

## PROGRAM STAFFING AND CLASS COMPOSITION

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

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### What You Need to Know

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#### **CLASS SIZE AND STAFFING RATIO REQUIREMENTS**

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

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

- The maximum class size is 20 children.
- 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 Providers

- The maximum class size is 12.
- One teacher and one paraprofessional are required.
- The maximum class size is inclusive of:
  - Pre-K for All students
  - Non-Pre-K for All children 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 Students

Pre-K students funded directly by the NYCDOE and Pre-K students funded through EarlyLearn NYC are all considered 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 DECE and 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.
  - You must request and receive written permission from the Operations Manager at your designed 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.
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### 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 children's birth years are contiguous. For example, children born in 2011 and 2012 may be in a mixed age class together. However, children born in 2013 should not be in the same class as children born in 2011.
- Mixed age classrooms are required to adhere to:
  - All Pre-K for All staff to child ratio requirements.
  - NYCDOE expectations for a high-quality Pre-K for All program, including meeting the developmental and instructional needs of children of different ages within the same classroom.

### **MEAL AND REST TIME STAFFING REQUIREMENTS**

You must adhere to the required staff to child ratio requirements at all times, including during meal and rest time.

At least one staff member certified in Early Childhood Education must be on-site and on-duty throughout meal and rest times. The regularly assigned lead teacher and paraprofessional are not required to be in the classroom during meal and rest times as long as:

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

During meal and rest times **ONLY**, 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 child ratios apply to field trips.
- No student may be left unsupervised during any phase of a trip--- line of sight supervision must be maintained at all times.
- Children must wear clothing (or another item) that identifies your program name and contact information. (Child Care - Article 47 DOHMH providers only)
  - This item must not include a child's name.

You must submit a Field Trip Authorization Form to your designated DECE Field Office, which provides the field trip staffing plan proposal.

- The exact number of chaperones needed will vary depending on the type of trip and must be approved by your field office.
- You must designate a Trip Coordinator who will accompany students on the field trip and will be responsible for: (Child Care - Article 47 DOHMH providers only)
  - Overall child supervision
  - Accountability procedures
  - Staff oversight

#### **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 DOHMH) Providers

- Your pre-K program must employ an onsite 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.

### **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 (for example, 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.

#### *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 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. 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 their regularly assigned teaching responsibilities on any future days when the Education Director is absent through the end of the school year. In cases where this provision would create an undue hardship, providers 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 are the expectations of staff during meal time?

Staff members who are present are expected to engage in positive interactions with pre-K students at all times.

Meal time is an opportunity for staff members to support children to build on their independence, curiosity, social-emotional development and language skills. To facilitate this learning, meals and snacks should be provided in an environment conducive to interaction between staff and children.

### Staff Expectations at Meal Time

At meal time, staff should:

- Sit with children.
  - Staff who are pleasant and polite act as good role models for social interactions.
  - Children watch, listen, and learn from adult modeling during meal time.
  - If staff enjoy the foods the children are eating, children may show more enthusiasm for varying food types.
  - Staff are better able to promote a positive and safe classroom environment when sitting with children during meal time.
- Interact with children and develop a pleasant social atmosphere.
  - Conversation at meals is a great way to develop strong relationships between staff and children. Meal and snack time conversations allow staff to incorporate learning of many kinds.
- Encourage children to eat independently and serve themselves.
  - Children develop self-help skills as well as fine motor skills when they are encouraged to serve themselves.

*Please contact your Instructional Coordinator for further guidance on how to make the most of meal time for instructional purposes.*

## 3. What should you consider in determining your preferred adult to child ratio for a field trip?

You should consider the following when determining adult-child 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

**4. 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 day and week. The only exception is stated above in the *Meal and Rest Time Staffing Requirements* above, the regularly assigned instructional staff members do not need to be present in the classroom during meal and rest times.