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Louisiana Department of
EDUCATION

Ollie S. Tyler | Acting State Superintendent of Education



TITLE

PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Philosophy	1
Eligibility Criteria	1
Curriculum	2
Staff Qualifications	2
Pupil Teacher Ratio	3
Class Size	3
Professional Development	3
Health Requirements	3
Family Involvement	3-4
Monitoring	4
Length of School Day/Year	4-5
Assessment for Guiding Instruction	5-6
Collaboration	6
Transition to Kindergarten	6
Allowable Expenses	6
Unallowable Expenses	7

COMPONENTS OF LOUISIANA PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

Philosophy:

Title I programs will adhere to the developmental philosophy as outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). Inherent in this philosophy is the provision of a child-centered program directed toward the development of cognitive, social, emotional, communication (language and literacy) and motor skills in a manner and at a pace consistent with the needs and capabilities of the individual child.

Learning information in meaningful context is not only essential for children's understanding and development of concepts, but also important for stimulating motivation in children. If learning is relevant for children, they are more likely to persist with a task and be more motivated to learn.

Eligibility Criteria:

In order to qualify for participation in a Title I Prekindergarten program, a child must:

- Be one year younger than the age eligible for Kindergarten or four years of age by September 30 of the year seeking entry;
- Meet the legal requirement for immunization and documentation required for regular school enrollment; and

For a Title I school operating a schoolwide program:

- Reside in the attendance area of a Title I school operating a schoolwide program;
- If more children in a schoolwide program apply than for which space is available, a policy developed by each LEA will be used to prioritize which students are served by the program; or

For a Title I targeted assistance school:

- Be identified as most at-risk for not meeting the State's challenging achievement standards in a Title I targeted assistance school. (With respect to prekindergarten children, this determination must be made on the basis of criteria such as teacher judgment, interviews with parents, and developmentally appropriate measures of child development.)
- The use of family income to determine eligibility for Title I prekindergarten is allowable, especially for the purposes of prioritizing when there are not sufficient Title I resources to serve all prekindergarten age children with other educational needs, but children should not be identified for Title I prekindergarten solely on the basis of family income.
- In addition, children who participated in a Head Start, Even Start, Early Reading First, or Title I preschool program at any time during the two preceding years, homeless children, and children in institutions for neglected or delinquent children are automatically eligible for Title I prekindergarten and to continue in Title I school programs.

Curriculum:

Title I prekindergarten programs shall offer a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate and informal in nature. The curriculum will provide a complete educational program directed toward the whole child and address all areas of development to meet the needs of each individual child.

The prekindergarten curriculum shall be research-based, support interrelated development, and be aligned with the *Louisiana Standards for Programs Serving Four-Year-Old Children*, and supporting the *Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum*, and the *Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs)* in the following domains:

- Cognitive development
 - Mathematical development
 - Science development
 - Social studies development
- Creative Arts Development (art, music, drama)
- Health and Physical Development
- Language and Literacy Development
- Social and Emotional Development

Staff Qualifications:**Teachers:**

Teachers must possess one of the following credentials in order to be employed in a Title I prekindergarten program and to be considered Highly Qualified:

- A valid and current Louisiana teaching certificate in Nursery School Education, Kindergarten, Early Intervention, Non-Categorical Preschool Handicapped, or PreK-3, or
- A valid and current Louisiana teaching certificate in Elementary Education and an Out-of-Field Authorization to Teach (OFAT) in Kindergarten, Nursery School, Early Intervention, Non-Categorical Preschool Handicapped, or PreK-3 which may be held for a maximum of three years while the holder pursues endorsements (add-on) certification requirements, or
- A baccalaureate degree and a Temporary Employment Permit (TEP), a Temporary Authority to Teach (TAT), or an Out-of-State Certificate in Kindergarten, Nursery School, Early Intervention, Non-Categorical Preschool Handicapped, or PreK-3. As of Fall, 2010, teachers with a TAT certification may only be employed as a PreK teacher for one year.

Paraprofessionals:

The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) specifies that teachers shall be highly qualified as defined by the State. Paraprofessionals must be supervised by a Highly Qualified teacher and shall be considered Highly Qualified as determined by the requirements of the Local Education Agency (refer to *Bulletin 746* and to *Serving Preschool Children Under Title I, Non-Regulatory Guidance*).

Pupil Teacher Ratio:

Each class shall maintain a child-to-lead teacher ratio of no more than 20:1 and a child to adult staff member ratio of no more than 10:1.

At no time shall the lead teacher or a paraprofessional be asked to leave the Prekindergarten classroom to assume other duties at the school site.

Class Size:

The maximum number of children enrolled in one Prekindergarten class shall be no more than twenty (20).

Professional Development:

All teachers and paraprofessionals working directly with children enrolled in the Title I Prekindergarten program must be provided with eighteen (18) clock hours of locally approved early childhood related professional development.

Health Requirements:

All children enrolled in a Title I Prekindergarten program must comply with the immunization requirements as established by the Department of Health and Hospitals. All local school systems will administer a vision and hearing screening to each participant within 90 days of participating in the Title I Prekindergarten Program.

LEAs may work with the health department and other health professionals to secure basic dental screening. Any child with identified physical or mental developmental health needs should be referred to the proper source or agency for coordination of and access to appropriate support services.

Family Involvement:

According to NCLB, schools must develop compacts jointly with parents. The compact must describe the school's responsibility for providing a high-quality PreK program in a supportive and effective learning environment. The compact must also describe the ways parents will support their children's learning.

At a minimum the compact must provide for:

- Parent-teacher conferences (at least annually) in which the compact forms the framework for discussion with respect to the individual child;
- Frequent reports to parents on their children's progress; and
- Reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities.

In carrying out the parental involvement requirements, LEAs and charter schools, to the extent practicable, must provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children.

A program orientation for families shall be scheduled for parents/guardians of children entering Prekindergarten not later than 20 days after the program begins or the child enters the program. The purpose of this orientation is to assist parents/guardians in understanding their obligation to ensure regular attendance as described in the compact and developmentally appropriate Prekindergarten curriculum goals.

All parents/guardians of the children enrolled in the school system's Prekindergarten programs should be informed of opportunities for gaining knowledge of child development and parenting. Other available support services such as assistance with enrollment in local adult literacy programs should be provided. All meeting times should be scheduled to accommodate the needs of working parents/guardians.

Monitoring:

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) will be used to measure the quality of the program. The schedule for on-site visits to monitor program quality will be developed by the Department of Education. A class receiving a score of below 5.00 on the *ECERS-R* scale will be monitored on a yearly basis until an average score of 5.00 or above is attained.

The Department of Education staff will make on-site visits on a yearly basis for the purpose of program monitoring to ensure compliance with Title I Prekindergarten Program eligibility requirements, as well as adherence to all State and Federal guidelines.

Length of School Day/Year:

Full day programs are recommended to provide participating children the most opportunity for success. If the LEA wishes to operate a half-day program or a less than five-day week program, justification for such should be included in the Consolidated Application for Federal Programs.

The minimum instructional day for a full-day Prekindergarten program shall be 360 minutes exclusive of recess, lunch, and planning periods. Instructional days will be based upon the school calendar of each LEA with a minimum of 177 days of instruction.

The time requirements listed below shall be flexibly scheduled to meet the developmental needs of the individual child.

Minimum Time Requirements for Prekindergarten according to *Bulletin 741*:

Teacher-directed activities **25% - 35%**

- Whole group activities (no longer than 15-20 minutes at a time)
- Small group activities
- Outdoor planned activities

Child-initiated activities **35% - 45%**

- Learning centers
- Outdoor free play

Snack, restroom **10%**

Nap **20%**

The recommended rest period is at least one hour or not more than 20% of the day except to address the specific needs of individual children.

Assessment for Guiding Instruction:

Any assessment instruments used shall be valid, reliable, culturally sensitive and individually administered by trained personnel. Programs are responsible for conducting pre- and post-test assessments using the state-approved instrument for the purpose of program evaluation and research. Additionally, programs must collect and submit demographic information on each child, along with test data, electronically via the state-approved vendor.

It is recommended that information from such assessments be used to plan/modify program activities and address the specific needs of individual children.

Note: *Use of pass/fail criteria, report cards, or letter grades are inappropriate practices.*

To help determine the needs of the individual students when planning for instruction, classroom teachers are required to maintain a portfolio on each student. Each child's portfolio should contain, but is not limited to the following:

- Work samples, including items such as photos or tapes of child-created products (e.g., block creations, sculptures, dramatizations, child interviews) actual (or copies of) developmental writing samples, or other items to document child development;
- Anecdotal records, including informal notes on the child's problem solving and critical thinking behaviors related to classroom, social, and academic interactions;
- Checklists and inventories for recording observations of child behaviors and skills such as the *Creative Curriculum Developmental Checklist*, *High/Scope Child Observation Record (COR)*, and *Work Sampling Systems (WSS)*;
- Parent conference notes, including information on the child provided by the parent;
- Health screening reports; and
- Referral records for support services.

Portfolios must be kept up-to-date in the classroom and available for review by the child's parent/guardian and appropriate LEA and State Department personnel.

Collaboration:

The Title I Prekindergarten coordinator will collaborate with coordinators of other LEA Prekindergarten programs as well as other providers of early childhood care and education in an effort to maximize services.

Transition to Kindergarten:

Each Title I Prekindergarten Program must plan for the transition of participants to local elementary school programs. A few examples of the ways in which prekindergarten programs can help ensure continuity in children's learning are:

- Coordinating the professional development activities of prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers in order to align prekindergarten and kindergarten curricula and goals;
- Arranging for kindergarten and prekindergarten teachers, as well as parents and children, to visit each other's classrooms; and
- Having prekindergarten teachers provide the future kindergarten teacher with children's portfolios or a written record of their learning during prekindergarten.

Allowable Expenses:

- Salaries and benefits for the teacher and the aide
- Substitute pay
- Professional development activities
- Appropriate classroom materials, supplies and equipment
- Classroom furnishings for children
- Small appliances (<\$100) for classroom cooking activities
- Computer hardware and software for classroom use
- Resource books and materials for the teacher
- Nutritious snacks for the children
- Field trips
- Parent involvement activities
- Travel expenses for teachers and paraprofessionals to attend the Department of Education Prekindergarten and Kindergarten Conference, LAECA Conference, LAEYC Conference, or other in-state early childhood training approved by the Elementary Standards Section on an individual basis
- Indirect costs
- Stipends for teachers and paraprofessionals to attend appropriate early childhood trainings
- TV and video equipment

Unallowable Expenses:

- Renovation, construction, or purchase of building used for program operation
- Developmentally inappropriate materials, such as workbooks, ditto masters, etc.
- Services or materials deemed inappropriate in relation to service delivery