

### **Definition of a High Quality Prekindergarten Program**

*High-Quality Preschool Program* means an early learning program that includes structural elements that are evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality, including at a minimum—

- (a) Staff with high qualifications, including a teacher holding a State certification for teaching in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field pursuing residency through the Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program (MAAPP), a State-approved alternate pathway, which includes coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood, as well as teaching assistants with appropriate credentials;
- (b) High-quality professional development for all staff which includes individualized professional development plans and coaching;
- (c) A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1;
- (d) A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high qualifications as outlined in paragraph (a) of this definition;
- (e) A Full-Day program with an instructional day of no less than the local school system's established length of day for K-5;
- (f) Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities;
- (g) Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence-based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the Maryland Early Learning Standards;
- (h) Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities
- (i) Instructional staff salaries are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff;
- (j) Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;
- (k) On-site or accessible Comprehensive Services for children and community partnerships that promote families' access to services that support their children's learning and development; and involves screening and referrals
- (l) Evidence-based health and safety standards.

\*\*Adapted from the standards used to define high quality PreK for the Federal Pre-K Expansion Grant and the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) Quality Standards and Benchmarks