



Blueprint for Maryland's Future: Prekindergarten Sliding Scale Guidance

Instructions For State-Funded Pre-K in Local Education
Agencies and Private Providers or Community-Based

Division of Early Childhood

June 2025

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Income Verification Process (Determining Tier Status of a Child).....	5
Administrative Procedures for Distribution and Collection of Funds for Tier II Families	7
Calculating State, Local, and Family Share for Tier II Children.....	8
Blending and Braiding Federal, State, and Local Funding to Support Pre-K Programs.....	11
FAQs	12

Introduction

The State of Maryland is making significant investments in early learning, informed by the neuroscience documenting the early years as the most critical time of brain development¹, as well as decades of research showing that supporting early childhood learning and development of disadvantaged children yields a high return to society.² The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has begun to develop a robust mixed-delivery system of early childhood programs and services to support families and their young children, the early childhood workforce, and children with disabilities and promote high-quality early childhood experiences.

Under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, MSDE is charged with expanding voluntary prekindergarten (Pre-K) to all three- and four-year-old children from families earning incomes at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) at no charge to the family. MSDE is also charged with implementing a subsidized sliding scale to calculate the family share of the Pre-K cost for Tier II families earning 301–600% of FPL.

Under the Blueprint, income eligibility is based on a system of tiers:

1. **Tier I:** three- or four-year-old children:
 - from families with a gross annual income less than or equal to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or children experiencing homelessness; OR
 - with disabilities and Multilingual Learners if they are within 300-600% FPL.
 - High-quality, full-day Pre-K is available at no charge to Tier I families.
2. **Tier II:** four-year-old children from families with a gross annual income of more than 300% of FPL but not more than 600% of FPL.
 - High-quality, full-day Pre-K is available at a subsidized cost, on a sliding scale, for Tier II families.
3. **Tier III:** four-year-old children from families with a gross annual income above 600% of FPL.
 - High-quality, full-day Pre-K is available at the full cost of the program for Tier III families.

Note: According to the [Budget Reconciliation Act of 2024](#), the sliding scale will be partially implemented beginning in FY 26. At that time, families whose annual income is between 301-360% will be eligible to enroll.

¹ Center on the Developing Child: Harvard University. (2019) In Brief: The Science of Early Childhood Development. Retrieved from: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-science-of-ecd/>

² The Center for High Impact Philanthropy, School of Social Policy and Practice, University of Pennsylvania (2020). High Return on Investment (ROI). Retrieved from: <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/early-childhood-toolkit/why-invest/what-is-the-return-on-investment/>

This guidance will support both local education agencies (LEAs) and private providers with the implementation of the prekindergarten sliding scale:

1. Enrollment, Income Verification, and Data Collection (Determining Tier Status of a Child)
2. Administrative Procedures for Distribution of Funds
3. Calculating State, Local, and Family Share for Tier II Children
4. Blending and Braiding Federal, State, and Local Funding to Support Pre-K Programs

Please note that this guidance only pertains to formula funding for Pre-K through the Blueprint and does not include the Pre-K Expansion Grant, which is paid at a flat per pupil rate.

This guidance document is subject to legislative changes.

Income Verification Process (Determining Tier Status of a Child)

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires the State to expand access to publicly funded full-day Pre-K for three-year-old and four-year-old children in both public and private settings.

Families with an income less than or equal to 300% FPL and families experiencing homelessness are designated as Tier I and will receive free access to Pre-K. For school years 2023-2024, 2024-2025, and 2025-2026, Tier I families include Tier II children with disabilities and children who speak a home language other than English. However, all family income levels must be collected at the time of enrollment for every child, even those in Tier I and Tier III. Starting in Fiscal Year (FY) 2027, for children with disabilities and children who speak a home language other than English, the tiers must align with a family's income, no matter the child's disability or multilingual status. All children must be enrolled in an eligible full-day prekindergarten program to be eligible for these funds.

The State and Local Shares of funding are provided for families designated as Tier II (income more than 300% FPL, but not more than 600% FPL). However, authorizing legislation allows Tier II families to be charged a portion of the program cost if a LEA and private providers in the jurisdiction choose to collect it. Further, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future specifies that a sliding scale will be used to determine the family portion. Tier III families (income above 600% FPL) who choose to enroll their three-year-old and four-year-old children in full-day Pre-K are expected to pay the full cost to attend, if space is available. The per-pupil Pre-K costs are defined in statute. In fiscal year 2025, this cost is \$13,003; in fiscal year 2026, \$14,473; in fiscal years 2027 and 2028, \$19,950; and in each fiscal year after that, the amount is increased by an inflation adjustment.

Given the central role these "Tiers" play in the program design, it is necessary to establish a clear enrollment process with income verification and data collection to determine Tier I, II, or III status for families of all children participating in Pre-K programs serving three- and four-year-old children. This process will support LEAs and private providers with determining the family share for families who fall into Tier II.

In exploring options for an income verification process, MSDE conducted a review of departmental income verification procedures currently in place for specific early childhood programs in the state. A sample of income verification methods from other states were examined as well.

ENROLLMENT IN THE MARYLAND PRE-K PROGRAM AND DATA COLLECTION

At the time of enrollment, LEAs and private providers must verify a family's income to determine their tier. Pre-K providers (both public and private community-based providers) must collect family income information from all families at the time of enrollment, for every child, even those in Tier I and Tier III. Practices are consistent across both public providers (public schools) and private providers (community-based programs). As part of the fiscal monitoring process, files will be reviewed to ensure income eligibility documentation is collected and maintained for all enrolled children. All children, except for children experiencing homelessness, must provide proof of income for Pre-K enrollment.

- **LEA providers** may use Free and Reduced Meal Program (FARM) eligibility or Direct Certification documentation (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or Foster Care documentation). Documentation of

income should be verified through a W-2, 1099, pay stubs, unemployment verification, or tax return and maintained by the LEA.

- **Private providers** must collect income verification documents and may use approved and current Child Care Scholarships, SNAP eligibility, Head Start income eligibility forms, or a program-developed income eligibility form. A program-developed form must list the family size, parent/guardian's income, and place of employment. Documentation of income must be verified through a W-2, 1099, pay stubs, unemployment verification, or tax return and must be maintained in the child's file.
- **Families experiencing homelessness** do not need to provide proof of income for Pre-K enrollment. Pre-K programs must enroll all three- and four-year-old applicants who are experiencing homelessness. Children experiencing homelessness are Tier I by definition and priority in expanding slots is given to Tier I children under Educ. 7-1A-06(d). This categorical eligibility means that families experiencing homelessness do not have to provide evidence of income for Pre-K enrollment. Acceptable documentation would include a completed eligibility questionnaire, a note from the McKinney-Vento liaison or designated Pupil Personnel Worker, or any other record that the family has been determined to be experiencing homelessness replaces proof of income. Notarized letters from the family cannot be required, as such a requirement would create a barrier to the child's enrollment in Pre-K.

MSDE has created a calculator on the [MSDE website](#) to help both LEAs and private providers determine a family's FPL and tier level, after receiving verification documents to determine income. LEAs and private providers are to determine family Tier status for the program year at the time of initial enrollment. If a family's income increases to more than the eligible income level during the year, the student may remain in the program until the end of the academic year. This policy is consistent with the Child Care Scholarship Program offered by the MSDE.

Administrative Procedures for Distribution and Collection of Funds for Tier II Families

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires MSDE to provide the state share to each LEA through the state aid grant and private provider through the Pre-K formula grant. In addition, for Tier II families, it is not mandatory to collect the family share. Each LEA and private provider that chooses to collect the family share will determine its program-specific policies and procedures to do so.

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS TO MARYLAND PRE-K PROGRAMS

Maryland's Pre-K formula program, like other State Aid programs, is calculated on a per-pupil basis and is a wealth-equalized, shared program between the state and local jurisdictions. Payments to LEAs are made on a bimonthly basis, while payments to private providers are made monthly per invoicing.

COLLECTION OF FUNDS FOR TIER II FAMILIES IN THE MARYLAND PRE-K PROGRAM

During the time of enrollment, when a family is determined to be in Tier II, the LEA or private provider must have the family sign an agreement. MSDE will create a standardized form that providers may use. The agreement acknowledges the Tier II sliding scale reimbursement level of the family and an agreed upon weekly, monthly, or yearly payment to the LEA or private provider. The family should receive a copy of this agreement.

LEAs should collect funds with guidance from their Chief Financial Officer. LEAs and private providers may establish their own processes for consequences of nonpayment, up to and including disenrollment.

Private providers should collect the money from families in the same way that they collect tuition payments or Child Care Scholarship Program copayments and keep accurate records of payments collected and whether these cover the costs for tuition or scholarship copayments.

COUNTIES ARE AUTHORIZED TO COVER TIER II STUDENTS WITH LOCAL FUNDS

LEAs and private providers may choose to cover the full cost of all Tier II (and/or Tier III) students with local funds. According to [Md. Code Ann., Educ. §5-229](#), "a county board [LEA] may provide up to 100% of the family share on behalf of the family." Similarly to LEAs, each private provider also has the option to provide up to 100% of the family share on behalf of the family. If an LEA or private provider chooses to waive all or part of the family share, that is an organizational business decision.

MSDE will distribute the state share of the Pre-K program directly to LEAs based on prior year enrollment. LEAs will not distribute any funding to private providers. Private providers will receive their state and local shares through the grants administered by MSDE.

Calculating State, Local, and Family Share for Tier II Children

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future requires that MSDE partially implement a sliding scale starting in School Year (SY) 2025-2026 and fully implement the sliding scale in SY 2026-2027.

MARYLAND PRE-K PROGRAM:

Under the Blueprint, income eligibility is based on a system of tiers, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Blueprint Pre-K Income Eligibility Tiers for FY 2026

Tier	Eligibility for Pre-K Expansion FY 2026	Program details
I	<p>Three- or four-year-old children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> from families with a gross annual income less than or equal to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or children experiencing homelessness; OR with disabilities and multilingual learners if they are within 300-600% of FPL. <p>Children with disabilities who have an Extended Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that requires group services in Pre-K must have access to Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). As a result, these families will be placed in Tier I, regardless of their income level. For additional information, please see the Pre-K and Special Education Guidance.</p>	High-quality, full-day Pre-K is available at no charge to Tier I families.
II	<p>Four-year-old children from families with a gross annual income of more than 300% of FPL but not more than 600% of FPL.</p> <p>Note: In FY 26, Tier II students who are Students with disabilities and Multilingual Learners are deemed Tier I.</p> <p>Note: According to the Budget Reconciliation Act of 2024 (see page 12) the sliding scale will be partially implemented beginning in FY 26. At that time, families whose annual income is between 301-360% FPL will be eligible to enroll.</p>	High-quality, full-day Pre-K is available at a subsidized cost, on a sliding scale, for Tier II families.
III	<p>Tier III is not an eligibility option for FY 2026. For reference, Blueprint states four-year-old children from families with a gross annual income above 600% FPL are Tier III.</p>	High-quality, full-day Pre-K is available at the full cost of the program for Tier III families.

- The sliding scale fee methodology required by law differentiates the cost of Pre-K for families within Tier II. With stakeholder feedback, MSDE provided a nuanced approach to fee subsidizing Pre-K for families in Tier II by ensuring the family share was proportional to a family's earnings. In the Pre-K Sliding Scale, families must pay a portion of the per-pupil cost of care, with that portion depending on where their income falls as compared to the federal poverty level.

The sliding scale operationalizes a method in which families pay a percentage of cost of care and as proposed in recent federal bills to advance child care subsidy programs³.

For more information on the options reviewed, please see *The Blueprint for Maryland's Future: Prekindergarten Sliding Scale Methodology*.⁴

MSDE BLUEPRINT SLIDING SCALE

The Pre-K sliding scale has five tiers, requiring families to contribute 10%–40% of the per-pupil cost, but never more than 7% of their gross annual income. Both the federal poverty guidelines and the program's per-pupil funding amount are updated each year. To determine eligibility for the sliding scale:

1. Families provide verification of gross annual income.
2. LEAs and private providers use the MSDE Pre-K Cost Calculator to determine the family share based on a sliding scale tied to the total family income and household size (see example chart below, based on a family of four).

In FY 2026, only families in the 301%-360% FPL range will be eligible for the sliding scale. Table 2 below shows the family share for FY 2026 as an annual amount, monthly amount, and percentage of family income.

Table 2. Pre-K Sliding Scale Cost and Share of Cost Details for Fiscal Year 2026

Federal Poverty Level	Per-Pupil Amount (FY 26)	State and Local Share (per child)	Family Share (per child)	Annual Amount (per child)	Amount as Percentage of Annual Income* (per child)	Monthly Amount (per child)**
301%-360%	\$14,473	\$13,026	10%	\$1,447.30	1.3%-1.5%	\$144.73

*Range based on 2024 FPL guidelines for a family of four with an annual income range of \$93,912-\$112,320.

**Based on 10 monthly payments.

Federal Poverty Levels (FPL) are released annually each January by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The Pre-K Sliding Scale will be based on the FPL from the previous school year. In School Year 2025-2026, the 2024 FPL will be used; in School Year 2026-2027, the 2025 FPL will be used; and so on.

³ <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/ED/ED00/20210909/114029/BILLS-117-CommitteePrint2-S000185-Amdt-1.pdf>

⁴ <https://blueprint.marylandpublicschools.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2023/07/Pre-K-Sliding-Scale-Report-July2023.pdf>

In Table 3 below, the family shares for FY 27 are displayed based on the cost of care of \$19,950, as set by statute. The family share remains capped, ensuring that no family pays more than 7% of their annual income per child. **This guidance document is up to date on current legislation and is subject to change in the authorizing legislation.**

Table 3. Pre-K Sliding Scale Cost and Share of Cost Details for Fiscal Year 2027

Federal Poverty Level	Family Share (Cost per child)	Annual Amount (per child) (FY 27)	Monthly Amount (per child) (FY 27)
301%-360%	10%	\$1,995	\$200
361%-420%	18%	\$3,591	\$359
421%-480%	25%	\$4,988	\$499
481%-540%	33%	\$6,584	\$658
541%-600%	40%	\$7,980	\$798

Note: Amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar. Family share percentages were set to ensure that the family contribution does not exceed 7% of annual income for family sizes from 2 to 6 based on 2025 federal poverty levels.

Blending and Braiding Federal, State, and Local Funding to Support Pre-K Programs

For Pre-K programs to become sustainable and to support the infant and toddler population, it is recommended that programs blend and braid federal, state, and local funding streams.

WAYS TO BLEND AND BRAID FUNDS

Both private providers and LEAs may blend and braid funding streams at the federal, state, and local levels. For instance, for children who are eligible, there are programs that are using:

- State Pre-K funding to support children during the 6.5-hour school day and Child Care Scholarship funding for before- and after-care;
- Head Start funding and State Blueprint funding to pay for the 6.5-hour school day and Child Care Scholarship funding for before- and after-care; or
- Title I funding, State Blueprint funding, and Head Start funding to fund the same 6.5-hour school day and Child Care Scholarship funding for before- and after-care.

This blended funding helps to increase teacher salaries in alignment with federal guidance from the Office of Head Start at the Administration for Children and Families. In addition, MSDE is supporting the infant and toddler population by partnering with counties and LEAs to conduct supply and demand studies. Private providers can also blend and braid funds to support their infant and toddler programs.

Garrett County

Garrett County Public Schools (GCPS) partners with Head Start in a collaborative model for Pre-K-3 classrooms. The Pre-K-3 classrooms are staffed with a GCPS teacher, a Head Start teacher, and a GCPS instructional assistant. Pre-K-4 classrooms are staffed by GCPS instructional staff only.

Calvert County

Calvert County Public Schools (CCPS) supports Judy Center/HIPPY/Healthy Families and Head Start grant programs. The grant programs combine for parent nights and other activities. CCPS provides in-kind support for any fees that would have been charged for facility usage at Head Start and Judy Center summer programming sites. Head Start supports fees for families receiving the Child Care Scholarship for wraparound services. Title I and Judy Centers work collaboratively to support school-wide parent engagement events via funding and personnel.

Montgomery County

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) applies local, state Blueprint, and Title I funding to enhance and increase high-quality early childhood program seats. Through the allocation of local, Title I, state Blueprint, and Prekindergarten Expansion Grant funding, MCPS currently has 3,163 Prekindergarten seats: 1,971 full-day seats and 1,192 part-day seats.

FAQs

How will the Blueprint for Maryland's Future determine income eligibility for prekindergarten?

Under the Blueprint, income eligibility is based on a system of tiers:

- Tier I: three- or four-year-old children from families with a gross annual income less than or equal to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or children experiencing homelessness. For FY 2024, FY 2025, and FY 2026 only, children with disabilities and multilingual learners who are Tier II can be counted as Tier I for funding purposes.
 - High-quality, full-day Pre-K is available at no charge to Tier I families.
- Tier II: four-year-old children from families with a gross annual income of more than 300% of FPL but not more than 600% of FPL. For FY 2026 only, families with a gross annual income of more than 300% FPL but not more than 360% will be eligible.
 - High-quality, full-day Pre-K is available at a subsidized cost, on a sliding scale, for Tier II families.
- Tier III: four-year-old children from families with a gross annual income above 600% of FPL.
 - High-quality, full-day Pre-K is available at the full cost of the program for Tier III families.

How will a Tier II family's share of cost of care be determined?

1. For Tier II families, the cost of care is based on a family's gross annual income, in relation to the Federal Poverty Level. Families will pay a share of the cost of care, with the percentage ranging from 10% to 40% of the total per-pupil cost of care.

The family shares for FY 27 are displayed based on the cost of care of \$19,950, as set by statute. The family share remains capped, ensuring that no family pays more than 7% of their annual income per child. (See Table 3 on page 10.)

How will the tier status of a family be determined?

LEAs and private providers use the MSDE Pre-K Cost Calculator to determine the family share based on a sliding scale tied to the total family income and household size.

Are the cost of care subsidies provided to Tier I and II families only available for public Pre-K, or can the subsidies also be applied to private care providers?

Tier I and II families can qualify for high-quality, full-day Pre-K in both public and private Pre-K settings.

Is the family share of cost of care adjusted if the household income is substantially changed after the child is enrolled in Pre-K (e.g., a parent becomes unemployed, job change with significant change to income)?

No. Pre-K providers (both public and private providers) must collect family income information from all families at the time of enrollment. This will be the only opportunity to determine the family cost of care for the year.

My gross annual household income is \$100,000/year. What would be the cost of care for my four-year-old child under each sliding scale option?

A household income of \$100,000/year is 321% of the Federal Poverty Level (FY 2024 FPL is \$31,200 for a family of four). For the School Year 2025-2026, your cost of care would be \$1,447.30.

Are there reductions to the cost of care if a child only enrolls for part-time care, and are the sliding scales outlined in the implementation report only applied to full-time enrollment?

If a child only enrolls in part-time care, this child would not be eligible for the Blueprint for Maryland Future funding.

Prekindergarten enrollment is at capacity for providers closest to me in my LEA. Can I enroll my child in a Pre-K program outside of my home LEA?

A child can be enrolled in Pre-K in a private provider setting in the county in which they live.

How does family size impact the family contribution for total cost of care?

Federal Poverty Levels (FPLs) are published each fiscal year by the Department of Health and Human Services by family size. The sliding scale levels to determine family contribution is based on FPL, and therefore adjustments based on family size would impact the overall family contribution. For instance, a family of three earning a household income of \$110,000/year would be earning 426% of the 2024 FPL. Under this sliding scale, this family would not be eligible for Tier II in FY 2026. In comparison, a family of four earning the same household income would earn less than 360% of the 2024 FPL and would contribute \$1,447.30 for the cost of care, or 10% of the total cost.

Are LEAs responsible for private provider fund disbursement?

No. LEAs are not responsible for private provider fund disbursement.

What is the timeline for collecting data from LEAs and private providers?

Data should be collected at the time of enrollment. This data should include the Tier of the family and the federal poverty level as well as the age of the child.

What records do providers need to send to MSDE?

LEAs are required to provide Tier and federal poverty level information for prekindergarten students, including FARM-eligible students. This guidance regarding data provided to MSDE will be included as part of the September 30th enrollment data collection.

What records do providers need to keep on hand?

Providers should keep the income verification for each family on file.

Will MSDE actively audit providers for accurate compliance?

MSDE will have "financial monitoring" of providers, not "auditing." As part of the fiscal monitoring process, Pre-K files will be reviewed to ensure income eligibility documentation is collected and maintained for all enrolled children.

What are acceptable/necessary forms of income verification?

- **LEA providers** may use Free and Reduced Meal Program (FARM) eligibility or Direct Certification documentation (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or Foster Care documentation). Documentation of income should be verified through a W-2, 1099, pay stubs, or tax return and maintained by the provider.
- **Private providers** must collect income verification documents and may use approved and current child care scholarship, SNAP eligibility, Head Start income eligibility forms, or a program-developed income eligibility form. A program-developed form must list the family size, parent/guardian's income, and place of employment. Documentation of income must be verified through a W-2, 1099, pay stubs, or tax return and must be maintained in the child's file.

How is "gross annual income" defined?

The amount of money made or earned within one year before deductions.

How is the exact family payment amount calculated?

MSDE developed a Pre-K Calculator, which can be used to calculate the exact family share amount. MSDE encourages both LEAs and private providers to use the calculator to determine the Tier levels and the family share for Tier II families.

What are the rules that MSDE will impose? What can be left up to the providers? Collection frequency? Weekly? Monthly? Yearly? Are certain types of payment acceptable or not acceptable?

Pre-K providers may set these rules themselves based on the cadence they can collect and process payment. MSDE recommends setting a monthly or weekly rate given that most families will not be able to pay the full amount at the beginning of the school year.

What happens if families do not submit payments on time?

LEAs and private providers may establish their own processes for consequences of nonpayment. It is recommended that these processes be set forth in the enrollment agreement signed by the family.

Do you anticipate that LEAs will need additional fiscal staff to support a transition to include Tier II students using a sliding scale?

Yes, LEAs should consider the following questions when making staffing decisions.

1. Who will lead the Office of Early Learning, and how does their vision align with district-wide goals?
2. What steps will be taken to support strong leadership for effective program implementation?
3. How will the district coordinate and implement key aspects of early childhood programs, including roles like curriculum development, assessment, and family engagement?
4. Who will be responsible for managing data collection and training for Kindergarten Readiness Assessments in early childhood programs?
5. How will student enrollment data be collected, submitted to MSDE, and used to inform program decisions as the LEA scales the mixed-delivery system?
6. What staffing is needed to actively engage families to participate in early learning programs, and how will the district build partnerships with local organizations through Judy Centers and Patty Centers, while managing budgets to support enrollment goals and the sliding scale implementation?
7. How can staffing support training of central staff and shared professional learning of Pre-K providers in schools and private provider settings?

Are there any processes that need to be set up to distribute state funding to LEAs or private providers?

LEAs and private providers should work together to develop processes that work for both parties. These processes should be outlined in the memorandum of understanding.

Does the funding for private providers go through the LEAs?

State and local funding for private providers will go through the Maryland State Department of Education via the Prekindergarten Formula Grant and the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant.

Where can I find more information?

For more information go to <https://blueprint.marylandpublicschools.org/ece/>.

What about the system for collecting tuition? Is that just at the level of the LEA?

Each LEA will need to develop their own system for collecting tuition. LEAs can work with their county governments to establish these systems. That does not preclude providers from including a tuition component for families in Tier II as part of the registration process.

Early Learning Supervisors have requested language from the State regarding the need to provide income documentation. It's an uncomfortable point for families, especially those with children receiving IEP services. Universal language would help all LEAs clarify this messaging.

It is mandatory to collect income documentation from all students.

Will LEAs be responsible for monitoring private providers (just as the Pre-K Expansion grants are monitored)? This could lead to staffing implications.

The monitoring would be a shared responsibility between the LEAs and the State. MSDE will collaborate with the LEAs to monitor the fiscal and programmatic activities.

Do students with IEPs need to share income information?

All families participating in public Pre-K need to provide income information in order to determine the Tier status for the family. For more information, please review [this memo](#).

What documents are needed for homeless students?

Homeless students automatically qualify for Tier I status. If the LEA collects documents on homeless students, that documentation would suffice for Pre-K students.

This year all students with disabilities are categorized as Tier I, and we receive funding for them. Moving forward, if a student's income categorizes them as Tier III, then we don't receive funding, correct?

Only students with disabilities whose family have a Tier II income are categorized as Tier I. The same is true for students whose home language is other than English. Students with disabilities whose family have a Tier III income are categorized as Tier III.

Will FARMs forms be used for income eligibility?

Yes, FARMs forms may be used.

Which FPL levels will be used?

The new Federal Poverty Levels (FPL) are released by the federal government in January of each year. In February, MSDE will release the most up-to-date family share for families. The Pre-K Sliding Scale will be based on the FPL from the previous school year. In School Year 2025-2026, the [2024 FPL](#) will be used; in School Year 2026-2027, the [2025 FPL](#) will be used; and so on.