

MS Early Learning Guidelines

For Classrooms Serving

Three- and Four-Year-Old Children

VISION

To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens

MISSION

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community

MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

1

All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas



2

Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career



3

Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program



4

Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders



5

Every Community Effectively Uses a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes



6

Every School and District is Rated “C” or Higher



PRE-KINDERGARTEN

GOALS

For all children

Pre-Kindergarten Goals

1. Improve their self-concept
2. Increase their intellectual growth
3. Enlarge their understanding of the world, people, experiences, and ideas
4. Increase competencies and skills in oral language, literacy, writing, listening, and thinking
5. Increase their competencies and skills in mathematical reasoning and scientific exploration



Pre-Kindergarten Goals

6. Increase their skills involved in physical coordination and gross and fine motor skills
7. Increase their competence in dealing with emotions, feelings, and social situations
8. Increase their self-direction and independence
9. Develop cooperative, trusting relationships
10. Develop their natural curiosity and creative potential
11. Develop a love of learning

Think-Pair-Share

- Turn to your neighbor and talk about which of these goals (if any) you find most difficult to address for children with disabilities, based on your experience.
- Share-out



LEARNING

PRINCIPLES

Learning Principles

The *Early Learning Guidelines* outlined in this document are built on high-quality research and evidence-based principles. The following principles are required in the learning environment and curriculum in the classroom:



Learning Principles

1. Skills and concepts specific to developmental domains developed by the Mississippi Department of Education are foundational to all instruction.

- a. English Language Arts
- b. Mathematics
- c. Social Studies
- d. Science
- e. Approaches to Learning

- f. Social and Emotional Development
- g. Physical Development
- h. The Arts

Learning Principles

2. Learning activities that acknowledge children's individual rates of development are evident.
3. Children are in an inclusive learning environment that embraces diversity.
4. Children use their senses in the instructional process (seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling).

Learning Principles

5. Active engagement (exploring, playing, manipulating, and problem solving) is the primary strategy for delivering instruction.

6. Children are taught using a combination of instructional strategies, which includes active engagement in integrated learning centers, speaking and listening, participating in large and small groups, and individual instructional settings.

Learning Principles

7. Attitudes and examples from teachers and in lesson content taught reflect a positive problem-solving approach. Therefore, attention should be given to instructional methods, emotional climate, environment, peer-to-peer interaction and educator-child interaction.

8. Children have experiences which are sensitive to the value of play, for it is through play that children create their own meaning and learning.

Developmental Domains and Standards



CURRICULUM

Curriculum

Requirements:

- Research- and evidence-based
- Designed to prepare children for kindergarten
- Emphasis in early literacy
- Aligned with the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Three- and Four-Year-Old Children*
- Thematic units of activities and ideas



LEARNING

CENTERS

Learning Centers

Requirements:

- There is a minimum of 5 different learning centers (that can be combined if space is limited).
- Centers are accessible to all children for a minimum of 120 minutes per day (in full-day programs).
- Hands-on learning available at individually appropriate levels.
- Integrated multiple subject matters included.
- Assessment is conducted through observation and authentic practices.

Learning Centers

- Required centers are book/library center, math/manipulative center, and creative art center.
- Provide enough centers and space to accommodate your number of students.
- Children have access to fiction and non-fiction books and writing materials that are developmentally appropriate throughout the day.
- Provide a variety of activities and materials – no worksheets.

Learning Centers

Possible learning centers (beside primary centers):

- Science
- Oral language/phonemic development
- Cooking
- Blocks, wheel toys, and construction
- Sand and/or water
- Woodworking
- Music
- Listening
- Dramatic play
- Creative writing
- Social studies
- Technology
- Motor development

EDUCATIONAL

MATERIALS

Educational Materials

- Adequate to equip a classroom of a maximum capacity of 14 three-year-old children or 20 four-year-old children
- Suited for the developmental needs of your children
- Replenished at least once per year



ASSESSMENT

Assessment

- Vision/hearing screeners are conducted within 45 days of beginning of school.
- Physical/developmental screening results are reviewed and referrals made within 30 days of initial screening.
- MTSS not required for pre-K, but procedures should be developed by district.
- Interventions recommended for students who show deficits, followed by referral for Child Find as needed.

Assessment

- MS Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (MKAS²) is given to four-year-old students.
- Teachers use observational checklists to measure each child's progress according to the *MS Early Learning Standards*.



Assessment

- Documentation is kept through a transition folder that will follow each child to kindergarten. The folder must contain:
 - End-of-year Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Score/Summary Sheet
 - End-of-year screening/assessment results
 - Final report card/skills checklist



Assessment

- Child information sheet, including:
 - * Child's name, DOB, photo, language(s) spoken
 - * Parents' names, contact information, preferred time and way to contact
 - * Child's favorite things (activity, toy, food, book, center, etc.)
 - * Child's play and learning styles
 - * Child's skills and proficiencies
 - * Child's areas of growth and challenges
 - * Child's personality/temperament traits

Assessment

- Work samples, which may include:
 - * Free art
 - * Writing samples
 - * Guided art
 - * Learning center products (e.g., photo of block construction)

MONITORING

Monitoring

- Districts must develop an internal procedure for monitoring their pre-K.
- MDE staff monitor pre-K programs when the school district is audited through the Office of Accreditation (except for Collaborative and Blended programs, which are monitored yearly).

Rate of Readiness Scores

- Mississippi Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (MKAS²) – up to 25 points
- Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment (CELA) – up to 25 points
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) – up to 50 points

Rate of Readiness (continued)

- Each site is expected to achieve a successful score (70+ points).
- Collaborative or Blended sites who achieve a site score of 69 or below will be put on probation. Sites who do not achieve a successful score for a second year become non-eligible for funding.

ORGANIZATION

Organization

Full-Day Program

Procedure	Requirement
Length of School Day/Term	Same as the other grades in elementary school
Teacher – Child Ratio	1:10 or 2:20 Four-Year-Olds 1:7 or 2:14 Three-Year-Olds 1:7 or 2:14 Three-and-Four-Year-Old Blended
Instructional Day	360 Minutes
Physical Activity	40 Minutes (minimum) – 60 Minutes (maximum)
Learning Centers	120 Minutes
Quiet Time	30 Minutes (minimum) – 60 Minutes (maximum)

STAFF

REQUIREMENTS

Staff Requirements

General Education Teachers

- Hold a Pre-K/K (153) License **OR**
- Hold a K-3 (116) License, a K-4 (152) License, or a K-6 (120) License **OR**
- Other Pathways and Completion of an approved Licensure pathway degree program to obtain 116 (K-3), 120 (K-6), 152 (K-4), or 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **AND** any additional requirements needed for licensure
- Bachelor's degree or higher with child development emphasis **AND** passing score ACT or MSBE Basic Skills Assessment **AND** any additional requirements needed for licensure

Staff Requirements

Special Education Teachers

- Birth-K Special Education License (211) **OR**
- Mild to Moderate K-12 (221), Severe Disability K-12 (222), Mild to Moderate K-8 (223) **AND** 12 hours of EC college credit **OR** attain a passing score on MSBE assessment to add Pre-K/K(153) endorsement **OR** completion of an early childhood training program

Staff Requirements

Assistant Teachers

- Hold an Early Childhood associate's degree **OR**
- Associate's degree or 60 college credit hours (*transcript verification required*) 12 hours EC college credit **OR** completion of an early childhood training program **OR**
- High school diploma/GED **AND** Verification of WorkKeys® Scores **AND** 12 hours EC college credit **OR** completion of an early childhood training program

FAMILY

ENGAGEMENT

Family Engagement

REQUIRED

Handbook that addresses pre-kindergarten philosophy, goals and information unique to a pre-kindergarten program

Recommended

Volunteer participation by parents, guardians and community members

REQUIRED

Parent/teacher conferences are held three times per year to inform parents or guardians of student progress

PHYSICAL

SETTINGS

Physical Settings

Classroom includes:

- At least 600 square feet/35 square feet per child.
- Location on ground level.
- Outlets with safety covers or that are tamper resistant.
- Maximum distance no more than 100 feet from the classroom door at the corridor to an exit.

Physical Settings

Classroom includes:

- Maximum distance of no more than 125 feet from a bathroom.
- Toilet door lock that is designed to permit opening from the outside in case of emergency (Requirement is the same for restrooms outside the classroom).
- Furniture that is the appropriate height for the children.

Physical Settings

Classroom includes:

- Tables and chairs rather than desks.
- At least one small book case or book display shelf.
- A 9' x 12' area rug or carpet squares for large group meetings.

OUTDOOR

PLAY

Outdoor Play

Play area is:

- Designated area for students in pre-K and/or K only simultaneously.
- A fully accessible outdoor play space with activities to encourage inclusive play.

Outdoor Play

- Designed to facilitate learning and ensure safety.
- Developmentally appropriate for three- and four-year-old children according to National Standards adopted by the MS Department of Health.
- Defined with boundaries to protect children from environmental hazards.

Resources

MS Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Three- and Four-Year-Old Children

<https://mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OAE/OEER/Early%20Childhood/Early%20Childhood%20Early%20Learning%20Guidelines%2003's%20%204's%202018%20FINAL%20with%20no%20mark-ups.pdf>

State Board Policy Chapter 74, Rule 74.19

https://mdek12.org/sites/default/files/documents/part-34-rule-74-19_20160614161027_365113.pdf

Questions





MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright *future* for every child

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