Prekindergarten Eligibility, Documentation and Program Requirements

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION DIVISION
HOWARD MORRISON
Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Define prekindergarten eligibility criteria
- Learn ways to document prekindergarten eligibility
- Describe prekindergarten program requirements
- Learn about prekindergarten tuition-based program options
- Learn about new prekindergarten program updates
- Define the high-quality prekindergarten components
Agenda

- Prekindergarten Eligibility
- Prekindergarten Documentation
- Prekindergarten Program Requirements
- Prekindergarten Tuition-Based Programs
- Prekindergarten Updates
- High-Quality Prekindergarten Programs
Prekindergarten Program Requirements
Are districts required to have a prekindergarten program?

Yes, if a district identifies 15 or more eligible children who are at least four years of age by September 1 of the current school year. A school district may offer prekindergarten classes if the district identifies 15 or more eligible children who are at least three years of age. (TEC 29.153)
Half-Day Prekindergarten

- Teacher Requirements
- Class Size
- Length of Day
- Notification of Prekindergarten Programs
Data Reporting

- Demographic information
- Special program information
- Classroom link on students enrolled in LEA prekindergarten classes, including the number of students who are eligible for classes under Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.153
- The numbers of half-day and full-day prekindergarten classes offered by the LEA and campus
- The sources of funding for the prekindergarten classes
• Class size and ratio of instructional staff to students for each prekindergarten program class offered by the district and campus
• If the district elects to administer an assessment instrument to students enrolled in district and campus prekindergarten program classes, a description and the results of each type of assessment instrument
• Curricula used in the district's prekindergarten program classes
Prekindergarten Eligibility
To be eligible for enrollment in a prekindergarten class, a child must be at least three years of age as of September 1 of the current school year (if a 3-year-old program is available) or four years of age as of September 1 of the current school year (if only a 4-year-old program is available) and meet at least one of the state eligibility requirements.
State Prekindergarten Eligibility Criteria

- is unable to speak and comprehend the English language; or
- is educationally disadvantaged (which means a student eligible to participate in the national free or reduced-price lunch program... guidelines can be found here); or
- is homeless, as defined by 42 U.S.C. Section 1143a, regardless of the residence of the child, of either parent of the child, or of the child's guardian or other person having lawful control of the child; or
is the child of an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority; or

is the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty; or
is or ever has been in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care) following an adversary hearing held as provided by Section 262.201, Family Code; or

is the child of a person eligible for the Star of Texas Award as: a peace officer under Section 3106.002, Government Code; a firefighter under Section 3106.003, Government Code; or an emergency medical first responder under Section 3106.004, Government Code.
Prekindergarten Documentation
Home language survey. The home language survey shall be administered in English and Spanish; for students of other language groups, the home language survey shall be translated into the home language whenever possible. The home language survey shall contain the following questions [19 TAC §89.1215 (b)]:

- "What language is spoken in your home most of the time?"
- "What language does your child (do you) speak most of the time?"

Proof of a qualifying score on an approved oral language proficiency test. The official scores must be documented in the student's records.

Documentation of the LPAC's identification of the student as an English language learner.
Acceptable documentation for earnings (wages and salary) include:
- Current paycheck stub
- Current pay envelope
- Letter from employer stating gross wages paid and how often they are paid
- Unemployment, Worker's Compensation or Disability payment stub

Acceptable documentation for self-employment income include:
- Business or farming documents, such as ledger books and/or self-issued paycheck stub
- Last year's tax return

Acceptable documentation for cash income include:
- A letter from the employer stating wages paid and frequency
Income documentation is not necessary for children who are automatically eligible for NSLP under criteria in federal law 42 United States Code (USC):

- a child who is a member of a household receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, Medicaid Free/Reduced, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- a child who is enrolled as a participant in Head Start or Even Start
- a child who is considered a migrant child
- a child who is considered homeless
- a child who is considered a runaway
- a child who is a foster child
If the student is eligible for prekindergarten because the student is homeless, the student must fit the definition of homeless as defined by 42 U.S.C. Section 11302 or 42 U.S.C. Section 11434(a).

The Texas Homeless Education Office (THEO) offers a variety of services to the state.

THEO: [http://www.utdanacenter.org/theo/](http://www.utdanacenter.org/theo/)

Contact: 1-800-446-3142
Documentation that a district employee verified the student's US Department of Defense (DoD) photo identification for children of active duty service members.

If the student has not been issued such an ID, then documentation must be on file that a district employee verified the military member's DoD photo identification (or other DoD-issued documentation indicating that the person is an active-duty member of the military) and verified documentation showing that the student is a child of the military member.

- Important: Your district should not make a copy of DoD identification.

A statement of service from the installation adjutant general director of human resources for children of active members, mobilized reservists, or members of the Texas National Guard.
Active Duty or Injured While on Active Duty Military

- A copy of the death certificate using the service-appropriate DoD form, or a DoD form that indicates death as the reason for the separation from service, for children of service members who died or were killed.
  - If the DoD form is not available, the family would ask the casualty assistance office of the closest casualty area command (in Texas) to provide a memorandum signed by the casualty office stating that the service member was killed in action or died while serving.

- A copy of Purple Heart orders or citation for children of service members or mobilized reservists or guardsmen who were wounded or injured in combat.
A copy of the line of duty determination documentation for children of service members or mobilized reservists or guardsmen who were injured while serving active duty but were not wounded or injured in combat.

- If this documentation is not available, a copy of an official letter from a commander (at or above the lieutenant colonel or, for the navy, at the commander level) that states that the service member was wounded or injured while on active duty is acceptable.

A copy of a letter from the US Department of Veterans Affairs indicating that the service member is eligible for disability compensation is also acceptable.

- Documentation that a service member is MIA for children of service members who are MIA.
If a student is eligible for prekindergarten because the student is or has ever been in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services following an adversary hearing held as provided by Section 262.201, Family Code, the parent or caregiver of the child will be mailed a verification letter of prekindergarten eligibility. Districts are asked to accept the DFPS letter as proof of eligibility to enroll these children in free prekindergarten. For assistance in obtaining a letter, please contact the DFPS Education Specialist in your area for assistance or for a description of other forms of proof of eligibility.
The Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division honors recipients annually in September. The resolution (certificate) awarded to an individual, serves as proof of eligibility to enroll these children in free prekindergarten if they are age-eligible. A list of past honorees may be viewed on the Criminal Justice Division—Past Honorees webpage.

Honorees may also provide a letter from their local representative as documentation for eligibility. If an individual has a prekindergarten-aged child and has been nominated but not notified as an honoree prior to the current school year, that individual may make a request that the Early Childhood Education Division to determine eligibility based on the nomination submitted for review to the Criminal Justice Division.
Early Childhood Education FAQs

- Prekindergarten Eligibility and Attendance (free for eligible 3- and 4-year-olds)
- Full/Half-Day Prekindergarten Program Questions
- Prekindergarten Tuition Questions
- Prekindergarten Instruction Questions
- School Readiness Integration Questions
- Other Prekindergarten Questions
Resources To Support Eligibility and Documentation

- Student Attendance Accounting Handbook: Section 3 and Section 7
  - SAAH
- Prekindergarten Enrollment Toolkit
  - Outreach
  - Family Education
  - Registration
  - Community Empowerments
  - Example Enrollment Campaign
  - Other Resources
Prekindergarten Program Updates
SAAH, Section 7, Prekindergarten & Section 3, General Attendance

- **2018-2019 Adopted**
  - To receive full one-half Average Daily Attendance (ADA) funding for half-day prekindergarten programs, school districts and open-enrollment charter schools must provide 32,400 instructional minutes along with any applicable waivers.
- **TAA Correspondence Letter,** [https://tea.texas.gov/taa_letters.aspx](https://tea.texas.gov/taa_letters.aspx)
  - Waiver for in-class lunch to count as instructional minutes - Automatic
For School Year (SY) 2018-2019, USDA has approved automatic free meal eligibility for all students attending state-funded prekindergarten programs operated under the administration of the Texas Education Agency Early Childhood Program. To determine eligibility for these students, contracting entities (CEs) will need to:

1. obtain an enrollment list with names of the enrolled students and official signature from the appropriate school district official or
2. verify the student’s enrollment in the state-funded prekindergarten participation if submitted on an application.
This would include:

- non-eligible prekindergarten students enrolled in a public prekindergarten whether locally funded or tuition-based
- three-to-five year-old students receiving PPCD services
- three-to-five year-olds enrolled, not in membership

When LEAs report data on three- and four-year-old prekindergarten students they:

- would not automatically include non-economically disadvantaged students when reporting on State Compensatory Education allocation funding
- would not code non-economically disadvantaged students in PEIMS as economically disadvantaged

TAA Correspondence Letter, [https://tea.texas.gov/taa_letters.aspx](https://tea.texas.gov/taa_letters.aspx)
Prekindergarten Eligibility:

- Direct Certification includes SNAP (includes D-SNAP) and TANF
- Beginning in 2018-2019, Direct Certification adds Medicaid Free and Medicaid Reduced
- TAA Correspondence, [https://tea.texas.gov/taa_letters.aspx](https://tea.texas.gov/taa_letters.aspx)
The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), in cooperation with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA), have a database (TX-UNPS)—Direct Certification/Direct Verification System—that allows Texas Contracting Entities (CEs) to match the nine-digit EDG# to the student in the household.

LEAs should coordinate with their school nutrition contacts to ensure direct certification is applicable. Once direct certification has been verified and documented, a student is eligible for free meals and prekindergarten.

Note: Districts may continue to use the SNAP/TANF group numbers as documentation (no change). Only the Medicaid Free/Reduced needs to be verified in the TX-UNPS system. All of them are direct certifications for NSLP and qualify for prekindergarten.
Prekindergarten Tuition-Based Programs
A district may charge tuition to provide:

- an additional half day of prekindergarten classes to those children who are eligible for free prekindergarten classes; and
- half-day and full-day prekindergarten classes to children who are ineligible for free prekindergarten classes.
If a district charges tuition:

- the tuition may not be higher than is necessary to cover the added costs of providing the additional prekindergarten classes, including any costs associated with data collection and reporting requirements; and
- the district must submit a proposed tuition rate to the commissioner for approval annually. See the Sample Proposed Tuition Rate Letter (PDF 17 KB).
- 2018-2019 Prekindergarten Tuition Rates (PDF 310 KB)
- Prekindergarten and Foreign Student Tuition page
High-Quality Prekindergarten Components
FSP Formula Funding for High-Quality Prekindergarten Programs. Included in amounts appropriated above in Strategy A.1.1, FSP - Equalized Operations, is an estimated $1,580 million in the 2018-19 biennium for formula funding entitlement for pre kindergarten programs. Of this amount, the Commissioner shall ensure that school districts and charter schools receiving these funds shall use not less than 15 percent of their entitlement, an estimated $236 million statewide, to implement prekindergarten consistent with the requirements of a High-Quality Prekindergarten program, as established in Education Code, §§29.167 - 29.171, and consistent with the provisions of Education Code, Chapters 41 and 42.
High-Quality Prekindergarten Components

- Curriculum
- Student progress monitoring
- Teacher qualifications and professional development
- Student to teacher ratio
- Family engagement plan
- Program evaluation
- Data reporting
High-Quality Component: Curriculum

Prekindergarten Curriculum

Alignment

2015 Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines
Student progress monitoring tool should:

- Be listed on the *Commissioner's List of Approved Prekindergarten Assessment Instruments 2017-2021*
  
https://tea.texas.gov/Academics/Early_Childhood_Education/Educator_Resources/

- Measure the 5 primary developmental domains:
  - Emergent literacy - reading
  - Emergent literacy - writing
  - Language and communication
  - Health and wellness
  - Mathematics
# High-Quality Component: Teacher Qualifications and PD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Appropriately certified to teach early childhood</th>
<th>Additional qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option #1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Has a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option #2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Has a Montessori certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option #3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Has taught for at least 8 years in a nationally accredited child care program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Option #4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Has a degree in ECE, Special Education–ECE or a non-ECE degree with 15 units of ECE-specific coursework</td>
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<td>Option #5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Completion of TSR – Comprehensive program</td>
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<td>Option #6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Has completed 150 hours of professional development in ECE-specific topics; 75 of the 150 hours being in a mentoring/coaching relationship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Option #7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Completes 30 hours of ECE-specific professional development annually with 15 of the 30 hours being in a mentoring/coaching relationship until 150 hours are documented</td>
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High-Quality Component: Student to Teacher Ratio

Attempt to maintain an 11 to 1 ratio or better
### Family Engagement Plan:

- Develop, implement and make available

| Facilitate family-to-family support | Establish a network of community resources | Increase family participation in decision-making | Equip families with tools to enhance and extend learning | Develop staff skills in evidence-based practices that support families in meeting their children's learning benchmarks | Evaluate family engagement efforts and use evaluations for continuous improvement |

**High-Quality Component:** Family Engagement Plan
In implementing this high-quality prekindergarten component referenced in Rider 78, LEAs should:

- Select and implement a method of evaluation
- Use student progress monitoring data
- Make results of the program evaluation available to parents

Recommendation: Use the *High-Quality Prekindergarten Program Evaluation* tool
High-Quality Component: Data Reporting

- Enrollment in half-day and/or full-day
- Demographic data
- Sources of funding
- Instructional staff-to-student ratio
- Kindergarten readiness data
- Teacher qualifications
- Family engagement plan
- Student progress monitoring tool and results
- Type of curriculum
- Class size
- Instructional staff-to-student ratio

DATA UPLOAD INTO PEIMS/ECDS
FAQs To Support Rider 78 and High-Quality Programs

- General FAQ
- Calculating 15% FAQ
- General 15% FAQ
- Teacher Qualifications FAQ
- Student Progress Monitoring FAQ
- Family Engagement FAQ
- Monitoring FAQ
Support for Districts and Charters
Upcoming TEA Webinars

- **September 2018**: User of Student Progress Monitoring Data and Reporting for Kindergarten BOY
- **October 2018**: Addressing Challenging Behaviors
- **November 2018**: Serving 3-Year-Olds in Prekindergarten
Support from TEA

Website
- https://tea.texas.gov/earlychildhoodeducation.aspx

FAQ Page
- https://tea.texas.gov/Academics/Early_Childhood_Education/Prekindergarten_FAQs/

Phone/email support
- earlychildhoodeducation@tea.texas.gov
Questions
Take-Aways

- Prekindergarten Eligibility
- Prekindergarten Documentation
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- Prekindergarten Updates
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