

PUSH to Pre-K: Components of An Educational Program

Division of Early Learning

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PRESENTED BY

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Presentation Outline

1. Purpose of Pre-K Grants
2. Components of an Educational Program
3. Definition of High-Quality Prekindergarten
4. Share resources and next steps



1. Purpose of Pre-K Grants

- 2. Components of an Educational Program
- 3. Definition of High-Quality Pre-K
- 4. Questions and Next Steps

Purpose

Purpose of the Maryland Prekindergarten Grant Programs

Maryland State Prekindergarten Grants

Broaden availability and expand access to high-quality prekindergarten educational programming and school readiness services for three- year-old and four-year-old students from families with household incomes up to 300% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

- Students with special education needs, students experiencing homelessness, and students with a home language other than English are eligible regardless of income.



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Components of an Educational Program

Components of a high-quality prekindergarten educational program.

Components of an Educational Program

Pre-K grant funds must be used to provide an educational program designed to provide high-quality learning experiences for children in Prekindergarten.

- Led by highly qualified teaching staff
- Implement curriculum that is evidence-based and aligned with the Maryland Early Learning Standards and Maryland College and Career Ready Standards
- Implement formative and summative assessments
- Developmentally appropriate lesson plans aligned to the Early Learning Standards
- Developmentally appropriate classrooms that are well-equipped to address the needs of **ALL** children
- Ongoing program evaluation to ensure continuous quality improvement

Highly Qualified Teaching Staff

Highly qualified teaching staff includes the following:

Lead Teacher

P-3 Certified Teacher or Bachelor's degree and pursuing certification through an alternative preparation program.

For additional information about P-3 certification please contact the Division of Certification:
<https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DEE/Certification/index.aspx>

Assistant Teacher

CDA or Associate of Arts Degree (AA)

- Currently a plan to obtain one of these is acceptable.

*The Pre-K Expansion Grant also requires a qualified Instructional Oversight person to support teaching and learning.

Finding Qualified Staff

- Consider existing staff that may be close to meeting the requirements or willing to get the required degree and/or certifications.
- Network with other ECE programs.
- Reach out to LEAs as there may be additional candidates that were not placed in classrooms.
- Reach out to local colleges and universities to target upcoming or recent graduates.
- Continuous recruitment to create a “pipeline” of qualified staff.
- Offer incentives or a referral program.

*Contact our Workforce Advancement Branch for additional information regarding funds to support higher education (CCCPDF) and CDA supports.

<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/WorkforceAdvancementBranch>

Curriculum

- Curriculum must be evidence based.
- Must be aligned to the Maryland Early Learning Standards and Maryland College and Career Ready Standards.
- For additional guidance of Early Childhood Curriculum, visit <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/early-childhood-curriculum>
- The Pre-K Expansion grant application asks applicants to describe curriculum training provided for teaching staff.

Note: MSDE no longer provides a list of recommended curriculum. There is guidance forthcoming on how to select an appropriate curriculum.

Assessments

A High-Quality Educational Program should consist of a process to assess children's learning.

Assessment helps teachers ascertain whether children are learning the content and skills they're teaching. It helps teachers identify learning gaps and develop strategies to help children achieve their goals.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment gauges a child's understanding during the learning process. It provides ongoing feedback and helps preschool teachers adjust instruction to meet each child's needs as they grow and change.

Summative Assessment

Occurs at the end of a learning period and evaluates cumulative learning. It helps teachers gauge a child's understanding and proficiency after a unit, lesson, or semester.

Developmentally Appropriate Lesson Plans

- Weekly written lesson plans containing specific instructional activities are required for Pre-K classrooms.
- The lesson plans must align with the Maryland Early Learning Standards and include enough details to identify the purpose of your lesson(s).
- The Maryland Early Learning Standards should be documented for all instructional activities. Teachers should also have a plan for transitions throughout the day.
- Lesson plans should reflect differentiated instruction based on the individual needs of each child in the class, including children with disabilities and English learners. Goals and objectives from a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or extended IFSP should be used when planning instruction.

Developmentally Appropriate Classrooms

- Maryland Prekindergarten Programs should feature busy, active, well-equipped classrooms where teachers work together to foster learning.
- Developmentally appropriate classrooms that are well-equipped to address the needs of **ALL** children.
- Prekindergarten classrooms should be organized around clearly defined learning centers and interest areas that allow children to experience high quality materials and activities both indoors and outdoors.
- Materials and activities should be changed frequently to meet children's growing developmental needs and reflect children's changing interests.
- Prekindergarten providers must maintain adequate and appropriate equipment, materials, and supplies for each Prekindergarten classroom.
- All equipment must be in good repair.

Program Evaluation and Continuous Quality Improvement

- A high-quality educational program includes ongoing program evaluation to ensure continuous quality improvement.
- The Pre-K grants require programs to measure success consistent with the program's goals and objectives.
- There must be an evaluation plan in place to ensure continuous program improvement.
- The data and instruments used to support continuous quality improvement must be identified.
- A plan must be implemented to inform parents about student progress and areas of concern.
- A program evaluation and report is required annually.



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Definition of High-Quality Pre-K

The expanded definition of high-quality prekindergarten.

Definition of High-Quality Pre-K

See Link Below



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;

https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/4/definition_of_high_quality_prekindergarten_fy_2023.pdf

Definition of High-Quality Prekindergarten (Letter K)

Comprehensive Services

- On-site **or** accessible Comprehensive Services for children and community partnerships that promote families' access to services to support their children's learning and development are required.
- Screening and referral services covering at least vision, hearing, speech and language, health, and physical development are required.
- Programs must offer, either directly or through coordination with local school systems or local departments of health and social services, additional support services for prekindergarten families. These services may include parenting support or training including those with languages other than English, physical and mental health and wellness services, and early intervention for children with disabilities and/or special health care needs.



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Questions and Next Steps

Where to send questions and next steps to receive additional support.

Questions and Next Steps

If you have **questions or require additional information**, you can send your questions to:
Prekexpansiongrant.msde@maryland.gov

Grant Information Guide and previous applications can be found here:
<https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/node/1303>

Next PUSH to Pre-K Session will be held on February 7, 2024, from 1:00-2:00 PM

Topic: Grant Writing Tips

Review previous recordings

- Topic: Maryland EXCELS Requirements [Link](#)
- Topic: Licensing Requirements [Link](#)

Website: <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/pushtoprek>