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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Maine’s Preschool Guidebook, a document designed to facilitate implementation of high-quality publicly-funded preschool. Although public preschool programming remains optional for any school administrative unit (SAU) to offer, the Early Learning Team at the Maine Department of Education (DOE), in partnership with the Head Start State Collaboration Office, has created this tool to support establishment and expansion of public preschool in Maine.

The opportunity to establish public preschool programs was enacted by the Maine Legislature in 1983, ensuring eligibility for 4-year-olds to enter the public schools in the two-year kindergarten programs. Eighteen years later, in school year 2001-2002, Maine enrolled 10% of 4-year-olds in state-funded preschool. Nine years after that, in 2010, the percentage had more than doubled with 25% of the 4-year-old population served. In July of 2017, **Chapter 124 - Basic Approval Standards: Public Preschool Programs** was adopted. The rule provides clear program standards for SAUs that lead to high-quality environments and instruction. As of July 2020, enrollment has steadily increased to more than 44% of 4-year-olds across three quarters of Maine’s SAUs.

Members of the Early Learning Team at the DOE are available to provide ongoing technical assistance as needed and requested by SAUs. More information regarding technical assistance is outlined on page 17 of this document or by contacting [nicole.madore@maine.gov](mailto:nicole.madore@maine.gov) or [marcy.r.whitcomb@maine.gov](mailto:marcy.r.whitcomb@maine.gov). Additional preschool information can be found on the [Early Childhood website](#).

As Maine advances toward achieving the goal of offering universal preschool, it has become clear that consistent guidance is needed to address the wide variety of questions and needs that arise as programs are established. The intent of this guide is to assist SAUs in the implementation of high-quality programming that meets the diverse needs of Maine’s preschool students, families, and communities, including fostering partnerships with entities such as:

- [Head Start agencies](#)
- [Family childcare providers](#)
- [Center-based providers](#)
- [Private community providers](#)



# STANDARDS

When operating a public preschool program, it is important to clearly understand the distinction between program standards and learning standards. Rule Chapter 124 contains the program standards that govern the implementation of public preschool while the Maine Early Learning and Development Standards (MELDS) inform efforts to improve practice and instruction in the implementation of curriculum and assessment.

## Chapter 124: Basic Approval Standards: Public Preschool Programs

This rule establishes school approval standards for school administrative units implementing public preschool programs.

## Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards (MELDS)

The Maine Early Learning and Development Standards (MELDS):

- Represent the communities, values, perspectives and recommended practices of the early childhood community in the State of Maine;
- Provide early childhood educators with guidance as they design inclusive environments, shape curriculum, lead professional development initiatives, build intentionality into teaching practice, engage families, and support children's learning at home. Since effective early childhood learning environments for young children incorporate an integrated, holistic approach to teaching children and address each child's social emotional, physical and intellectual development, the 8 domains represented in Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards should not be addressed in isolation;
- Facilitate personalized learning goals to accommodate each child's unique learning pathway. Learning goals are based on predictable developmental stages yet include an individualized approach to each child as s/he develops at her/his own rate. Development is influenced by many factors: genetics, prenatal care, birth and temperament, attachment to families, caregivers, and teachers and early experiences;
- Provide early childhood educators with tools to support children who may be at-risk;
- Serve as a guide for best practices in inclusive environments for *all* children including those who are culturally, linguistically and ability diverse (e.g. students eligible for special education, English learners, etc.);
- Are neither a curriculum nor an assessment, but should align with and inform both in early childhood settings;
- Connect the learning that occurs in the preschool years (age three through kindergarten entry) with the essential learning and development that occurs both before and after this age span. Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the Supporting Maine's Infants and Toddlers: Guidelines for Learning & Development and Maine's Learning Results Standards (K-12), as appropriate, to demonstrate the continuous learning progression for children from birth through all subsequent development;
- Incorporate and reflect current research on early education and care, school readiness, and culturally-responsive and inclusive practices for all children (e.g. students eligible for special education, English learners, etc.).

# PROGRAM STRUCTURE

High-quality preschool programs are comprised of many key elements that promote positive child outcomes and provide supports toward overall school readiness for our youngest learners. This section explores these elements.

## Program Hours

Ideally a full-day, full-week program is the best choice for a high-quality program. Recent research in the November 26<sup>th</sup> issue of JAMA concluded that children who attend full-day preschool programs generally have higher scores on measures of school readiness skills, increased attendance and reduced chronic absences, (Nichols, H. 2014). Program hours will depend, however, on the community assessment and available space, along with the school administrative unit's and community partners' capacity. The current rules set forth by the Department include a minimum of 10 hours a week of instructional programming, scheduled over a 35-week period and scheduled within the 175 required student days in a public-school calendar. It is the recommendation of the Department to first consider full time programming for preschool students when building a high-quality program.

## Teacher Certifications

Classrooms of up to 16 students must have teaching staff that consists of one lead teacher with a State of Maine 081 (birth-5) certification and one staff credentialed with at least an Education Technician II certification. Certification requirements apply to staff in classrooms where staff are employed by collaborative partners. See Appendix A for a list of Maine-based Early Childhood higher-education programs.

It may be possible for a SAU to submit a Waiver Affidavit if meeting the certification standards outlined above is a hardship. Please contact the Certification Office at the Department for more information.

## Ratios

Research indicates that teacher-child interactions in a high-quality preschool setting contribute to improved child outcomes across all domains of learning. Lower ratios in preschool classrooms are one of the key indicators of a high-quality program, as this improves the frequency of individual interactions with students, increases the children's engagement in instructional activity, and enhances safety in the environment (Perlman, et al., 2017). Chapter 124 maintains a *maximum* class size of 16 students in a public preschool classroom, with a *1:8 ratio* between teaching staff and students during the academic portions of the school day. There are times during the day when an increased ratio (1:10) can be utilized: mealtimes, rest time, allied arts and outdoor play. Providing that ratios are followed, supervision may be upheld by the Ed Tech staff during these times of the day, and not the lead teacher, which lends itself to increased planning time and contractual requirements.

While Chapter 124 maintains a maximum class size of 16 in a preschool classroom there may be instances where a slight increase in enrollment is warranted. In these instances, the Department will consider a waiver submitted by a SAU for this purpose. SAUs should first consider community needs, classroom space indicators, staffing, and ratios in the classroom, in order to maintain a safe and high-quality program.

If additional staff are needed to support children with identified disabilities then SAUs should consult with Child Development Services to determine how best to meet these needs. These staff would not count in the overall teacher: student ratio.

## Enrollment Policy

There are times when a public pre-k program cannot accommodate all eligible students who register or wish to attend. Given the expectations around class size and teacher:student ratios, schools should be proactive in developing a pre-k enrollment policy that is made available to families prior to registration. The policy should clearly document the number of students that can be enrolled and the process the SAU will take to identify those students. High-quality programs should make every effort to serve their communities most vulnerable populations with a heterogenous mix of students. This refers to children’s developmental abilities and their families’ economic status, culture and/or language needs, etc. A recommended policy is one that mirrors school-wide demographic percentages within the walls of the pre-k program. For example, if the school-wide special education percentage is 15%, then reserve 15% of your pre-k seats for students with identified disabilities. If the school-wide economically disadvantaged rate is 50%, then reserve 50% of your pre-k seats for students who qualify. Refer to Appendix B for a detailed example.

## Curriculum

The Maine Department of Education defines curriculum as the school administrative unit’s written document that includes the learning expectations for all children for all domains of development as indicated in the Maine Early Learning and Development Standards (MELDS). The curriculum shall reflect continuous, sequential and intentional instruction aligned with the MELDS.

While Chapter 124 does not specify curriculums that SAUs must utilize, it provides guidelines to assist SAUs in selecting high-quality curriculums. Curriculum must be evidence-based and aligned with the MELDS. Currently the US Department of Education defines evidence-based as an activity, strategy, or intervention that:

1. demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on at least one of the following criteria:
  - i. strong evidence from at least 1 well-designed and well-implemented experimental study;
  - ii. moderate evidence from at least 1 well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study; or
  - iii. promising evidence from at least 1 well- designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias; or
2. demonstrates a rationale based on high- quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes; and
3. includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention.

The Maine Department of Education offers guidance for selecting curriculums through this [Curriculum Consumer Report](#) (see Resources, page 19 for more information). The Maine DOE is also pleased to provide an open-source curriculum for preschool classrooms. This whole child curriculum meets the requirements of Chapter 124: Public Preschool Program Standards and is developmentally appropriate for four-year old children. Adapted from the Boston Public Schools’ *Focus on KI* curriculum, [Pre-K for ME](#) is intended to support any preschool teacher in providing a rich, play-based, intentional curriculum that is aligned to Maine’s Early Learning and Development Standards as well as the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. This curriculum is open sourced for Maine Public Preschool programs and their community partners and can be accessed at the hyperlink above.

## **Child Assessment and Parent Reporting/Conferences**

Programs are required to utilize research-based assessment tools. Child assessments inform teaching staff of the growth of the child over time and give information essential to the planning of activities for individual children. Quality assessment tools and practices include child observation, work samples, anecdotal notes, checklists, photographs and video. The assessment tools that SAUs use need to be aligned with the Maine Early Learning and Development Standards (MELDS). Assessments should be completed across the program year at designated times.

Assessments are also used as tools for guiding conferences and student updates. Some assessment tools offer reports to share with families regarding students' growth and goals. Family conferences and child outcome updates should be guided by artifacts and should outline the strengths students display in the classroom setting. These should be coupled with the student's next steps, or goals, within that setting. Considerations should be given to choosing assessment tools or strategies that lend themselves to children's strengths. Sharing student progress with families should be conducted through a written or verbal strength-based narrative as opposed to a traditional report card. Also, be aware of the necessary accommodations needed to best inform all families of their child's growth and development (e.g. various language and/or interpretation needs, preference for communication- written, verbal, etc.). See Resources (page 18) and Appendix C for examples of whole-child, formative assessments.

## **Classroom Environment**

Classroom environment is one of the important key factors in a high-quality preschool program. A high-quality classroom environment is welcoming and organized. Environments should be ADA compliant and set up with intentionality, which leads to more engaged children, positive interactions and promotion of development and learning.

When setting up your classroom, the following aspects should always be considered:

- ✓ **Boundaries:** Are centers clearly defined? Are "teacher" areas and "child" areas marked consistently and understood by children? Are there visuals showing children where to line up or doors that should not be opened (visual stop signs) and are these boundaries explained and upheld consistently by all staff?
- ✓ **Line of Site:** Are staff able to see children in all areas of the classroom in order to practice active supervision?
- ✓ **Culture:** Are the varying cultures and identities of students and families represented in the classroom?
- ✓ **Easy Access:** Do children have access to materials they need in every area of the classroom in order to be independent and engaged? Are materials needed in specific learning centers found within those centers? For example, are the manipulative materials stored near the manipulative table and easily accessed by children at centers time?
- ✓ **Travel Spaces:** Are there areas that invite children to run, or is the classroom set up in a way that encourages walking?
- ✓ **Materials:** Are the materials and furniture high quality and developmentally appropriate for the students? Are there ample materials for the allowed number of children in a center; for example, are there two buckets and two shovels in the sand table that allows for two students to explore at once? Are there too few materials in centers, leading to wandering and non-engagement for students, and possibly less desired behaviors?
- ✓ **Stimulation:** Is the classroom environment over or under stimulating to the students? Are centers that are louder (block area) distanced from centers that are quieter (library)? Are materials not in use put away and out of site, or is the space cluttered (and if so, is there other available storage space to utilize)? Are there too many materials in any given center, making choices and engagement difficult and overwhelming for some students?

A classroom with a high quality, intentional design can lend itself to acting as the “third teacher” in the space. The set up can change how children interact and cooperate with each other, and with materials and activities. The intentionality of design also has a noticeable impact on behaviors in the classroom and can help with positive classroom management. When designing the environment within your preschool team, be mindful of the above list, as well as your chosen curriculum. Some curriculums offer specific guidelines on setting up certain areas that consider the points above.

In addition to the considerations for classroom environments listed above, a variety of signage should be posted in high-quality classrooms to support consistency and classroom management, both of which lead directly to children developing independence and understanding of how to engage in a positive classroom community. Examples include:

- ✓ **A Visual Daily Schedule of Activities.** This should be hung at students’ eye level and should be reviewed with children multiple times during the school day.
- ✓ **Visual List of Expectations or Rules.** These should be hung at students’ eye level and depict 3-5 basic expectations of positive behaviors in the classroom, and be written with positive directives, such as “walking feet” as opposed to “no running”.
- ✓ **Visual List of Expectations or Rules for Centers or Certain Areas of a Classroom:** Centers need visuals of expected positive behaviors posted so children are reminded of safety, such as in the block area; other areas such as meal tables of large group, should also have positive behavior expectations posted for children during those times. These expectations should be reviewed at the beginning of each group time.
- ✓ **Center Limits:** Centers in the classrooms should have visuals posted depicting the number of students who may be utilizing that area at one time. These visual cues should be posted at the entrance to a center and be at the students’ eye level. Centers should have a correct amount of materials for the number of students posted. Having these limits lends to more engaging play, allowing children to explore materials collaboratively, as well as contributing to lessening of challenging behaviors around space and materials when an area is overcrowded.
- ✓ **Center Labels:** Centers of learning in the classroom should have visual labels that depict what the center is and what happens there. These should be posted at the students’ eye level. For example, the art easels should have a visual that might show an easel and a paint brush. These center labels enhance children’s ability to make independent choices as to their interests and enables them to be more likely to engage in activities.
- ✓ **Boundary Markers and Stop Signs:** Boundary markers and stop signs should be employed as visual signs discriminating “teacher” areas from “student” areas. Stop signs on exit doors are a visual reminder that they may not open doors, enhancing the safety of the classroom.

There are other important environmental considerations that should be implemented into a high-quality preschool classroom. The first of these is the shift of learning activities and materials throughout the program year. Activities and materials should change over the course of the program year, following children’s interests and developmental levels. This helps not only to keep children engaged in learning, but also making gains toward child outcome and school readiness.

An environmental checklist, with the above elements and indicators of a high-quality program, should be utilized multiple times through the course of the program year. This ensures that staff are continuing to be consistent with environmental quality and use of tools that enable children’s success during the program. Please see Appendix D for a sample environmental checklist.

## Daily Schedule

A daily schedule should be designed, including all components of the preschool school day. When designing your daily schedule there should be an appropriate amount of time to include the following components:

- Morning Meeting/gathering
- Read aloud
- Centers
- Specials (if provided)
- Outdoor time (40 to 60 minutes depending on program hours)
- Mealtimes
- Rest time: Full day programs require a rest time period
- Whole group or small group time
- Other: scheduled components as specified by the curriculum
- Departure

When designing daily schedules, be mindful that component arrangement during the day is important. For example, morning meeting is a whole group time where teachers provide students with the expectations of the day, among other things. This needs to happen in the morning to provide students with an idea of how their day will go. Being considerate of existing scheduled pieces of the day specific to the entire school, such as mealtime and outdoor time, will be helpful in planning. Please see Appendix E for samples of daily schedules.

### **Positive Interactions**

Staff interactions with children should be conducted with positive leads, such as giving guidance by telling a student what they should be doing, as opposed what they should not be doing. Staff who are modeling kindness and respect and who are attentive to their classrooms foster confidence and security amongst their students. In classrooms with positive, high-quality teacher-student interactions, children experience greater working memory and gains in math, and teachers report less conflict with individual students (Chapdelaine, 2020). Make your positive interaction strategies known to families and caregivers. Additional resources for positive behavior interactions can be found on the website for [Center on Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports](#) (PBIS).

### **Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth (PEPG)**

Rule Chapter 180, adopted by the Maine DOE in April 2014, requires that the Department “develop at least one complete State Model PEPG system for teachers and at least one complete State Model PEPG system for principals.”

All teachers employed by the SAU will be required to participate in the SAU’s PEPG system. [Additional information](#) can be found on the Maine DOE’s website.

### **Transportation**

Though not required, when a school transports a public preschool child, it is recommended that the standard of care offered to public preschool students meet the standard of care as defined by “Guideline for the Safe Transportation of Preschool Age Children in School Buses,” which is provided by the National Highway Transportation Safety Agency. Children should be in a child safety restraint system (CSRS) appropriate for the age, weight and height of the student. Consider having at least one aide on board the bus to assist with loading, unloading, correct securement of a CSRS and for behavior and emotional support. Transportation offices should offer training, communication and operational policy items for drivers, aides, parents, students and routes.

Districts who provide transportation for their preschool students often experience higher levels of attendance, thereby increasing student outcomes (North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation, 2019). For additional information regarding the safe and lawful transportation of young children, visit [the Department’s transportation page](#).

# STUDENT SUPPORT



Key learning experiences during the first 8 years of a young child’s life include children learning to identify and handle strong emotions, playing with peers socially and responding positively to adults. Adults in a preschool setting play an important role when guiding and facilitating these learning experiences. Teachers should be prepared to respond to, and help prevent, challenging behaviors. It is important to remember that these behaviors have a meaning behind them, and it is the adult’s job to translate the meaning and offer supports appropriately. Providing support to young children should be done in a purposeful, sequential manner.

## Classroom Management

In a high quality preschool program, teaching staff should practice high level behavior management. In order to do this, teachers should be consistent and clear in stating universal expectations, be frequent in their reminders, and offer positive reinforcement when followed. Teaching staff should proactively monitor the classroom, in order to prevent problems and concerns from developing, but also providing students opportunities to solve social problems on their own, prior to intervening. Classroom management includes the teaching staff’s ability to effectively redirect students when needed, while continuing learning opportunities.

It is important to understand that preschool age children often have difficulty in managing their emotions while they are beginning to build executive functioning and social-emotional skills, including problem solving, empathy, impulse control and emotional regulation. Often children have not had a classroom experience prior to enrolling in a public preschool program. These, and other factors, can cause children to exhibit less than desired behaviors. Employing strong positive classroom management skills can help to minimize the opportunity for challenging behaviors, while capitalizing on productive instructional time where students become engaged with activities, peers and teachers in a more desired way.

Additionally, it is important to note that behavioral norms vary from culture to culture and from family to family. Every effort should be made to partner with families to understand and clarify all expectations of the classroom as well as acknowledge the behavioral norms families convey.

## Social and Emotional Curriculums

Many preschool classrooms often implement social and emotional learning (SEL) curricula. These are meant to support the teacher in designing lessons to better engage and model appropriate behavior when experiencing a variety of emotions. Examples of SEL curricula can be found on the Resources page. Additionally, the DOE has recently launched its own free to use, comprehensive, CASEL-aligned and trauma-informed, PreK-12th grade [SEL4ME](#) curriculum.

## Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

All school administrative units are required to develop and implement a multi-tiered system of support in preschool that provides each child with differentiated learning experiences and/or assistance to achieve social and emotional development, and to meet Maine’s Early Learning and Development Standards. These supports must be specific, timely, and based upon ongoing formative assessments that continuously monitor student progress. A multi-tiered system of support has three distinct levels of intervention available to general education students:

**Tier I** – Universal Supports. This tier begins with the implementation of core curriculum, including strategies to assist student development and learning. Typically, these supports are differentiated based on student need and provided to all students within the classroom. Tier I support continues when Tier II or Tier III interventions are added.

**Tier II** – Targeted Supports. Supplemental instruction or supports provided to students in addition to Tier 1. These may be provided by qualified staff, including, but not limited to, the classroom teacher, an intervention specialist, or an authorized Educational Technician. Targeted support may involve more intensive practice and/or monitoring of regular classroom activities.

**Tier III** – Intensive Supports. Intensive instruction or supports provided to students through small group or one-to-one interventions, within the classroom or through an individualized environment, with an increased focus on teaching specific skills.

More information can be found at on the Maine DOE’s [MTSS website](#).

## English Learners/Dual Language Learners

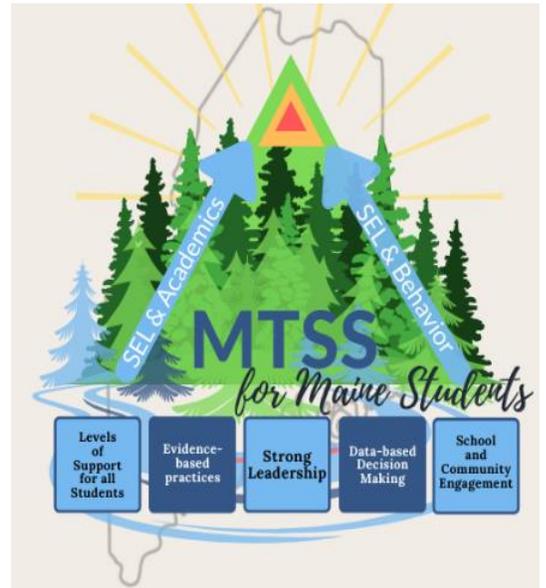
English learners are students with a primary or home language other than English. Schools that serve English learners offer a variety of supports to ensure that these students can meet the same challenging academic standards as their peers while also acquiring English.

Young children acquiring two (or more) languages are Dual language learners (DLLs). Early childhood programs serve an essential role in ensuring that families are encouraged and supported in helping children develop their home language(s) and English simultaneously. It may be necessary to counter misconceptions regarding language acquisition by emphasizing that multilingualism has enormous benefits cognitively, academically, socially, and emotionally.

The Maine Department of Education provides resources, guidance, and professional development to schools regarding language teaching and assessment, educational equity, state and federal policies, and many other related topics. More information can be found on the Maine DOE [English Learner website pages](#).

## Special Education Screening and Referrals

In Maine, special education services for children birth through 5 years old are overseen through an Intermediate Educational Unit known as [Child Development Services](#) (CDS). An IEP team will determine



the least restrictive environment (LRE) for children to receive special education services, which may be a public pre-k program.

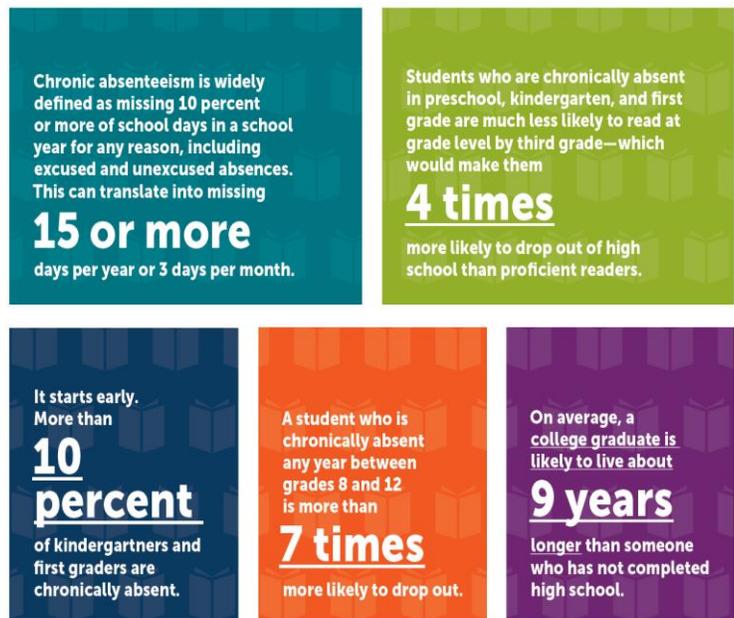
CDS consists of nine regional sites and a state office. The state CDS office maintains a central data management system, system-wide policies and procedures, and provides centralized fiscal services for regional CDS sites.

Regional CDS sites provide case management and direct instruction for families with children from birth through age five. Each site conducts Child Find, which is the process of conducting screening and evaluations in order to identify children who may have disabilities and be eligible for services. Regional CDS sites arrange for local services that include early intervention and special education and related services for eligible children from birth to age five and their families.

Before being referred to CDS for special education services, every child entering the preschool program must receive a research-based developmental screening. If a concern arises regarding the child's development, the SAU is required to implement a general education intervention process prior to referral, unless the SAU and parent agree that one is not needed. The SAU's policy or procedures for staff referrals must document the specific concerns of the staff member, the alternatives attempted prior to referral, and parent notification of concerns by the referring party. Prior to any referral, assure that the individual child's language development is not misunderstood as a learning disability or behavioral concern.

### Attendance & Modified Schedule Guidance

Though enrollment in a preschool program is voluntary, once a student does enroll, attendance is very important. Attendance in a preschool classroom is a significant factor in stronger child outcomes and contributes to school readiness. Research demonstrates that children who attend a quality early education program regularly show higher proficiency in both reading and math in later elementary years. It is also understood that poor attendance habits in the early years of education lead to higher chronic absenteeism rates in later grades. Establishing strong attendance habits in Preschool can lead to healthy attendance in later grades. Programs should adopt an attendance policy or follow the SAUs current policy for follow up with families when students miss school.



Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2016

## Suspension and Expulsion



Source: Parents with Confidence, 2020

One goal of early childhood programs is to prepare young children to be successful in school. Suspending and/or expelling young students interrupts their learning and serves as a hindrance to accomplishing that goal. More importantly, suspending or expelling young children is not an age-appropriate method for addressing behavioral problems. There are no beneficial short-term or long-term outcomes for a child when he/she cannot be in school to receive needed support services due to out of class or school disciplinary measures. Typically, expulsion is the result of a student displaying challenging and unsafe behaviors in the school environment. Teachers may not have had sufficient training regarding the skills and strategies needed to respond positively and effectively to these situations. This can lead staff to feeling overwhelmed and stressed, which can negatively impact overall classroom management and climate. Children often display fewer desirable behaviors in reaction to trauma, or situations outside of the school environment, of which teaching staff may not be aware. Limited amounts of support staff in preschool classrooms can make it difficult to manage challenging behaviors.

The act of expulsion with this age group has many negative outcomes for children. Gilliam (2005) states that “pre-k expulsion rate is 3.2 times higher than those in K-12<sup>th</sup> grades... with boys being 4.5 times more likely to be expelled than girls” (p.1).

When students are not in the classroom, there is a loss of both learning and socialization time, along with lack of time that students will spend with positive adult role models in the classroom. This contributes to a loss of developmental opportunities and skill practice, including social and emotional learning. Expulsion at this age can trigger a negative self-concept for our youngest learners, which can lead to ongoing undesired behavior in later grades, coupled with a negative outlook toward school and learning. Families also suffer a hardship due to stress and possible financial challenges related to expulsion, and this can lead to harsher and less effective parenting strategies at home.

Programs should be prepared to adopt mental health consultation services and supports to implement within the classroom. They should be collaborating with families regarding the home environment and possible causes of challenging behaviors at home and school. Staff should be provided with de-escalation strategies and training around social and emotional learning for preschool students.

# COLLABORATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

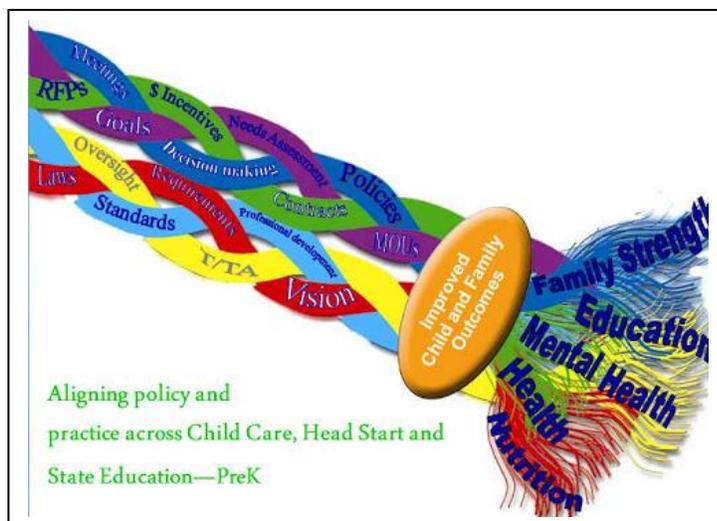
## Local Community Needs

A high-quality preschool program will only be beneficial if it addresses the local community's needs for early childhood care and education. As part of planning for the addition and/or expansion of public preschool, schools must demonstrate coordination with other early childhood programs in the community to maximize resources. Consider employing the following strategies to develop a better understanding of your local community's needs.

- Conduct a local community assessment to identify existing education and special education services being provided to preschool-age children and their families, and to determine existing gaps in opportunities for preschool-age children and their families.
  - Assure that methods for collecting local community assessments are accessible and culturally responsive, (e.g. translation services if needed, outreach through multiple means, etc.).
- Survey parents with young children regarding their needs for childcare and their desires for educational opportunities for their young children.
- Examine recent kindergarten enrollment numbers to estimate your potential preschool population.
- Establish or work to maintain partnerships and collaborations
  - Send letters and emails to initiate conversations with local childcare providers, Head Start agencies and/or other programs serving young children in the community.
  - Meet via telephone or in-person to follow-up on introductions and discuss plans to work together to fill existing gaps for children and improve options for families.
  - Consider establishing a formal partnership with a local childcare provider or Head Start agency to provide public preschool.

## Partnerships with Other Programs

Schools should think innovatively in forming partnerships with other early care and education programs as well as culturally-based community organizations. Partnerships may involve blending and braiding of funding or even “outsourcing” preschool programming and services in the partner’s setting. When forming partnerships, remain considerate of the regulations and expectations that inform each partner’s work. Schools can use “partnerships to align school and community resources in order to produce successful students, strong families, and engaged communities” (Blank, Jacobson, & Melaville, 2012, p. 1). Remain communicative and set clear parameters around ongoing relationship building. Identify common goals that can serve as the glue to connect each other’s work toward improving educational programming and services for young children and their families. Appendix F offers examples of the variety of ways public schools can partner with outside providers.



Appendix F offers examples of the variety of ways public schools can partner with outside providers.

“Partnering with a community program has established relationships with more families as well as the ability to screen more children.”

## Partner Quality and Accountability

When entering into partnerships with public preschools, early care and education providers must demonstrate high quality programming. A copy of the partner's [Quality Rating and Improvement System](#) certificate documenting achievement of at least a level 3 out of 4 on the current four-step scale or of at least a 4 out of 5 on the star rating scale is strongly encouraged. Partners that have not yet achieved this level on the rating scale need to show proof of compliance with Chapter 124.

"We have worked with our partners to successfully share expertise and resources between our programs."  
RSU 75

"Partnering has provided additional Pre-K slots for our community members. It has also connected families to an accredited center that can provide extended care and services in a neighborhood where we do not have a school in the immediate proximity."  
South Portland

"We're able to collaborate with professional development opportunities and provide wrap around care. The Head Start model provides services that the district cannot, such as family services support."  
Portland

"Partnering has given us access to more students and continuity of curriculum and professional development."  
RSU 1

"Within our partnership with RSU 50, we've benefitted greatly from the additional classroom space! We also have access to library, gym, art, the playground and substitutes provided by the SAU."  
Aroostook County Action Program

# PRESCHOOL BUDGETS

When operating a public preschool classroom, certain financial obligations must be considered. Programs generally have start-up costs as well as operating costs. If a public preschool operates within a partnership, further conversations must take place to assure all parties agree and contribute fairly to its operation. To assist SAUs, a generic annual budget for operating a preschool classroom can be found in Appendix G.

## Essential Programs and Services (EPS Formula)

SAUs who operate approved public preschool programs will receive funding through the EPS formula and local contributions. For more information, visit the Maine Department of Education's guidance [here](#).

### Financial items to consider:

- Staff salaries: Consider pay parity across organizations if in a partnership.
- Space & Materials: Well-equipped classrooms have sufficient materials to meet children's needs in terms of quality, quantity, space and curriculum. Refer to Appendix H for a list of early child centers and materials.
- Space renovations: Does the classroom meet space requirements? Does the classroom have natural lighting, a water source, and a restroom within 30 feet?
- Curriculum: Is an evidence-based curriculum available? Are specific materials and professional development necessary to implement it with fidelity available?
- Outdoor space: This should be well maintained, offer at least 75 square feet per child, be enclosed with natural or manmade fencing and offer space and materials to foster both gross and fine motor development as well as social interaction.
- Fire and Code Compliance: Have you checked with the local fire marshal for specific requirements?

## Blending and Braiding Funding

In order for programs to effectively deliver high-quality, comprehensive, early education programming to young children and families, SAUs are encouraged to maximize public and private sector investments by accessing funds from multiple sources. Combining funding streams is referred to as "blending" and/or "braiding" funds (Fonseca, 2017).

- Blended...funds from two or more separate sources are wrapped together...to pay for a unified set of services to a group of children. In blending, costs are not necessarily allocated and tracked by individual funding source.
- Braided...two or more funding sources are coordinated to support the total cost of services to individual children, but revenues are allocated, and expenditures tracked by categorical funding source. In braiding, cost allocation methods are required to assure that there is no duplicate funding of service costs and each funding source is charged its fair share of program and administrative costs.

For examples of braided or blended funding sources refer to Appendix I.

## Title IA

Title IA dollars may be used to fund or partially fund preschool programs at eligible schools by redirecting existing Title IA funds to support preschool. If SAUs choose to have a Title IA school-wide program at the elementary site, all children in that school's attendance boundary are eligible to attend including preschool students. In order to determine children most at risk, SAUs will need to have a student selection process in place if there is not enough space for all children to attend. Federal regulations establish that Head Start eligible children, homeless children, and foster children automatically qualify.

In Title IA Targeted Assistance programs, a student identification process needs to be used. The SAU and the school can determine the identification process for PK-2<sup>nd</sup> grade based on “objective criteria” (ESEA Sec 1114 I(B)). The table below compares targeted assistance and schoolwide programs.

<b>Targeted</b>	<b>Schoolwide</b>
“On-going” monitoring must be in place for identified, participating students	“On-going” review of Comprehensive Needs Assessment (I)/Schoolwide Plan; “On-going” monitoring for all students
Title IA teachers and paraprofessionals must meet state certification requirements	All teachers and paraprofessionals in the school must meet state certification requirements
PD focused on staff who provide direct support to Title IA identified students and is aligned to these students’ needs	PD for all staff to support all students and promote school reform (based on I)
School must have 35% poverty rate	School must have 40% poverty rate (or be granted a waiver)
Identify the most “at-risk” students for services; Determine eligibility to receive Title IA services	All students can receive additional services; No student identification for eligibility; Most “at-risk” students are given additional assistance; All students and staff are considered Title IA
Resources used for only “eligible” students	Resources used to improve instruction for all students and promote school reform
Program based on needs of “identified, eligible” students	-Comprehensive Needs Assessment/School plan outlines how both school and Title IA resources will be used to meet identified needs of students schoolwide -Parents are involved in schoolwide plan development, revision, and review
Parents need to be notified of students’ Title IA eligibility, on-going progress, and intervention plan	No parent notification of additional services to students necessary
Parent and family engagement activities only provided to parents and families of participating students	Parent and family engagement activities are provided to all parents and families in the school

SAUs cannot use Title IA funds to implement a preschool program throughout the school unit that benefits all preschool students unless all schools in the SAU are operating Schoolwide Title IA programs. Keep in mind that you can blend and braid funding in the same classroom. A Title IA eligible school can serve both children who are eligible for Title IA services and those who are not eligible in the same classroom.

Teachers paid with Title IA funds in a Targeted Assistance Program and all teachers in a Schoolwide Program must meet applicable State certification requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned. Teacher certification requirements are defined in Chapter 115. This also applies to Title IA Ed Techs in Targeted Assistance Program and all Ed Techs in Schoolwide programs who must also meet state requirements including an ESEA endorsement. An ESEA endorsement requires 2 years or 48 semester hours of post-secondary education or a passing score on the ParaPro.

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Engagement means building relationships among schools, families and communities to support learning and development (Baker, Wise, Kelley, & Skiba, 2016). Effective, sustainable engagement is:

- culturally competent and responsive to all families;
- shared responsibility of schools, families, and communities;
- continuous from birth throughout adulthood;
- happens in homes, early care and education settings, schools, and communities; and
- operates with capacity and partnerships.

Currently, schools across Maine offer a wide variety of resources, activities, and practices that inform families of upcoming events, involve them in planned activities within classrooms, and inspire teachers and leaders to connect with families and their greater school community. Each classroom and school community are unique and should be thoughtfully examined to determine the best fit for children and their families. Below are some innovative examples teachers and school leaders might consider to inform their practices and engage families in a deep and meaningful manner.

<i>Low Impact Strategies</i>	<i>Moderate Impact Strategies</i>	<i>High Impact Strategies</i>
Preschool registration on program website or drop in.	Open house for new families, hosted by current families.	Staff, families and childcare providers do neighborhood walks to <b>meet and connect</b> with prospective families and hand out program information, books, and growth charts.
Back to School Night. Families visit classrooms, meet teachers, and have refreshments.	Family Night. Families visit classrooms, meet teachers, view children’s work, sign-up to volunteer, and receive a family phone tree compiled by staff.	Preschool families share family engagement strategies with new families in <b>familiar neighborhood settings</b> and sign them up for things like Parent Teacher Home Visits, Ready4K, and Community Café. Short videos of families’ sharing are sent with texts or emails to families who couldn’t attend, with <b>sign-up sheets and surveys attached</b> .
Program newsletter with generic messaging.	Monthly phone calls, emails, or texts with information on program activities.	A program communication app, which creates <b>two-way communication and ongoing</b> exchange of knowledge between families and teachers.
Family -Teacher Conferences by appointment during workdays.	Family-Teacher Conferences twice a year, available evenings and on weekends.	Family-Teacher Home Visits quarterly. Teachers visit in the fall to launch relationships and in winter and spring to share information to <b>support smooth transition to kindergarten</b> .

## Questions to consider when thinking about Family Engagement:

1. When a family/community member enters my school, is the environment welcoming?
2. Is there signage indicating a family’s right to interpretation/translation and instructions for accessing those services?
3. Are all staff trained in communicating with culturally- and linguistically diverse families?
4. When a family/community member enters my school, are they greeted with a smile and asked how they can be helped?
5. Do families know who they can ask for questions related to their child? Meals? Function of school? Bus rides?
6. Is there a platform that teachers use to communicate? Does it expand across all grades or does a parent need to learn a new technique each year?
7. How often are teachers/leaders reaching out to individual parents? Is it only when there are concerns or when something amazing happens?
8. How are families engaged during the transition process into preschool and Kindergarten?

# TRANSITION TO PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN

Attention to [transitions](#) to programs, and between classrooms, sets a positive tone for future experiences with teachers and families and sets children up for a successful outlook for school in general. Programs should have transition plans in place for new students entering preschool, as well as children transitioning into Kindergarten at the end of the program year. Strategies to consider when developing a transition plan for new students enrolling in a preschool program:

- Organize visits to the classroom and with teachers prior to the first day of school
- Meet with families to discuss home language, preferred communication methods, transition concerns and supports, Individual Education Plan (IEP) services and health considerations for children, and program information
- Ensure that dual language families have information in preferred language and support completing registration documents
- Schedule and notify parents of screening days, including developmental and behavioral, and hearing and vision screenings
- Contact CDS for IEP information and scheduling of services for children with current IEP plans

Opportunities for educators to consider when developing a preschool to Kindergarten transition plan:

- Encourage joint professional development opportunities for education staff from preschool programs and kindergarten classrooms.
- Visit the learning settings of partner schools, programs, and classrooms
- Collaborate to develop common routines and language used in early learning and kindergarten classroom settings.
- Attend CDS/public school transition meetings for children with transferring IEP plans.
- Participate in meetings between preschool and kindergarten educators to discuss and coordinate:
  - Strengths-based child data,
  - Special information for supporting individual children and their families,
  - Classroom routines and procedures, and
  - Learning standards, instruction, and assessment as well as child/classroom placement.

# TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & SUPPORT

## Technical Assistance

The Department's goal is to support SAUs and their community partners in many aspects of public Pre-K program start-up and ongoing high-quality programming resources. To meet this goal, Early Childhood (EC) representatives from the Department offer many forms of Technical Assistance. These optional supports include the following:

- ❖ Consultation and site visits: Prior to applying, the EC Specialist and EC Monitor are available to meet with SAU representatives to discuss high quality classroom arrangement, playground requirements, best practice strategies as well as any other early childhood questions or concerns.
- ❖ Consultation and technical assistance are also available through Child Development Services to assist with inclusion of all students.
- ❖ Application support for new and expanding programs.
- ❖ Consultation and site visits for all approved Pre-K programs during the school year that could include:
  - Pre-K for ME curriculum support.
  - C.L.A.S.S.<sup>TM</sup> observation and reporting: The EC Monitor at the Department conducts classroom observations using the C.L.A.S.S.<sup>TM</sup> observation tool. Observation includes a 2-hour visit to the classroom, meeting with school officials and classroom teacher(s), and a final report used to inform educators of quality of interactions within the classroom, and next steps for educators.
  - In-person or virtual meetings to discuss successes and challenges of operation.
  - Support for curriculum and assessment implementation as well as review of materials and classroom environment.
  - Sharing of materials and resources.
- ❖ Professional development opportunities which can be found on the Maine DOE [professional development Calendar](#).
- ❖ Open Office hours for Early Childhood professionals.
- ❖ Webinars and trainings: Housed on the DOE's [webinar library](#) are many Professional Development training videos and webinars geared around topics of best practice in the early childhood field.

If you're interested in having an Early Childhood representative assist with any of the above needs please reach out to [nicole.madore@maine.gov](mailto:nicole.madore@maine.gov) or [marcy.r.whitcomb@maine.gov](mailto:marcy.r.whitcomb@maine.gov)



# RESOURCES

## Child Development Services Regional Site Contact Information:

- CDS Webpage <https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/cds/contact>

## Preschool Curricula:

- PreK4ME – An open source preschool curriculum from the Maine Department of Education  
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/earlychildhood/PreK4ME>
- Curriculum Consumer Report outlines 16 preschool curriculum programs for both in classroom and online learning including reviews, ratings and a brief overview  
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/curriculum/consumer-report/preschool/curricula>
- Social Emotional Curricula:  
SEL Specialists at the Department of Education have worked to build a free and readily available web-based low barrier Social Emotional curriculum that is available to any school district across the state in order to meet the diverse needs of our student population. More information is available at <https://www.maine.gov/doe/sel/sel4me>.

## Screening Tools:

- Early Childhood Development, an office of the Administration for Children and Families-A Resource Collection Focused on Developmental and Behavioral Screenings <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/child-health-development/watch-me-thrive/resources>
- Educare Pilot Screening Report (PDF): <https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Educare%20Pilot%20Screening%20Report.pdf>
- Training to Screen Young English Language Learners and Dual Language Learners for Disabilities (PDF): <https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/ASSESSMENT%20Training-to-Screen-Young-ELLs-and-DLLs-for-Disabilities%5B1%5D.pdf>

## Assessments:

- Early Childhood Assessment: Implementing Effective Practice (PDF)  
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/EarlyChildhoodAssessment-ImplementingEffectivePractice%5B1%5D.pdf>
- Teaching Strategies Gold & MELDS Crosswalk (PDF)  
[http://www2.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/TSG%20MELDS%20crosswalk\\_0.pdf](http://www2.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/TSG%20MELDS%20crosswalk_0.pdf)

## General Early Childhood Resources:

- Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System <https://teachstone.com/class/>
- National Institution for Early Education Research <http://nieer.org/>
- National Association of Elementary School Principals <https://www.naesp.org/>
- National Association for the Education of Young Children <https://www.naeyc.org/>

# HYPERLINKS

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Maine DOE Early Childhood Website: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/earlychildhood>

Maine Head Start agencies: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/earlychildhood/headstart/grantees>

Maine family, center-based and community partners: <https://childcarechoices.me/>

## Page 1

Basic Approval Standards: Public Preschool Programs: <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/05/chaps05.htm>

Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards: [https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doefiles/inline-files/MELDS\\_Re-Print\\_1.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doefiles/inline-files/MELDS_Re-Print_1.pdf)

## Page 3

Curriculum Consumer Report: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/curriculum/consumer-report/preschool/curricula>

Pre-K for ME Curriculum: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/earlychildhood/PreK4ME>

## Page 6

Center on Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS): <https://www.pbis.org/topics/early-childhood-pbis>

PEPG Examples:

The Framework for Teaching (Charlotte Danielson): <https://www.danielsongroup.org/framework/>

The Marzano Art and Science of Teaching Framework: <http://www.marzanoevaluation.com/>

Marshall Teacher Evaluation Rubrics: <https://mainedoews.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/marshall-teacher-evaluation-rubrics-jan-2014.pdf>

MSAD 49 Teacher Evaluation Rubric: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doefiles/inline-files/MSAD49-Teacher-Evaluation-Rubric.docx>

Transportation: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/transportation>

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Maine SEL4ME Curriculum: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/sel/sel4me>

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Multi-Tiered Systems of Support: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/mtss>

English Learners: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/englishlearners>

Child Development Services: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/cds>

## Page 12

Quality Rating and Improvement System: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/qualityforme.htm>

## Page 13

Essential Programs and Services (EPS): <https://www.maine.gov/doe/funding/gpa/eps>

## **Page 16**

Transition into public school: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/earlychildhood>

## **Page 17**

Maine DOE professional development calendar: [www.maine.gov/doe/calendar](http://www.maine.gov/doe/calendar)

Maine DOE webinar library: [www.maine.gov/doe/webinarlibrary](http://www.maine.gov/doe/webinarlibrary)

## **Appendix C**

Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG): <https://teachingstrategies.com/solutions/assess/gold/>

Child Observation Record (COR): <https://highscope.org/assessment/child>

Work Sampling System: <https://www.pearsonclinical.com/childhood/products/100000755/the-work-sampling-system-5<sup>th</sup>-edition.html>

## **Appendix G**

Preschool budget: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mWqMLa\\_qY3w2SeC6RRmcp8PQI5dRV0b1/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mWqMLa_qY3w2SeC6RRmcp8PQI5dRV0b1/view?usp=sharing)

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Maine Colleges and Universities Offering Early Childhood Education Programs and 081 Certification Eligibility

Maine's Community College System can be found here: <https://www.mccs.me.edu/>

The following campuses offer Associate Degrees in Early Childhood Education (educators with Associate Degrees do not hold eligibility for Maine DOE 081 Certification):

- Central Maine Community College, Auburn
- Eastern Maine Community College, Bangor/Dover-Foxcroft/East Millinocket
- Kennebec Valley Community College, Fairfield/Hinckley
- Northern Maine Community College, Presque Isle
- Southern Maine Community College, South Portland/Brunswick
- Washington County Community College, Calais
- York County Community College, Wells

The University of Maine System can be found here: <https://www.maine.edu/>

- The University of Maine, Orono Campus offers a bachelor's degree program with a concentration in Child Development and Family Relations and Maine DOE 081 certification eligibility upon completion.
- The University of Maine, Farmington Campus offers a Bachelor of Science: Early Childhood Education and Bachelor of Science: Early Childhood Special Education programs, with Maine DOE 081 certification eligibility upon completion.
- The University of Maine, Augusta campus offers an Early Childhood Teacher Certificate with courses that meet the Maine DOE 081 Certification eligibility upon program completion (candidates must hold a Baccalaureate Degree from a Regionally Accredited Institution).

Other Institutions in Maine offering Early Childhood Education Programs:

- Thomas College, Waterville; <https://www.thomas.edu/academics/> Offers a Bachelor of Science: Early Childhood Education program with Maine DOE 081 certification eligibility upon completion

Information regarding 081 Certification requirements through the Maine Department of Education can be found here: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/cert/requirements>.

## Appendix B: Sample Enrollment Policy

To: RSU01 Families

From:

Re: **Pre-K Lottery Registration Information & Deadline**

Date: March 1, 2021

It is our hope that this memo will serve to clarify any questions regarding our district's pre-k programs. To begin, our pre-k programs seek to serve our local schools first, (Identify what schools). Each child registered for the lottery will have an opportunity for selection. Our goal is to have classrooms made up of students who qualify for special education services (up to 20%: Lottery A) economically disadvantaged services (up to 40%: Lottery B), as well as those who do not (40% or more: Lottery C). Once all openings have been filled by local residents (meeting the identified district criteria), we will reach out to district community members who are on a waitlist to determine interest in program admittance should spaces become available. Please review the district's criteria below to understand our program admittance criteria:

Pre-K Program Eligibility Criteria		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students must be 4 years old by Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> and are not of kindergarten age.</li> <li>Complete <i>Lottery Registration Form</i> (required) and <i>Free &amp; Reduced Lunch Application Form</i> (optional).</li> <li>Form(s) must be completed and submitted by <b><u>March 30, 2021</u></b>.</li> </ul>		
Lottery A	Lottery B	Lottery C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children who currently have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) (determined by <i>Child Development Services</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children who qualify for economically disadvantaged services (determined by <i>Free &amp; Reduced Lunch Application Form</i>).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children who do not qualify for economically disadvantaged services OR do not complete the <i>Free &amp; Reduced Lunch Application Form</i>.</li> </ul>

Included are the forms that you will need to complete in order to be considered for admittance for our pre-k program. After you have filled in the information, please return all forms to your local school's main office. Our goal is to make program notifications b (date). Once all openings have been filled by lottery, remaining names will be drawn to create a waiting list should room become available. Any interest from local school residents received after the lottery is complete and notification has taken place will be placed on the waiting list.

If you know of any community families who may have an eligible student, please feel free to share this information. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your local school's main office.

Sincerely,

RSU 01 Administration

*\*This is an example only. Percentages of students in each lottery could match that of your individual school district\**

## **Appendix C: Assessment**

Students in a public preschool classroom must have their growth and development formatively assessed in a manner that is developmentally appropriate and based on observation. Assessments work to apprise teaching staff of children’s developmental levels and inform activities and learning toward better child outcomes and school readiness.

Below is a list of assessment tools used in a number of Maine’s public preschools that reflect the expectations for assessment in Chapter 124. Maine DOE offers these as examples.

[Teaching Strategies Gold](#)

[Child Observation Record](#)

[The Work Sampling System](#)

## Appendix D: Environmental Checklist

<b>Center Areas are Clearly Defined:</b>	<b>Dramatic play</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Center Labeled <input type="checkbox"/> Center Limit sign <input type="checkbox"/> Clear Expectations posted <input type="checkbox"/> Materials Easily accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient number of materials match the number of students in area	<b>Library area</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Center Labeled <input type="checkbox"/> Center Limit sign <input type="checkbox"/> Clear Expectations posted <input type="checkbox"/> Materials Easily accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient number of materials match the number of students in area	<b>Writing Area</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Center Labeled <input type="checkbox"/> Center Limit sign <input type="checkbox"/> Clear Expectations posted <input type="checkbox"/> Materials Easily accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient number of materials match the number of students in area	<b>Blocks Area/Building</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Center Labeled <input type="checkbox"/> Center Limit sign <input type="checkbox"/> Clear Expectations posted <input type="checkbox"/> Materials Easily accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient number of materials match the number of students in area
	<b>Art Area</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Center Labeled <input type="checkbox"/> Center Limit sign <input type="checkbox"/> Clear Expectations posted <input type="checkbox"/> Materials Easily accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient number of materials match the number of students in area	<b>Easels</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Center Labeled <input type="checkbox"/> Center Limit sign <input type="checkbox"/> Clear Expectations posted <input type="checkbox"/> Materials Easily accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient number of materials match the number of students in area	<b>Manipulative/Mat h</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Center Labeled <input type="checkbox"/> Center Limit sign <input type="checkbox"/> Clear Expectations posted <input type="checkbox"/> Materials Easily accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient number of materials match the number of students in area	<b>Science/Discovery</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Center Labeled <input type="checkbox"/> Center Limit sign <input type="checkbox"/> Clear Expectations posted <input type="checkbox"/> Materials Easily accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient number of materials match the number of students in area
	<b>Listening Center</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Center Labeled <input type="checkbox"/> Center Limit sign <input type="checkbox"/> Clear Expectations posted <input type="checkbox"/> Materials Easily accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient number of materials match the number of students in area	<b>Quiet/Alone Space</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Center Labeled <input type="checkbox"/> Center Limit sign <input type="checkbox"/> Clear Expectations posted <input type="checkbox"/> Materials Easily accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient number of materials match the number of students in area	<b>Sensory Tables</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Center Labeled <input type="checkbox"/> Center Limit sign <input type="checkbox"/> Clear Expectations posted <input type="checkbox"/> Materials Easily accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient number of materials match the number of students in area	<b>Other:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Center Labeled <input type="checkbox"/> Center Limit sign <input type="checkbox"/> Clear Expectations posted <input type="checkbox"/> Materials Easily accessible <input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient number of materials match the number of students in area
<b>Furniture</b>	Is the furniture in good repair	Appropriate sizes for children and adults	Is furniture safely secured as needed?	
<b>Materials</b>	Are materials in good repair?	Are pieces missing making use of material frustrating?	Are there enough materials for children to explore?	
<b>Overall Room</b>	Is there visible clutter?	Are the wall decorations too high or too low	Is the room over stimulating? (bright/loud)	Are posters used appropriate and do they serve a purpose?
<b>Posted Visuals</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily Schedule	<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Rules & Expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> Center Rules at each center	

	<input type="checkbox"/> Center student limits	<input type="checkbox"/> Center Labels	<input type="checkbox"/> Student boundaries	
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Stop Signs	<input type="checkbox"/> Cubbies/student storage space labeled		
<b>Space Availability</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Space for Whole Group Meeting	<input type="checkbox"/> Quiet areas separated from active areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Children/teachers can move freely about	
<b>Print Environment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Children's work displayed	<input type="checkbox"/> Children's names displayed	<input type="checkbox"/> Alphabet cards are posted at child eye level	
<b>Books/reading</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate number of books on display	<input type="checkbox"/> Books displayed at child level	<input type="checkbox"/> Texts extended beyond library	

## Appendix E: Daily Schedules

The following are *sample* schedules. Scheduling and structure of components are flexible and will be dependent on individual contexts. Outdoor nature-based programs can follow similar timeframes. Curriculum components and meals will take place outdoors.

### Full Day Program's

Full Day Program (5.5-6 hours)	Component
10-15 minutes	Arrival
15-30 minutes	Breakfast
60-75 minutes	Curriculum Components- Include whole group as well as individual time within well-prepared/intentional centers
45-60 minutes	Outside Play
20-30 minutes	Lunch
45-60 minutes	Rest
30-40 minutes	Curriculum Components
30-45 minutes	Snack & Outdoor play
15 minutes	Clean up & Dismissal

### Half Day Program's

Half Day Program (2.5-4 hours)	Component
10-15 minutes	Arrival
50-60 minutes	Curriculum Components- Include whole group as well as individual time within well prepared/intentional centers
15-20 minutes	Snack
30-45 minutes	Outside Play
30-60 minutes	Curriculum Components
15-20 minutes	Clean up & Dismissal

## Appendix F: Collaboration Checklist

<b>General Information</b>	<b>Date included in contract</b>	<b>Date changed in Contract</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>
Identification of partners entering into the collaborative contract			
Partners' affiliation and legal status			
Contractual Period			
Contract amendments, renewal, and termination procedures			
Role of each partner's decision-making bodies in the contractual development and approval process			
Compliance with local, state, and federal regulations and policies			
Conflict of interest statements and prohibited activities			
Liability/insurance			
Travel policies			
Signature of key parties and date of signing			
Storage, maintenance, and access of records			
Parent partnership plans			
<b>Preschool Collaborative System: Classrooms, Collaboration, and Partnerships</b>	<b>Date included in contract</b>	<b>Date changed in Contract</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>
School Calendar			
Number of children served: hours, days, weeks of operation			
Application and Enrollment process			
Enrollment requirements- Disabilities, medical, dental services, recordkeeping			
Inclusive Settings and Services for children with special needs			

Location of Services			
Attendance procedures			
Transportation process and training			
Meal Service			
Special Dietary Needs provisions			
Each partner's role in service delivery: child education, child/family health, mental health, disabilities, nutrition, family services/ parent involvement, home visits/conferences, meeting, recordkeeping, transportation, supervision, oversight			
Role of each entity's decision-making bodies in planning and decision making			
Community assessment process			
Collaborative, inclusive strategies involving partners' staffs and parents and the community Items needing prior approval (partners reserve the rights to approve)			
Use of partners' name (how partners will publicize the services sponsored by the partnership)			
<b>Preschool Collaborative System: Communication</b>	<b>Date included in contract</b>	<b>Date changed in Contract</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>
Designated contact person for each organization involved			
Type, frequency of meetings; meeting participants			
Preschool Program Data Reporting			
Type and frequency of reports			
Information exchange (training calendars, personnel policies, position openings, etc.)			
Work with other agencies and responsibility of each partner			
Use of technology, i.e. shared databases for student data, e-mail communication, etc.			
Protocols for information sharing			
Parent communications			

Impasse/Dispute resolution procedures			
<b>Preschool Collaborative System: Funding</b>	<b>Date included in contract</b>	<b>Date changed in Contract</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>
Funding and resource commitment of each partner			
Funding/resources accessed and by which partner			
Payment per child/per year by partners and payment procedures			
Contingencies (child enrollment, etc.) required by partner for payment			
Funds targeted and/or designated for specific improvements			
Renovations, salary enhancements, quality issues			
<b>Preschool Collaborative System: Personnel and Staffing</b>	<b>Date included in contract</b>	<b>Date changed in Contract</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>
Staff assigned to support the partnership; which entity/partner employs and supervises which staff			
Responsibilities of each partner's staff			
Staff schedules			
Supervision procedures			
Staff qualification requirements			
Professional development responsibilities (in-service, training, college courses)			
Annual performance appraisal procedures			
Provisions for substitutes			
<b>Preschool Collaborative System: School-Readiness and Transitions</b>	<b>Date included in contract</b>	<b>Date changed in Contract</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>
School Readiness Plan			
Transition plan and procedures			
Transfer of information, confidentiality			

<b>Curriculum, Instruction, and Child Assessment</b>	<b>Date included in contract</b>	<b>Date changed in Contract</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>
Family Engagement: Parent contacts, home visits, parent-teacher conferences			
Preschool Standards (MELDS)			
Assessment Tools Used in Program			
Recordkeeping and Documentation of enrollment application, process and placement			
Parent permission procedures			
Curriculum planning and individualized child plans			
Curriculum adoption			
Supplemental Curriculum			
Environmental Design provisions			
Meal Environments			
Inclusive Environments			
Child Guidance Procedures			
Child Assessment System			
<b>Program Assessment and Continuous Quality Improvement</b>	<b>Date included in contract</b>	<b>Date changed in contract</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>
Program Oversight process and provisions			
Preschool Health and Safety Checklist procedures			
Staff Training (new staff, individualized professional development, professional learning)			

## Appendix G: Annual Program Budget

An editable version of a suggested Preschool Budget can be found as a Google Doc [here](#):

<b>Public Preschool Program Budget</b>		
<b>Preschool Program Expenditures</b>		
<b>Instruction (Function Code 1000)</b>		
Teacher salary (Object Code 1010)		
Teacher payroll withholding (Object Code 2010)		
Teacher retirement (Object Code 2310)		
Ed Tech salary (Object Codes 1020-1023)		
Ed Tech payroll withholding (Object Code 2020)		
Ed Tech retirement (Object Code 2320)		
Substitute salary (Object Code 1230)		
Substitute payroll withholding (Object Code 2030)		
Substitute retirement (Object Code 2330)		
Department Head stipend (Object Code 1510)		
Team Leader stipend (Object Code 1560)		
Stipend payroll withholdings (Object Code 2000)		
Purchased Professional Services (Object Code 3000)		
Employee Training & Development (Object Code 3300)		
Online book subscription (Object Code 5340)		
Online software subscription (Object Code 5350)		
Instructional supplies (Object Code 6100)		
Books (Object Code 6400)		
<b>Transportation (Function 2700)</b>		
Regular salaries drivers (Object Code 1180)		
Regular payroll withholding/benefits (Object Code 2080)		
Substitutes (Object Code 1200)		
Substitutes payroll withholding/benefits (Object Code 2030)		
Supplies (Object Code 6000)		
Fleet Fuel (Object Code 6260)		
<b>Food (Object Code 6300-6310)</b>		
<b>Playground/Classroom Equipment (7xxx)</b>		
<b>Building operations/maintenance</b>		
Custodial (Function 2610)		
Other Building operations/maintenance Costs (Function 2600)		
Other Costs		
<b>Total Program Costs</b>	<b>(add lines 4-34)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Revenues</b>		
State Share of public education (Revenue Code 3111) N/A Year 1		
US Department of Agriculture (Revenue Code 4549-4559)		
Daily Food Sales (Revenue Code 1610)		
Private Sources (Revenue Codes 1920-1928)		
Title IA (Fund Codes 2300-2410)		
Head Start		
Local Child Care/Preschool		
<b>Total Program Revenues</b>	<b>(add lines 38-44)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Total Preschool Costs</b>	<b>(subtract "total program revenues" from "total program costs")</b>	

## Appendix H: Materials Checklist

Unit Blocks – Preschool Set		
	Basic Units (5.5”x1.5”); 42	Double Units; 20
	Quad Units; 8	Half Units; 12
	Pillars; 8	Double Pillars; 4
	Half Pillars; 12	Triangles; 4
	Small Triangles; 8	Ramps; 6
	Large Cylinders; 4	Small Cylinders; 4
	Building Boards (11”x22”); 4	Roof Boards (5.5”x11”); 4
	Unit Arches; 2	Elliptical Curves; 2
	Quarter Circle Arches; 4	Quarter Circles; 4
	Half Roman Arches; 2	Side Roads; 1
	Intersections; 1	Block Accessories (cars/people/animals/etc.)
	Other Materials	
Manipulatives		
	Puzzles	Pegboards
	Duplo’s/Legos	Math counters, unifix cubes, pattern blocks
	Other Materials	
Book Area		
	At least 15 books present	Books reflect a theme
	Variety of displayed books	Comfortable seating for more than 1
	Other Materials	
Dramatic Play		
	Child-sized Sink	Child-sized Stove
	Child-sized Refrigerator	Play Table and Chairs
	Dress-up Clothing	Other Dramatic Play Equipment
	Other Materials	
Sand and Water Tables		
	Sand table for at least 2 Students	Water Table for at least 2 Students
	Shovels, Buckets, other items	Cups, items for water plan
	Other Materials	
Art Center		
	Easel/s	Smocks
	Accessible Art Materials	Drying Rack
	Other Materials	
Writing Center		
	Table/Chairs	Variety of Paper
	2 Forms of Writing Implements	Other Materials
	Other Materials	
Outdoor/Playground		
	Large enough for running & Wheeled toys	Other Items: balls, shovels, buckets, etc.
	Other Materials	

**Appendix I : Partnership Model *Example Tables***

\*In a **braided funding** model, each partner is fiscally responsible for some aspect(s) of the pre-k program. The chart below models some examples of how a SAU and its community partner might organize their strengths to fiscally and responsibly operate a public pre-k program.\*

	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Classroom Space</b>	<b>Lead Teacher</b>	<b>Asst. Teacher</b>	<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Meals</b>	<b>Curriculum &amp; Assessment</b>	<b>Comprehensive Services/wrap-around services</b>
<b>Example 1</b>	SAU/Partner Name	SAU	Partner	SAU	SAU	SAU	Partner	Partner
<b>Example 2</b>	SAU/Partner Name	Partner	SAU	SAU	SAU	Partner	Partner	Partner
<b>Example 3</b>	SAU/Partner Name	Partner	Partner	Partner	SAU	Partner	Partner	Partner
<b>Example 4</b>	SAU/Partner Name	SAU	SAU	SAU	SAU	SAU	SAU	Partner

\*In a **blended funding** model, one partner might commit a set dollar amount annually to the other. Leaving the overall fiscal responsibility to one entity.\*

	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Classroom Space</b>	<b>Lead Teacher</b>	<b>Asst. Teacher</b>	<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Meals</b>	<b>Curriculum &amp; Assessment</b>	<b>Comprehensive Services</b>
<b>Example 1</b>	Partner pays the SAU set amount annually to cover a portion of the costs.	SAU	SAU	SAU	SAU	SAU	SAU	Partner
<b>Example 2</b>	The SAU pays the partner a set amount per child annually.	Partner	Partner	Partner	SAU	Partner	Partner	Partner

Fiscal partners might include one or all of the following, in either a blended or braided model:

- 1) School Administrative Unit
- 2) Community partner agency (Head Start, childcare center- YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, etc.)
- 3) Child Development Services (for Part B 619 related services only)
- 4) Title IA Services (when applicable in targeted and schoolwide settings)
- 5) Philanthropic donation(s)
- 6) Local or Federal Grant(s)

**\*\*The models above are strictly examples. Partnerships are encouraged to communicate their needs regularly and create a clear Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement to fairly meet the fiscal and operational needs of both parties\*\***

## **Appendix J: Administrative Letter 025**

Toileting Policy for Public Preschool

**ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER: 25**  
**POLICY CODE: ACE JBA**

TO: Superintendents of Schools  
FROM: Susan A. Gendron, Commissioner  
DATE: December 10, 2009  
RE: Toileting Policy for Public Preschool

As a matter of Federal and State anti-discrimination law, school systems may not refuse entrance into a public preschool (four-year-old program) to a child who is not toilet trained.

School administrative units must adopt sanitation and hygiene procedures for assisting with toileting that adequately protect the health and safety of children and staff and that includes procedures to communicate with parents to develop any necessary plan for toileting.

For further information you can contact:

Nicole Madore, M.Ed.  
Early Childhood Specialist  
Maine Department of Education  
(207) 446-3967  
[Nicole.madore@maine.gov](mailto:Nicole.madore@maine.gov)