



# Prekindergarten Eligibility, Documentation and Program Requirements

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# 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

# Data Reporting

- 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

# Who is eligible for public school prekindergarten?

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

# Prekindergarten Eligibility Criteria

- 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

# Prekindergarten Eligibility Criteria

- 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

# Unable to speak and comprehend the English language

- 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.

# Educationally Disadvantaged (NSLP Eligible)

- 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



# Educationally Disadvantaged (NSLP Eligible)

- 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

# Homeless

- 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/>
- Contact: 1-800-446-3142

# Active Duty or Injured While on Active Duty Military

- 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.

# Active Duty or Injured While on Active Duty Military

- 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.

# Foster Care

- 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.

# Star of Texas

- 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 .

# FAQs To Support Eligibility and Documentation

## 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

# Instructional Minutes - Prekindergarten

## 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

# National School Lunch Program – Update from TX Department of Agriculture

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.

# National School Lunch Program – Update from TEA

## 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)**

# National School Lunch Program – Update from TEA

## 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)

## Documentation:

- 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



# Prekindergarten Tuition

- 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.

# Prekindergarten Tuition

- 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

# Article III, Rider 78

*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



*2015 Texas  
Prekindergarten  
Guidelines*

# High-Quality Component: Student Progress Monitoring (PK)

## 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/](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

Options	Appropriately certified to teach early childhood	Additional qualification
<b>Option #1</b>	Yes	Has a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)
<b>Option #2</b>	Yes	Has a Montessori certification
<b>Option #3</b>	Yes	Has taught for at least 8 years in a nationally accredited child care program
<b>Option #4</b>	Yes	Has a degree in ECE, Special Education–ECE or a non-ECE degree with 15 units of ECE-specific coursework
<b>Option #5</b>	Yes	Completion of TSR – Comprehensive program
<b>Option #6</b>	Yes	Has completed 150 hours of professional development in ECE-specific topics; 75 of the 150 hours being in a mentoring/coaching relationship
<b>Option #7</b>	Yes	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



# High-Quality Component: Student to Teacher Ratio



Attempt to maintain an 11 to 1 ratio or better

# High-Quality Component: Family Engagement Plan

## 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

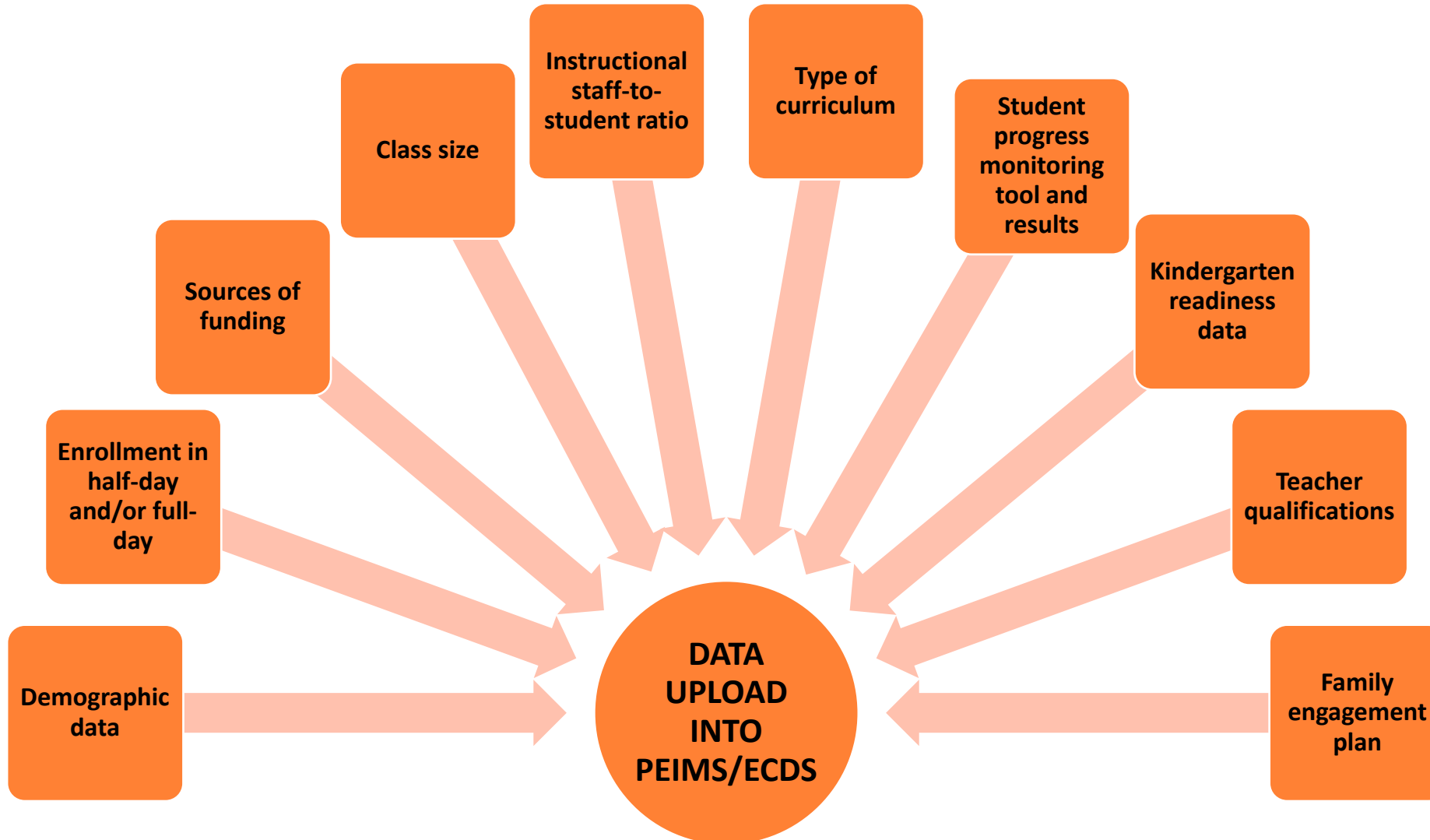
# High-Quality Component: Program Evaluation

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

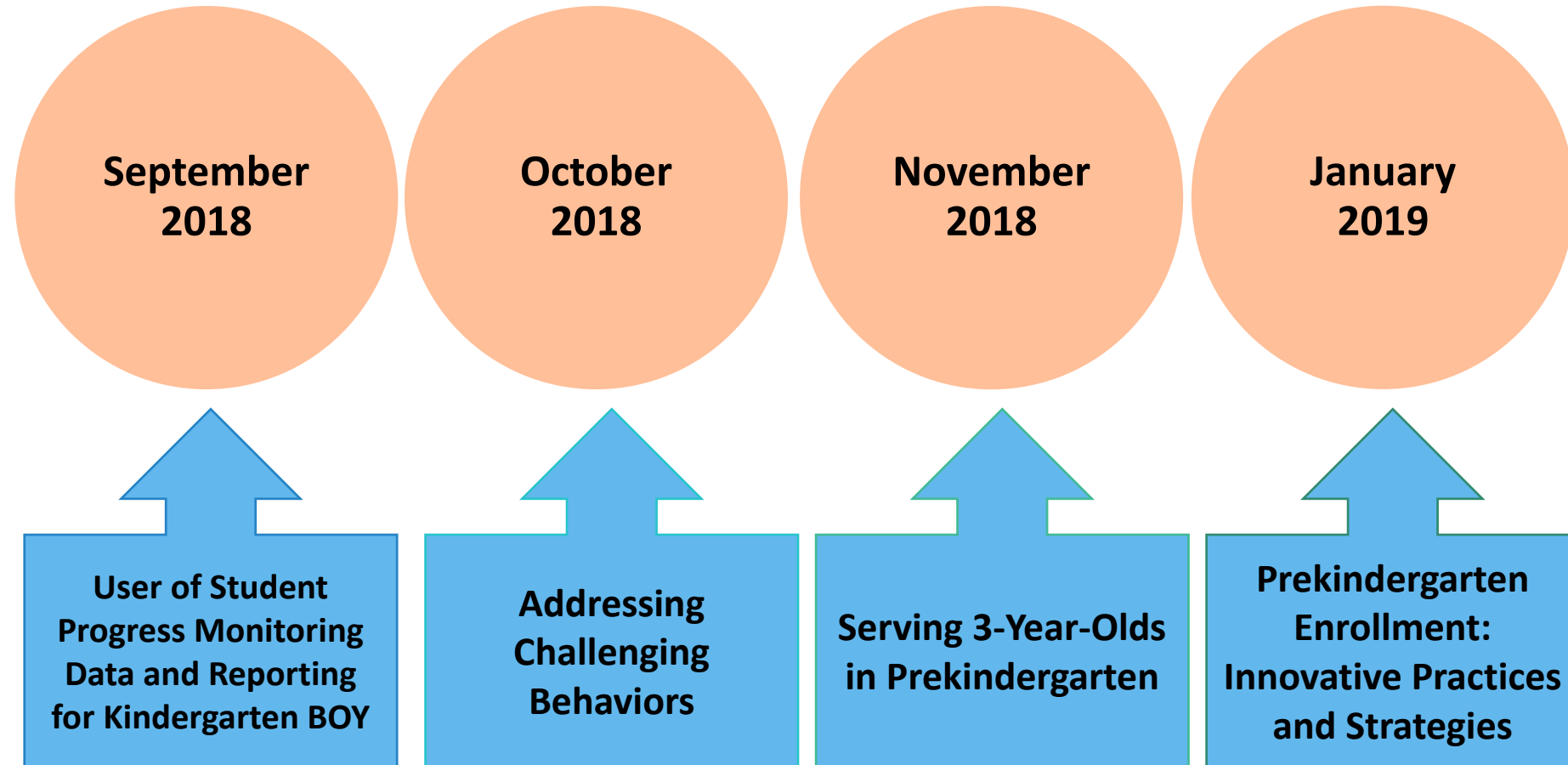


# FAQs To Support Rider 78 and High-Quality Programs

- [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



# Support from TEA

## Website

- <https://tea.texas.gov/earlychildhoodeducation.aspx>

## FAQ Page

- [https://tea.texas.gov/Academics/Early\\_Childhood\\_Education/Prekindergarten\\_FAQs/](https://tea.texas.gov/Academics/Early_Childhood_Education/Prekindergarten_FAQs/)

## Phone/email support

- [earlychildhoodeducation@tea.texas.gov](mailto:earlychildhoodeducation@tea.texas.gov)



# Questions



# Take-Aways

- Prekindergarten Eligibility
- Prekindergarten Documentation
- Prekindergarten Program Requirements
- Prekindergarten Tuition-Based Programs
- Prekindergarten Updates
- High-Quality Prekindergarten Programs



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