
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 minimum¹

- a. High staff 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 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 a teacher assistant with an AA in Early Childhood, CDA, or enrolled in a program to obtain these credentials
- b. High-quality professional development for all staff (must be 15 hours of early childhood PD).
- 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 in each classroom with high staff qualifications as outlined in paragraph (a) of this definition.
- e. A Full-Day program (6.5 hours).
- 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 State Early Learning and Development Standards, for at least the year prior to kindergarten entry.
- h. Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities
- i. Instructional staff salaries are commensurate with the salaries and benefits of local PreK-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
- l. Evidence-based health and safety standards.

¹ Adapted from the PDG TA State Technical Assistance Report: Curriculum policies and guidelines of the Preschool Development and Expansion Grant Programs
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED583132.pdf>