

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>