
Note: Only districts that identify 15 or more eligible students are required to provide prekindergarten programs.

Tuition-Free

A district shall offer prekindergarten classes if it identifies 15 or more eligible students who are at least four years of age. A district may offer prekindergarten if it identifies 15 or more eligible children who are at least three years of age.

A district may not charge tuition for a prekindergarten program offered under these provisions.

Exemption

A district may apply to the commissioner of education (“commissioner”) for an exemption from the requirement that it provide a free prekindergarten program if the district would be required to construct classroom facilities in order to provide the program.

Definitions

In this section:

1. “Child” includes a stepchild.
2. “Parent” includes a stepparent.

Eligibility

A child is eligible for enrollment in free prekindergarten if the child is at least three years of age and:

1. Is unable to speak and comprehend the English language;
2. Is educationally disadvantaged;
3. Is homeless, as defined by federal law [see FD(LEGAL)], regardless of the residence of the child, of either parent of the child, or of the child’s guardian or other person having lawful control;
4. Is the child of an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority;
5. Is the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty;
6. Is or ever has been in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services following an adversary hearing under Family Code 262.201; or
7. Is the child of a person eligible for the Star of Texas Award as:
 - a. A peace officer under Government Code 3106.002;

- b. A firefighter under Government Code 3106.003; or
- c. An emergency medical first responder under Government Code 3106.004.

A child who is eligible for enrollment under item 4 or 5 above remains eligible if the child's parent leaves the armed forces, or is no longer on active duty, after the child begins the prekindergarten class.

Notice A district shall develop a system to notify the population in the district with children who are eligible for enrollment in a free prekindergarten program of the availability of the program. The system must include public notices issued in English and Spanish.

Half-Day Basis A free prekindergarten class shall be operated on a half-day basis.

Transportation A district is not required to provide transportation for a prekindergarten class. If transportation is provided, it is included for funding purposes as part of the regular transportation system.

Education Code 29.153

Tuition-Supported Or District-Financed A district may offer on a tuition basis or use district funds to provide:

1. An additional half-day of prekindergarten classes to children eligible for free prekindergarten; and
2. Half-day and full-day prekindergarten classes to children not eligible for free prekindergarten.

A district may not adopt a tuition rate that is higher than necessary to cover the added costs of the program, including any costs associated with collecting, reporting, and analyzing data under Education Code 29.1532(c) (regarding PEIMS data for prekindergarten programs). A district must submit its proposed tuition rate to the commissioner for approval.

Education Code 29.1531

Program Design A district's prekindergarten program shall be designed to develop skills necessary for success in the regular public school curriculum, including language, mathematics, and social skills. *Education Code 29.1532(a)*

Daily Physical Activity A district shall require students in full-day prekindergarten to participate in moderate or vigorous daily physical activity for at least 30 minutes throughout the school year, as part of the district's physical education program or through structured activity during a campus's daily recess.

To the extent practicable, a district shall require a student enrolled in prekindergarten on less than a full-day basis to participate in the same type and amount of physical activity as a student enrolled in full-day prekindergarten.

If a district determines, for any particular grade level, that requiring moderate or vigorous daily physical activity is impractical due to scheduling concerns or other factors, the district may as an alternative require a student in that grade level to participate in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 135 minutes during each school week.

A district must provide an exemption for a student who is unable to participate in the required physical activity because of illness or disability.

Education Code 28.002(l)

**High-Quality
Prekindergarten
Grant Program**

From funds appropriated for that purpose, the commissioner shall establish a grant funding program under which funds are awarded to districts to implement a prekindergarten grant program under Education Code Chapter 29, Subchapter E-1 and 19 Administrative Code 102.1003.

A district may participate in and receive funding under the program if the district meets all program standards required under Subchapter E-1. A program is subject to any other requirements imposed by law that apply to a prekindergarten program.

Education Code 29.165

A district that receives funding under this grant shall maintain locally and provide at TEA's request the necessary documentation to ensure fidelity of high-quality prekindergarten program implementation. *19 TAC 102.1003(k)*

Eligibility for
Funding

All eligible districts may receive grant funding for each qualifying student in average daily attendance in a high-quality prekindergarten program in the district. A school district that receives the funding may use the funding only to improve the quality of the district's prekindergarten programs. Funding for each qualifying student in attendance for the entire instructional period on a school day shall not exceed \$1,500. *Education Code 29.166; 19 TAC 102.1003(a), (j)*

To be eligible to receive grant funding under the program, a district shall:

1. Implement a curriculum for a high-quality prekindergarten grant program that addresses all of the Texas Prekindergarten

Guidelines (updated 2015) in the domains identified in 19 Administrative Code 102.1003(c).

2. Measure the progress of each student in meeting the recommended end of prekindergarten year outcomes identified in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, and the preparation of each student for kindergarten using a kindergarten readiness instrument for reading as described in Education Code 28.006.
3. Develop, implement, and make available on the district or campus website a family engagement plan to assist the district in achieving and maintaining high levels of family involvement and positive family attitudes toward education. [See Family Engagement Plan, below]

19 TAC 102.1003(c), (d), (f)

Qualifying Students

A district receiving funds under the program must provide educational services to qualifying students. A student qualifies for additional funding if the student is four years of age on September 1 of the year the student begins the program and:

1. Is unable to speak and comprehend the English language;
2. Is educationally disadvantaged;
3. Is a homeless child, as defined by 42 U.S.C. § 11434a, regardless of the residence of the child, of either parent of the child, or of the child's guardian or other person having lawful control of the child;
4. Is the child of an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority;
5. Is the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty; or
6. Is or ever has been in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services following an adversary hearing held as provided by Family Code 262.201.

Education Code 29.153(b); 19 TAC 102.1003(b)

Curriculum
Requirements

A district shall select and implement a curriculum for a prekindergarten grant program that:

1. Includes the prekindergarten guidelines established by TEA;

SPECIAL PROGRAMS
PREKINDERGARTEN

EHBG
(LEGAL)

2. Measures the progress of students in meeting the recommended learning outcomes; and
3. Does not use national curriculum standards developed by the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

The curriculum must address all of the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (updated 2015) in the domains identified in 19 Administrative Code 102.1003(c).

In a format prescribed by TEA, a district that receives funding under this grant shall report:

1. The curriculum used in the high-quality prekindergarten program classes as required by 19 Administrative Code 102.1003(c);
2. A description and the results of each prekindergarten instrument used in the high-quality prekindergarten program classes as required by 19 Administrative Code 102.1003(d);
3. A description of each kindergarten readiness instrument used in the district to measure the effectiveness of the district's high-quality prekindergarten program classes as required by 19 Administrative Code 102.1003(d); and
4. The results for at least 95 percent of the district's kindergarten students on the kindergarten readiness instrument.

Education Code 29.167(a); 19 TAC 102.1003(c), (g)

Teacher
Requirements

Each teacher for a prekindergarten program class must be certified under Education Code Chapter 21, Subchapter B and have one of the following additional qualifications:

1. A Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or another early childhood education credential approved by TEA;
2. Certification offered through a training center accredited by Association Montessori Internationale or through the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education;
3. At least eight years' experience of teaching in a nationally accredited child care program;
4. A graduate or undergraduate degree in early childhood education or early childhood special education;
5. Documented completion of the Texas School Ready Training Program; or

6. Be employed as a prekindergarten teacher in a district that has ensured that:
 - a. Prior to assignment in a prekindergarten class, teachers who provide prekindergarten instruction have completed at least 150 cumulative hours of documented professional development addressing all ten domains in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines that were approved prior to 2015 in addition to other relevant topics related to high-quality prekindergarten over a consecutive five-year period;
 - b. Teachers who have not completed training required above prior to assignment in a prekindergarten class complete:
 - (1) The first 30 hours of 150 cumulative hours of documented professional development addressing all ten domains in the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (updated 2015) in addition to other relevant topics related to high-quality prekindergarten before the end of the 2016–17 school year; and
 - (2) Complete the additional hours in the subsequent four years in order to continue providing instruction in a high-quality prekindergarten classroom; and
 - c. At least half of the hours required above shall include experiential learning, practical application, and direct interaction with specialists in early childhood education or instructional coaches.

A district may allow a teacher employed by the district to receive the training required to be awarded a CDA credential from a regional education service center. Training may not include national curriculum standards developed by the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

A school district must attempt to maintain an average ratio in any prekindergarten program class of not less than one certified teacher or teacher's aide for each 11 students.

Education Code 29.167; 19 TAC 102.1003(e), (i)

Family Engagement
Plan

A district shall develop and implement a family engagement plan to assist the district in achieving and maintaining high levels of family involvement and positive family attitudes toward education.

An effective family engagement plan creates a foundation for the collaboration of mutual partners, embraces the individuality and

uniqueness of families, and promotes a culture of learning that is child centered, age appropriate, and family driven.

The family engagement plan must be based on family engagement strategies established by TEA as set out in 19 Administrative Code 102.1003(f).

Education Code 29.168; 19 TAC 102.1003(f)

Program Evaluation

A school district shall:

1. Select and implement appropriate methods for evaluating the district's program classes by measuring student progress; and
2. Make data from the results of program evaluations available to parents.

A district may administer diagnostic assessments to students in a program class to evaluate student progress but may not administer a state standardized assessment instrument.

An assessment instrument administered to a prekindergarten program class must be selected from a list of appropriate prekindergarten assessment instruments identified by the commissioner.

Education Code 29.169; 19 TAC 102.1003(h)

Eligible Private
Providers

A district participating in the grant program may enter into a contract with an eligible private provider to provide services or equipment for the program.

To be eligible to contract with a district to provide a program or part of a program, a private provider must be licensed by and in good standing with the Department of Family and Protective Services. A private provider is in good standing with the Department of Family and Protective Services if the department has not taken an action against the provider's license during the 24-month period preceding the date of a contract with a school district. The private provider must also:

1. Be accredited by a research-based, nationally recognized, and universally accessible accreditation system approved by the commissioner;
2. Be a Texas Rising Star Program provider with a three-star certification or higher;
3. Be a Texas School Ready! participant;
4. Have an existing partnership with a district to provide a pre-kindergarten program not provided under Subchapter E-1; or

5. Be accredited by an organization that is recognized by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission.

A prekindergarten program provided by a private provider under Education Code 29.171 is subject to the requirements of Education Code Chapter 29, Subchapter E-1.

Education Code 29.171

**Prekindergarten
Expansion Grant**

A district may use funds from grants administered by the commissioner to expand an existing half-day prekindergarten program to a full-day basis or to implement a prekindergarten program on a campus that does not have a prekindergarten program.

A district may use funds received under this program to employ teachers and other personnel for a prekindergarten program or to acquire curriculum materials or equipment, including computers, for use in prekindergarten programs.

A district may use funds granted under this program in contracting with another entity, including a private entity.

Education Code 29.155(a), (b), (i)

Ready to Read Grant

A district that operates a prekindergarten program is eligible to apply for a Ready to Read grant if at least 75 percent of the children enrolled in the program are low-income students, as determined by commissioner rule.

Grants shall be used to provide scientific, research-based pre-reading instruction for the purpose of directly improving pre-reading skills and for identifying cost-effective models for pre-reading intervention. Grants funds shall be used for:

1. Professional staff development in pre-reading instruction;
2. Pre-reading curriculum and materials;
3. Pre-reading skills assessment materials; and
4. Employment of pre-reading instructors.

Education Code 29.157(b), (c)

**Statewide
Information Referral
Network**

A district shall provide the Texas Information and Referral Network with information regarding eligibility for and availability of child-care and education services for inclusion in the statewide information referral network. A district shall provide the information in a form determined by the executive commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. *Gov't Code 531.0312*

SPECIAL PROGRAMS
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“Child care and education services” includes child-care and education services provided by a school district through a prekindergarten or after-school program. *Gov’t Code 531.03131(a)*

Staff of the Texas Information and Referral Network shall send an electronic mail message to each appropriate entity containing the name of and contact information for each applicant and a description of the services for which the applicant is applying.

On receipt of such an electronic mail message, a district shall contact the applicant to verify information regarding the applicant’s eligibility for available child-care and education services. On certifying eligibility, a district shall match the applicant with entities providing those services in the applicant’s community, including local workforce development boards, local child-care providers, or a Head Start or Early Head Start program provider.

A district shall cooperate with the Texas Information and Referral Network as necessary in the administration of this project.

Gov’t Code 531.0312(c)–(e)

Shared Site

Before establishing a new prekindergarten program, a district shall consider the possibility of sharing use of an existing Head Start or other child-care program site as a prekindergarten site. *Education Code 29.1533*

**Prekindergarten
Licensing Standards**

If a district contracts with a private entity to operate a prekindergarten program, the program shall comply at a minimum with the applicable child-care licensing standards adopted by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services under Human Resources Code 42.042. *Education Code 29.1532(b)*