



**Department of
Education**

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The New York City Department of Education
Division of Teaching and Learning
Office of Early Childhood Education

Prekindergarten Instructional Review

Winter 2009

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PREKINDERGARTEN INSTRUCTIONAL REVIEW

To ensure the implementation of a high quality prekindergarten instructional program there will be an Annual Instructional Review conducted by the Prekindergarten Early Childhood Instructional Team in each Borough. This Team will review the prekindergarten programs in the contracted early childhood community-based organization. The review is designed to identify areas of program strengths and areas of need.

To advance the goals of Children's First, the Prekindergarten Instructional Review criterion are based on the critical elements that guide the implementation of effective, developmentally appropriate prekindergarten programs. The referenced documents in this review protocol include:

- Amended State Regulations Part 151-1, November 2007.
- Commissioner's Regulations for the Experimental Prekindergarten Program. 1967, 1997.
- Commissioner's Regulations for the Universal Prekindergarten Program. 1998, 2002.
- New York State Learning Standards. 1998
- The Eight Essential Elements of Effective Early Childhood Education. New York State Regents, 1993.
- Preschool Planning Guide: Building a Foundation for Development of Language and Literacy in the Early Years. The University of the State of New York, the State Education Department. 1998
- SuperStart Prekindergarten Program Guidelines. 2004
- New York City Department of Education's Universal Prekindergarten Contractual Agreement. 1998, 2003, 2004.
- New York City Department of Education's *Prekindergarten Performance Standards*. 2003.

An overview of the Essential Elements of an Effective Early Childhood Program provides the format for the Annual Instructional Review. (*Refer to pages 5 and 6*)

Instructional Review Process

Prior to initiating the review process, the Prekindergarten Instructional Team should discuss the purpose of the review. This Annual Instructional Review has two components as follows:

- **Prekindergarten Classroom Review Checklist.** This section is focused on Curriculum—including Social and Emotional Development; Language and Literacy Development; Mathematical Thinking and Mathematics; Assessment and Environment. One Prekindergarten Classroom Review Checklist is to be completed for *each* prekindergarten class at a site. Please duplicate this section as needed. (*Refer to pages 7 to 11. Please provide a copy of the Prekindergarten Classroom Review Checklist to the Site Director.*)
- **Prekindergarten Program Review Checklist.** This section is focused on Family Involvement, Comprehensive Services, Transition and Continuity, Staff Qualifications and Professional Development, Group Size: Adult-Child Ratio; Leadership/Supervision; Program Administration; Physical Plant and Safety Requirements; and the Safety Plan. One Prekindergarten Program Review Checklist is to be completed for *each* site. Please duplicate this section as needed. (*Refer to pages 12 to 14*).

After the orientation discussion, the Prekindergarten Instructional Team should schedule a *Prekindergarten Instructional Review* “Walk-Through” with either the director or the educational director.

Overall Assessment

At the conclusion of this review process, the Prekindergarten Instructional Team must make an overall assessment of the prekindergarten program. This overall assessment should determine whether or not the identified components of the program are implemented, needs improvement or not implemented. Count the number of checks in each column and complete the chart at the end of the review document.

After the on-site review, the Prekindergarten Instructional Team should meet with the director of the community-based organization, to discuss the outcomes of the review and possible next steps. The content of the review and the outcome of the discussion should be shared with the Contract Administration Officer and the Office of Early Childhood Education. (*Refer to Summary Page*). Likewise, the results of the Fiscal Review should be shared with the Prekindergarten Instructional Team.

In the event that a site has outstanding instructional and/or fiscal concerns, a Corrective Action Plan is required. The Corrective Action Plan must specify the areas that require correction and the date when the action is to be completed. The document must be signed by all participants. Similar to the instructional and fiscal reviews, the Corrective Action Plan and its results are to be shared with all stakeholders. A Corrective Action Plan format is attached.

**PREKINDERGARTEN INSTRUCTIONAL AND FISCAL REVIEW
CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN**

Borough: _____

District: _____

Prekindergarten Site: _____

Instructional Corrective Action Plan

Fiscal Corrective Action Plan

**Instructional Corrective
Action Plan Written By:** _____
Signature/Title and Date

**Fiscal Corrective
Action Plan Written By:** _____
Signature/Title and Date

**Prekindergarten
Borough Director:** _____
Signature/Title and Date

Essential Elements of an Effective Early Childhood Program

CURRICULUM

The integrated prekindergarten curriculum enables children to reach a deeper understanding of a subject when they can make connections across several disciplines. These connections are achieved through the implementation of projects of inquiry or themes. Curriculum content evolves from the observations of children's interests, questions children ask or shared experiences within the natural environment. Prekindergarten learning experiences include a variety of concrete activities presented in meaningful contexts. These experiences are integrated across content areas and are augmented with a variety of multicultural and nonsexist activities and materials that are adapted to meet the special needs of individual children. The curriculum goal is to emphasize the importance of developing the whole child, in all learning domains, including social, emotional, creative expression/aesthetic, physical and cognitive development. The focus of the prekindergarten instructional strategies is targeted to three areas of development: *social-emotional development, language and literacy development and mathematics.*

ASSESSMENT

Assessment occurs within the context of everyday experiences. Beginning with the information and observations shared by family members as the child moves from home to the preschool, assessment continues as teachers and other staff members observe and record behaviors throughout the day. These systematically collected observations inform instructional practices about how to support children's strengths and abilities and provide the foundation for meaningful parent-teacher conferences about a child's progress. A research-based assessment tool with a clear protocol that measures children's progress in social relations, language and literacy, and mathematics must be utilized.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment must be physically safe, socially enhancing, emotionally nurturing and intellectually stimulating. This carefully designed setting promotes self-selection by prekindergarten children from a wide array of age appropriate materials. Both the classroom and the playground invite children to engage in active learning whereby they construct their own knowledge through interaction with adults, other children and materials. The equipment and materials that support this learning are easily adapted to the diverse interests, needs and abilities of the children. Children and adults with special needs have easy access to the indoor and outdoor spaces and the materials.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Family members play a critical role in supporting growth and development of their children. In early childhood programs, families are viewed as partners in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program. The family involvement activities include, but are not limited to, parent meetings, classroom participation, training sessions, parent-teacher conferences, weekly communication with families and informal gatherings. To promote and maintain meaningful family involvement experiences, materials are written in the primary language of the families, and translators are provided for family members who speak languages other than English.

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

Comprehensive services are an integral part of effective early childhood programs. These services are designed to build upon the strengths and alleviate the needs of young children and their families. Comprehensive services include health services, physical examinations and primary prevention, nutrition services, social services and counseling. In addition, comprehensive services are available in the primary language of the families.

TRANSITION AND CONTINUITY

In order for children to move smoothly from home to preschool and through the early elementary grades, there must be similarities in goals, philosophy and expectations of children, families, and staff. Any special needs of children should be provided within the early childhood setting to reduce the fragmentation of services and facilitate inclusion. Furthermore, it is critical that all prekindergarten providers ensure curriculum continuity through the implementation of a strategic plan that promotes articulation between the community-based organizations and the feeder elementary schools and within the respective school communities.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The critical relationship between staff experience, high quality training and the effectiveness of a program is well-documented. Staff, teachers, social workers and administrators must all have in-depth knowledge of child development and how young children learn. Teachers in prekindergarten programs must be certified as teachers for service in the early childhood grades. A bilingual certification extension or license is required when instruction is provided to students who are English language learners. A special education certification and/or license is required where instruction is provided to students who are classified as needing special education services. A social worker must be certified as a social worker.

In addition to the certification requirement, all staff members must have ongoing professional development opportunities to increase their understanding of all children, their diverse social, emotional and academic needs, the New York State Learning Standards and the New York City Department of Education's *Prekindergarten Performance Standards*.

GROUP SIZE: ADULT-CHILD RATIO

To ensure that programming is individualized and appropriate to their age, there should be two adults available for each group of 18 children, with a teacher and a paraprofessional working together. For class sizes of 19 or 20 children, one teacher and two paraprofessionals are required.

LEADERSHIP/SUPERVISION

The leader/supervisor must be able to articulate the philosophy of the program to parents, staff and the community, and serve as a source of support for staff and families by facilitating ongoing opportunities for learning and development. Alongside these responsibilities, the program leadership must continually assess program quality, institute measures of accountability to strengthen the instructional practices and promote curriculum alignment with the feeder schools.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Program administration must be focused on specific requirements related to ongoing communication and dissemination of information, outreach, recruitment and enrollment, establishment of classes, school calendar, and length of day requirements and use of technology and internet access to support program administration.

PHYSICAL PLANT AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

All prekindergarten programs must be in compliance with the Department of Health's Article 47 Health Codes.

SAFETY PLAN

To ensure the safety and security of all students and staff, the New York City Department of Education has established guidelines to be followed by all community-based organizations. These guidelines are based on the Department of Health Code Article 47.25 Health Emergencies and the Administration for Children's Services Division of Child Care/Head Start's Emergency in Child Care Programs. Public schools will follow the Department of Education's Safety Plan guidelines targeted for public schools.

PREKINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM REVIEW CHECKLIST

District: _____ **Site:** _____

Reviewer(s): _____

Teacher(s): _____ **Classroom:** _____

Teacher Assistant(s)/Teacher Aide(s): _____

Please indicate with a check mark the area that best describes the level of implementation.

Essential Elements	Evaluation		
	Not Implemented	Needs Improvement	Implemented
CURRICULUM			
<i>Curriculum Content</i>			
There is evidence of focused planning that is aligned with the New York State Standards.			
The curriculum is integrated across content areas.			
Curriculum reflects diversity and meets the individual needs of all children.			
Curriculum is child-centered and age-appropriate.			
Classroom staff uses an integrated thematic/inquiry-projects approach based on the interests of the children.			
<i>Instructional Strategies</i>			
Instruction is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners.			
Children have the opportunity to learn in a variety of whole/small group and independent settings.			
Classroom staff uses activities that promote concrete experiential learning with an emphasis on process rather than project completion and pattern duplication.			
Instructional practices promote language acquisition and early literacy for all children.			
Play is a primary vehicle for learning in all areas.			
Instructional strategies promote interaction with other children.			
Classroom staff effectively facilitates the children's use of learning centers.			
Children have an opportunity to make choices for learning activities.			
Children are exposed to a variety of materials.			
<i>Assessment</i>			
There is evidence of ongoing observation and assessment to determine student abilities, interests, and growth that benchmark their progress.			
There is evidence that a research-based assessment tool is used to determine children's social-emotional development, language and literacy development and mathematics skills.			
There is evidence that observation results inform the teacher's instruction.			
There is evidence of teacher conferences with children and parents.			
Varied authentic dated samples of standards-based student work are maintained in portfolios.			
There is evidence that the classroom staff uses checklists.			

PREKINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM REVIEW CHECKLIST

Essential Elements	Evaluation		
	Not Implemented	Needs Improvement	Implemented
<i>Language and Literacy Development</i>			
Language development is fostered through meaningful, purposeful conversation that encourages children to use oral language.			
There are many opportunities for small group and whole group discussions on a variety of topics.			
Varied instructional practices help children recognize letter/sound relationships and phonemic awareness in a context that is meaningful.			
Meaningful language experiences are embedded in daily classroom activities.			
There are multiple opportunities for listening, speaking, reading and writing.			
Classroom items are labeled with print and pictures.			
Pictures represent multicultural groups.			
Reading is used to obtain meaning from print and to help children understand print concepts.			
There are opportunities for children to sing or respond to predictable or rhyming books.			
Students have frequent opportunities to read, be read to and interact with quality literature.			
The lending library is established and used on a daily/weekly basis.			
Classroom staff facilitates vocabulary knowledge by explaining, defining, and modeling usage.			
Classroom staff supports meaningful storytelling connections through the use of visuals, pictures and/or props to highlight critical elements of the story.			
Classroom staff frequently uses concrete objects, as well as first hand experiences and/or prior knowledge to build a supportive language environment.			
Classroom staff provides frequent opportunities for children to engage in and independently practice literacy activities.			
Classroom staff provides children with frequent authentic writing opportunities.			
Reading/writing opportunities and related books are available in and support every center.			
Throughout the day, there are small group book readings where information and conversational exchanges are tailored to individuals.			
Through telling stories and other activities, the teacher promotes extended conversations with English language learners.			
Books that celebrate diversity are available in the classroom library.			
<i>Mathematical Thinking and Mathematics</i>			
Mathematics activities, such as counting objects and measuring materials, are integrated throughout the daily classroom routines.			
The teacher provides multiple opportunities for children to use appropriate mathematical language and vocabulary during class discussions and conversations.			
The teacher provides multiple experiences with math related literature.			
The teacher provides appropriate, authentic math generated charts based on the shared experiences of the children.			

PREKINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM REVIEW CHECKLIST

Essential Elements	Evaluation		
	Not Implemented	Needs Improvement	Implemented
<i>Social and Emotional Development</i>			
Instructional practices provide opportunities for children to build a positive self-image and increase their self confidence.			
Classroom staff acknowledges children's special talents and interests.			
Classroom staff describes the children's behaviors in positive terms.			
Classroom staff fosters independence. Children help each other.			
Classroom staff acknowledges children's feelings and provides support.			
Classroom staff helps children use words to describe their feelings and solve problems.			
Children's literature (classroom library collection) is utilized to promote social and emotional development.			
Instructional practices provide opportunities for children to demonstrate initiative, cooperation, curiosity and creativity.			
Children engage in social relationships and develop attachments to peers, to classroom adults and to the larger community.			
ENVIRONMENT			
<i>Room Arrangement</i>			
The room is clean.			
Furnishings, supplies, and materials are clean and in good repair.			
Room arrangement is child-centered and functional.			
The room is divided into clearly defined learning centers.			
Learning centers are well-equipped with an appropriate amount of materials.			
Learning center materials reflect the children's cultural background.			
Age appropriate materials are varied and accessible so that children can use them independently.			
Learning center materials are rotated and reflect the theme that is currently being studied.			
Materials permit divergent as well as individual responses.			
There is an area set aside where an individual child or a small group of children can engage in quiet activity.			
There is a private space for each child's possessions.			
Displays are child-made and reflect individual differences.			
Meaningful, authentic and current work is attractively displayed at the eye level of the children.			
There is space for whole group meeting, preferably in the library area.			
Room has an assortment of rhythm instruments, CD's and tapes that exposes children to a variety of multicultural genres.			
<i>Daily Schedule</i>			
The daily schedule allows for a balance of active and quiet play.			
Daily schedule allows for a balance of individual, whole/small group activities.			
Daily schedule allows for a balance of indoor/outdoor gross motor activities.			
The posted daily schedule for children, represented in pictures and words, is displayed, accessible to children and reviewed daily.			

PREKINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM REVIEW CHECKLIST

Essential Elements	Evaluation		
<i>Instructional Meals</i>	Not Implemented	Needs Improvement	Implemented
Meals are nutritional and are served family style.			
Children are given serving and cleaning responsibilities to foster independence and critical thinking.			
Children and instructional staff participate in conversations during mealtimes.			
Menus are posted and/or distributed to parents.			
Menus are translated in the language of the families as needed.			
<i>Learning Centers:</i>			
Space allocated for the learning centers is adequate.			
A Choice Chart with children's name cards attached is prominently displayed and used daily.			
Appropriate reading and/or writing materials are accessible in all learning centers to promote literacy development.			
<i>Creative Arts</i> area has an array of materials that promotes varied aesthetic experiences.			
Materials and props in the <i>Dramatic Play</i> area are associated with the theme.			
A wide array of materials is available for a variety of dramatic play experiences.			
The dolls accurately represent diversity in features and dress.			
A variety of garments worn by members of diverse cultures is available.			
The <i>Block Building</i> area has an adequate supply of wooden blocks in varied sizes and is organized and labeled.			
There is adequate space for children to maximize the use of materials.			
Wooden block accessories such as signs, vehicles, cars and people are provided to support literacy learning.			
Wooden block accessories are related to the theme as applicable.			
Wooden block accessories are varied and are multiracial, non-sexist and non-stereotypical.			
<i>Literacy Center</i> (Library/listening/Writing/Computer) has age appropriate materials that support children's current interests and reflect the theme.			
A comfortable, quiet, cozy area for children to read books is provided.			
Bookshelves and book bins for storing books are available and set up with covers facing outward.			
Different types of boards (felt, magnetic, white), puppets and story characters with related books are available.			
The literacy area has five to six books per child and multiple copies of the same book.			
The literacy area has a collection of children's books that include non-fiction, poetry, nursery rhymes, fairy tales and folk tales organized by theme, author and/or genre.			

PREKINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM REVIEW CHECKLIST

Essential Elements	Evaluation		
<i>Learning Centers: Cont'd</i>	Not Implemented	Needs Improvement	Implemented
A variety of equipment such as: a record player, head phones, CD player, tape recorder, typewriter and/or computer is available.			
Developmentally appropriate computer software is available.			
Books, records, tapes, and compact disks reflect different cultural groups and languages.			
Pictures and photographs found in books and posters are free of cultural, racial and sexual bias.			
A variety of writing implements such as markers, crayons, pens, pencils, is available.			
Alphabet and number stamps, stencils and representatives are available in the writing/drawing center.			
The <i>Manipulative and Mathematics</i> Center has a variety of manipulative materials and non-standard measuring activities.			
The Manipulative and Mathematics Center promotes engaging mathematical activities to develop children's awareness of concepts such as numbers, patterns, and geometrical shapes.			
The Manipulative and Mathematics Center is arranged to promote partner and group work.			
The Manipulative and Mathematics Center is clearly defined, and accessible to students.			
Students have access to an assortment of theme-related materials for independent inquiry and exploration in the <i>Science and Discovery Area</i> .			
Theme based study promotes opportunities for children to engage in experiments.			
<i>Woodworking</i> area has safe, child sized equipment such as hammers, a saw, glue, nails and an assortment of wood.			
There is evidence that this area is used regularly and specific tasks and activities are provided.			
<i>Sand and Water</i> play area with appropriate equipment is accessible and available for daily use.			
Share additional comments about the areas related to the Prekindergarten Classroom.			

PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM REVIEW CHECKLIST

Essential Elements	Evaluation		
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT	Not Implemented	Needs Improvement	Implemented
Instructional team and the CBO administrators work together to strengthen and increase family involvement activities.			
Procedures are in place to actively involve each child's family.			
Activities are planned to meet the interests, cultural lifestyles and needs of families.			
Activities are scheduled at various times, days and locations to encourage parent participation.			
Written materials are available in the primary language of the families.			
The instructional program and at home activities promote family literacy experiences.			
Translators are provided for family members who speak languages other than English.			
There is ongoing communication (verbal and written) communication with families.			
Describe the support services coordinated for families who are in need of these services.			
TRANSITION AND CONTINUITY			
An Open House is held for families to visit the classrooms and to meet the staff.			
Orientation meetings are held to support transition.			
Transition and continuity materials are written in the primary languages of families.			
Translators are provided for family members who speak languages other than English.			
Describe approaches used to ensure smooth transitions for children, families and staff. See <i>Prekindergarten Performance Standards</i> .			

PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM REVIEW CHECKLIST

Essential Elements	Evaluation		
LEADERSHIP/SUPERVISION	Not Implemented	Needs Improvement	Implemented
The program leader/supervisor articulates the philosophy of the program to parents, staff and community, and serves as a source of support for staff and families by facilitating ongoing opportunities for learning and development.			
The Director is appropriately certified.			
The Director is on site during the UPK hours.			
STAFF QUALIFICATIONS			
Teachers are certified as teachers for service in the early childhood grades.			
Copies of teachers' certifications are on file at the site.			
Teachers who provide instruction to students who are designated as special education have a special education certification and/or license.			
<u><i>Family Assistants</i></u> Family Assistants have a high school diploma.			
<u><i>Staff Evaluations</i></u> Staff members are evaluated annually.			
Copies of evaluations are on file at the site.			
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT			
Professional development activities are aligned with the Children's First initiative, focused on understanding how children grow and develop, the New York State Learning Standards and the New York City Department of Education's <i>Prekindergarten Performance Standards</i> . Program goals and objectives are regularly reviewed and are familiar to teachers, directors and families. Substitutes are provided to support the continuity of instruction for the children.			
Describe how professional development needs are identified as well as the professional development activities.			

PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM REVIEW CHECKLIST

Essential Elements	Evaluation		
GROUP SIZE: ADULT-CHILD RATIO	Not Implemented	Needs Improvement	Implemented
GROUP SIZE: ADULT-CHILD RATIO Classes are staffed to meet the appropriate ratio: 1 teacher and 1 teacher aide to 18 children. 1 teacher and 2 teacher aides to 19 or 20 children.			
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION			
Number of Universal Prekindergarten Program funded children enrolled: _____ • Number of Half-Day classes: _____ • Number of Full-Day classes: _____			
Families are not charged a fee for instructional program.			
Clear disclosure of fee schedules/rates for non-Universal Prekindergarten services is provided for families, staff and the community.			
Program adheres to citywide recruitment and enrollment policies.			
School Calendar/Length of Day Requirements			
Universal Prekindergarten Program operates 180 days per year; at least four (4) of these days are for professional development.			
Universal Prekindergarten sessions are at least 2.5 hours long.			
PHYSICAL PLANT AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS			
Space provides at least 30 square feet per child (excluding cloakrooms, bathrooms, storage).			
Space is clean and regularly maintained.			
Outdoor play area provides at least 75 square feet per child.			
The classroom is located on or near the first floor.			
The bathroom is immediately accessible and barrier free.			
Fire drills are held in accordance with regulations.			
SAFETY PLAN			
In compliance with the contractual agreement a completed Safety Plan, using the New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene with an Addendum from the New York City Department of Education is maintained on file at the site.			
STAFF SECURITY			
Program is in compliance with Security System (PETS).			
Prekindergarten site has received NAEYC accreditation.	Yes		No

Please affix supportive documentation.

Thank you.

Signature of the Reviewer(s): _____ Date

_____ Date

Signature of the Director: _____

PREKINDERGARTEN INSTRUCTIONAL REVIEW RECORD

Region: _____

Site: _____

Mid-Year Review Date: _____

End-of-Year: _____

Rating Scale for Prekindergarten Classroom Review Checklist

PROCESS QUALITY			
CURRICULUM			
	Not Implemented	Needs Improvement	Implemented
Curriculum Content			
Instructional Strategies			
Assessment			
Language and Literacy Development			
Mathematical Thinking and Mathematics			
Social and Emotional Development			
Total			
ENVIRONMENT			
Room Arrangement			
Daily Schedule			
Instructional Meals			
Learning Centers			
Total			
OTHER ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS			
Family Involvement			
Transition & Continuity			
Leadership/Supervision			
Staff Qualifications			
Professional Development			
Total			
STRUCTURAL QUALITY			
Group Size			
Program Administration			
School Calendar			
Physical Plant			
Safety Plan			
Staff Security			
TOTAL			