYCDOE strongly encourages you to do the following when establishing a "late pick-up" fee policy:

- Develop a protocol for partnering with families to understand the reasons for late pick-up and perhaps coordinate alternate pick-up arrangements.
- Provide a "grace period" of at least 10 minutes before charging a fee.
- Charge fees only to families that meet your pre-determined and clearly communicated definition of "consistently late."
- Establish a fee amount that is reasonable and not excessive.

3. *Can I ask families to donate classroom materials and supplies?*

Yes, you can ask that families make an optional donation of classroom materials and supplies. You must inform families that a donation is not required and that their student will be able to participate in all classroom activities with access to the same materials even if no donation is made. Under no circumstances may a donation be required for students to enroll in or attend your Pre-K for All program.

4. *Can I charge a fee for school uniforms?*

No, but you may ask families to purchase uniforms. If you do request that students wear a uniform during Pre-K for All program hours, you may not sell uniforms directly to families; families must purchase uniforms directly from the vendor. You must have provisions in place to assist if a family cannot afford to pay for uniforms. You must pay for and provide their child with a reasonable number of uniforms.

5. *Can I charge a fee for a stepping-up ceremony or other special celebrations?*

No, you may not charge a fee or require families to purchase anything for a stepping-up ceremony or special celebration.

6. *If my program was private pay and converted to Pre-K for All, what do I do with the deposit I collected from families?*

You must reimburse families for any deposit paid for pre-K services. Please contact your DECE Field Office Operations Analyst if you have any questions.

7. *If my site serves Pre-K students funded directly by the NYCDOE and pre-K students funded by EarlyLearn NYC³¹ via Child Care funding (Child Care and Dual Eligible programs), may I still collect the Child Care weekly fee?*

Yes, you may collect the Child Care weekly fee. However, the fee may only be charged to those families participating in EarlyLearn NYC via Child Care funding. Please contact your ACS Resource Area with any questions.

³¹ EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide Pre-K for All services.

Uniforms

Pre-K for All programs can request that pre-K students wear uniforms.

What You Need to Know

Uniform Policy

Pre-K for All programs may request that students wear a uniform during program hours. If you request that Pre-K for All students wear a uniform, you must adhere to the following policies and procedures:

- You may ask families to purchase uniforms for their student.
- You may not exclude or penalize a student whose family would prefer that their child not wear a uniform.
- No student may be denied a uniform because of economic hardship.
 - You must develop a plan to obtain uniforms for families who demonstrate that they are unable to purchase them.
 - For any student whose family cannot afford to pay for a uniform, you must purchase the uniforms for them directly from the vendor.
 - You must purchase a sufficient number of uniforms for that student.
 - Costs for these uniforms may not be charged to the Pre-K for All budget and will not be reimbursed by the NYCDOE.
- You cannot collect fees for uniforms directly from parents; parents must purchase uniforms directly from the vendor.
- You must inform families about the uniform policy when describing your program (e.g. at outreach events and pre-registration) and ensure families receive written notice about this policy with enough time to purchase the uniform or request that you either provide the uniform or grant an exemption. The written notice must:
 - Describe and/or enclose a photograph of the uniform and explain the purpose, expectations, and benefits of the uniform policy.
 - List the range of costs for each item of clothing.
 - Advise families that:
 - They must purchase uniforms directly from the vendor.
 - They can purchase clothing that satisfies the uniform requirement at any vendor or store of their choice.
 - If they cannot afford to buy a uniform, they can request that you provide a uniform for their child.
 - They can request an exemption from the uniform requirement.

Students may not be sent home, excluded, disciplined, or penalized in any way if they fail to wear a uniform to the Pre-K for All program.

Uniform Wear

You must select a developmentally appropriate uniform that aligns with the intended goals of your uniform policy. You should select a uniform that is durable, easy to care for, and cost-effective.

In addition, uniforms **must NOT**:

- Consist of clothing that poses a health and safety hazard or that is disruptive to the education process.
- Require girls to wear skirts. You must offer the option of wearing pants.
- Contain offensive slogans or pictures.
- Contain religious symbols or text.
 - Except if the name of your program has religious text references, which may be displayed as text only, absent any religious symbol.

Attendance

To ensure students get the most out of Pre-K for All services, programs must stress the importance of regular attendance.

What You Need to Know

Attendance Overview

Students attending Pre-K for All programs are offered a minimum of 176 days of instruction during the program year. Research has shown that students in regular attendance benefit most from the services offered in pre-K.³²

By collecting attendance data, developing strategies for improving attendance, and reaching out to at-risk students and their families, you have the ability to improve student attendance at your program.

Clear attendance and communication policies along with collaboration with families, are crucial to improving student attendance:

- Set out the attendance expectations and policies for absences and lateness, including what is considered excused, what documentation is required and what families need to do when a student is absent, late, or must leave early.
- Your communications with families during orientation, family/teacher conferences, and via written/online communications should clearly articulate the expectation that students attend pre-K on a full-time, daily basis.
- You should work with families to understand reasons for low attendance, discuss strategies to address those reasons and, where necessary, discuss the impact of low attendance on their children's pre-K experience.

Ongoing Responsibilities

You are responsible for setting policy, tracking student attendance, and conducting follow-up communication with families. Staff should be trained and have a clear understanding on their role in ongoing tasks related to student attendance.

Maintaining Accurate Records of Student Attendance

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

- Daily attendance must be recorded for each student on his/her [Pre-K Attendance Card](#).³³
 - You are required to enter a "P" for present, an "A" for absent, and an "E" for excused absence. Excused absences, which are still counted as absences, shall include, but are not necessarily limited to:
 - Student illness (For more information on when students should be asked to stay home, please see the section on Excluding Students Due to Infectious Illnesses below).
 - Any student who is out for 3 or more days due to illness must provide a note from a physician.

³² Mapping the Early Attendance Gap: Charting a Course for Student Success. Attendance Works & Healthy Schools Campaign, September 2015.

³³ Classrooms funded directly through EarlyLearn NYC must use the Roster Book. EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide Pre-K for All services.

- 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 PreKIDS.
 - Attendance must be entered and verified at least once per month.
 - Data entered into PreKIDS must match the data collected on the Pre-K Attendance Cards.
- A [Daily Attendance Record Form](#) must be filled out and signed by parents/legal guardians or escorts (if applicable) daily. (Required for Article 47³⁴ providers and recommended for Article 43³⁵ and Group Family Day Care³⁶ providers).

Classrooms funded directly through EarlyLearn NYC programs must use the Web-based Enrollment System (WES) to input daily attendance.

Responding to Student Absenteeism

When a student is absent, it is important that you communicate with his/her family to understand the reason for the absence and determine if the student/family require additional supports or services.

Unless a family has notified you in advance of an absence, you must call his/her family:

- Within an hour, on the first day of an absence
- On each day of additional absence

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

If you fail to reach a student’s family by phone you should utilize other methods of communication such as e-mail, 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 pre-K enables students to get the most out of daily learning opportunities.

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

- The nature of the student’s irregular attendance
- Actions to be taken by the family
- Actions to be taken by staff
- Actions to be taken in the event the attendance problem continues
- The time of the next meeting to review the progress of attendance

³⁴ Child Care (Article 47)- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (“DOHMH”) Article 47 Child Care Services Permit. These programs are regulated by Article 47 of the NYC Health Code.

³⁵ School-Based (Article 43)- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (“DOHMH”) Article 43 School-Based Filing Certificate for Children Ages 3 through 5. These programs are regulated by Article 43 of the NYC Health Code.

³⁶ Group Family Day Care- Pre-K for All programs operating with a NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Group Family Child Care License.

- 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](https://www.attendanceworks.org) for tips and guides that staff can share with families, including research about how attendance in pre-K predicts later academic progress.

Recurring Absenteeism

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
- Find a more reliable source of transportation
- Access community resources
- Access counseling services

In pre-K, recurring absence is defined as:

- 10 consecutive non-excused absences
- 20 non-excused absences in a four month period

If a student's absences reach these thresholds you must:

- Report the case of recurring absenteeism in writing and by telephone to your designated DECE Field Office with the reason for absences, or with your efforts to determine the reasons for absences.
- Request that the family come to your site for a Discharge Review Conference to determine if the student should be removed from the program in order to permit a student on a waiting list to be registered and enrolled in his/her place.³⁷

No student will be discharged before the family is given an opportunity to explain the recurring absenteeism and without DECE Field Office approval. Additional guidance on Discharge Review Conferences is forthcoming.

Contact prekfamilyengagement@schools.nyc.gov if you need further guidance. *EarlyLearn NYC program can contact their ACS Team Leader for further guidance.*

Excluding Students Due to Infectious Illnesses

To promote student health, and avoid the spread of illnesses in school, your program may request that students with contagious diseases stay home until the symptoms are gone or until a doctor approves readmission into the program.

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

- Chicken pox, conjunctivitis, diarrhea, diphtheria, food poisoning, hepatitis, haemophilus influenza 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.

³⁷ Not applicable to classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC.

Excluding Students Due to Lice

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

- Students who have lice must be excluded from the pre-K program for 24 hours after receiving treatment and becoming lice/nit free.
- Staff at the pre-K program should check the student's head to see that the student is nit-free before readmission into the program.
- Students should still be sent home if the family has not complied with the nit-free policy of the DOHMH Bureau of Child Care, even when a health care provider sends a student back with a clearance from a physician.
- A note from a physician is not a requirement for a student who has lice to return to their pre-K program.

The NYCDOE policy for school-age students, which states a student only needs to be lice free, is different from the DOHMH readmission policy to child care for pre-K, which requires students to be nit-free as well as lice-free.

Bed Bugs

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

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

Excluding Students Who Have Not Received All Required Immunizations

For information on the immunization requirements of New York Public Health Law §2164 and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), please see the "[Immunizations](#)" section of the Policy Handbook.

Attendance Expectations at the Beginning of the Year

Smooth transitions into your Pre-K for All program lay the foundation for a successful year. Your program should be prepared to assist students and families with their transition into pre-K.

Staggered Schedule

- If appropriate for your families, establish a staggered schedule during the first week of school to help students and families adjust.
 - Please view the DECE's [Sample Staggered Schedule](#).

Modified Schedule

- On a case-by-case basis when a family and pre-K program agree that a student may benefit from a modified schedule at the beginning of the school year, a program, family, and a pre-K program's assigned Early Childhood Social Worker or Program Specialist may agree on a plan that temporarily shortens the length of a student's day or week.
 - A student's parent/legal guardian must give voluntary written consent on a form provided by the Social Worker or Program Specialist. This must be kept on file and made available upon request.
- The modified schedule should gradually lengthen the student's schedule to support his/her transition into your Pre-K for All program. Modified schedules may be implemented for a time period **not to exceed three weeks** to support the student's full participation in the regular program schedule. Programs and families should work together to support the student to attend for a full schedule (6 hours and 20 minutes, 5 days a week, or a weekly equivalent) by the end of this period.

Any changes to programmatic structures must not discriminate against any student or family, where a student or family's right to successfully engage in a full day of high quality pre-K is limited due to any characteristic or perceived characteristic of that student or family.

For further assistance with staggered entrance or modified schedule planning, programs should contact the DECE at (212) 374-0351 or earlychildhood@schools.nyc.gov. Information is also available on the [Early Childhood Website](#).

Strategies for Improving Student Attendance

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

Analysis

As part of your pre-K program's regular review of program-level data, you should have a system in place that ensures program staff are able to identify:

- Cases where a student is approaching frequent absenteeism
- Cases of recurring absenteeism
- Classrooms with low and high attendance rates
- Other attendance patterns

Programs with classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC should refer to FAQ #1 for additional requirements on when the program must conduct an analysis of the causes of low attendance.

Improvement Strategies

You should work with families in an effort to improve student attendance. Potential strategies include:

- Engaging families in the curriculum to demonstrate why daily attendance matters
- Clearly communicating expectations for attendance to families
- Having regular celebration events for classrooms with improved attendance
- Offering supports to overcome common barriers to attendance
 - Assistance in accessing health care
 - Assistance in finding a safe and consistent transportation route to the pre-K program
- Engaging families in identifying and addressing family and community issues that contribute to frequent absenteeism (e.g. students in temporary housing)
- Ensuring families have the opportunity to meet with program staff to discuss concerns families may have about participation in the program, and to brainstorm solutions to those concerns

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *When are EarlyLearn NYC funded classrooms required to conduct an analysis of the causes of low attendance?*

When the monthly average daily attendance falls below 85 percent, an analysis of the causes should be conducted. The analysis should include:

- The pattern of absences for each student
- The number of absences that occur on consecutive days
- The initiation of family support, if the absences are the result of anything other than illness

Communication with Families and Family/Teacher Conferences

Proactive partnerships between families and staff establish a solid foundation for students' success in pre-K and beyond.

What You Need to Know

Family Communication Overview

Strong partnerships with families in pre-K lay the foundations for ongoing engagement in their student's K-12 education. Your program must provide families with a warm and respectful environment. The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) requires that programs provide information to families at certain times. All program policies, communications, and services must be sensitive to the linguistic, cultural, and social-emotional needs of families.

Communication with Families

Pre-K for All programs are required to communicate with families before the school year begins and on an ongoing basis.

Strategies at the Beginning of the School Year

The information below must be shared with families at the beginning of the school year. When possible, information should be shared prior to the first day of school. Written materials should be shared in the preferred language of each family.

Provide the following information to families at the beginning of the school year:

- Your program's calendar, identifying the first day of school and days when the program will not be in session
- Program contact information
- A copy of the [Pre-K for All Commitment to Families](#)
- An overview of your program's curriculum and how it supports and advances the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC).
- Meal services
 - Meals being served and general food policy, including information on food safety and allergies
 - Menus for the beginning of the school year
 - Vendors utilized (if applicable)
- Key program information and policies, including:
 - Health and safety information
 - How illnesses, injuries, and student allergies will be managed and communicated
 - Evacuation plan
 - Fire and safety drills
 - Volunteer/visitor policy

- Program’s behavior guidance policy (must align to the [DOE and ACS Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance in Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC Programs](#))
- Pick-up/drop-off timing and procedures
 - Early drop-off and late pick-up policies
 - Fees policy (only relevant for programs that provide services for a fee before/after Pre-K for All hours)
- Clothing or uniform policy (if applicable)

Family Communication Guidance

It is strongly encouraged that you share the following additional information with families at the beginning of the school year in ways that address the linguistic, cultural, and social-emotional needs of families:

- Information on the First Days of School
 - Information about the transition into pre-K
 - Program and teacher-level supports for coping with separation
 - How families can support their student and partner with teachers during this time
- Appropriate developmental expectations for 4-year-olds (grounded in the guiding principles of the PKFCC)
- Your program’s daily schedule
- How your program plans to communicate with families (e.g. newsletter, texts, emails, etc.)
- Methods for how families can communicate with your program

Providing a “Welcome Orientation” event at the beginning of the school year, or even before school starts, is a great way to set a warm tone with families and share key information about your program’s policies, expectations, and goals. The DECE strongly recommends that each Pre-K for All program hold a welcoming or orientation event for families before the program begins or within the first two weeks of the school year.

Ongoing Methods of Two-Way Communication

Your program must communicate with families by utilizing multiple methods of communication in order to ensure that families receive all program communications. Your program should also provide families with multiple ways to stay in touch with staff and encourage families to share information about their student and questions they may have on a regular basis. Methods of communication should support the linguistic, cultural, and social-emotional needs of families. These methods may include, but are not limited to:

- In-person conversations between staff and families at arrival and dismissal
- Emails and/or texts
- Through your website
- Through newsletters
- By phone
- At school meetings
- During family workshops, classroom celebrations, and other school events

Family/Teacher Conferences

Family/teacher conferences are an important tool for building relationships with families and keeping them updated on their students' learning and developmental progress. Conferences supplement the casual, daily conversations that you have with families by providing more comprehensive information about a student's progress and allowing time for deep conversation. At conferences, teachers should present information in a way that is sensitive to the linguistic, cultural, and socio-emotional needs of families.

You must schedule a minimum of three family/teacher conferences for each family during the program year. When scheduling conferences you must consider the following:

- Your program should use authentic assessment data, including student observations, work samples, and Developmental Summary Reports, to plan family/teacher conferences.
- Allow approximately 20 minutes with each family to talk about their child's progress.
- Family/teacher conferences should be scheduled at times that are convenient for families. Conferences may be held before, during, or after regular program hours. To schedule family/teacher conferences at times that meet families' needs, full-day programs may:
 - Employ substitutes on family-teacher conference days to enable teachers to meet with families during program hours.
 - Schedule a half-day of instruction for students on family/teacher conference days to enable teachers to meet with families during program hours.
- Full-day programs may schedule a maximum of three half days per year for this purpose. These days will be credited as a regular instructional day in your program calendar.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *How can I increase family engagement in my program?*

Guidance on Increasing Family Engagement and Volunteering

Open new communication channels.

- Not all families receive or see hard copy flyers or notes all the time. Be sure to supplement any notes sent home with email reminders or through other electronic methods.

Be clear about where you most need parents to help.

- 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 up and collaborate with families.

- Keep parents or other family members involved when it comes to making decisions about their children's progress and school experience. Consider involving families in school decisions as well.

Touch base frequently with your parents and family members.

- Remember to thank your volunteers at the end of the semester or school year (or the time period that they have committed).

Field Trips and Neighborhood Walks

Field trips provide enriching experiences and unique learning opportunities for students that support the Pre-K Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC) guiding principles and learning standards. It is important that all New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) field trip policies are followed to ensure that students are safe and gain the most from any off-site experience.

What You Need to Know

Overview

The NYCDOE encourages pre-K programs to provide opportunities to enrich and expand students' experiences through developmentally appropriate neighborhood walks and field trips. All trips require written parent/legal guardian consent and should be planned to ensure the health, safety and adequate supervision of all students at all times.

All field trips must:

- Contain an educational component supporting the [PKFCC](#), align to the current unit of study, and be developmentally appropriate. Examples include:
 - Identifying and sorting different plants at the Botanical Garden.
 - Learning about community careers at your local police station, post office, or fire station.
- Fit within the scope of your budget
 - You must budget for field trips in advance and identify all required funding in your proposed annual budget.

Students requiring assistance may not be excluded from field trips or neighborhood walks. You should plan to support students with disabilities to participate in all activities.

EarlyLearn NYC³⁸ programs must follow ACS guidance and requirements for field trips and neighborhood walks.

Field Trips Involving Transportation

In some cases, you may need to provide students with vehicular transportation (e.g. a bus) to take them to an off-site location. If you choose to transport students as a part of any trip, you are required to adhere to the following policies:

- Students may not be taken on field trips that require transportation before January 1st of the school year.
- No more than three field trips involving transportation may be provided in a given school year.
- Under no circumstances may students utilize public transportation to get to or from an off-site location.
- Travel time either to or from a field trip location must not exceed one hour (one way).
- Transportation of students must be in compliance with all applicable federal, state, local, and NYCDOE laws, rules, and regulations. (See FAQ #3 below for additional details).
 - If you transport students with your pre-K program's own vehicle at any time, you must maintain Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance. (See FAQ #2 for additional details).

³⁸ EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide Pre-K for All services.

— If you retain another company to transport students at any time, you must ensure that the private company maintains Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance. (See FAQ #2 for additional details).

- All vehicle operators must be 19-A certified as per the NYSDMV Bus Driver Certification Unit and Article 19-A of the NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law. Drivers must carry license and certifications with them at all times while transporting students.

- You must maintain a daily transportation log of students placed aboard vehicles documenting:

- Names of students transported
- Arrival and departure dates and times
- Name(s) of transportation staff
- Identifying information for transportation service

- You must maintain Daily Transportation Logs for at least six months, and make them available for inspection by the DOHMH upon request.

Neighborhood Walks

In some cases, students may be able to walk to an off-site location. This may include excursions to the neighborhood playground, visits to the neighborhood grocery store, etc.

- Neighborhood walks can take place throughout the school year, including before January 1st.
- There is no limit on the number of neighborhood walks that can take place during the school year.
- Students may not be required to walk more than 10 blocks or ½ of a mile (one way). If you choose an off-site location more than 10 blocks or ½ of a mile from your pre-K program site, you must provide students with transportation and follow all policies noted in the Field Trips Involving Transportation section above.
 - You should avoid having students cross large avenues or busy thoroughways.

Approval from the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE)

Prior to taking students on a field trip, you must receive approval from your designated DECE Field Office.

- To receive approval, you must submit a [Field Trip Authorization Form](#) at least two weeks prior to the proposed field trip.
 - If you fail to submit a completed Field Trip Authorization Form, the cost of the field trip will be deducted from your final payment for field trip expenses previously approved in your Budget Detail.

Parent/Legal Guardian Notice and Approval

If you plan to take students on a neighborhood walk or field trip, you **must**:

- Notify students' parents/legal guardians at least two weeks in advance of any planned neighborhood walk or field trip

- Prior to each field trip, obtain written permission on a parental/legal guardian consent form that includes, at a minimum, all information contained on the [NYCDOE Parent Notification/Consent Form](#) (see pg. 10-11).
- If neighborhood walks are to take place on a regular basis (e.g. trips to an off-site playground), you only need to collect one parental/legal guardian consent form for neighborhood walks taking place at that location.
 - Indicate the proposed schedule of neighborhood walks on the consent form.

Student Supervision

You must ensure that students are accompanied at all times during field trips and neighborhood walks. No student may be left unsupervised during any part of a field trip.

- The exact number of chaperones needed for each field trip will vary depending on the type of trip, but there must be, at minimum, the same ratio of adults to students as required in the classroom.
- On the [Field Trip Authorization Form](#), you will be required to indicate your proposed adult to student supervision ratios.
 - The DECE Field Office will review all proposed staffing of field trips. If needed, the Field Office will contact you for additional information.

A system for maintaining accountability for students during neighborhood walks and field trips must be detailed in your written safety plan and include, at minimum, procedures for:

- Conducting name-to-face headcounts:
 - Before leaving for a field trip
 - Upon arrival at the field trip
 - At periodic times throughout the field trip
 - Before departing
 - Upon arrival back at your facility
- Providing students with a piece of clothing and/or other item that identifies and provides contact information for your pre-K program.
 - A student or family's name should not be included in the contact information.
 - Examples include:
 - T-Shirts with your pre-K program name and contact information
 - Stickers displaying your pre-K program name and contact information

You must also appoint a trip coordinator who will be responsible for:

- Assessing supervision needs.
- Developing guidelines and procedures for when additional staff and volunteers accompany students on field trips.
 - Incorporating these guidelines and procedures into the written safety plan(s).
- Accompanying students on field trips to improve accountability and lower the risk of leaving students unsupervised.

The Trip Coordinator can be a Lead Teacher, Paraprofessional, or Education Director.

Emergency Preparedness and First Aid

Your pre-K program must develop an Emergency Plan for staff to follow when taking students on trips. Staff must be informed of this plan at an appropriate staff/volunteer orientation. Emergency plans should include staff responsibilities in case of an emergency.

Lost Student Emergencies

Upon a report that a student is missing, the responsible adult or trip coordinator will:

Step 1: Designate the chaperone who will conduct the preliminary search and reassign that chaperone's students to another group and chaperones.

Step 2: Concurrently notify security guards or supervisors at the site.

Step 3: If, after the preliminary search the student is not found, all staff members not required for the immediate supervision of the other students must be called together and given information as to the lost student's last whereabouts. The entrances, exits, and insides of buildings must be checked, as well as the surrounding area.

Step 4: If the above mentioned search is unsuccessful, the trip coordinator or designee must notify the police, giving full description of the student: clothes, height, weight, hair color, and when last seen. The trip coordinator should notify the director, who will call the DECE Field Office and notify the family. Also, the Child Abuse hotline (1-800-635-1522) must be called.

Bus Travel Emergencies

In case of an emergency on the bus, the trip coordinator or designee must:

1. Provide adequate supervision in a secure area for all students.
2. Notify proper authorities and your DECE Field Office as the situation indicates and provide for appropriate first aid and medical care.
3. Arrange for alternate means of transportation, if needed.

In case of injury, call 911 depending upon the nature of the injury. If the injury is to a chaperone, immediately reassign the students who were in his/her charge to other chaperones. The pre-K program director should also be called and informed of the situation and the group's plans.

Families must always be informed of any incidents/accidents involving their child on the same day on which the incident occurred. This can be done by telephone or in writing if the parent/legal guardian cannot be reached by phone.

First Aid

The New York City Health Code 47.19 mandates that all programs have at least one staff member certified in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on the premises at all times. It is required that a staff member certified in first aid and CPR go on all trips.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do drivers have to meet security clearance requirements when transporting students for a field trip?

Any driver who has or may have the potential for any unsupervised contact with students must be screened for child abuse and criminal history in accordance with the Security Clearances section of the Policy Handbook. Drivers either need to be cleared of child abuse and criminal history or, if they are unscreened, they must be working under the direct supervision and within the line of sight of a screened employee of your program at all times.

2. What are the specific Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance Requirements?

If you transport students with your pre-K program's own vehicle at any time, you must maintain Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance that insures your pre-K program, program staff, and names as additional insureds the NYCDOE and the City of New York, during the performance of work under your contract against all present and future claims for bodily injury, sickness, disease, death, and property damaged which may arise because of a vehicular accident. The limit of the liability must be at least \$5,000,000 for all injuries sustained in any one occurrence. The limit of liability for property damage must be at least \$100,000 for one claimant and at least \$200,000 for two or more claimants in any one accident. Such damages must include all injury to, or destruction of, property of such claimant as well as the loss of the use occasioned by the accident.

If you retain another company to transport students at any time, you must ensure that the private company maintains Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance that meets the above requirements.

3. What are the applicable laws, rules and regulations I must follow when transporting students?

The applicable laws, rules, and regulations you must follow when transporting students include, but are not limited to, NYS Department of Transportation rules and regulations, NYS Department of Motor Vehicles rules and regulations, and the US Department of Transportation rules and regulations, including, but not limited to Titles 15 and 17 of the NY Code of Rules and Regulations, 49 CFR 571.213 and NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law 1229-c.

Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance in Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC Pre-K Programs

Department of Education & Administration for Children's Services

This statement replaces the prior ACS and DOE Statement on Behavior Management for the 2015-2016 school year. This document introduces an important update to DOE and ACS policy, prohibiting expulsion and suspension across all pre-K settings and EarlyLearn NYC programs.

Official Statement

Position

The NYC Department of Education (DOE) and Administration for Children's Services (ACS) are committed to ensuring all Pre-K for All programs prepare children and families with the skills and knowledge needed to enter Kindergarten prepared to succeed. With Pre-K for All, children will gain a strong foundation in all domains of development and families will be prepared to support their child's learning and growth.

Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC programs are responsible for structuring an environment and approaching interactions in ways that build positive relationships with children and families. In our pre-K programs, children and families should feel secure, supported, and recognized as important members of a program's community. A child engaged in active learning who feels secure, supported, and valued, is more likely to demonstrate respectful and constructive behaviors and engage in positive interactions. Children's behavior should be guided in a positive way as part of the developmentally appropriate instruction taking place throughout the program.

Children in Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC programs may not be expelled or suspended.

Pre-K for All Programs are expected to implement positive behavior guidance strategies that are grounded in the following practices:

- Teaching staff build nurturing learning environments through the use of developmentally appropriate strategies that advance children's social and emotional development and approaches to learning. For more detail on these domains of development and learning, refer to the [NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core](#) and the [Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework](#).
- Successful positive behavior guidance is built upon strong relationships that are grounded in trust and respect. Programs collaborate with families to ensure the program meets the needs of all learners. Teaching staff and administrators develop strategies to build each child's social, emotional, and behavioral skills based on shared understandings with each family. Establishing regular and ongoing two-way communication with families will create strong relationships that allow for effective collaborations.

Overview of Guidance and Support for Pre-K Programs

The following pages outline additional guidance on positive behavior guidance strategies to support programs in meeting the expectations described above. Behavior guidance approaches, strategies, policies and procedures implemented in programs must align to this guidance. Our guidance currently includes sections on:

1. [Proactive Measures](#)
2. [Positive Reinforcement](#)
3. [Responsive Strategies](#)

In situations where programs need more support to interpret or implement positive behavior guidance strategies, programs should contact DOE or ACS.

- Pre-K for All programs (including district schools, NYC Early Education Centers, EarlyLearn NYC providers, and DOE Pre-K Centers) with questions should contact the DOE Early Childhood Social Worker Team by emailing prekfamilyengagement@schools.nyc.gov.
- EarlyLearn NYC providers should utilize their partnerships with mental health consultants who can provide observation, guidance, and support to teachers in developing a plan to meet a child’s individualized social and emotional needs.
 - For questions about children in the birth–3 age range, please contact Teija Sudol at teija.sudol@acs.nyc.gov or 212-393-5029.

Positive Behavior Guidance Strategies

1. Proactive Measures to Promote Positive Behavior

Children enter early childhood programs at varying developmental levels. There is a wide range in the behaviors and skills that are considered “typical” for children in this age group. Each child is unique and requires individualization that may be based on personality, ability, etc. These important considerations must be taken into account as programs advance children’s learning and development across all domains. To support each child’s growth in social-emotional and other skills that affect children’s ability to engage with curriculum and program as a whole, Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC programs are required to develop and implement proactive, developmentally appropriate behavior guidance strategies such as those described below.

- [Respectful, caring relationships](#)
- [Flexible and responsive teaching](#)
- [Physical environment and activities](#)
- [Clear expectations](#)
- [Developmentally appropriate instructional strategies](#)
- [Transitions](#)
- Establish **respectful, caring relationships** among staff, children, and families.
 - Communicate and act on the principle that all children are capable of learning and making developmental progress.
 - Consistently use welcoming and positive language and tone, and ensure adults in the program interact positively with each other as well as with children.
 - Acknowledge children’s emotions and provide comfort and assistance when necessary.
 - Explicitly welcome families into the classroom environment and foster daily two-way communications between families and teaching staff.
 - Deepen knowledge of each child’s skills, interests and needs through implementation of an authentic assessment system and regular conversation with families.
 - Acknowledge and respect children’s rich backgrounds, cultures, and linguistic diversity and tailor your practices appropriately to meet these needs.
- Be **flexible and responsive** to children’s skills, interests and developmental needs when planning the curriculum.
 - The flow of the day/daily schedule should include ample time for child-initiated and teacher-facilitated activities.

- During child-initiated times of the day, empower children to self-select and engage with a variety of classroom centers, learning materials, and companions, encouraging purposeful play.
- Use information gathered from authentic assessments to develop lessons and activities that build on children’s strengths and interests while addressing their needs.
- Support children’s active participation by incorporating children’s ideas into instructional activities and encourage children to talk and share their ideas for learning.
- Encourage children to have freedom of movement by allowing them to choose how and where they sit, stand, or move within small-group and whole-group learning experiences, as long as this does not interfere with other children’s learning or feelings of belonging. Limit the amount of time children are expected to remain sitting during an activity to short periods of about 10-15 minutes at a time.
- If students do not appear to be engaged during periods of whole-group instruction, consider:
 - Including additional whole-group movement.
 - Increasing student participation.
 - Shortening or changing the activity.
 - Reducing the frequency of whole-group activities.
- Arrange and supervise the **physical environment and activities** in ways that promote children’s development of approaches to learning, social and emotional skills, and positive behaviors.
 - Arrange the environment to allow children to utilize shared space collaboratively.
 - Stock classroom centers with diverse materials that are suitable for the range of skills, interests, and abilities of children in the classroom. Ensure there is an appropriate amount of resources and that children can access those resources independently. All children should have opportunities to participate without competing for classroom resources or adult assistance.
 - Ensure that each area of the classroom has sufficient space to allow for the number of children that will utilize the space at a given time.
 - Use visual displays (e.g. Tools of Autonomy) that support children in understanding expectations of their behavior during the day, with others, and with the resources in their environment.
 - Tools of Autonomy are the supports in the classroom that support prekindergarten students to develop independence and self-sufficiency. They include center systems or choice charts (that children use to choose their interest area), flow of the day displays (that establish a predictable sequence of events in pictures and words), interactive attendance charts, and job charts (that support children to take turns with routine jobs with modelling and support from the teacher).
 - Other examples of visual displays include using labels for center and resource organization (to assist children in choosing or returning materials after their use), or pictures that remind children of specific behavior expectations (such as a mouth that can remind children to use soft voices indoors).
 - Establish a cozy area reserved for quiet activity, or a way for children to find space for privacy and relaxation.
 - Offer extra support, attention, and modelling when children are engaging in a new activity and gradually introduce new materials and manage resource access to keep children from being overwhelmed.

- Anticipate problematic behavior by frequently monitoring, or “scanning,” the classroom, and proactively intervene to avoid escalation.
- **Communicate clear expectations** for children that help them develop independence and self-regulation skills, and engage in respectful interactions with peers and adults.
 - At the beginning of the year, encourage children to participate in creating a set of expectations for behavior in the classroom.
 - Use positive language to clearly establish and define the desired behavior (e.g. “We share toys with friends” rather than “Don’t grab toys from other children”).
 - In general, negative language should be avoided when setting or reinforcing behavior expectations. *Very rarely*, using negative language like “no” or “stop” may be appropriate to keep a child safe in an emergency.
 - Explicitly teach children how to use and move through the classroom space/centers, treat their resources and environment with respect, and remind children of classroom expectations frequently, especially at the beginning of the year or before a transition to another activity.
 - Throughout the year, guide children’s peer interactions in a clear and consistent manner, so that children come to understand behavioral expectations, the impact of their choices, and have an opportunity to practice conflict resolution strategies.
- Use **developmentally appropriate instructional strategies** to establish a positive classroom culture, help children make meaningful connections, and feel excited and motivated to engage in meaningful activities as well as with adults and other children.
 - Help children develop self-regulation skills and positive relationships by modelling respectful and caring behaviors.
 - When modelling such behaviors, teaching staff should use self- and parallel talk by narrating or describing their actions and children’s actions:
 - To explain considerate ways of thinking and acting (e.g. “I notice you don’t have a magnifying glass but you look like you want to join the science activity. Would you like some help finding an extra one?”)
 - To explain emotional regulation (e.g. “Hmm, you just took the markers from me and I’m getting upset... I wonder, what should I do now? Should I grab for them or ask you to give them back?”)
 - Use story-telling, literature, puppetry, etc. to engage children in thinking about the impacts of certain behaviors, and to extend children’s empathy and understanding of emotions.
 - Engage children in problem-solving discussion regularly and establish the expectations that children talk with each other to resolve conflicts.
- Plan for successful management of **transitions** at the beginning and end of the day, between activities, into and out of the program, and when starting or ending special education services or specialist activities (when applicable).
 - Give children reminders before major transitions so they have time to finish what they are doing and prepare for the next activity.
 - Make transitions or wait times fun and educational by singing songs, rhyming words or names, or going over the expected behaviors of the next setting. This will keep children engaged in learning and prepared for the next event. Minimize wait times during transitions in order to maximize children’s active engagement throughout all times of day.

- For example, during bathroom routines, rotate small groups of children so that all children can engage in productive learning activities for as much time as possible rather than waiting in line.

2. Positive Reinforcement to Promote Positive Behavior

Positive reinforcement acknowledges and motivates further positive behavior. It is important to let children know that they are making progress toward a desirable new skill to encourage their effort. Positive reinforcement can be done in many ways, and may need to be tailored for individual children. Children demonstrating new and more complicated behaviors may need additional reinforcements.

Examples of developmentally appropriate ways to reinforce positive behaviors include:

- Using **social reinforcements** such as praise, smiles, encouragement, or even a well-timed high-five or a thumbs up.
 - Praise should be specific and provide meaningful feedback, especially when the behavior is relatively new to the child (e.g. “You were very thoughtful to share the toys with your friend. He seems really happy that you included him in the game”). Avoid more general feedback (e.g. “good job”).
 - A high-five or thumbs up are appropriate non-verbal reinforcements for behaviors that are clearly encouraged (e.g. the child has been working on sharing and you notice them share their toys from across the room. You catch their eye and give them a thumbs up immediately following the positive behavior).
- Using **activity reinforcements** as a reward for desired positive behaviors, such as being able to choose a song or activity for the group or during center time.
 - There should already be room in the curriculum for following children’s interests or ideas for learning. These reinforcements are therefore a logical way to incorporate positive reinforcement into the program.

3. Responsive Strategies to Promote Positive Behavior

Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC programs are required to develop and implement strategies for responding to behavior that is disruptive to other children or unsafe for the child and/or others. This does not apply to behaviors of intentional risk-taking appropriate for learning new physical skills, such as walking on a balance beam or climbing a rope ladder during gross-motor activities, with adult support and supervision. Teaching staff should collaborate with a child’s family to help the child develop solutions to demonstrate positive behavior or practice appropriate alternative behaviors, consistently and in various contexts. Programs should communicate with families throughout the process of positive behavior guidance to exchange information about strategies and progress. All strategies for guiding children to appropriate behaviors should be implemented in a calm, consistent, and non-punitive way to support children’s social and emotional development and approaches to learning.

- Understand contributing factors
- Offering choices
- Redirecting or providing acceptable substitutes
- Supporting the child’s sense of security, self-regulation and self-soothing skills
- Limiting negative attention
- Logical consequences
- Replacement/alternative behaviors
- Modifications to program structures
- Additional support

- Program staff members should **work together with families and others to better understand the factors contributing to a child’s behavior**. Ask the question: “What is this child trying to communicate when they demonstrate this behavior?” Factors contributing to a child’s behavior may include:
 - Programmatic structures or conditions such as the flow of the day/daily schedule, arrangement of the classroom, noise level, etc.
 - The child’s feeling of security within the classroom or the condition of their relationships with adults or peers.
 - The child’s unique circumstances. For example:
 - The child has not yet learned appropriate behaviors for social interactions and may be grabbing toys instead of asking or hitting when upset.
 - The child is going through a transition at home and experiencing emotional distress as a result (e.g. a new baby in the family) or has experienced trauma.
 - By consistently observing and documenting children’s behavior, teaching staff may identify the situations that trigger disruptive or unsafe behaviors and help determine the factors that contribute to such behavior.
 - A cycle of *observation* (collect and annotate evidence), *planning* (analyze the evidence and use it to inform your practice), *implementation* (make planned changes to your practice or program), *reflection* (observe the effect), and *adjustment* (make improvements if needed) should be used in any response plan for behavior guidance.
 - Cycles of assessment and planning are already in use within programs through the implementation of authentic assessment systems, and can be leveraged to plan for positive behavior guidance.

Depending on the contributing factors, some strategies to respond to unsafe or disruptive behaviors include:

- **Offering choices** to allow children control over their own behavior, such as choosing which toys to put away or where to sit at the lunch table.
- **Redirecting or providing acceptable substitutes** to help children identify options for their behavior, such as when a teacher may notice there are too many people at an activity table and suggest a child engage with a different activity while they wait for a turn.
- **Supporting the child’s sense of security and development of self-regulation or self-soothing skills.**
 - Staff may collaborate with the child and family to strengthen the child’s relationships with children and adults in the program.
 - The child may be encouraged to bring a “security object” (e.g. blanket, teddy bear) to help feel more comfortable in the classroom.
 - The child may be encouraged to utilize the quiet space or create a space for privacy in the classroom where children can calm down from feelings of anger or frustration.
 - The child can be encouraged to practice breathing techniques, getting a drink of water, or other strategies that assist in processing strong emotions or related negative physiological responses.
 - The child may be encouraged to self-soothe using sensory materials or objects, such as sand or water play, or any other activity calming to the child’s senses.
- **Limiting the amount of negative attention given to children** by ignoring non-disruptive inappropriate behavior and focusing on the positive.

- Staff may choose to ignore non-disruptive behavior and continue to focus children on another learning activity. Positive behaviors should be reinforced with positive attention.
- A strategy of actively ignoring a child’s behavior should not be utilized in isolation or to the extent where it becomes a detriment to a child’s well-being. This strategy does not replace the expectation that teachers and program staff actively engage all children in the curriculum and encourage their participation in the program.
- **Implementing logical consequences**, where a child’s access to an activity or resource is restricted in direct response to an unsafe or disruptive behavior.
 - The severity of the consequence should be appropriate and relevant (e.g. not being able to stay at the water table because they continue to pour water on other children).
 - This strategy may be used along with redirecting or providing acceptable alternatives.
 - This strategy may be used along with encouraging a child to utilize a quiet space for a limited period of time.
- Helping the child develop **appropriate replacement or alternative behaviors**.
 - Staff may use different strategies depending on the program’s philosophy and the unique needs of the child and family. One possible strategy for programs and families is outlined below:
 1. Identify the inappropriate behavior in a non-judgmental, factual way.
 2. Calmly communicate with the child about the impact of the behavior on him/herself and others.
 3. Help the child identify contributing factors and identify an appropriate alternative behavior or way to address the situation.
 4. With the child, develop strategies for demonstrating the appropriate alternative behavior, along with any supports the child may need (for example, a phrase or visual cue that the teacher and student agree on to help remind the student to use the alternative behavior).
 5. Collaborate with the child’s family throughout the process.
 6. Celebrate with the child when he/she makes progress over time.
- Modifying programmatic structures as appropriate.
 - Staff may make **modifications to daily schedules** (such as scheduling center-time to take place earlier in the day) **or the physical environment** (such as moving the quiet and noisy centers further apart in the classroom) to accommodate the needs of children and minimize their frustration throughout the day. This can be an effective support for a group of children or individual children.
 - Programs may not shorten the school day of any child unless the program receives approval from the DOE’s Division of Early Childhood Education and written consent of the child’s parent or guardian. In particular, any proposed changes that would modify a child’s access to the program by temporarily shortening the length of a child’s day must be planned with the support of your program’s assigned Early Childhood Social Worker or Program Specialist, in collaboration with the child’s family. These changes can be implemented only with voluntary written consent of the child’s parent or legal guardian on a form provided by the Social Worker or Program Specialist informing the family of the option of continuing with a full-time program. This written plan must outline the strategies that the program will use to aid the child to return to full access and program participation within a specified timeline (not to exceed three weeks). Programs may only place children on shortened schedules if they follow these procedures and if the child’s parent or legal guardian consents.

Parents' written consent to a shortened schedule must be kept on file and be made available upon request. Programs may not shorten the school day of a child as an alternative to suspension.

- Any changes to programmatic structures must not discriminate against any child or family, where a child or family's right to successfully engage in a full day of high quality pre-K is limited due to any characteristic or perceived characteristic of that child or family.
- After implementing these positive behavior guidance strategies with the support of an assigned Social Worker or Program Specialist, the program and family may need **additional support from an outside agency**.
 - These supports include, but are not limited to, parenting or family support classes, professional learning opportunities for program staff, psychological evaluation or collaboration with the [Committee on Preschool Special Education \(CPSE\)](#).
 - In some cases, the outside agencies may not be able to provide services to the child or family immediately. In these cases, the child may require more direct supervision for a period of time. This will help ensure a safe, nurturing environment for the child and his/her peers.
 - For a child who already has an IEP, contact the child's parent or legal guardian and the [CPSE](#) to discuss scheduling a new IEP meeting to consider whether any changes to the IEP are needed to support the child's development.
 - For a child without an IEP, the behavior can most often be addressed using the positive behavior guidance strategies described above. However, a referral for preschool special education evaluations may be appropriate if a child is not making meaningful progress even with the interventions that the pre-K program has implemented. In these cases, speak with the parent about making a referral to the [CPSE](#) for preschool special education evaluations.

Additional Resources for Programs

1. The [NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core \(PKFCC\)](#) and the [Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework](#) describe outcomes and goals for children within the domains of learning and development. The benchmarks and guiding principles provide the basis for developmentally appropriate expectations for young children's learning and the underlying principles of practice for pre-K programs.
2. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) provides a common language around effective, positive interactions in pre-K classrooms, and is a strong tool to support teachers with guidance on effective interactions that are aligned to this Statement on Positive Behavior Guidance in Pre-K for All and EarlyLearn NYC Programs.
 - For more information about the CLASS tool, including regional trainings that are offered in New York City, please visit Teachstone's website (<http://teachstone.com/services/training/regional-training/new-york-city-regional-trainings/>).
3. An authentic assessment system is a formative collection of qualitative student data (i.e. student observations and work samples) that measures student progress across developmental domains to inform instruction. Authentic assessment systems support teachers to:
 - Strategically collect observational data and student work samples.
 - Analyze that information along a developmental continuum.
 - Consider next steps for planning instruction that is responsive to the needs of individual children and groups of children.

Pre-K for All programs are required to use a developmentally appropriate, valid, and reliable authentic assessment system to monitor developmental progression and plan instruction. The Division of Early Childhood Education provides online subscriptions and resources to assist teachers in authentic assessment work. For more information about the DOE-approved authentic assessment systems, please email preassessment@schools.nyc.gov and/or visit the following links.

- [Work Sampling System \(WSS\)](#)
- [Teaching Strategies GOLD \(TS GOLD\)](#)
- [High Scope Child Observation Record Advantage \(COR Advantage\)](#)

4. The following websites have useful resources that Pre-K and EarlyLearn NYC programs can use to understand and support children’s social, emotional and behavioral development:

- [Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning](#)
- [Technical Assistance Center for Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children](#)
 - [Toolkit](#)
 - [Resources](#)
- [Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#)
 - [Teaching Tools for Young Children with Challenging Behaviors](#)
- [Collaborative Problem Solving](#)
 - [Materials](#)
- [Center on the Developing Child](#)
- [Trauma Smart](#)
- [Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative](#)

5. The following books can be used to support social-emotional learning and to understand behavioral expectations:

- *Will I Have a Friend?* by M. Cohen.
- *Llama Llama Misses Mama* by A. Dewdney.
- *Wemberly Worried* by K. Henkes.
- *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn.
- *When I Feel Good about Myself* by Cornelia Maude Spelman (and others in the series).
- *Knuffle Bunny Too: A Case of Mistaken Identity*, by M. Willems.
- *How Do Dinosaurs Go to School?* by Yolen & Teague.
- *Me I Am!* by J. Prelutsky.

Developmental Screenings

Pre-K for All programs must use a valid and reliable developmental screening tool, along with authentic assessment data, to identify students with potential developmental delays and English Language Acquisition support needs.

What You Need to Know

Developmental Screening Tools Overview

Developmental screening is a key part of a student's transition into your Pre-K for All program. At the beginning of the year, you must use developmental screening information in conjunction with authentic assessment data to determine if students in your program may need access to a variety of services throughout the year. The developmental screening process is designed to support you to identify potential developmental delays and English Language Acquisition support needs.

Programs with classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC³⁹ programs should follow EarlyLearn requirements for developmental screenings.

The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) has approved three developmental screening tools:

- Early Screening Inventory- Revised (ESI-R)
- Brigance Inventories System II
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire- Third Edition (ASQ-3)

The DECE provides materials and training for the ESI-R tool; see the DECE's [Developmental Screening website](#) for information.

Key Requirements

- Pre-K for All teachers are required to administer a developmental screening to all students within 45 days calendar days of enrollment.
 - You do not have to administer developmental screenings to students with IEPs or students who were screened with an approved tool in a prior year to pre-K.
 - If a student's screening results indicate that they need to be rescreened for any reason, you are required to rescreen the student within 8-10 weeks.
 - If a student is unable to complete the screening in one of the offered languages (for the ESI-R tool, these languages include Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, and Spanish), see the Screenings Results section below for more information.
- Those administering the developmental screenings should take into consideration the needs and backgrounds of the students that they are serving and ensure that screenings are implemented using culturally, linguistically, and developmentally responsive methods.

³⁹ EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide Pre-K for All services.

Child Screening Timeline

Dates	Requirement
Summer	Order screening materials (through the DECE, if using ESI-R). Teachers complete screening training on WeTeachNYC.org (if using ESI-R).
First Day of School	Send the Introduction to Developmental Screening letter to families. Begin screening enrolled students.
45 Calendar Days from Enrollment	All students must be screened within 45 calendar days of enrollment.
21 Calendar Days from Screening	Screening outcomes are to be submitted via PreKIDS within 21 days of each student's screening.
Between 8 – 10 weeks from Screening (56 and 70 Calendar Days)	All students who were screened with an outcome indicating a need for rescreening must be rescreened in this two-week period.
After December 1st	All students enrolled after December 1st must be screened within 15 calendar days of enrollment. Screening outcomes for these students must be submitted within 21 calendar days of screening. If applicable, rescreening for these students must occur 8 to 10 weeks from the initial screening.

Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-R)

ESI-R Examiner Qualifications

You program's Education Director has the responsibility to ensure that staff administering the developmental screening meet the following minimum requirements:

- Must have understanding of basic principles of standardized tests, including:
 - Knowledge of methods to ensure objectivity in administration of the tool
 - Importance of following standard procedures for administration and scoring
- Must be an Education Director, Lead Teacher, Paraprofessional, or other staff member experienced in Early Childhood Education, with an understanding of early childhood behavior and development.
- Must complete training to include observation of an examiner administering the tool (through online or in person training).
- Must be fluent and proficient in the language(s) used to administer the developmental screening tool (including Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English or Spanish if using the ESI-R).

Self-paced training for ESI-R is available at WeTeachNYC.org. If you experience technical trouble, such as logging into your account, please email WeTeachNYC@schools.nyc.gov or call 212-374-6646 for immediate support.

ESI-R Materials

The DECE provides ESI-R materials by request. In order to process your request for ESI-R materials, please complete the [web-based survey](#).

If your program received a kit in a prior school year, it must be reused.

ESI-R kits include:

- An Examiner's Manual
 - Four shape and six picture cards
 - 10 blocks
 - A button
 - A rubber ball
 - A toy car
 - Reusable 8-foot measuring tape
 - A tote bag
- Parent Questionnaires
- Scoring Sheets

Programs will need to provide the following additional materials:

- Cardboard/manila file folder (to be used as a screen)
- 2 sheets of construction paper, 8 ½" x 11" (building surface)
- Plain white paper, 8 ½" x 11"
- Pencil without an eraser

Please note, materials must be standardized to the above requirements to maintain the validity of the screening.

Screening Results

Submitting Screening Outcomes

- All screening outcomes must be submitted to the DECE through PreKIDS within 21 days of the screening
- For additional guidance about pre-K screening data submission, please refer to the guidance posted on the [DECE Developmental Screening website](#).
- Developmental screening outcomes must also be communicated to families.
 - The method of communication to families is at the discretion of your pre-K program’s Education Director.

Language Exception

- If a student is unable to complete the screening in one of the offered languages (for the ESI-R tool, these languages include Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English and Spanish), the screen should be marked “OK” when entering data into PreKIDS, then add “language exception” into the comments area.
- You must use authentic assessment to monitor ongoing developmental progression and to provide the student with English Language Acquisition support, as well as send the [Language Exception](#) letter to families.

Referrals

- If a student scores below the “Refer” cutoff on the ESI-R, or below the referral cutoff on a comparable developmental screening, the Lead Teacher should continue to monitor ongoing developmental progression through the use of an approved authentic assessment system to inform possible referral to the Committee on Preschool Special Education for information about evaluation services.
- Referral cutoffs are available in the ESI-R manual and are differentiated by age. Methods of referrals are at the discretion of the education director at your program.

Communicating with Families

Prior to Screening

- All families must receive the [Introduction to Developmental Screening](#) letter prior to any screening beginning at your program.
 - Translated letters in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu can be found on the [DECE Developmental Screening website](#).
- [IEP Exemption](#) letters must be sent to families of students with IEPs.
- [Language Exception](#) letters must be sent to families of students who do not speak Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English or Spanish, or who are unable to complete the screening in one of the offered languages (for the ESI-R tool, these languages include Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English and Spanish).

After Screening

- Methods of communicating screening and rescreening results are at the discretion of the Education Director at your program.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *The primary home language of a student attending my program is Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, or Spanish, but no one on my staff meets the qualifications to administer the ESI-R developmental screening in this language. How should I proceed?*

If you do not have a qualified staff member who is fluent and proficient in the student's primary home language, you should mark a language exception for this student in PreKIDS and send the family a language exception letter, as detailed in the sections above. Family members may not be asked to translate for the student.

2. *What is the difference between developmental screening and authentic assessments?*

Developmental screening is (ESI-R, Ages and Stages Questionnaire and Brigance Inventories II) different and separate from authentic assessments (Work Sampling System, Teaching Strategies GOLD, and HighScope COR Advantage).

Developmental screening is a brief process conducted once early in the year to identify potential developmental delays and/or English Language Acquisition needs in conjunction with authentic assessments.

Authentic assessments are conducted throughout the year to monitor a student's progress and aid teachers in individualized instruction.

3. *What is the difference between developmental screening and environmental/programmatic assessments?*

Developmental screening (ESI-R, Ages and Stages Questionnaire and Brigance Inventories II) is different from environmental/programmatic assessments (ECERS-R and CLASS).

Developmental screening is a brief process conducted once early in the year to identify potential developmental delays and/or English Language Acquisition needs in conjunction with authentic assessments.

Environmental/programmatic assessments are designed to measure program quality by assessing various interactions that go on in a classroom, as well as the features that support these interactions, such as space, schedule, materials, etc.

Authentic Assessments

Authentic assessments provide Pre-K for All educators a system to monitor students' developmental progress across all domains of learning, as outlined in the NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC), to inform curriculum development and instruction.

What You Need to Know

Authentic Assessments Overview

An authentic assessment system is a formative collection of qualitative student data (i.e. student observations and work samples) that measures student progress across the learning and development domains of the [PKFCC](#) to inform instruction. Authentic assessment systems support teachers to:

- Strategically collect observational data and student work samples.
- Analyze that information along a developmental continuum.
- Plan instruction that is responsive to the needs of individual students and groups of students.
- Support families to understand their children's learning and development.

Teachers that know where each student is on the developmental continuum are better able to determine targeted goals and effective instructional strategies. Pre-K for All programs are required to use a developmentally appropriate, valid, and reliable authentic assessment system to monitor developmental progression and plan instruction. The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) provides online subscriptions and resources to assist teachers in authentic assessment work.

The DECE and EarlyLearn NYC approved authentic assessment systems include:

- Work Sampling System (WSS)
- Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG)
- High Scope Child Observation Record (COR) Advantage

If your program would like to use an authentic assessment system not on this list, you must get the tool approved in advance in writing by the DECE. These requests should be sent to prekassessment@schools.nyc.gov.

Data Collection and Staff Requirements

Authentic assessment data consists of annotated student observations and work samples. Data must be collected throughout the school year and aggregated at least three times per school year in the form of Developmental Summary Reports.

Authentic assessment data must be used to develop:

- Student Portfolios
 - Collection of annotated observations and work samples that are collected regularly throughout the school year
 - Student portfolio items are entered online and can be stored within the classroom
- Developmental Summary Reports

- Teachers complete these reports by using student portfolio items to rate each student’s progress along a developmental continuum, across the domains of learning
- Completed three times per school year
- Teachers should use the data to individualize practice and set goals that address the needs of each student
- Stored online and transferred to a student’s Kindergarten program

Additional information on the Student Record Transfer process to each student’s Kindergarten program is shared annually in the spring.

The DECE and EarlyLearn NYC⁴⁰ require all Lead Teachers to

- Collect annotated work samples and observations.
- Align student portfolio items to the authentic assessment system domains and indicators.
- Rate developmental progression at Fall, Winter, and Spring Citywide Checkpoints.
- Communicate developmental progression to pre-K program leaders and families.

See *FAQ #1 for more information on how Paraprofessionals can support authentic assessments*. The DECE and EarlyLearn NYC recommend all program leaders to meet regularly with teaching staff to:

- Review student portfolio items and developmental progression.
- Use developmental progression to inform ongoing instruction and support.
- Encourage them to use authentic assessment system reports and student portfolio items to communicate with families during check point periods.

DECE and EarlyLearn NYC Approved Authentic Assessment Systems

Three authentic assessment options have been approved by DECE and EarlyLearn NYC; the DECE will set up your program’s authentic assessment system account prior to the start of the school-year.

Work Sampling System

The Work Sampling System (WSS) is an authentic assessment system that informs educators about their students’ skills, behaviors and academic achievement across seven domains:

1. Personal & Social
2. Language & Literacy
3. Mathematical Thinking
4. Scientific Thinking
5. Social Studies
6. The Arts
7. Physical Development & Health

⁴⁰ EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide Pre-K for All services.

Teachers develop student portfolios by collecting student observations and work samples throughout the year for three Citywide Checkpoint periods: fall, winter, and spring. For more information please see [Work Sampling System/Online](#).

Teaching Strategies GOLD

Teaching Strategies GOLD is an authentic assessment system that tracks students' development across ten domains:

1. Language
2. Literacy
3. Mathematics
4. Social-emotional
5. Physical
6. Cognitive
7. Science & Technology
8. Social Studies
9. The Arts
10. English Language Acquisition

Teachers collect evidence of student learning through student observations and work samples throughout the year for three Citywide Checkpoint periods: fall, winter, and spring. For more information please see [TeachingStrategies GOLD](#).

High Scope Child Observation Record Advantage

The High Scope Child Observation Record Advantage (COR) is an authentic assessment system that tracks students' development across six domains:

1. Language & Literacy
2. Mathematics & Science
3. Initiative
4. Social Relations
5. Creative Representation
6. Movement & Music

Teachers collect evidence of student learning through the collection of student observations and work samples throughout the year for three Citywide Checkpoint periods: fall, winter, and spring. For more information please see [HighScope Child Observation Record/Child Observation Record Advantage](#).

Please note, all approved online authentic assessment systems align to the PKFCC and can be used with any developmentally appropriate pre-K curriculum.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How should Paraprofessionals support authentic assessment?

Lead Teachers are responsible for the authentic assessment work. Paraprofessionals can assist with collecting student work samples and observations as well as with the uploading of most authentic student portfolio items under the direction of the Lead Teacher and through the Lead Teacher account.

2. Can a Lead Teacher choose to change their authentic assessment system?

The program must use a single authentic assessment system across all classes at a site. If a Lead Teacher would like to change their authentic assessment tool, they must receive approval from their education director first. The education director must request and receive approval from DECE. Requests to DECE must come directly from your program's education director and sent via email to prekassessment@schools.nyc.gov. Please note that requests to change the program's authentic assessment system can only be processed at a specified time in between school years.

3. How can I communicate authentic assessments with families?

For a guide on how to introduce authentic assessments to families, please refer to the [Family Guide to Authentic Assessments Letter](#) and the Communication with Families section in the Policy Handbook.

4. Can teaching staff use personal cell phones to take pictures/document student work?

No, teaching staff may not use personal cell phones or other personal devices to document student observations and work samples. Programs should provide appropriate technology for each classroom to support teaching staff to photograph student activities and student work.

Curriculum and Professional Learning

Pre-K for All programs are required to implement a curriculum that supports and advances the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC) guiding principles and learning standards, supporting all students to have rich and varied early learning experiences that prepare them for success in K-12 and beyond.

What You Need to Know

Curriculum Overview

Programs must choose or design a pre-K curriculum that:

1. Advances students' learning and development across all domains of the [PKFCC](#)
2. Supports and advances the guiding principles of the PKFCC and draws on research-based practices about how young children develop and learn.
3. Integrates information about students' learning and developmental progress from one of three authentic assessment systems approved by the Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE), which collects data from low-inference observations and work samples.
4. Supports and advances the Pre-K for All Program Quality Standards and provides:
 - Opportunities for students to engage in active, hands on, purposeful play and exploration through student-initiated and teacher-facilitated activities, particularly during center time.
 - Opportunities for students to engage in individual, small, and whole-group learning through a balance of student- initiated and teacher-facilitated activities.
 - Adjustments to the curriculum based on students' interests, backgrounds, linguistic needs, and ideas for learning.
 - Multiple ways of engaging with the curriculum based on the variety of skills and developmental levels of the students in the class, including modifications for students based on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), as needed.
 - Opportunities for families to contribute to and participate in their student's learning experiences, as well as opportunities for families to extend learning beyond the classroom.

Instructional Tracks and Lanes

The Pre-K for All Instructional Tracks/Lanes all support and advance the PKFCC and build on evidence-based practices as well as innovative and promising work already being done in NYC pre-K classrooms. The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) assigns an Instructional Track/Lane to your program based on interest, need, and capacity. The Instructional Tracks/Lanes and partners for the 2015-2016 school year are:

Pre-K Explore

- Pre-K programs that participate in the NYC Pre-K Explore Track will use the Building Blocks math curriculum with Interdisciplinary Units of Study created by the DECE in collaboration with outside experts.
- Bank Street College, along with the developers of the Building Blocks curriculum, will foster teachers' understanding and implementation of Building Blocks, a cutting-edge math curriculum designed to teach concept development and problem solving.

Lane A: Advancing Social and Emotional Development

- Through a partnership with Bank Street College, teachers will learn how to better support pre-K students in developing the social-emotional skills needed to form positive relationships and adapt to change.

Lane B: Using Data to Inform Instruction

- The City University of New York (CUNY) will work with teachers to help them identify and meet the needs of each individual student by using authentic assessment and other data points.

Lane C: Supporting Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Learners

- Through a partnership with Fordham University, teachers will develop classroom strategies to support students and families from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

If your program does not participate in the DECE's Pre-K Explore Instructional Track in the 2015-2016 school year, the DECE will determine the extent to which your curriculum meets the expectations above. This analysis of your curriculum will inform next steps for the 2016-2017 school year. The DECE reserves the right to require your program to implement certain curriculum and activities, including professional learning activities, if the DECE determines that your program needs such curriculum or activities to meet the expectations for curriculum outlined above.

Please see FAQ #2 for additional information on using the DECE Units of Study if your program does not participate in Pre-K Explore.

Ongoing Professional Learning Opportunities

The DECE will offer small group differentiated learning experiences for teachers and leaders aligned to the 2015-2016 Instructional Tracks/Lanes at the Citywide Professional Learning sessions. These sessions will build on the professional learning that took place at the 2015 Pre-K for All Summer Institute.

Leader Sessions (Education Directors):

- Wednesday, October 21
- Wednesday, November 18
- Wednesday, January 20

Teacher Sessions (Lead Teachers & Paraprofessionals):

- Tuesday, November 3 (Election Day)
- Thursday, December 3
- Thursday, January 28
- Thursday, June 9 (Anniversary Day)

Pre-K educators will receive ongoing training and support from both New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) and university partners throughout the year. Programs will be visited by a:

- Coach specific to their Track/Lane and/or
- NYCDOE Instructional Coordinator and/or
- NYCDOE Social Worker

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can a program change the Instructional Track/Lane they use?

A program interested in changing their Track/Lane should express interest in the 2016-2017 survey, to be distributed by late spring of 2016.

2. Can a program use the DECE Units of Study if not a part of Pre-K Explore?

Yes, there is a version of the DECE Units of Study available for programs not participating in Pre-K Explore. Visit the [DECE Pre-K Units of Study](#) to access this resource. If you have further questions, please email prekinstruction@schools.nyc.gov.

Daily Program Schedule

Daily program schedules must include a variety of both student- initiated and teacher-facilitated activities that advance student learning and development across all domains of the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core (PKFCC).

What You Need to Know

Overview

During Pre-K for All program hours, you must offer activities which are appropriate to the age-level and individual needs of students. Activities provided should support the development of skills and knowledge described in the [PKFCC](#) standards and adhere to the PKFCC Guiding Principles.

Students learn best when they have the opportunity to work independently and in a variety of group settings facilitated by teachers. Your daily schedule must provide students with opportunities for individual, small, and whole group learning through a balance of student and adult-initiated activities.

Classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC must follow ACS daily schedule requirements.

Daily Schedule Requirements

While the DECE does not mandate that your program follows a specific schedule, your program must offer each of the required daily activities.

- Your program’s written daily schedule must be displayed prominently in the classroom at student eye level, using both words and pictures to describe activities.

You must include the following activities in your daily schedule:

Activity	Requirements	Recommended Length (Including transitions)
Snack and Meal Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide at least lunch and a snack or breakfast during pre-K for All hours.• You must provide one of the following meal patterns:<ul style="list-style-type: none">— Lunch and a snack— Lunch and breakfast• To facilitate learning, meals should be served family-style and provided in an environment conducive to interaction between staff and children.<ul style="list-style-type: none">— Provision of snacks can be integrated into center time if family style breakfast/lunch is provided.— Provision of breakfast can be done via buffet style if family style lunch is provided.• For more information on snack and meal time (e.g. sanitary practices) see the Meal Services section of the Policy Handbook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approximately 30 minutes for meals and 20 minutes for snacks (unless snack/breakfast is integrated into other activities)

<p>Nap and Rest Time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an environment conducive for students to nap and rest. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Quiet activities must be provided for students who do not nap. • Length of nap and rest time can be adjusted throughout the year depending on students' needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 30-40 minutes allowing for individual differences
<p>Gross Motor Time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If outdoor space is available, weather permitting, provide students with time to be outdoors where they are able to move around freely and select gross motor activities such as: running, jumping, climbing, throwing, catching, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — If no outdoor space is available and in cases of inclement weather, provide students with adequate indoor space for freedom of movement, where they run, jump, or move in ways that are necessary for students' appropriate physical learning and development, purposeful play, and self-expression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 60 minutes per day • Two 30 minute periods can be provided
<p>Center Time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with the opportunity to self-select a variety of activities, materials, and companions, while supported by teachers who facilitate their learning within the centers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Materials in centers should be offered for the range of skills, interests, and abilities of students in the classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 2 hours and 20 minutes required per day • <i>Reminder: This is inclusive of transition time</i> • Two 1 hour and 10 minute periods recommended
<p>Meeting/ Circle Time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with group activities where they can engage in active learning opportunities by participating in conversation and exchanging ideas. • Meeting/Circle Time can include, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Time to talk about the day's activities and choices for Center Time — Read Alouds — Music and Movement activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 activities per day lasting a maximum of 15 minutes each

Sample Schedules

The following sample schedules are based on 6 hour and 20 minute days. They are recommendations and are not intended to be mandated schedules. All activities in your daily schedules must support students in developing skills and knowledge described in the PKFCC standards and adhere to the PKFCC Guiding Principles.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE #1

Time	Activity
20 minutes	Arrivals, Greetings, Family Style Instructional Breakfast or Breakfast Buffet
20 minutes	Music & Movement
15 minutes	Class Meeting
1 hour/10 minutes	Center Time (includes 5 minutes for clean-up)
35 minutes	Outdoor Play
30 minutes	Family Style Instructional Lunch
15 minutes	Read Aloud
40 minutes	Rest Period
15 minutes	Class Meeting #2 (related to Read Aloud, etc.)
1 hour/10 minutes	Center Time #2 (includes 5 minutes for clean-up)
35 minutes	Outdoor Play
15 minutes	Debrief meeting/prepare for dismissal

SAMPLE SCHEDULE #2

Time	Activity
15 minutes	Arrivals, Greetings
15 minutes	Music & Movement
1 hour/10 minutes	Center Time (includes 5 minutes for clean-up)
15 minutes	Class Meeting
35 minutes	Outdoor Play
30 minutes	Family Style Instructional Lunch
45 minutes	Rest Period
15 minutes	Class Meeting #2 (related to Read Aloud, etc.)
1 hour/10 minutes	Center Time #2 with buffet style snack (includes 5 minutes for clean-up)
20 minutes	Read Aloud
35 minutes	Outdoor Play
15 minutes	Debrief meeting/prepare for dismissal

Center Time Activities

During Center Time students should have daily opportunities to experience different content areas.

For additional information on instructional materials that must be provided during these activities please view the Policy Handbook Section on Classroom Furniture and Instructional Materials.

Content Area	Examples of Recommended Activities
Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Painting/drawing• Using three dimensional materials• Making collages• Modeling with clay/Play Dough
Music and Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experimenting with instruments• Dancing• Exercising to music (e.g. yoga, zumba)• Acting out the content of songs
Nature, Science & Discovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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
Math and Manipulatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.)
Block Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building structures related to the current unit• Encouraging students to build structures that reflect their neighborhood• Talking with students about the spaces they created

Content Area	Examples of Recommended Activities
Computer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using recommended literacy and/or math games on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Computers — Tablets — iPads — Smartboards • <i>See below for time limits on the use of technology tools</i>
Sand and Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digging and pouring • Conducting sink and float experiments • Having students observe how many teaspoons of sand or water are needed to fill various measuring cups • Encouraging students to make patterns in the sand
Literacy Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizing the library with books for children to read or read aloud • Listening to books and music • Making books from student work <p><i>Literacy Centers are inclusive of library and listening centers, which may be separate or combined depending on classroom size and set up. Writing activities should be integrated within centers.</i></p>
Relaxation and Comfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a cozy corner for a student's private time • Lounging on soft toys or furnishings • Reading on bean bags • Conducting quiet activities in a comfortable space
Dramatic Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretending with child-size kitchens • Dressing up with costumes • Playing with a pretend register and/or store supplies <p><i>Students can transform the dramatic play area to align to current units of study (e.g. dramatic play area can be designed to become a vehicle, grocery store, garden, spaceship, castle, hospital etc.)</i></p>

Transitions

Transitions occur when students switch from one activity period to another.

- You must ensure that your staff handles transitions between Pre-K for All activities in a developmentally appropriate way. Suggestions include:
 - Reviewing norms and routines prior to each transition.
 - Using instructional supports during transitions such as visual schedules, songs, or other strategies to actively involve students.
 - Scheduling transitions so that only a few children transition at a time.
 - Ensuring wait times during the transition are less than 1-2 minutes and that students remain consistently engaged.

Use of Technology Tools

Student use of technology tools should be limited to no more than 15 minutes per day and no more than 30 minutes per week.

Technology tools consist of a broad range of digital devices such as computers, tablets, interactive whiteboards, mobile devices, e-book readers, and televisions.

A student with a disability who's Individual Education Program (IEP) requires assistive computer technology is exempt from this policy.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do I have to inform families of my daily schedule?

Yes, you must publicize your daily schedule with times in any program description made during the application and enrollment period so that families may make informed choices during enrollment.

In addition, the daily schedule must be shared with families during family orientation and should be prominently posted in the classroom for reference.

Nap and Rest

Regularly scheduled nap and rest time is important to ensure students are able to relax, rest, and replenish their energy.

What You Need to Know

Overview

Mid-day nap/rest time plays a crucial role in enhancing the memory, alertness as well as the cognitive and physical development of pre-K students. Your Pre-K for All program must have a regularly scheduled nap or rest time during which you must provide an environment conducive for students to nap/rest. Quiet activities must be provided for students who do not wish to rest or nap.

Scheduling of Nap and Rest Time

Your daily schedule must include time for students to nap/rest. It is recommended that nap/rest be scheduled (with some flexibility and discretion):

- At a consistent time each day
- At a time that meets the needs of students in the class (i.e. at a time when most students are tired enough to want to rest)
- To allow for students to rest/nap for 30-40 minutes (inclusive of transition time)⁴¹
 - The length of nap/rest time may vary depending on the changing needs of students over the course of the school year and the length of the pre-K program day.
 - If most students do not nap and are not tired during your pre-K program day, a shorter rest period or supervised accommodation in a designated space for quiet activities may be appropriate.
- Alternatively, if most students are not ready to wake up at the end of nap time, this period may need be extended up to 1 hour. Pre-K programs with longer nap/rest periods should periodically consider whether it would be appropriate to decrease the length of this time.

Equipment and Furnishings

During nap/rest time, children must be offered the following items to allow them to relax comfortably:

- A firm sanitary cot or mat
 - A separate cot or mat must be provided for the exclusive use of each student.
 - Cots and mats must be cleaned and sanitized as needed.
 - During nap/rest time, this sleep equipment must be placed at least two feet apart, unless divided by a solid barrier.

⁴¹ Classrooms funded through EarlyLearn NYC who operate for more than 8 hours per day may schedule a longer rest period as necessary to accommodate students' needs. EarlyLearn NYC- Child Care and Head Start programs operating under contract with ACS EarlyLearn NYC to provide Pre-K for All services.

- A clean sheet and blanket
 - You are required to provide clean sheets for every student enrolled.
 - Families may provide their own sheets should they choose to.
 - You may request that families provide blankets.
- All sheets and blankets must be:
 - Provided for each student’s exclusive use and labeled with the student’s name.
 - Stored separately to minimize spread of illness.
 - Washed (either at home or at school) at least weekly.
 - Pre-K programs should be mindful of student allergies to detergent.
- If there are students in the class who do not rest or nap, a designated space with sufficient lighting to enable reading or other quiet activities should be provided.

When not in use, all nap/rest equipment, furnishings and materials must be stored separately and in a sanitary manner to minimize the spread of illness. Storage accommodations must be arranged to ensure that students’ personal items and bedding are not touching each other, and that sleeping surfaces (i.e. the side of a mat that a child sleeps on) do not touch the floor.

Staffing

- Pre-K for All staff to student ratios must be adhered to at all times during Pre-K for All hours, including nap/rest time.
- During nap time, family engagement staff members may count toward fulfilling required ratios.
 - For a class of 18 students or less, two instructional or family engagement staff members must supervise students during naptime.
 - For a class of 19 or 20 students, three instructional or family engagement staff members must supervise students during naptime.
- At least one staff member with a teaching license from the New York State Education Department (NYSED) for the early childhood grades, must be on-site and on-duty throughout the entire nap/rest time. This staff member does not have to be the Lead Teacher or Paraprofessional.

Instructional or family engagement staff members present during nap and rest time must maintain line of sight supervision of students at all times.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *How can I help students relax during nap/rest time?*

It is important to create a classroom environment that helps students to relax, rest, and replenish their energy. The following provisions can be implemented to help students rest well:

- Help students relax at the beginning of nap time by:
 - Playing soft music or singing a lullaby at a low volume.
 - Telling or reading a story in a calm, gentle voice.
 - Rubbing a student's back.
- Offer children access to a transitional object from home (e.g. family picture, special blanket, etc.) that they can use during nap/rest time.
- 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.
- Cots/mats are put in the same place every day so students can go to the same spot as part of their routine.
 - The room is quiet, with the exception of soft music at a low volume if you choose to apply that strategy.
 - Any disruptions that come up are handled calmly and gently by staff.
 - Calmly and gently awaken students at the end of nap time.

2. *How can I make accommodations for students that are having trouble dealing with the nap/rest schedule that is appropriate for all others in the group?*

Your nap/rest schedule should be flexible enough to meet the varying needs of individual students.

Your staff should accommodate individual needs by, for example, letting one student go to sleep earlier than others or allowing a student who does not wish to rest participate in an alternate activity. Flexibility can also be provided as your staff gives attention to a particular student for a longer period of time than is needed by others, to help the student relax.

Guidance on Early Risers or Non-Nappers

Early risers and non-nappers are those students who sleep less than others and who are ready to get up and engage in an activity while others sleep. These students should not have to stay quietly on their cots or mats with nothing to do. You should provide ways for these students to be appropriately involved and supervised while others are sleeping.

The following provisions can be taken:

- Students can be encouraged to quietly read books or play quietly with toys on their mats or cots.
- Students can read or play quietly in a separate part of the room that is away from sleeping students.
- Students can go to another room where non-nappers or early risers can participate in interesting activities with necessary supervision.

3. *What are some examples of family engagement staff members in NYCEECs who might supervise children during nap/rest time?*

Family engagement staff members can be anyone who has been cleared to work with students, is familiar with your students/families, and is trained on your Safety Plan/Emergency Procedures. This may include receptionists, paraprofessionals, etc.



