OFFICE OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER
Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items
Consent Agenda
July 17, 2025

OFFICE OF EARY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

H. Approval to begin the Administrative Procedures Act process: To revise the *Mississipi Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Three- and Four-Year-Old Children (2025)*

Background Information: *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Three- and Four-Year-Old Children (2025)* will provide updated information on the minimum requirements and recommendations for the operation of public school three- and four-year-old programs in Mississippi.

This revision deletes the Program Quality Assessment section for Grant Funded programs. There will be a new policy for Grant Funded Program Quality Assessment created as a stand alone document to make it easier to adjust with assessment changes.

The sections in the guide covers the following components:

Section I: Requirements for Voluntary Enrollment

Section II: Curriculum, Materials, and Assessment

Section III: Organizational Procedures and Staff

Section IV: Family Engagement and Transportation

Section V: Physical Settings and Outside Play

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

Title 7 Education K-12
Part – 191

MISSISSIPPI

Early Learning Guidelines

for classrooms serving

Three- and Four-Year-Old Children

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Lance Evans, Ed.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

Wendy Clemons
CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

Revised July ~~une~~ ~~Published~~ 2025

The Mississippi State Board of Education, the Mississippi Department of Education, the Mississippi School for the Arts, the Mississippi School for the Blind, the Mississippi School for the Deaf, and the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability in the provision of educational programs and services or employment opportunities and benefits. The following office has been designated to handle inquiries and complaints regarding the non-discrimination policies of the above mentioned entities: Director, Office of Human Resources, Mississippi Department of Education, 359 North West Street, P.O. Box 771, Suite 203, Jackson, MS 39205-0771, (601)359-3511.

Mississippi Department of Education
359 North West Street
P. O. Box 771
Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0771
(601) 359-3511
www.mdek12.org/EC

M I S S I S S I P P I

State Board of Education

Mr. Glen V. East,
Chair

Mr. Matt Miller,
Vice Chair

Dr. Lance Evans,
Executive Secretary

Dr. Wendi Barrett

Mr. Bill Jacobs

Mr. Matt Mayo

Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee

Mr. Mike Pruitt

Mrs. Billye Jean Stroud

Mrs. Mary Werner

Student Representatives
Crosby Parker
Michelle Xie ~~Kate Riddle~~

Jill Dent, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Office of Early Childhood Education

Early Learning Guidelines Committee Members (2025)

Bliss Acker
Pre-K Teacher
Bay-Waveland School District

Karey Alegria
SIP Lead/Assistant Principal & Pre-K Coordinator
Jefferson Davis County School District

Dr. Chad Allgood
Director, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development
Mississippi Department of Human Services

Sheri Anders
Early Childhood Education Advisor
East Central Community College

Mary Anderson
Pre-K Teacher
Rankin County School District/ELC

Dr. Pearl Bailey
Grant Director-Preschool Development Grant B-5, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development
Mississippi Department of Human Services

Sarah Bailey
SIP Lead/Assistant Superintendent
Humphreys School District

Michelle Beard
SIP Lead/Pre-K/MTSS/EL Coordinator
Wayne County School District

Dr. Eileen Beazley
Head Start Collaboration Office Director/Education Liaison
Office of Governor Tate Reeves

Dr. Regina Biggers
Superintendent
Benton County School District

Jodie Boyd
ELC Lead/Early Childhood Director
Lee County School District/ ELC

Xandra Brooks-Keys
SIP Lead/Assistant Superintendent
North Bolivar School District

Alfreda Brown
ELC Lead
Holmes County School District/ELC

Dr. Sametra Brown
ELC Lead, Yazoo City Collaborative/ Assistant Superintendent Federal Programs
MS Achievement School District

George Buchanan
SIP Lead/Assistant Superintendent, Pre-K Director/State Testing Coordinator
South Tippah School District

Cara Buffington
ELC Lead/Director of Early Childhood and Reading Development
Oxford School District/ELC

Jennifer Calvert
ELC Lead/Owner
Calvert's ABC Preschool
Monroe County Early Learning Collaborative

Keithann Carter
Pre-K Teacher
Lamar County School District/ELC

Dr. Kevin Carter
SIP Lead/Career & Technology Education Director
Newton Municipal School District

Katherine Chesser
SIP Lead/Director of Curriculum & Instruction/District Pre-K Coordinator
Smith County School District

Dr. Katherine Clark
Professor
University of Southern Mississippi

LaToya Clark
SIP Lead/Early Childhood Academic Coach
Natchez-Adams School District

Patsy Clerk
ELC Lead/Family & Community Engagement Coordinator
Cleveland School District/ELC

Dr. Connie Clay
Education and Training Specialist Graduate Center for the Study of Early Learning
University of Mississippi

Mary Coleman
ELC Lead/Program Coordinator
Starkville Oktibbeha School District

Dr. Stacie Collins
SIP Lead/Assistant Superintendent
Philadelphia School District

Katherine Coon
SIP Lead/Principal
Tupelo Municipal School District

Jennifer Courteaux
Pre-K Teacher
Bay-Waveland School District

Suzanne Crosby
ELC Lead/Principal, Kosciusko Lower Elementary
Kosciusko School District /ELC

Brandy Culpepper
Pre-K Teacher
Lauderdale County School District

Dr. Stephanie Davidson
Associate Professor/Department of Elementary & Early Childhood Department Chair
Jackson State University

Amy Davis
SIP Lead/Math Coach/Pre-K Coordinator
Union County School District

Kayla Fitzgerald
Pre-K Teacher
Pascagoula-Gautier School District/ELC

Sherna DeBerry Jones
ELC Lead/Early Childhood Education Coordinator
Holly Springs School District/ELC

Stormy Dupre
SIP Lead/Coordinator
Vicksburg - Warren School District

Kim Ezelle
ELC Lead/ Data Analyst/ Interventionist
Grenada County School District/ELC

Gina Gallant
SIP Lead/Assistant Superintendent
Forrest County School District

Dr. Edshundra Gary
Chief ELC Lead
Greenwood Leflore School District/ELC

Helen Gilkey
ELC Lead
Noxubee County School District/ELC

Dr. Cathy Grace
Co-Director, Graduate Center for the Study of Early Learning
University of Mississippi

Haley Green
ELC Lead
Marion County School District/ELC

Jennifer Griffin
Pre-K Teacher
Lamar County School District/ELC

Lasonja Hardy
Pre-K Teacher
Holmes County School District/ELC

Daisey Hawkins
SIP Lead/Principal
Sunflower County Consolidated School District

Dr. Angel Herring
Associate Professor, Child and Family Sciences
University of Southern Mississippi

Raquel Jackson
Pre-K Teacher
Pascagoula-Gautier School District/ELC

Shontelle Johnson
ELC Lead/Principal
Hollandale School District/ELC

Dr. Kristie Jones
ELC Lead/Director of Federal Programs
Lowndes County School District/ELC

Letha Jones
MELC Laison/Training Coordinator
Monroe County Early Learning Collaborative

Tony Keys
ELC Lead/Principal, Stringer Attendance Center
West Jasper School District/ELC

Kate Killough
ELC Lead/Director
Corinth School District
Corinth-Alcorn-Prentiss/ELC

Kristi Kirkwood
ELC Lead/Early Childhood Coordinator
George County School District/ELC

Dr. Mandy Lacey
ELC Lead/Assistant Curriculum Director
Pass Christian School District ELC

Dr. Jeff Leffler
Associate Professor/ Graduate Coordinator
Mississippi State University

Dr. Gail Lindsey
Assistant Teaching Professor/ Elementary Education Faculty
Mississippi State University

Heather Lyons
ELC Lead/Pre-K Coordinator
Lamar County School District/ELC

Dr. Toya Matthews
Superintendent
Clarksdale School District/ELC

Lakeisha Maxer
ELC Lead/PreK Coordinator
Rankin County School District/ELC

Win Maxey-Shumate
Early Childhood Education Technology Program Coordinator/Instructor
Meridian Community College

Linda McAdory
ELC Lead/Director of Early Learning
Leland School District/ELC

Dixie McCollough
ELC Lead
Quitman School District
Clarke County/ELC

Kelli McCorkle
ELC Lead/PreK Coordinator
Pascagoula-Gautier School District/ELC

Joann Mestayer
SIP Lead/Director of Early Learning
Bay St. Louis – Waveland School District

Hope Mikell
ELC Lead/Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Hattiesburg School District/ELC

Monica Mitchell
ELC Lead/Federal Programs Director
Senatobia School District/ELC

Dr. Angela Mixon-Harris
SIP Lead/Assistant Superintendent
Simpson County School District

Lenora Morris
ELC Lead/Chief of Student Services
South Panola School District/ELC

Rachel Newman
Pre-K Teacher
Lamar County School District/ELC

Nita Norphlet-Thompson
Executive Director
Mississippi Head Start Association

Dr. Michelle Nowell
Executive Director, Elementary Education and Reading
Mississippi Department of Education

Dr. Julie Parker
Professor, Human Development and Family Sciences
Mississippi State University

Jana Perry
ELC Lead/Program Director
Petal School District/ELC

Tyranny Piece
MELC Lead Pre-K Teacher
Monroe County/ELC

Dr. Candice Pittman
Grants Manager
Mississippi Head Start Association

Dr. Felicia Pollard
ELC Lead/Director of Instruction
Pontotoc City Schools District/ELC

Amanda Randall
SIP Lead/School Psychometrist/ Positive Behavior Specialist/School Testing Coordinator
Enterprise School District

Martha Ravola
Professor, Human Development & Family Science, Director, ASU SNAP-Ed program, Department of Human Sciences
Alcorn State University

Jennifer Rawson
Director of Federal Programs/Pre-k
Neshoba County School District

Kelleigh Reynolds Broussard
ELC Lead/Assistant Superintendent
Long Beach School District/ELC

Jason Roberson
SIP Lead/District Support Specialist
Newton County School District

Tara Rouse
Pre-K Teacher
George County School District/ELC

Jeannie Saia
Pre-K Teacher
Rankin County School District/ELC

Diane Savell
Pre-K Teacher
Scott County School District/ELC

Tamara Smith
SIP Lead/Director of Early Childhood
Midtown Public Charter School

Rachel Spencer
Pre-K Teacher
Rankin County School District/ELC

Cheryl Swoops
ELC Lead/Director of Community Engagement
Tallahatchie Early Learning Alliance ELC

Yashica Suddeth
ELC Lead
Jefferson County Public School District/ ELC

Jamila B. Taylor, MBA
Interim Executive Director Early Childhood Programs: Mississippi LIFT Resource & Referral Network, Nurturing Homes Initiative, and Head Start-Early Head Start Program, School of Human Sciences
Mississippi State University Extension

Kim Taylor
ELC Lead
ICS Head Start/West Point ELC

Dr. Felicia Thomas
ELC Lead/Early Childhood Director
Jackson Public School District/ELC

Dr. Pam Thomas
ELC Lead/Early Childhood Programs Director
Picayune School District/ELC

Dr. Shushan Vardanyan
Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education
University of Mississippi

Stacy Walker
ELC Lead/Director of Assessment and Accountability
Brookhaven School District/ELC

Whitney Weaver
SIP Lead/School Counselor
Union City School District

Holly Weeden
Lead Online Instructor, Early Childhood Education
Itawamba Community College

Dr. Trenisha Weekley
ELC Lead/Principal, Nichols Elementary
Biloxi School District/ELC

Nyisha Wells
ELC/Lead Curriculum Director, MSIS Coordinator
Scott County School District/ELC

Alicia Westbrook
Director, Mississippi Early Childhood Inclusion Center
University of Southern Mississippi

Tevin White
District Parent Liaison/Family Education Center Coordinator
Moss Point School District

Karen Williams
SIP Lead/Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Pre-K-4, & MTSS
Lauderdale County School District

Betty Wilson-McSwain
ELC Lead/Assistant Superintendent for Federal Programs and Testing
McComb School District/ELC

Dr. Kenya Wolff
Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education/Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator/Co-Director
The Graduate Center for the Study of Early Learning
University of Mississippi

Table of Contents

Introduction ..... ~~1~~1~~9~~9

Pre-Kindergarten Philosophy and Goals for Three- and Four-Year-Old Children ..... ~~13~~11

SECTION I ..... ~~17~~14

A. ENTRANCE AGE ..... ~~17~~14

B. PARTICIPATION 14

SECTION II ..... ~~18~~15

A. GUIDELINES FOR CURRICULUM ..... ~~18~~15

B. GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS 21

C. GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT 21

SECTION III ..... ~~33~~23

A. ORGANIZATION ..... ~~29~~23

B. STAFF 2834

SECTION IV ..... 40~~38~~

A. GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ..... 40~~45~~

B. TRANSPORTATION 46

SECTION V ..... ~~50~~42

A. PHYSICAL SETTINGS ..... ~~47~~42

B. OUTDOOR PLAY AREA ..... ~~553~~49

Introduction

This manual has been prepared for use by administrators, counselors, teachers, and other authorized staff in the pre-kindergarten programs of Mississippi and is to be used as a guide to implement requirements and recommendations in facilitating state or other funded pre-kindergarten programs such as federal, local, and philanthropically-funded programs.

This manual also includes guidance for serving pre-kindergarten students with disabilities, as appropriate for meeting the needs of individual students based on their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Any elementary, including pre-kindergarten, and/or secondary school system, accredited by the Mississippi State Department of Education, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Mississippi Association of Independent Schools, the American Association of Christian Schools, the Association of Christian School International, a school affiliated with Accelerated Christian Education, Inc., and any Head Start program operating in conjunction with an elementary school system, whether it is public, private or parochial, whose primary purpose is a structured school or school readiness program is exempt from licensing by the Mississippi State Department of Health. If a classroom is located in a public school and sponsored by a non-public school organization, the classroom must be licensed unless named in the exemption requirements section of the Child Care Regulations or a letter of joint sponsorship is provided by the school district and non-profit sponsor that is approved by the Mississippi State Department of Health. Pre-kindergarten providers not located in public schools are required to be licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health.

Additionally, this manual includes guidance for any classroom that serves three- and four-year-old children including pre-kindergarten lab schools located on public school campuses and licensed by the Mississippi Department of Health. The chart below describes the requirements and options for each type of program.

State Funded, Grant Funded OR Federally Funded Program	Other Funded OR Public School Pre-kindergarten Lab School Program
REQUIREMENTS	**REQUIREMENTS**
• Enter children into Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) • Follow Early Learning Standards • Administer the Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening) • Administer Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment • Create transition folders for pre-kindergarten children • Participate in early childhood training offered by MDE • Be accredited by the Mississippi Department of Education	• Enter children into Mississippi Student Information System(MSIS) • Follow Early Learning Standards • Administer the Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening) • Administer Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment • Create transition folders for pre-kindergarten children • Participate in early childhood training offered by MDE • Be licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health **OR** Accredited by the Mississippi Department of Education

Facilities or programs claiming exemption shall be required, upon the written request of the licensing agency, to provide documentation of the facts claimed to support the basis for the exemption, which documentation shall be provided within 30 days of the request by the licensing agency and shall be sworn by affidavit to be true and accurate under the penalties of perjury. However, any entity exempt from the requirements to be licensed but voluntarily chooses to obtain a license is subject to all provisions of the licensing law and these regulations. (Regulations Governing Licensure of Child Care Facilities, Office of Health Protection, Office of Licensure, Bureau of Child Care Licensure, Mississippi State Department of Health, Effective February 12, 2022, pg. 2.)

Pre-Kindergarten Philosophy and Goals for Three- and Four-Year-Old Children

The early childhood years are a critical time in development for every child. The learning that takes place during the first eight years of life serves as the foundation for all later academic, social, emotional, physical and motor development. All children are capable of learning and meeting developmental milestones. Therefore, the Early Learning Guidelines are proposed to assist all early childhood educators in their efforts to provide a high-quality, research-based program serving pre-kindergarten children at three and four years of age to support school readiness.

SCHOOL READINESS DEFINITION

"Responsibility for school readiness lies not with children, but with the adults who care for them and the systems that support them," (National Governors Association, 2005., p. 29)

School readiness is a multi-dimensional construct that goes beyond the skills, knowledge, and disposition of children as they enter kindergarten. Children are *eligible* for school when they have reached the chronological age established by the state, as described on page 1; however, school *readiness* is achieved through a combination of efforts involving children, families, schools, communities, and the state.

READY CHILDREN show an eagerness to explore, discover, engage, and learn. They demonstrate interest and abilities in all dimensions of early learning and development: social and emotional development; language development; cognition and general knowledge; physical well-being and motor development; and approaches toward learning. Children are unique individuals, who do not develop at the same time or in the same way. Therefore, school readiness should be viewed as a continuum of behaviors rather than an inflexible or narrow set of proficiency skills. Any age-eligible child who is eager to attend kindergarten should be deemed "ready."

READY FAMILIES recognize their role as their child's first and most stable teacher and advocate while understanding their child's current level of development. Families ensure a safe and consistent environment, promote good health, provide steady and supportive relationships, and understand their relationship with the school system to ensure a smooth transition.

READY SCHOOLS provide a welcoming and accepting environment for all and have professional educators who consistently advance growth and achievement for students with diverse backgrounds, experiences and abilities while working in partnership with families and communities.

READY COMMUNITIES include businesses, faith-based organizations, early childhood service providers, community groups, and local governments collaborating to support schools and children's long-term success by providing families access to information, affordable services, and high-quality early learning opportunities.

READY STATES play a crucial part in supporting communities, schools, and families through developing appropriate policies; providing adequate funds; ensuring access to high-quality early development and learning opportunities; preparing and retaining a world-class early childhood workforce; ensuring an infrastructure to coordinate services, including data systems for accountability and demonstrating political leadership to make school readiness a state priority.

Adapted from National Governors Association. 2005. Building the foundation for bright futures: Final report of the NGA Task Force on School Readiness. Washington, DC: Author

All children attending a high-quality pre-kindergarten program will:

1. improve their self-concept;
2. increase their intellectual growth;
3. enlarge their understanding of the world, people, experiences, 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;
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; and
11. develop a love of learning.

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:

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
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).
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 group, and individual instructional settings.
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 that are sensitive to the value of play; for it is through play that children create their own meaning and learning.

Children need opportunities to engage in application of the principles being introduced through the curriculum. Therefore, one of the requirements for classrooms serving three- and four-year-old children is that the majority of the instructional delivery be organized around a variety of integrated learning centers with responsive interactions among children, their peers, and adults. These experiences provide opportunities for children to acquire skills and concepts through hands-on engaged learning while the teacher is facilitating appropriate language development through meaningful conversations with others.

SECTION I

Requirements for Voluntary Enrollment

A. ENTRANCE AGE

1. **Required Age**
   A child is eligible for a three-year-old program if they reach three years of age on or before September 1. A child is eligible for enrollment in a four-year-old program if they reach four years of age on or before September 1.

2. **Required Documentation**
   A birth certificate and immunization record (Form 121 or 122) are required for all pre-kindergarten children and shall be presented to the proper school authority. If the pre-kindergarten (three- and/or four-year-old) program is located in a public school setting, the information in Section 1 of the Mississippi Cumulative Folders and Permanent Records document must be followed (Mississippi Code Ann. §37-15-1).

B. PARTICIPATION

1. If the pre-kindergarten (three- and/or four-year-old) program is located in a public school setting, the school district decides how students are chosen for enrollment in the program. This process should be included in the district's School Board approved policies to ensure equitable opportunities for all students.

SECTION II

Curriculum, Materials, and Assessment

A. GUIDELINES FOR CURRICULUM

1. Curriculum

Requirements for Curriculum Pre-kindergarten programs use a research- and evidence-based comprehensive curriculum that is designed to prepare children for kindergarten, with emphasis in early literacy, and is aligned with the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Three-Year-Old Children* and the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children*. Mississippi Code Annotated §27-103-159 defines "evidence-based program" as "a program or practice that has had multiple site random controlled trials across heterogeneous populations demonstrating that the program is effective for the population." Additionally, the curriculum contains thematic units of activities and ideas designed to provide children the opportunities and experiences needed to master the performance standards in the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Three-Year-Old Children* and the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children*. Visit https://mdek12.org/EC/Mississippi-Beginnings-Curriculum/Mississippi-Beginnings-Curriculum for a current listing of the approved curricula and supporting materials including accompanying trade books. Lesson planning documents must reflect Early Learning Standards that are targeted through each lesson and learning center activities that are used throughout the thematic unit. They must also identify differentiated instructional needs for students.

2. Learning Centers

a. **Daily Use** Instructional delivery shall be organized primarily using a variety of learning centers. A minimum of five (5) different learning centers shall be organized, arranged, and labeled so they are accessible to all children for a minimum of 120 minutes per day in full-day programs and 60 minutes in half-day programs. The MDE recognizes the definition of learning centers as identified in literature as "distinct areas in a classroom that offer various materials and opportunities for hands-on learning at individually appropriate

levels". (Copple & Bredekamp, 2006). In addition, NAEYC (2007) publications state that learning centers:

- Engage students in learning
- Promote development of the whole child
- Integrate multiple subject matters so that learning happens in a meaningful context
- Assess student understanding and knowledge through observation and authentic assessment practices
- Foster a love of learning

Copple, C., & Bredekamp. (2006) Basics of developmentally appropriate practice: An introduction for teachers of children 3 to 6. Washington, DC: NAEYC.
Stuber, G. (2007) Centering your classroom: Setting the stage for engaged learners. National Association for the Education of Young Children Beyond the Journal.

Learning centers provide children with hands-on opportunities to practice learning and thematic unit concepts. Learning relies heavily on experiential, hands-on activities. Each early learning classroom must include the following:

- Three required primary centers for each classroom are related to the thematic unit and contain a book/library center, a math/manipulative center, and a creative art center.
- Centers offer opportunities to engage in skills that are intentionally aligned with the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards,* https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/final_infants_through_four-year-old_early_learning_standards_2020.08.21_jg.pdf
- Additional integrated learning centers are added to address child interest and support current learning topics so that at least five (5) integrated learning centers are available.
- Available space in learning centers is sufficient to accommodate simultaneous use by the number of children enrolled in the classroom while maintaining appropriate numbers of children in each learning center.
- Children have access to fiction and non-fiction books and writing materials during learning center time and throughout the day that are appropriate to the child's developmental state.

- Worksheets are inappropriate for use at this developmental level, and are not used as part of the curriculum.
- Learning centers offer a variety of activities and materials for simultaneous use by children.
- Children are able to freely choose the centers they participate in and are uninterrupted during engagement. Children do not visit centers with timed rotations.

In addition to the three (3) required primary learning centers identified in this section, additional learning centers may include those from the list below to meet the minimum requirement of five (5) integrated learning centers per classroom. Except for the three (3) primary centers identified previously, the remaining learning centers shall be rotated and changed throughout the year. The following is a list of possible learning centers:

- Science/Discovery Center
- Oral Language/Phonemic Development Center
- Cooking Center
- Blocks, Wheel Toys, and Construction Center
- Sand and/or Water Center
- Woodworking Center
- Music Center
- Listening Center
- Dramatic Play
- Creative Writing Center
- Social Studies Center
- Technology Center
- Motor Development Center
- Outdoor Centers (Creative Arts, Sand and/or Water, Science/Discovery, Motor Development)

b. **Space Limitations** If space is limited, some of the centers may be combined.

c. **Use of Classroom Technology** Computers and similar technological devices are only

to be used in the classroom as instructional tools.

d. **Resource Materials** Teachers use, at a minimum, the resources developed by the Mississippi Department of Education in curriculum planning such as the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Three-Year-Old Children and/or the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children, Developmental Checklists for Infants through Four Year Old Children, Mississippi Beginnings Curriculum | The Mississippi Department of Education and the Developmental Checklist for Three- and Four-Year-Old Students. Programs may also access other resources on the early childhood webpage at www.mdek12.org/ec.

B. GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

1. **Requirement for Equipment and Educational Materials**
The initial expenditure for any new equipment, instructional materials, and consumable supplies must be adequate to equip a classroom of a maximum capacity of 14 three-year-old or 20 four-year-old children. Classroom teachers should select instructional materials that are most suited for their classrooms and the developmental needs of their students.

2. **Requirement for Instructional and Consumable Materials**
The pre-kindergarten program will replenish the consumable supplies and instructional materials in each classroom at least once per year.

3. Additional information on materials can be found at Pre-Kindergarten Adopted Materials - Mississippi Instructional Materials Matter (msinstructionalmaterials.org)

C. GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT

Requirement for Assessment and Screening

- A continuous evaluation through a variety of techniques, procedures, and tools is used to determine each child's needs. Information obtained from ongoing assessments is reflected in lesson plans to address children's needs collectively, as well as individually.
- All schools conduct vision and hearing screenings for all pre-kindergarten students within the first 45 calendar days of the beginning of school. The results of these screenings are placed in the student's cumulative folder.

- All physical or developmental screening results are reviewed and all necessary educational or developmental referrals made within 30 calendar days of the initial screening.

- Programs shall administer the Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening) with pre-kindergarten children as described in the program quality assessment section below.

- Programs shall administer the Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment with pre-kindergarten children.

- While the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is not required for pre-kindergarten students, districts can develop and utilize their own procedures for determining what intervention services, if any, pre-k students may receive.

- It is recommended that students who show deficits on developmental screenings be given an intervention, which may be administered and documented by the classroom teacher. The student can then be given a follow-up screener to determine if the intervention was successful. If the student has not made sufficient progress, an additional intervention may be put in place, or the student may be referred for an evaluation for special education services, if data collected support the suspicion of a disability. Intervention procedures may not be used to delay or deny a student the opportunity for a comprehensive evaluation. When making a referral, districts should follow their Child Find procedures.

- Retention for pre-kindergarten students is a district decision. The policy that guides this decision should be included in the family pre-kindergarten handbook. The program could be affected financially if the program is grant-funded based on the student's age.

1. Recommended Screenings

A comprehensive health screening (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment-EPSDT) or a standard physical conducted by a child's health care provider or health department is recommended for all pre-kindergarten students. EPSDT screenings/standard physicals should be conducted within 45 calendar days of the beginning of school by either a private health care provider of the parents' choosing, or through school resources such as school nurses, or the local Department of Health. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend

screenings conducted at the school. A standard physical form is submitted for all screenings conducted by a private health care provider.

A dental screening conducted by a child's dental care provider or health department is recommended for all pre-kindergarten students. Dental screenings should be conducted within 45 calendar days of the beginning of school by either a private dental health care provider of the parents' choosing, or through school resources such as the local Department of Health. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend screenings conducted at the school.

2. Requirement for Standardized Testing

All four-year-old students participating in grant-funded programs and public pre-kindergarten shall be administered the state approved Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. Paper and pencil standardized tests are not appropriate measures for three- or four-year-old children. Any technology-based assessment should be administered using touch-based technology devices. If touch-based technology is not available, children should be familiar with the available technology before taking the assessment.

3. Requirement for Individualized Assessments

School districts containing pre-kindergarten programs collaborate with Mississippi's state-recognized birth to three-year-old provider, First Steps, to formulate a plan regarding services. This plan ensures any child currently receiving services continues to receive appropriate services based on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), as eligible. Each school district should follow Child Find policies as stated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Children who are determined eligible shall receive services as stated in the child's IEP.

4. Requirement for Documentation

Teachers use observational checklists to measure the child's progress according to the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Three-Year-Old Children and the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children (e.g. curriculum-based, teacher-generated, or MDE developed pre-kindergarten checklists).

Each classroom serving four-year-old children must develop a transition folder to follow each child to kindergarten. The folder must contain the following:

- End-of-year Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening) results

- End-of-year Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Score/Summary Sheet
- End-of-year results from other assessments used in the classroom
- A school-issued final skills checklist **OR** a completed *Developmental Checklist for Four-Year-Old Students* (located here: www.mdek12.org/EC)
- A child information sheet containing some or all of the following (a sample sheet is located here: www.mdek12.org/EC):
    - Child's name, date of birth, preferred name, photo, languages spoken
    - Parents' names (and/or other adults/ caregivers), address, phone, and preferred time and way to contact (in accordance with school policy)
    - Child's favorite things (activity, toy, food, color, book, center, etc.)
    - Child's play and learning styles
    - Child's skills and proficiencies
    - Child's areas of growth and what they do not like to do
    - Child's personality/temperament traits

CHILD PROFILE

SAMPLE

- Work samples (two or three samples that demonstrate the child's capabilities) may include:
    - Free art
    - Guided art
    - Writing sample
    - Photographs of learning center products (e.g. block construction)

5. Recommendation for Letter or Number Grades

Pre-kindergarten students should not receive letter or number grades. Any number grades given on a progress report or report card should be a percentage of the standards students are expected to have mastered during a marking period.

6. Program Quality Assessment

The Program Quality Assessment guidance policy for grant funded programs is located on the early childhood webpage at https://mdek12.org/earlychildhood/.

~~**Rate of Readiness**~~

~~Schools providing services to pre-kindergarten aged children receive an annual evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of services on improving children's learning and well-being. Evaluation occurs for the Early Learning Collaboratives, State Invested Pre-K, Blended Pre-K programs, and grant funded pre-K programs.~~

~~The rate of readiness is a score assigned to each site through completion of specific evaluation tools that assess how children grow academically and developmentally throughout a school year and how the classroom environment and teaching practices support children's learning. A site score is comprised of the sum of subscores from the following tools:~~

- ~~The Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening)~~
- ~~Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment~~
- ~~Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)~~
- ~~Monitoring Instrument~~

~~Each four-year-old child in a pre-kindergarten classroom completes the Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening) in the fall and spring semesters. All individual scores will be averaged together into one subscore, if a school/site has more than one classroom.~~

~~Each four-year-old child in a pre-kindergarten classroom completes the Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment in the fall and spring semesters. Scores will be combined to yield an average of students attaining the target score.~~

~~A CLASS observation is completed in each applicable classroom by MDE Certified CLASS Observers. The scores will be averaged together into one CLASS subscore for schools/sites with more than one classroom.~~

~~Monitoring is a process where evidence is provided to ensure compliance with the *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Three- and Four-Year-Old Children*, and/or best practices in early childhood.~~

~~**State, Blended, and Grant Funded Pre-K Program Monitoring**~~

~~All sites will receive a monitoring visit at least once during the school year between November and May. Representatives from the MDE will utilize the Monitoring Instrument. Tiered levels of technical support will be provided based on percentage of compliance.~~

Other Funded Pre-K Classroom Monitoring
Other pre-kindergarten classrooms following the *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Three-and Four-Year-Old Children* must develop an internal procedure for monitoring their pre-kindergarten program. Other funded pre-kindergarten classrooms are monitored utilizing Standard 17.2 when the school district is audited through the Educational Accountability Audit Service Providers (EAASP) with the Office of Accreditation. The Office of Early Childhood Education provides technical assistance to school districts cited in EAASP audits.

~~**Rate of Readiness Scores**~~

~~The school/site score will be measured through the Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening), the Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment scores, a CLASS rating, and a monitoring score. Each site will receive a score based on a 100-point scale. The Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening) scores will receive up to 45 points, the Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will receive up to 5 points, the CLASS rating will receive up to 25 points, and monitoring will receive up to 25 points. For schools/sites with more than one classroom, all CLASS scores will be averaged. Individual classroom scores will not be issued for CLASS observations.~~

~~School/site score breakdown by assessment tool:~~

~~**A.**~~	~~**Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener** (developmental screening)~~	~~Percentage of students at or above benchmark at end-of-year assessment~~	~~**0% - 30% = 0 points**~~ ~~**31% - 50% =5 points**~~ ~~**51% - 70% = 10 points**~~ ~~**71% - 80% = 20 points**~~ ~~**81% - 90% = 30 points**~~ ~~**91% - 100%= 45 points**~~
~~**B1.**~~	~~**Literacy Kindergarten Readiness Assessment**~~	~~Percentage of students at or above benchmark at end-of-year assessment~~	~~**0% - 30% = 0 points**~~ ~~**31% - 50% =.5 points**~~ ~~**51% - 70% = 1 point**~~ ~~**71% - 80% = 1.5 points**~~ ~~**81% - 90% = 2 points**~~ ~~**91% - 100%= 2.5 points**~~
~~**B2.**~~	~~**Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment**~~	~~Percentage of students at or above benchmark at end-of-year assessment~~	~~**0% - 30% = 0 points**~~ ~~**31% - 50% =.5 points**~~ ~~**51% - 70% = 1 point**~~ ~~**71% - 80% = 1.5 points**~~ ~~**81% - 90% = 2 points**~~ ~~**91% - 100%= 2.5 points**~~

C.	**CLASS Ranges** • Low = 1 – 2 • Mid = 3 – 5 • High = 6 – 7	Meet an average of 5 and a minimum of 2.8 in the Instructional Support domain	**1.00-2.99 = 0 points** **3.00-3.99 = 7 points** **4.00-4.99 = 15 points** **5.00-7.00 & ≤2.8 IS = 15 points** **5.00-7.00 & ≥2.8 IS = 25 points**
D.	**Monitoring**	Meets compliance standards based on the Monitoring Tool	**0-80%= 0 points** **81-84%= 5 points** **85-89%=10 points** **90-94%= 15 points** **95-99%=20 points** **100%=25 points**
Site Score (A+B+C+D)			

Rate of Readiness Determination

The rate of readiness is assigned based on the site score achieved. The point breakdown for the rate of readiness is as follows:

- **Successful:** site score of 70+ points
- **Probation:** site score of 69 points and below (The first year in this category initiates a one year probationary period. After the first probationary year, the partner site has to score 70 + points to avoid actionable revisions.) The site will enter into a Tier III technical assistance plan that will outline needed improvements. Effective for the 2025-2026 academic year, if programs are placed on probation, they will be held harmless for this one academic year (2025 – 2026). Programs will receive extra support to implement best practices in the classroom.
- **Post-probation:** site score of 69 points and below and has been on probation for one year or more; grant funded program will make MDE recommended changes based on established procedures.

State Blended, and Grant Funded Pre-Kindergarten Program Rate of Readiness

It is expected that each site within a program would achieve a successful score. If a site does not meet the criteria for a successful score, the site will move into a probationary period. During the probationary year, the program will develop a plan for improvement and receive technical assistance to support growth. If the probationary year is complete and the site still does not achieve a successful score, then the program shall make MDE recommended changes based on established procedures.

Rate of Readiness Scores

The school/site score will be measured through the Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening), the Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment scores, a CLASS rating, and a monitoring score. Each site will receive a score based on a 100-point scale. The Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening) scores will receive up to 45 points, the Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will receive up to 5 points, the CLASS rating will receive up to 25 points, and monitoring will receive up to 25 points. For schools/sites with more than one classroom, all CLASS scores will be averaged. Individual classroom scores will not be issued for CLASS observations.

School/site score breakdown by assessment tool:

A.	**Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener** (developmental screening)	Percentage of students at or above benchmark at end-of-year assessment	**0% - 30% = 0 points** **31% - 50% =5 points** **51% - 70% = 10 points** **71% - 80% = 20 points** **81% - 90% = 30 points** **91% - 100%= 45 points**
B1.	**Literacy Kindergarten Readiness Assessment**	Percentage of students at or above benchmark at end-of-year assessment	**0% - 30% = 0 points** **31% - 50% =.5 points** **51% - 70% = 1 point** **71% - 80% = 1.5 points** **81% - 90% = 2 points** **91% - 100%= 2.5 points**
B2.	**Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment**	Percentage of students at or above benchmark at end-of-year assessment	**0% - 30% = 0 points** **31% - 50% =.5 points** **51% - 70% = 1 point** **71% - 80% = 1.5 points** **81% - 90% = 2 points** **91% - 100%= 2.5 points**
C.	**CLASS Ranges** • Low = 1 – 2 • Mid = 3 – 5 • High = 6 – 7	Meet an average of 5 and a minimum of 2.8 in the Instructional Support domain	**1.00-2.99 = 0 points** **3.00-3.99 = 7 points** **4.00-4.99 = 15 points** **5.00-7.00 & ≤2.8 IS = 15 points** **5.00-7.00 & ≥2.8 IS = 25 points**
D.	**Monitoring**	Meets compliance standards based on the Monitoring Tool	**0-80%= 50 points** **81-84%= 105 points** **85-89%=150 points** **90-94%= 2015 points**

			~~95-10099%=250 points~~ ~~100%=25 points~~
~~Site Score (A+B+C+D)~~			

~~**Rate of Readiness Determination**~~

~~The rate of readiness is assigned based on the site score achieved. The point breakdown for the rate of readiness is as follows:~~

- ~~**Successful:** site score of 70+ points~~
- ~~**Probation:** site score of 69 points and below (The first year in this category initiates a one year probationary period. After the first probationary year, the partner site has to score 70 + points to avoid actionable revisions.) The site will enter into a Tier III technical assistance plan that will outline needed improvements. Effective for the 2025-2026 academic year, if programs are placed on probation, they will be held harmless for this one academic year (2025 – 2026). Programs will receive extra support to implement best practices in the classroom.~~
- ~~**Post-probation:** site score of 69 points and below and has been on probation for one year or more; grant funded program will make MDE recommended changes based on established procedures.~~

~~**State Blended, and Grant Funded Pre-Kindergarten Program Rate of Readiness**~~

~~It is expected that each site within a program would achieve a successful score. If a site does not meet the criteria for a successful score, the site will move into a probationary period. During the probationary year, the program will develop a plan for improvement and receive technical assistance to support growth. If the probationary year is complete and the site still does not achieve a successful score, then the program shall make MDE-recommended changes based on established procedures.~~

SECTION III

Organizational Procedures and Staff

A. ORGANIZATION

1. **Requirement for Teacher-Child Ratio**
The teacher-child ratio for classrooms serving three-year-old children is 1:7 maximum. The teacher-child ratio for classrooms serving four-year-old children is 1:10 maximum. If an assistant teacher is assigned in the pre-kindergarten classroom for the entire day, the teacher-child ratio for classrooms serving three-year-old children does not exceed 2:14 maximum at any time, while the teacher-child ratio for classrooms serving four-year-old children does not exceed 2:20 maximum at any time. Classrooms of mixed three- and four-year-old children follow the *Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Three-Year-Old Children* including the teacher-child ratio. The maximum classroom group size does not exceed 14 children at any time. There are no separate requirements for ratios in special education classrooms. IEP committees should consider the most appropriate placement for each individual student. There are no waivers for teacher-child ratio requirements.

2. **Requirement for Length of School Day and Term**
The length of the full-day school year will be no less than 1,080 instructional hours in no less than a 180-day school year, which results in six hours of instruction per day. The length of the half-day school day will be no less than 540 instructional hours in no less than a 180-day school year, which results in three hours of instruction per day. {Mississippi Code Annotated § 37-13-63 & 67}

3. **Requirements for Instructional Day**
The instructional day includes all aspects of the child's day (e.g. learning center activities, large and small group activities, individual instruction, and guided physical activity). At a minimum, the instructional day in a full-day program includes 360 instructional minutes (6 hours), 40 minutes of physical activity, 120 minutes of learning centers, and 30 minutes of quiet/rest time. At a minimum, the instructional day in a half-day program includes 180 (3 hours) instructional minutes, 20 minutes of physical activity, 60 minutes of learning centers, and quiet/rest time as appropriate for the children. Additional information on these requirements is in Section II of this document.

4. **Requirements for Physical Activity**

a. **Full-Day Program** Applies to programs offeri
six or more hours of instruction per day. Children engage in physical activity for a minimum of 40 minutes, and a maximum of 60 minutes during a full-day program. The minutes assigned to

physical activity do not have to occur continuously or consecutively. Weather permitting, physical activity takes place outside. Outdoor play experiences will occur unless a weather advisory is in effect, or the play space is unsafe due to damp or wet conditions. If outdoor play is not possible per one or more of these conditions, teachers provide 40 to 60 minutes of indoor physical activity documented in lesson plans.

b. **Half-Day Program** Applies to programs offering fewer than six hours of instruction per day. Children engage in physical activity for a minimum of 20 minutes, and a maximum of 30 minutes during a half-day program. The minutes assigned to physical activity do not have to take place continuously or consecutively. Outdoor play experiences will occur unless a weather advisory is in effect, or the play space is unsafe due to damp or wet conditions. If outdoor play is not possible per one or more of these conditions, teachers provide 20 to 30 minutes of indoor physical activity documented in lesson plans.

5. Requirement for Quiet Time

Children in full-day programs engage in a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 60 minutes of quiet time daily. Children in half-day programs that are less than six (6) hours in length are not required to rest, but are provided quiet time as appropriate. Activities during quiet time may include individual activities, looking at books/reading, listening to books on tape, drawing, or resting, as appropriate for each individual student.

6. Requirement for Nutritional Provision

All full-day programs provide a minimum of one meal per day. Meals meet nutritional requirements identified in the USDA National School Breakfast/Lunch Program Guidelines or the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Guidelines, whichever is applicable.

7. SAMPLE Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten Schedule

Time	Activity	Minutes	Instructional Time
7:00-7:30	Arrival/Free Choice Centers	30 Minutes	Yes
7:30-7:50	Breakfast*/Storytelling	20 Minutes	Yes
7:50-8:10	Whole Group Read Aloud	20 Minutes	Yes
8:10-8:20	Morning Exercise (Move to Learn)	10 Minutes	Yes

8:20-8:55	Extension Class/Teacher Planning (music, library, physical education, computer, art)	35 Minutes	Yes
8:55-9:10	Whole Group Intro to Centers	15 Minutes	Yes
9:10-10:30	Small Group/Free Choice Centers	80 Minutes	Yes
10:30-10:50	Lunch*	20 Minutes	Yes
10:50-11:05	Whole Group Math	15 Minutes	Yes
11:05-12:05	Small Group/Free Choice Centers	60 Minutes	Yes
12:05-12:15	Thinking and Feedback	10 minutes	Yes
12:15-12:55	Physical Activity	40 Minutes	Yes
12:55-1:40	Quiet Time	45 Minutes	Yes
1:40-2:00	Let's Find Out About It (LFOAI)/Problem Stories /Snack*	20 Minutes	Yes
2:00-2:30	Story Acting/Songs, Word Play, and Letters (SWPL)/Closure	30 Minutes	Yes
2:30-2:45	Dismissal	15 Minutes	No
2:45-3:30	Teacher Planning	45 Minutes	No

Required Minutes		**Sample Schedule Required Minutes**	
Instructional	360 Minimum	Instructional	450
Center Time	120 Minimum	Center Time	170
Quiet Time	30 Mimimum-60 Maximum	Quiet Time	45
Physical Activity	40 Minimum-60 Maximum	Physical Activity	50
Songs, Word Play, and Letters (SWPL) 15 Minimum		Can be done throughout the day	

*Meal times for this age group should be a learning time. Promotion of different skills can be learned during meal time such as taking turns, pre-reading and pre-math skills, problem-solving skills, fine motor skills, etc. Teachers will discuss concepts with children that support social and emotional, physical development, speaking and listening, approaches to learning, and science standards.

8. SAMPLE Half-Day Pre-Kindergarten Schedule

Time	**Activity**	**Minutes**	**Instructional Time**
7:30-7:55	Breakfast*/Storytelling/Free Choice Centers	25	Yes
7:55-8:15	Read Aloud	20	Yes
8:15-8:35	Physical Activity	20	Yes
8:35-8:45		10	Yes

	Intro to Centers		
8:45-9:45	Small Group/Free Choice Centers	60	Yes
9:45-10:05	Thinking and Feedback/Snack	20	Yes
10:05-10:35	Extension Class/Teacher Planning (music, library, physical activity, art, computer)	30	Yes
10:35-10:55	Whole Group Math/Songs, Word Play, and Letters (SWPL)	20	Yes
10:55-11:35	Small Group/Free Choice Centers	40	Yes
11:35-11:50	Let's Find Out About It (LFOAI)/Problem Stories	15	Yes
11:50-12:00	Story Acting	10	Yes
12:00	Dismissal		

Required Minutes	**Sample Schedule Required Minutes**
Instructional 180 Minimum	Instructional 270
Center Time 60 Minimum	Center Time 100
Quiet Time As Appropriate	Quiet Time 0
Physical Activity 20 Minimum-30 Maximum	Physical Activity 20 ***__Due to physical education extension Class, physical activity may be more than 20 minutes on certain days__
Songs, Word Play, and Letters (SWPL) 15 Minimum	Can be done throughout the day

*Meal times for this age group should be a learning time. Promotion of different skills can be learned during meal time such as taking turns, pre-reading and pre-math skills, problem-solving skills, fine motor skills, etc. Teachers will discuss concepts with children that support social and emotional, physical development, speaking and listening, approaches to learning, and science standards.

B. STAFF

1. Required Certification for Teachers and Assistant Teachers in an Early Learning Collaborative (ELC) Program

The Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013 requires that teachers and assistant teachers in any of the Early Learning Collaborative classrooms be qualified in the following manner:

TEACHER

A teacher shall possess a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child development, or an equivalent field. A teacher may also possess a bachelor's degree in any field and have at least twelve (12) credit hours of coursework in early childhood education, child development, or an equivalent field approved by an institution granting a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child development, or an equivalent field; or have a bachelor's degree in any field and have completed a specialized early childhood training program deemed equivalent by the State Department of Education to twelve (12) hours of approved coursework.

*If teachers are in a public-school setting, they will need to also follow the chart below.

GENERAL EDUCATION ELC PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOMS		
Hold a Pre-K/K (153) License		
OR		
Hold a K-3 (116) License or Hold a K-4 (152) License	**AND**	Complete twelve (12) early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Attain a Passing Score on the MSBE Approved Licensure Assessment to add 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **OR** Complete an early childhood training program*
OR		
Hold a K-6 (120) License	**AND**	Complete requirements to add N-1 (150) supplemental endorsement **OR** Attain a Passing Score on the MSBE Approved Licensure Assessment to add 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **OR** 12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Complete an early childhood training program*

*Completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved early childhood education training program includes the Child Development Associate (CDA), National Board Early Childhood Certification, Director's Credential, Montessori Credential, and the MDE's intensive specialized early childhood training program (122 Pre-K add on endorsement). MDE considers additional state, regional, or nationally approved programs upon request. Entities may submit program component documentation to earlychildhood@mdek12.org for consideration. Please note that the completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved training program or MDE prescribed twelve (12) hours of coursework only qualifies a prospective early childhood education teacher or early childhood education assistant teacher to serve three- and four-year old children in Mississippi classrooms and does not lead to an endorsement/licensure unless it is explicitly stated and outlined in the official Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12 document is located at https://mdek12.org/licensure. To review the most accurate and up-to-date licensure requirements, please visit the Office of Educator Licensure webpage at https://mdek12.org/OEL.

ASSISTANT TEACHER

An assistant teacher in the Early Learning Collaborative Pre-K program shall possess an associates degree in early childhood education, child development, or an equivalent field; **or** an associate's degree in any field and a Child Development Associate credential, a Montessori certification, or an equivalent certification; **or** a high school diploma/GED and verification of WorkKeys and a Child Development Associate credential, a Montessori certification, or an equivalent certification.

GENERAL EDUCATION ELC PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOMS		
Early Childhood Associate's Degree		
OR		
Associate's Degree	**AND**	12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Complete an early childhood training program**
OR		
High School Diploma/GED AND Verification of WorkKeys® Scores* **	**AND**	12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Completion of an early childhood training program**

*These hours can be included in the Associate's Degree or 60 College Credit Hours
**Completion of an early childhood training program includes the Child Development Associate (CDA), National/State Director's Credential, Montessori Credential, and the MDE's intensive specialized early childhood training program. MDE considers additional state, regional, or nationally approved programs upon request. Entities may submit program component documentation to earlychildhood@mdek12.org for consideration. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) requires assistant teachers to have a CDA or equivalent, at a minimum. Please note that the completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved training program or MDE prescribed twelve (12) hours of coursework only qualifies a prospective early childhood education teacher or early childhood education assistant teacher to serve three- and four-year old children in Mississippi classrooms and does not lead to an endorsement/licensure unless it is explicitly stated and outlined in the official Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12 document is located at https://mdek12.org/licensure. To review the most accurate and up-to-date licensure requirements, please visit the Office of Educator Licensure webpage at https://mdek12.org/OEL.

*** Prior to 2017, assistant teachers would have met WorkKeys® requirements: a Reading for Information score of 4, an Applied Mathematics score of 4, and a Writing or Business Writing score of 3;

OR

After 2017, assistant teachers must meet the WorkKeys® Silver Level certification: Workplace Document score of 4, an Applied Mathematics score of 4, and a Graphic Literacy score of 4.

Child Care & Head Start Program Teaching Staff in Early Learning Collaboratives

Classrooms participating in an Early Learning Collaborative shall follow the guidance above for the qualification requirements of teachers (page 15) and assistant teachers (page 17).

Caveat

If an offsite entity manages staff, the staff will also fall under the employing entity's staff requirement guidance.

2. Required Certification for Teachers and Assistant Teachers in a State Invested Pre-Kindergarten (SIP) Program

GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

General Education teachers in a State Invested Pre-K (SIP) are required to follow one of the pathways listed below.

GENERAL EDUCATION PUBLIC SCHOOL PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOMS		
Hold a Pre-K/K (153) License		
OR		
Hold a K-3 (116) License or Hold a K-4 (152) License	**AND**	Complete twelve (12) early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Attain a Passing Score on the MSBE Approved Licensure Assessment to add 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **OR** Complete an early childhood training program*
OR		
Hold a K-6 (120) License	**AND**	Complete requirements to add N-1 (150) supplemental endorsement **OR** Attain a Passing Score on the MSBE Approved Licensure Assessment to add 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **OR** 12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Complete an early childhood training program*

*Completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved early childhood education training program includes the Child Development Associate (CDA), National Board Early Childhood Certification, Director's Credential, Montessori Credential, and the MDE's intensive specialized early childhood training program (122 Pre-K add on endorsement). MDE considers additional state, regional, or nationally approved programs upon request. Entities may submit program component documentation to earlychildhood@mdek12.org for consideration. Please note that the completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved training program or MDE prescribed twelve (12) hours of coursework only qualifies a prospective early childhood education teacher or early childhood education assistant teacher to serve three- and four-year old children in Mississippi classrooms and does not lead to an endorsement/licensure unless it is explicitly stated and outlined in the official Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12 document is located at https://mdek12.org/licensure. To review the most accurate and up-to-date licensure requirements, please visit the Office of Educator Licensure webpage at https://mdek12.org/OEL.

ASSISTANT TEACHERS

General Education and Special Education assistant teachers in a SIP are required to follow one of the pathways listed below.

Early Childhood Associate's Degree		
OR		
Associate's Degree OR 60 College Credit Hours	**AND**	12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Completion of an early childhood training program**
OR		
High School Diploma/GED AND Verification of WorkKeys® Scores* **	**AND**	12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Completion of an early childhood training program**

*These hours can be included in the Associate's Degree or 60 College Credit Hours
**Completion of an early childhood training program includes the Child Development Associate (CDA), National/State Director's Credential, Montessori Credential, and the MDE's intensive specialized early childhood training program. MDE considers additional state, regional, or nationally approved programs upon request. Entities may submit program component documentation to earlychildhood@mdek12.org for consideration. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) requires assistant teachers to have a CDA or equivalent, at a minimum. Please note that the completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved training program or MDE prescribed twelve (12) hours of coursework only qualifies a prospective early childhood education teacher or early childhood education assistant teacher to serve three- and four-year old children in Mississippi classrooms and does not lead to an endorsement/licensure unless it is explicitly stated and outlined in the official Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12 document is located at https://mdek12.org/licensure. To review the most accurate and up-to-date licensure requirements, please visit the Office of Educator Licensure webpage at https://mdek12.org/OEL.

*** Prior to 2017, assistant teachers would have met WorkKeys® requirements: a Reading for Information score of 4, an Applied Mathematics score of 4, and a Writing or Business Writing score of 3;

OR

After 2017, assistant teachers must meet the WorkKeys® Silver Level certification: Workplace Documents score of 4, an Applied Mathematics score of 4, and a Graphic Literacy score of 4.

3. Required Certification for Teachers and Assistant Teachers in a Public School Pre-Kindergarten Program

GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

General Education teachers in a public school Pre-K are required to follow one of the pathways listed below.

GENERAL EDUCATION PUBLIC SCHOOL PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOMS		
Hold a Pre-K/K (153) License		
OR		
Hold a K-3 (116) License or Hold a K-4 (152) License	**AND**	Complete twelve (12) early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Attain a Passing Score on the MSBE Approved Licensure Assessment to add 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **OR** Complete an early childhood training program*
OR		
Hold a K-6 (120) License	**AND**	Complete requirements to add N-1 (150) supplemental endorsement **OR** Attain a Passing Score on the MSBE Approved Licensure Assessment to add 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **OR** 12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Complete an early childhood training program*

*Completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved early childhood education training program includes the Child Development Associate (CDA), National Board Early Childhood Certification, Director's Credential, Montessori Credential, and the MDE's intensive specialized early childhood training program

(122 Pre-K add on endorsement). MDE considers additional state, regional, or nationally approved programs upon request. Entities may submit program component documentation to earlychildhood@mdek12.org for consideration. Please note that the completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved training program or MDE prescribed twelve (12) hours of coursework only qualifies a prospective early childhood education teacher or early childhood education assistant teacher to serve three- and four-year old children in Mississippi classrooms and does not lead to an endorsement/licensure unless it is explicitly stated and outlined in the official Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12 document is located at https://mdek12.org/licensure. To review the most accurate and up-to-date licensure requirements, please visit the Office of Educator Licensure webpage at https://mdek12.org/OEL.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Special Education teachers are required to follow one of the pathways listed below.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRE-KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOMS		
Hold Birth-K Special Education License (211)		
OR		
Hold Mild to Moderate Disability K-12 (221) License or Hold Severe Disability K-12 (222) License or Hold Mild to Moderate Disability K-8 (223) License	**AND**	12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Attain a Passing Score on the MSBE Approved Licensure Assessment to add 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **OR** Complete an early childhood training program*

*Completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved early childhood education training program includes the Child Development Associate (CDA), National Board Early Childhood Certification, Director's Credential, Montessori Credential, and the MDE's intensive specialized early childhood training program (122 Pre-K add on endorsement). MDE considers additional state, regional, or nationally approved programs upon request. Entities may submit program component documentation to earlychildhood@mdek12.org for consideration.

Please note that the completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved training program or MDE prescribed twelve (12) hours of coursework only qualifies a prospective early childhood education teacher or early childhood education assistant teacher to serve three- and four-year old children in Mississippi classrooms and does not lead to an endorsement/licensure unless it is explicitly stated and outlined in the official Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12 document is located at https://mdek12.org/licensure. To review the most accurate and up-to-date licensure requirements, please visit the Office of Educator Licensure webpage at https://mdek12.org/OEL.

ASSISTANT TEACHERS

General Education and Special Education Assistant teachers in a public school Pre-K are required to follow one of the pathways listed below.

Early Childhood Associate's Degree		
OR		
Associate's Degree OR 60 College Credit Hours	**AND**	12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Complete an early childhood training program**
OR		
High School Diploma/GED AND Verification of WorkKeys® Scores* **	**AND**	12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Complete an early childhood training program**

*These hours can be included in the Associate's Degree or 60 College Credit Hours
**Completion of an early childhood training program includes the Child Development Associate (CDA), National/State Director's Credential, Montessori Credential, and the MDE's intensive specialized early childhood training program. MDE considers additional state, regional, or nationally approved programs upon request. Entities may submit program component documentation to earlychildhood@mdek12.org for consideration. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) requires assistant teachers to have a CDA or equivalent, at a minimum. Please note that the completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved training program or MDE prescribed twelve (12) hours of coursework only qualifies a prospective early childhood education teacher or early childhood education assistant teacher to serve three- and four-year old children in MS classrooms and does not lead to an endorsement/licensure unless it is explicitly stated and outlined in the official Licensure Guidelines K-12 document. To review the most accurate and up-to-date licensure requirements, please visit the Office of Educator Licensure section of the MDE website.

***Prior to 2017, Teacher Assistants would have met WorkKeys® requirements: a Reading for Information score of 4, an Applied Mathematics score of 4, and a Writing or Business Writing score of 3;

OR

After 2017, Teacher Assistants need to meet the WorkKeys® Silver Level certification: Workplace Document score of 4, an Applied Mathematics score of 4, and a Graphic Literacy score of 4.

The Office of Educator Licensure will continue to oversee the obtainment of endorsements. The Office of Early Childhood will be responsible for any other components of qualification.

4. **Requirement for Professional Learning**
   All teaching staff (teachers and assistant teachers) and program administrators complete at least fifteen contact (15) hours of professional learning annually for program instructional staff specific to the education of pre-kindergarten children. Administrators that manage pre-kindergarten teachers shall gain the required hours of professional learning through online or on-site training. This variety of content could include program administration, family engagement, and early childhood instructional content approved or offered by the Mississippi Department of Education and/or Mississippi Department of Health. Please visit the MDE early childhood professional learning webpage for additional resources: www.mdek12.org/Professional-Development.

SECTION IV

Family Engagement and Transportation

A. GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Families are viewed as a partner and the child's first teacher. Teachers provide families with information and resources that could help their children. Families have opportunities to volunteer in the classroom and participate in enrichment opportunities.

1. **Requirement for Family Handbook**
   Each pre-kindergarten program develops and distributes a family handbook that addresses the program philosophy, goals and specific information unique to the program (e.g. curriculum, credentials, and assessments.) This information may be included in the district handbook, but should be clearly identified for families.

2. **Requirements for Family Communication**
   Teacher/parent conferences are conducted at least three times during the pre-kindergarten year to inform parents or guardians of child's progress. The first parent conference at the beginning of the year consists of an information gathering session from the parent. Additional winter and spring conferences consist of a progress update to the parent. If documented attempts to meet with parents or other responsible persons fail, telephone conferences can be substituted. Communication is conducted on a regular basis. Communication between school and home could consist of notebooks/folders, newsletters, conferences, emails, and phone calls.

3. **Requirements for Volunteer Participation**
   Parents, guardians, and community members are encouraged to participate in various activities such as developing learning games for home or classroom use, sharing information with the class about their work skills or profession, or sharing their talents through conducting music and/or art activities. Volunteers are not in the classroom without a teacher or assistant teacher present and are not used to meet the minimum adult-to-child ratio. Volunteers that serve in a school more than 120 hours per school year participate in an orientation session, sign a confidentiality agreement, and consent to a background check that is conducted by the district.

B. TRANSPORTATION

1. Requirement for Transportation

All transportation is optional except for children with IEPs. Transportation requirements regarding children with IEPs are determined by the IEP Committee.

2. Requirement for School Bus Safety

All pre-kindergarten programs choosing to transport children adhere to Mississippi Code Annotated § 37-41-3. All liability and related expenses are the responsibility of the pre-kindergarten program. The National Highway Transportation Safety Association(NHTSA), Federal Code: 45 CFR 1310.15 (a), requires that all Head Start children, children preschool age or younger ride in Child Safety Restraint Systems (CSRS). Child Safety Restraints include car seats, safety vests or built in child restraints such as seat belts. In addition to the **National Highway Transportation Safety Association (NHTSA) Guidelines**, the following caregiver ratio should be followed when transporting children.

- If five (5) to sixteen (16) pre-kindergarten children are being transported on a bus, one (1) caregiver in addition to the driver should be on the bus.
- If seventeen (17) to thirty-two (32) pre-kindergarten children are being transported on a bus, two (2) caregivers in addition to the driver should be on the bus.
- Caregivers should be 18 years of age or older and an agency employee.

SECTION V

Physical Settings and Outside Play

A. PHYSICAL SETTINGS

1. Guidelines for Existing Structures

a. Existing Classrooms

i. Requirements for Existing Classrooms

1. The classroom consists of no less than 35 square feet per child.
2. Classrooms with typically developing, or a blend of typically and atypically developing children are a minimum of 600 square feet and free from excess storage that prevents full usage of classroom square footage.
3. Pre-kindergarten classrooms are to be located at ground level.
4. Every closet latch is such that children can open the door from the inside.
5. The maximum distance to an exit from any point in the building does not exceed 150 feet. The maximum distance from the classroom door at the corridor to an exit does not exceed 100 feet.
6. All electrical outlets accessible to children should be a type called “tamper-resistant electrical outlets.” These types of outlets look like standard wall outlets but contain an internal shutter mechanism that prevents children from sticking objects like hairpins, keys, and paperclips into the receptacle. This spring-loaded shutter mechanism only opens when equal pressure is applied to both shutters such as when an electrical plug is inserted. In existing facilities that do not have “tamper-resistant electrical outlets”,

outlets should have “safety covers” that are attached to the electrical outlet by a screw or other means to prevent easy removal by a child. “Safety plugs” should not be used since they can be removed from an electrical outlet by children. All newly installed or replaced electrical outlets that are accessible to children should use “tamper-resistant electrical outlets.” In areas where electrical products might come into contact with water, a special type of outlet called Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) should be installed. A GFCI is designed to trip before a deadly electrical shock can occur. To ensure that GFCIs are functioning correctly, they should be tested at least monthly. GFCIs are also available in a tamper-resistant design. (Source: Caring for Our Children 5.2.4.2, https://nrckids.org/CFOC)

7. The classroom is clean and sanitary in a safe and secure environment.
8. All classrooms are air conditioned.

ii. Recommendations for Existing Classrooms

1. Where multiple pre-kindergarten units occur within a school or building, they are grouped adjacent to one another for teacher and child interaction and for optimum use of common facilities.
2. Each pre-kindergarten classroom has a work counter of at least 12 feet with at least one sink. The sink is stainless steel or porcelain, standard with gooseneck fitting on one side and a drinking bubbler on the other. The sink has cold water only. A paper towel dispenser accessible to students and a trash receptacle should be located near the sink.
3. 110-volt wall plugs should be located every 10 feet to 15 feet around the classroom.

b. Existing Bathrooms

i. Requirements for Existing Bathrooms

1. Classrooms are located no more than 125 feet from a bathroom.
2. Every toilet room door lock is designed to permit opening of the locked door from the outside in an emergency, and the opening device is readily accessible to the staff.
3. For children with disabilities who are not yet toilet trained, a changing table is provided in the bathroom or classroom.
4. All bathrooms are adequately stocked with toilet tissue.

5. No items other than toilet tissue or bathroom supplies are stored in bathrooms. Cleaning supplies may be kept in the bathroom only if out of reach of children.

ii. Recommendations for Existing Bathrooms

1. A toilet room in the classroom is available for pre-kindergarten children.
2. Toilet seats in bathrooms are 10 to 13 inches from the floor.
3. Lavatories are 24 inches from the floor.

c. Existing Furniture

i. Requirements for Existing Furniture

1. Furniture is of an appropriate height for young children.
2. Tables and chairs are provided rather than desks.
3. At least one small book case or book display shelf is provided per classroom for children to access literature in the classroom.

ii. Recommendations for Existing Furniture

1. At least two small bookcases or book display shelves are provided to allow children access to literature in the classroom.
2. A personal area is provided within the classroom for teachers, providing these items do not significantly diminish space for use by children.

d. **Existing Floors**

i. Requirements for Existing Floors

1. Each classroom contains a 9 x 12-foot area rug or individual carpet squares, or similar material, to be used for large group meetings. Carpets or similar soft flooring surfaces are properly sanitized annually and replaced as needed.

ii. Recommendations for Existing Floors

1. Classroom areas not carpeted are covered with resilient flooring or other easily cleaned material. Roll-type resilient flooring has the advantage of a minimum amount of jointing.

e. **Building Codes for Existing Structures**

i. Requirements for Building Codes for Existing Structures

1. All building construction conforms to the Southern Building Codes, the American Disabilities Act, the Life Safety Codes, and to any other city or county building codes.

ii. Recommendations for Building Codes for Existing Structures

1. There are no recommendations for building codes.

f. Storage and Space in Existing Structures

i. Requirements for Storage and Space in Existing Structures:

1. Storage will be provided at the school for teaching and classroom supplies. Storage may not decrease classroom space available to students. Classrooms are organized and clutter is kept to a minimum.

ii. Recommendations for Storage and Space in Existing Structures

1. Base cabinets are installed below all counters. Doors are attached to some cabinets, while some are left open to serve as shelves. Open cabinet (18 x 24 inches and 24 x 36 inches) will accommodate large paper used for easel painting.
2. Cabinets, 12 inches deep, are installed over the entire counter area for general storage.
3. Open storage units (cubbies) are available for every student. Each unit to be four feet high and two feet wide with coat hanging space at the bottom and a storage area at the top. Coat hooks should be installed 36 inches from the floor.
4. Adequate storage space should be provided. The storage units may include one wall of built-in cabinets or moveable storage sections. Most storage units are accessible to children to facilitate independence and responsibility within the classroom. Storage space, above the reach of the children, is available for use by teachers.
5. Adequate space for display of children's work is provided. Bulletin boards can be located on walls and/or fastened to the backs of cabinets and bookcases.
6. A teacher work area of 180 to 200 square feet is allocated for use by every two to three pre-kindergarten teachers. This area is needed for individual assessment of children, conferencing with parents, making classroom materials, and planning meetings.

2. Guidelines for New Structures

a. New Classrooms

i. Requirements for New Classrooms

1. The classroom is a minimum of 1,000 square feet.
2. The minimum classroom width is 24 feet, except in pod-type structures. The classroom is free from excess storage that prevents full usage of classroom square footage.
3. Classrooms contain operable lighting with area controls that ensure adequate lighting throughout the room. Switches within reach of the children are located at the doors. Toilet rooms contain lighting fixtures.
4. The maximum distance to an exit from any point in the building does not exceed 150 feet. The maximum distance from the interior classroom door at the corridor to an exit does not exceed 100 feet.
5. Pre-kindergarten classrooms are located at ground level.
6. Every closet latch is such that children can open the door from the inside.
7. All newly installed electrical outlets accessible to children who are not yet developmentally at a kindergarten grade level of learning should be a type called "tamper-resistant electrical outlets." These types of outlets look like standard wall outlets but contain an internal shutter mechanism that prevents children from sticking objects like hairpins, keys, and paperclips into the receptacle. This spring-loaded shutter mechanism only opens when equal pressure is applied to both shutters such as when an electrical plug is inserted. "Safety plugs" should not be used since they can be removed from an electrical outlet by children.

In areas where electrical products might come into contact with water, a special type of outlet called Ground Fault Circuit

Interrupters (GFCIs) should be installed. A GFCI is designed to trip before a deadly electrical shock can occur. To ensure that GFCIs are functioning correctly, they should be tested at least monthly. GFCIs are also available in a tamper-resistant design. (Source: Caring for Our Children 5.2.4.2, https://nrckids.org/CFOC)

8. The classroom is clean and sanitary in a safe and secure environment.
9. All classrooms are air conditioned.

ii. Recommendations for New Classrooms

1. All pre-kindergarten units within one school or building are grouped in the same general vicinity for optimum use of common facilities.
2. A classroom clock is in each classroom.
3. 110-volt wall plugs are located every 10 to 15 feet around the classroom.
4. A minimum of 50 square feet of window area per unit is available in each classroom. Windows are located no more than two feet from the floor. Windows are able to be opened from the inside for ventilation purposes. A generous glass window area is in place to overlook the playground and promote an indoor-outdoor atmosphere. Roofing overhang and installation of blinds or shutters are provided to combat excessive sunlight.
5. Careful consideration is given to the location of pre-kindergarten units in new structures. Each classroom has a door opening onto the playground or other attractive outdoor space. A six-foot roof overhang makes the outdoor area usable on a rainy day as an outdoor learning center.

a. New Bathrooms

i. Requirements for New Bathrooms

1. Each classroom contains a minimum of one bathroom that consists of a toilet and lavatory, or at the district's option the lavatory may be omitted if the work counter area is equipped with a sink and is in close proximity to the toilet room door. The toilet paper holder is placed within a child's reach from the toilet. In classrooms where children are not yet toilet trained, a changing table is installed.
2. Individual toilet rooms are required to accommodate the physically handicapped and follow ADA regulations.

3. Every toilet room door lock is designed to permit opening of the locked door from the outside in an emergency, and the opening device is readily accessible to the staff.

ii. Recommendations for New Bathrooms

1. One bathroom/shower combination is provided for every eight pre-kindergarten units.

b. Furniture in New Classrooms

i. Requirements for Furniture in New Classrooms

1. Tables and chairs are provided rather than desks.
2. Chairs in the pre-kindergarten classroom adjust from 8 to 14 inches so that all children's feet will touch the floor.
3. All tables adjust from 20 inches to 24 inches in height.
4. Furniture is of an appropriate height for young children.
5. At least one small book case or book display shelf is provided per classroom for children to access literature in the classroom.

ii. Recommendations for Furniture in New Classrooms

1. A body-length, shatter-proof wall or floor mirror is in the dramatic play/housekeeping center area or near the toilet area.
2. At least two small bookcases or book display shelves, designed to display book covers/titles, are provided to allow children access to literature in the classroom.
3. A personal area be provided within the classroom for teachers, providing these items do not significantly diminish space for use by children.
4. A teacher work area of 180 to 200 square feet minimum is allocated for use by every two to three pre-kindergarten teachers. A proportionately larger space shared by all pre-kindergarten teachers in a school would suffice. This room is made inviting through use of carpeting and appropriate furniture. Items in the space include a four-drawer file cabinet, two chairs, a work counter, or table storage shelving.

c. Floors in New Classrooms

i. Requirements for Floors in New Classrooms

1. Classroom areas are covered with resilient flooring or other easily cleaned material. Roll-type resilient flooring has the advantage of a minimum amount of jointing.

2. Each classroom contains a 9 x 12-foot area rug or individual carpet squares, or similar soft flooring surface, to be used for large group meetings. Carpets or similar soft flooring surfaces will be properly sanitized annually and replaced as needed.

ii. Recommendations for Floors in New Classrooms

1. There are no recommendations for floors in new classrooms.

d. Building Codes for New Classrooms

i. Requirements for Building Codes for New Classrooms

1. All building construction conforms to the Southern Building Codes, the American Disabilities Act, the Life Safety Codes, and to any other city and county building codes.

ii. Recommendations for Building Codes for New Classrooms

1. There are no recommendations for building codes in new structures.

e. Storage and Space in New Classrooms

i. Requirements for Storage and Space in New Classrooms

1. Open storage units (cubbies) are provided for each student.
2. Wall receptacles are placed 10 feet to 15 feet apart in each classroom. Any receptacle in the counter area are not located near a sink. A minimum of six outlets is installed.
3. Every closet latch is such that children can open the door from the inside.
4. Built-in cabinets or portable storage areas are constructed to promote accessibility of materials to the child to encourage the selection of activities and to facilitate room clean-up and to serve as learning center dividers. The height of cabinets and storage furnishings does not diminish teachers' ability to visually supervise children.
5. Classrooms are organized and clutter is kept to a minimum.

ii. Recommendations for Storage and Space in New Classrooms:

1. Base cabinets are installed below all counters. Doors are attached to some cabinets, while some are left open to serve as shelves. Open cabinet (18 x 24 inches and 24 x 36 inches) will accommodate the large paper used for easel painting.

2. Cabinets, 12 inches deep, are installed over the entire counter area for general storage.
3. Open storage units (cubbies) are available for every student. Each unit is four feet high and two feet wide with coat hanging space at the bottom and a storage area at the top. Coat hooks are installed 36 inches from the floor.
4. Adequate storage space is provided. The storage units include one wall of built-in cabinets or moveable storage sections. Most storage units are accessible to children to facilitate independence and responsibility within the classroom. Storage space, above the reach of the children, is available for use by teachers.
5. Adequate space for display of children's work is provided. Bulletin boards can be located on walls and/or fastened to the backs of cabinets and bookcases.

B. OUTDOOR PLAY AREA

1. Guidelines for Outdoor Play Areas

a. **Outdoor Play Areas**

i. Requirements for Designated Outdoor Play Areas

1. A designated area for supervised outside periods during the pre-kindergarten day is provided. Pre-kindergarten students do not simultaneously share an area with children in first grade or older during designated outside periods.
2. To allow for all children to engage in outdoor play together, a fully accessible outdoor play space is provided for children requiring adaptive equipment. Activities are provided to allow for and encourage inclusive play.
3. Appropriate playground equipment and landscape design is provided to facilitate learning and ensure safety.
4. Playground equipment and landscape design is developmentally appropriate for three- and/or four-year-old children according to National Standards adopted by the Mississippi Department of Health.
5. The outside play area has defined boundaries to protect children from environmental hazards. Boundaries are sufficient to prevent vehicles and other hazards from entering the play area as well as prevent children from exiting the play area alone.

ii. Recommendations for Outdoor Play Areas

1. The outdoor play area is a minimum of 4,300 square feet for two pre-kindergarten classes. For each additional class, another 1,400 square feet is added.
2. A covered area is located on the playground to allow children refuge from the sun and to serve as a play area during inclement weather. This area is 225 to 300 square feet for each pre-kindergarten class, with a sloped concrete surface to shed water.

Source code: Section 37-21-7 (Adopt)

Title 7 Education K-12
Part – 191
Revised June 2025

Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines For classrooms serving Three- and Four-Year-Old Children

MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Mississippi Department of Education

Lance Evans, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

Wendy Clemons
Chief Academic Officer

Jill Dent, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Office of Early Childhood Education

Mississippi State Board of Education

Mr. Glen V. East,
Chair

Mr. Matt Miller,
Vice Chair

Dr. Lance Evans,
Executive Secretary

Dr. Wendi Barrett

Mr. Bill Jacobs

Mr. Matt Mayo

Dr. Ronnie L. McGehee

Mr. Mike Pruitt

Mrs. Billye Jean Stroud

Mrs. Mary Werner

Student Representatives

Crosby Parker **Michelle Xie**

Early Learning Guidelines Committee Members (2025)

Bliss Acker
Pre-K Teacher
Bay-Waveland School District

Karey Alegria
SIP Lead/Assistant Principal & Pre-K Coordinator
Jefferson Davis County School District

Dr. Chad Allgood
Director, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development
Mississippi Department of Human Services

Sheri Anders
Early Childhood Education Advisor
East Central Community College

Mary Anderson
Pre-K Teacher
Rankin County School District/ELC

Dr. Pearl Bailey
Grant Director-Preschool Development Grant B-5, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development
Mississippi Department of Human Services

Sarah Bailey
SIP Lead/Assistant Superintendent
Humphreys School District

Michelle Beard
SIP Lead/Pre-K/MTSS/EL Coordinator
Wayne County School District

Dr. Eileen Beazley
Head Start Collaboration Office Director/Education Liaison
Office of Governor Tate Reeves

Dr. Regina Biggers
Superintendent
Benton County School District

Jodie Boyd
ELC Lead/Early Childhood Director
Lee County School District/ ELC

Xandra Brooks-Keys
SIP Lead/Assistant Superintendent
North Bolivar School District

Alfreda Brown
ELC Lead
Holmes County School District/ELC

Dr. Sametra Brown
ELC Lead, Yazoo City Collaborative/ Assistant Superintendent Federal Programs
MS Achievement School District

George Buchanan
SIP Lead/Assistant Superintendent, Pre-K Director/State Testing Coordinator
South Tippah School District

Cara Buffington
ELC Lead/Director of Early Childhood and Reading Development
Oxford School District/ELC

Jennifer Calvert
ELC Lead/Owner
Calvert's ABC Preschool
Monroe County Early Learning Collaborative

Keithann Carter
Pre-K Teacher
Lamar County School District/ELC

Dr. Kevin Carter
SIP Lead/Career & Technology Education Director
Newton Municipal School District

Katherine Chesser
SIP Lead/Director of Curriculum & Instruction/District Pre-K Coordinator
Smith County School District

Dr. Katherine Clark
Professor
University of Southern Mississippi

LaToya Clark
SIP Lead/Early Childhood Academic Coach
Natchez-Adams School District

Patsy Clerk
ELC Lead/Family & Community Engagement Coordinator
Cleveland School District/ELC

Dr. Connie Clay
Education and Training Specialist
Graduate Center for the Study of Early Learning
University of Mississippi

Mary Coleman
ELC Lead/Program Coordinator
Starkville Oktibbeha School District

Dr. Stacie Collins
SIP Lead/Assistant Superintendent
Philadelphia School District

Katherine Coon
SIP Lead/Principal
Tupelo Municipal School District

Jennifer Courteaux
Pre-K Teacher
Bay-Waveland School District

Suzanne Crosby
ELC Lead/Principal, Kosciusko Lower Elementary
Kosciusko School District /ELC

Brandy Culpepper
Pre-K Teacher
Lauderdale County School District

Dr. Stephanie Davidson
Associate Professor/Department of Elementary & Early Childhood Department Chair
Jackson State University

Amy Davis
SIP Lead/Math Coach/Pre-K Coordinator
Union County School District

Kayla Fitzgerald
Pre-K Teacher
Pascagoula-Gautier School District/ELC

Sherna DeBerry Jones
ELC Lead/Early Childhood Education Coordinator
Holly Springs School District/ELC

Stormy Dupre
SIP Lead/Coordinator
Vicksburg - Warren School District

Kim Ezelle
ELC Lead/ Data Analyst/ Interventionist
Grenada County School District/ELC

Gina Gallant
SIP Lead/Assistant Superintendent
Forrest County School District

Dr. Edshundra Gary
Chief ELC Lead
Greenwood Leflore School District/ELC

Helen Gilkey
ELC Lead
Noxubee County School District/ELC

Dr. Cathy Grace
Co-Director, Graduate Center for the Study of Early Learning
University of Mississippi

Haley Green
ELC Lead
Marion County School District/ELC

Jennifer Griffin
Pre-K Teacher
Lamar County School District/ELC

Lasonja Hardy
Pre-K Teacher
Holmes County School District/ELC

Daisey Hawkins
SIP Lead/Principal
Sunflower County Consolidated School District

Dr. Angel Herring
Associate Professor, Child and Family Sciences
University of Southern Mississippi

Raquel Jackson
Pre-K Teacher
Pascagoula-Gautier School District/ELC

Shontelle Johnson
ELC Lead/Principal
Hollandale School District/ELC

Dr. Kristie Jones
ELC Lead/Director of Federal Programs
Lowndes County School District/ELC

Letha Jones
MELC Laison/Training Coordinator
Monroe County Early Learning Collaborative

Tony Keys
ELC Lead/Principal, Stringer Attendance Center
West Jasper School District/ELC

Kate Killough
ELC Lead/Director
Corinth School District
Corinth-Alcorn-Prentiss/ELC

Kristi Kirkwood
ELC Lead/Early Childhood Coordinator
George County School District/ELC

Dr. Mandy Lacey
ELC Lead/Assistant Curriculum Director
Pass Christian School District ELC

Dr. Jeff Leffler
Associate Professor/ Graduate Coordinator
Mississippi State University

Dr. Gail Lindsey
Assistant Teaching Professor/
Elementary Education Faculty
Mississippi State University

Heather Lyons
ELC Lead/Pre-K Coordinator
Lamar County School District/ELC

Dr. Toya Matthews
Superintendent
Clarksdale School District/ELC

Lakeisha Maxer
ELC Lead/PreK Coordinator
Rankin County School District/ELC

Win Maxey-Shumate
Early Childhood Education Technology Program Coordinator/Instructor
Meridian Community College

Linda McAdory
ELC Lead/Director of Early Learning
Leland School District/ELC

Dixie McCollough
ELC Lead
Quitman School District
Clarke County/ELC

Kelli McCorkle
ELC Lead/PreK Coordinator
Pascagoula-Gautier School District/ELC

Joann Mestayer
SIP Lead/Director of Early Learning
Bay St. Louis – Waveland School District

Hope Mikell
ELC Lead/Director of Curriculum & Instruction
Hattiesburg School District/ELC

Monica Mitchell
ELC Lead/Federal Programs Director
Senatobia School District/ELC

Dr. Angela Mixon-Harris
SIP Lead/Assistant Superintendent
Simpson County School District

Lenora Morris
ELC Lead/Chief of Student Services
South Panola School District/ELC

Rachel Newman
Pre-K Teacher
Lamar County School District/ELC

Nita Norphlet-Thompson
Executive Director
Mississippi Head Start Association

Dr. Michelle Nowell
Executive Director, Elementary Education and Reading
Mississippi Department of Education

Dr. Julie Parker
Professor, Human Development and Family Sciences
Mississippi State University

Jana Perry
ELC Lead/Program Director
Petal School District/ELC

Tyranny Piece
MELC Lead Pre-K Teacher
Monroe County/ELC

Dr. Candice Pittman
Grants Manager
Mississippi Head Start Association

Dr. Felicia Pollard
ELC Lead/Director of Instruction
Pontotoc City Schools District/ELC

Amanda Randall
SIP Lead/School Psychometrist/
Positive Behavior Specialist/School Testing Coordinator
Enterprise School District

Martha Ravola
Professor, Human Development & Family Science, Director, ASU SNAP-Ed program, Department of Human Sciences
Alcorn State University

Jennifer Rawson
Director of Federal Programs/Pre-k
Neshoba County School District

Kelleigh Reynolds Broussard
ELC Lead/Assistant Superintendent
Long Beach School District/ELC

Jason Roberson
SIP Lead/District Support Specialist
Newton County School District

Tara Rouse
Pre-K Teacher
George County School District/ELC

Jeannie Saia
Pre-K Teacher
Rankin County School District/ELC

Diane Savell
Pre-K Teacher
Scott County School District/ELC

Tamara Smith
SIP Lead/Director of Early Childhood
Midtown Public Charter School

Rachel Spencer
Pre-K Teacher
Rankin County School District/ELC

Cheryl Swoops
ELC Lead/Director of Community Engagement
Tallahatchie Early Learning Alliance ELC

Yashica Suddeth
ELC Lead
Jefferson County Public School District/ ELC

Jamila B. Taylor, MBA
Interim Executive Director Early Childhood Programs: Mississippi LIFT Resource & Referral Network, Nurturing Homes Initiative, and Head Start-Early Head Start Program, School of Human Sciences
Mississippi State University Extension

Kim Taylor
ELC Lead
ICS Head Start/West Point ELC

Dr. Felicia Thomas
ELC Lead/Early Childhood Director
Jackson Public School District/ELC

Dr. Pam Thomas
ELC Lead/Early Childhood Programs Director
Picayune School District/ELC

Dr. Shushan Vardanyan
Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education
University of Mississippi

Stacy Walker
ELC Lead/Director of Assessment and Accountability
Brookhaven School District/ELC

Whitney Weaver
SIP Lead/School Counselor
Union City School District

Holly Weeden
Lead Online Instructor, Early Childhood Education
Itawamba Community College

Dr. Trenisha Weekley
ELC Lead/Principal, Nichols Elementary
Biloxi School District/ELC

Nyisha Wells
ELC/Lead Curriculum Director, MSIS Coordinator
Scott County School District/ELC

Alicia Westbrook
Director, Mississippi Early Childhood Inclusion Center
University of Southern Mississippi

Tevin White
District Parent Liaison/Family Education Center Coordinator
Moss Point School District

Karen Williams
SIP Lead/Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Pre-K-4, & MTSS
Lauderdale County School District

Betty Wilson-McSwain
ELC Lead/Assistant Superintendent for Federal Programs and Testing
McComb School District/ELC

Dr. Kenya Wolff
Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education/Early Childhood Education Program Coordinator/Co-Director The Graduate Center for the Study of Early Learning
University of Mississippi

Table of Contents

Introduction 9

Pre-Kindergarten Philosophy and Goals for Three- and Four-Year-Old Children 11

Section I 1

A. ENTRANCE AGE 1
B. PARTICIPATION 1

Section II 2

A. GUIDELINES FOR CURRICULUM 2
B. GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS 5
C. GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT 5

Section III 10

A. ORGANIZATION 10
B. STAFF 15

Section IV 26

A. GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT 26
B. TRANSPORTATION 27

Section V 28

A. PHYSICAL SETTINGS 28
B. OUTDOOR PLAY AREA 35

Introduction

This manual has been prepared for use by administrators, counselors, teachers, and other authorized staff in the pre-kindergarten programs of Mississippi and is to be used as a guide to implement requirements and recommendations in facilitating state or other funded pre-kindergarten programs such as federal, local, and philanthropically-funded programs.

This manual also includes guidance for serving pre-kindergarten students with disabilities, as appropriate for meeting the needs of individual students based on their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Any elementary, including pre-kindergarten, and/or secondary school system, accredited by the Mississippi State Department of Education, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Mississippi Association of Independent Schools, the American Association of Christian Schools, the Association of Christian School International, a school affiliated with Accelerated Christian Education, Inc., and any Head Start program operating in conjunction with an elementary school system, whether it is public, private or parochial, whose primary purpose is a structured school or school readiness program is exempt from licensing by the Mississippi State Department of Health. If a classroom is located in a public school and sponsored by a non-public school organization, the classroom must be licensed unless named in the exemption requirements section of the Child Care Regulations or a letter of joint sponsorship is provided by the school district and non-profit sponsor that is approved by the Mississippi State Department of Health. Pre-kindergarten providers not located in public schools are required to be licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health.

Additionally, this manual includes guidance for any classroom that serves three- and four-year-old children including pre-kindergarten lab schools located on public school campuses and licensed by the Mississippi Department of Health. The chart below describes the requirements and options for each type of program.

Program Type	Requirements
State Funded, Grant Funded OR Federally Funded Program	• Enter children into Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) • Follow Early Learning Standards • Administer the Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening) • Administer Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment • Create transition folders for pre-kindergarten children • Participate in early childhood training offered by MDE • Be accredited by the Mississippi Department of Education
Other Funded OR Public School Pre-kindergarten Lab School Program	• Enter children into Mississippi Student Information System(MSIS) • Follow Early Learning Standards • Administer the Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening) • Administer Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment • Create transition folders for pre-kindergarten children • Participate in early childhood training offered by MDE • Be licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health **OR** Accredited by the Mississippi Department of Education

Facilities or programs claiming exemption shall be required, upon the written request of the licensing agency, to provide documentation of the facts claimed to support the basis for the exemption, which documentation shall be provided within 30 days of the request by the licensing agency and shall be sworn by affidavit to be true and accurate under the penalties of perjury. However, any entity exempt from the requirements to be licensed but voluntarily chooses to obtain a license is subject to all provisions of the licensing law and these regulations. (Regulations Governing Licensure of Child Care Facilities, Office of Health Protection, Office of Licensure, Bureau of Child Care Licensure, Mississippi State Department of Health, Effective February 12, 2022, pg. 2.)

Pre-Kindergarten Philosophy and Goals for Three- and Four-Year-Old Children

The early childhood years are a critical time in development for every child. The learning that takes place during the first eight years of life serves as the foundation for all later academic, social, emotional, physical and motor development. All children are capable of learning and meeting developmental milestones. Therefore, the Early Learning Guidelines are proposed to assist all early childhood educators in their efforts to provide a high-quality, research-based program serving pre-kindergarten children at three and four years of age to support school readiness.

School Readiness Definition

“Responsibility for school readiness lies not with children, but with the adults who care for them and the systems that support them,” (National Governors Association, 2005., p. 29)

School readiness is a multi-dimensional construct that goes beyond the skills, knowledge, and disposition of children as they enter kindergarten. Children are *eligible* for school when they have reached the chronological age established by the state, as described on page 1; however, school *readiness* is achieved through a combination of efforts involving children, families, schools, communities, and the state.

READY CHILDREN show an eagerness to explore, discover, engage, and learn. They demonstrate interest and abilities in all dimensions of early learning and development: social and emotional development; language development; cognition and general knowledge; physical well-being and motor development; and approaches toward learning. Children are unique individuals, who do not develop at the same time or in the same way. Therefore, school readiness should be viewed as a continuum of behaviors rather than an inflexible or narrow set of proficiency skills. Any age-eligible child who is eager to attend kindergarten should be deemed “ready.”

READY FAMILIES recognize their role as their child’s first and most stable teacher and advocate while understanding their child’s current level of development. Families ensure a safe and consistent environment, promote good health, provide steady and supportive relationships, and understand their relationship with the school system to ensure a smooth transition.

READY SCHOOLS provide a welcoming and accepting environment for all and have professional educators who consistently advance growth and achievement for students with

diverse backgrounds, experiences and abilities while working in partnership with families and communities.

READY COMMUNITIES include businesses, faith-based organizations, early childhood service providers, community groups, and local governments collaborating to support schools and children's long-term success by providing families access to information, affordable services, and high-quality early learning opportunities.

READY STATES play a crucial part in supporting communities, schools, and families through developing appropriate policies; providing adequate funds; ensuring access to high-quality early development and learning opportunities; preparing and retaining a world-class early childhood workforce; ensuring an infrastructure to coordinate services, including data systems for accountability and demonstrating political leadership to make school readiness a state priority.

Adapted from National Governors Association. 2005. Building the foundation for bright futures: Final report of the NGA Task Force on School Readiness. Washington, DC: Author

All children attending a high-quality pre-kindergarten program will:

1. improve their self-concept;
2. increase their intellectual growth;
3. enlarge their understanding of the world, people, experiences, 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;
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; and
11. develop a love of learning.

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:

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
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).
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 group, and individual instructional settings.
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 that are sensitive to the value of play; for it is through play that children create their own meaning and learning.

Children need opportunities to engage in application of the principles being introduced through the curriculum. Therefore, one of the requirements for classrooms serving three- and four-year-old children is that the majority of the instructional delivery be organized around a variety of integrated learning centers with responsive interactions among children, their peers, and adults. These experiences provide opportunities for children to acquire skills and concepts through hands-on engaged learning while the teacher is facilitating appropriate language development through meaningful conversations with others.

Section 1

REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTARY ENROLLMENT

A. Entrance Age

1. **Required Age**
   A child is eligible for a three-year-old program if they reach three years of age on or before September 1. A child is eligible for enrollment in a four-year-old program if they reach four years of age on or before September 1.

2. **Required Documentation**
   A birth certificate and immunization record (Form 121 or 122) are required for all pre-kindergarten children and shall be presented to the proper school authority. If the pre-kindergarten (three- and/or four-year-old) program is located in a public school setting, the information in Section 1 of the Mississippi Cumulative Folders and Permanent Records document must be followed (Mississippi Code Ann. §37-15-1).

B. Participation

1. If the pre-kindergarten (three- and/or four-year-old) program is located in a public school setting, the school district decides how students are chosen for enrollment in the program. This process should be included in the district's School Board approved policies to ensure equitable opportunities for all students.

Section II

CURRICULUM, MATERIALS, AND ASSESSMENT

A. Guidelines for Curriculum

1. Curriculum

Requirements for Curriculum - Pre-kindergarten programs use a research- and evidence-based comprehensive curriculum that is designed to prepare children for kindergarten, with emphasis in early literacy, and is aligned with the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Three-Year-Old Children and the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children. Mississippi Code Annotated §27-103-159 defines "evidence-based program" as "a program or practice that has had multiple site random controlled trials across heterogeneous populations demonstrating that the program is effective for the population." Additionally, the curriculum contains thematic units of activities and ideas designed to provide children the opportunities and experiences needed to master the performance standards in the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Three-Year-Old Children and the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children. Visit https://mdek12.org/MBC/ for a current listing of the approved curricula and supporting materials including accompanying trade books. Lesson planning documents must reflect Early Learning Standards that are targeted through each lesson and learning center activities that are used throughout the thematic unit. They must also identify differentiated instructional needs for students.

2. Learning Centers

a. **Daily Use -** Instructional delivery shall be organized primarily using a variety of learning centers. A minimum of five (5) different learning centers shall be organized, arranged, and labeled so they are accessible to all children for a minimum of 120 minutes per day in full-day programs and 60 minutes in half-day programs. The MDE recognizes the definition of learning centers as identified in literature as "distinct areas in a classroom that offer various materials and opportunities for hands-on learning at individually appropriate levels". (Copple & Bredekamp, 2006). In addition, NAEYC (2007) publications state that learning

centers:

- Engage students in learning
- Promote development of the whole child
- Integrate multiple subject matters so that learning happens in a meaningful context
- Assess student understanding and knowledge through observation and authentic assessment practices
- Foster a love of learning

Copple, C., & Bredekamp. (2006) Basics of developmentally appropriate practice: An introduction for teachers of children 3 to 6. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Stuber, G. (2007) Centering your classroom: Setting the stage for engaged learners. National Association for the Education of Young Children Beyond the Journal.

Learning centers provide children with hands-on opportunities to practice learning and thematic unit concepts. Learning relies heavily on experiential, hands-on activities. Each early learning classroom must include the following:

- Three required primary centers for each classroom are related to the thematic unit and contain a book/library center, a math/manipulative center, and a creative art center.
- Centers offer opportunities to engage in skills that are intentionally aligned with the *Mississippi Early Learning Standards,* https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/final_infants_through_four-year-old_early_learning_standards_2020.08.21_jg.pdf
- Additional integrated learning centers are added to address child interest and support current learning topics so that at least five (5) integrated learning centers are available.
- Available space in learning centers is sufficient to accommodate simultaneous use by the number of children enrolled in the classroom while maintaining appropriate numbers of children in each learning center.
- Children have access to fiction and non-fiction books and writing materials during learning center time and throughout the day that are appropriate to the child's developmental state.
- Worksheets are inappropriate for use at this developmental level, and are not used as part of the curriculum.
- Learning centers offer a variety of activities and materials for simultaneous use by children.

- Children are able to freely choose the centers they participate in and are uninterrupted during engagement. Children do not visit centers with timed rotations.

In addition to the three (3) required primary learning centers identified in this section, additional learning centers may include those from the list below to meet the minimum requirement of five (5) integrated learning centers per classroom. Except for the three (3) primary centers identified previously, the remaining learning centers shall be rotated and changed throughout the year. The following is a list of possible learning centers:

- Science/Discovery Center
- Oral Language/Phonemic Development Center
- Cooking Center
- Blocks, Wheel Toys, and Construction Center
- Sand and/or Water Center
- Woodworking Center
- Music Center
- Listening Center
- Dramatic Play
- Creative Writing Center
- Social Studies Center
- Technology Center
- Motor Development Center
- Outdoor Centers (Creative Arts, Sand and/or Water, Science/Discovery, Motor Development)

b. **Space Limitations** - If space is limited, some of the centers may be combined.

c. **Use of Classroom Technology** Computers and similar technological devices are only to be used in the classroom as instructional tools.

d. **Resource Materials** Teachers use, at a minimum, the resources developed by the Mississippi Department of Education in curriculum planning such as the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Three-Year-Old Children and/or the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children, Developmental Checklists for Infants through Four Year Old Children, Mississippi Beginnings Curriculum | The Mississippi Department of Education and the Developmental Checklist for Three- and Four-Year-Old Students. Programs may also access other resources on the early childhood webpage at https://mdek12.org/earlychildhood.

B. Guidelines for Educational Materials

1. Requirement for Equipment and Educational Materials

The initial expenditure for any new equipment, instructional materials, and consumable supplies must be adequate to equip a classroom of a maximum capacity of 14 three-year-old or 20 four-year-old children. Classroom teachers should select instructional materials that are most suited for their classrooms and the developmental needs of their students.

2. Requirement for Instructional and Consumable Materials

The pre-kindergarten program will replenish the consumable supplies and instructional materials in each classroom at least once per year.

3. Additional information on materials can be found at Pre-Kindergarten Adopted Materials - Mississippi Instructional Materials Matter (msinstructionalmaterials.org)

C. Guidelines for Assessment

Requirement for Assessment and Screening

- A continuous evaluation through a variety of techniques, procedures, and tools is used to determine each child's needs. Information obtained from ongoing assessments is reflected in lesson plans to address children's needs collectively, as well as individually.
- All schools conduct vision and hearing screenings for all pre-kindergarten students within the first 45 calendar days of the beginning of school. The results of these screenings are placed in the student's cumulative folder.
- All physical or developmental screening results are reviewed and all necessary educational or developmental referrals made within 30 calendar days of the initial screening.
- Programs shall administer the Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening) with pre-kindergarten children as described in the program quality assessment section below.
- Programs shall administer the Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment with pre-kindergarten children.

- While the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is not required for pre-kindergarten students, districts can develop and utilize their own procedures for determining what intervention services, if any, pre-k students may receive.
- It is recommended that students who show deficits on developmental screenings be given an intervention, which may be administered and documented by the classroom teacher. The student can then be given a follow-up screener to determine if the intervention was successful. If the student has not made sufficient progress, an additional intervention may be put in place, or the student may be referred for an evaluation for special education services, if data collected support the suspicion of a disability. Intervention procedures may not be used to delay or deny a student the opportunity for a comprehensive evaluation. When making a referral, districts should follow their Child Find procedures.
- Retention for pre-kindergarten students is a district decision. The policy that guides this decision should be included in the family pre-kindergarten handbook. The program could be affected financially if the program is grant- funded based on the student's age.

1. Recommended Screenings

A comprehensive health screening (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment-EPSDT) or a standard physical conducted by a child's health care provider or health department is recommended for all pre-kindergarten students. EPSDT screenings/standard physicals should be conducted within 45 calendar days of the beginning of school by either a private health care provider of the parents' choosing, or through school resources such as school nurses, or the local Department of Health. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend screenings conducted at the school. A standard physical form is submitted for all screenings conducted by a private health care provider.

A dental screening conducted by a child's dental care provider or health department is recommended for all pre-kindergarten students. Dental screenings should be conducted within 45 calendar days of the beginning of school by either a private dental health care provider of the parents' choosing, or through school resources such as the local Department of Health. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend screenings conducted at the school.

2. Requirement for Standardized Testing

All four-year-old students participating in grant-funded programs and public pre-kindergarten shall be administered the state approved Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. Paper and pencil standardized tests are not appropriate measures for three- or four-year-old children. Any technology-based assessment should be administered using touch-based technology devices. If touch-based technology is not available, children should be familiar with the available technology before taking the assessment.

3. Requirement for Individualized Assessments

School districts containing pre-kindergarten programs collaborate with Mississippi's state-recognized birth to three-year-old provider, First Steps, to formulate a plan regarding services. This plan ensures any child currently receiving services continues to receive appropriate services based on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), as eligible. Each school district should follow Child Find policies as stated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Children who are determined eligible shall receive services as stated in the child's IEP.

4. Requirement for Documentation

Teachers use observational checklists to measure the child's progress according to the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Three-Year-Old Children and the Mississippi Early Learning Standards for Classrooms Serving Four-Year-Old Children (e.g. curriculum-based, teacher-generated, or MDE developed pre-kindergarten checklists).

Each classroom serving four-year-old children must develop a transition folder to follow each child to kindergarten. The folder must contain the following:

- End-of-year Whole Child Kindergarten Readiness Assessment/Screener (developmental screening) results
- End-of-year Literacy/Math Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Score/Summary Sheet
- End-of-year results from other assessments used in the classroom
- A school-issued final skills checklist **OR** a completed *Developmental Checklist for Four-Year-Old Students* (located here: mdek12.org/earlychildhood/)
- A child information sheet containing some or all of the following (a sample sheet is located here: mdek12.org/earlychildhood/):

CHILD PROFILE

Name

CHILD'S PHOTO

CAREGIVER

Caregiver _____ Relationship to child _____

Caregiver _____ Relationship to child _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Preferred method of contact* ☐ Phone ☐ Email Preferred contact time* _____

Language(s) spoken by caregiver _____

Preferred Name

Date of Birth

Language(s) spoken by child

CAREGIVER

Caregiver _____ Relationship to child _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Preferred method of contact* ☐ Phone ☐ Email Preferred contact time* _____

Language(s) spoken by caregiver _____

*Ensure school policies for communicating with caregivers are always followed.

FAVORITES

Activity/Learning Material	Center	Other (food, color, etc.)

ACTIVITIES

	Well	Somewhat	Emerging	Notes
Plays with friends				
Follows directions				
Listens				
Participates in whole group activities				
Completes independent activities				
Independently completes transitions				
Independently completes routines				

SAMPLE

- Child's name, date of birth, preferred
- name, photo, languages spoken
- Parents' names (and/or other adults/ caregivers), address, phone, and preferred
- time and way to contact (in accordance with
- school policy)
- Child's favorite things (activity, toy, food, color, book, center, etc.)
- Child's play and learning styles
- Child's skills and proficiencies
- Child's areas of growth and what they do not like to do
- Child's personality/temperament traits

- Work samples (two or three samples that demonstrate the child's capabilities) may include:
  - Free art
  - Guided art
  - Writing sample
  - Photographs of learning center products (e.g. block construction)

5. Recommendation for Letter or Number Grades

Pre-kindergarten students should not receive letter or number grades. Any number grades given on a progress report or report card should be a percentage of the standards students are expected to have mastered during a marking period.

6. Program Quality Assessment

The Program Quality Assessment guidance policy for grant funded programs is located on the early childhood webpage at https://mdek12.org/earlychildhood/.

Other Funded Pre-K Classroom Monitoring

Other pre-kindergarten classrooms following the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Three-and Four-Year-Old Children must develop an internal procedure for monitoring their pre-kindergarten program. Other funded pre-kindergarten classrooms are monitored utilizing Standard 17.2 when the school district is audited through the Educational Accountability Audit Service Providers (EAASP) with the Office of Accreditation. The Office of Early Childhood Education provides technical assistance to school districts cited in EAASP audits.

Section III

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES AND STAFF

A. Organization

1. Requirement for Teacher-Child Ratio

The teacher-child ratio for classrooms serving three-year-old children is 1:7 maximum. The teacher-child ratio for classrooms serving four-year-old children is 1:10 maximum. If an assistant teacher is assigned in the pre-kindergarten classroom for the entire day, the teacher-child ratio for classrooms serving three-year-old children does not exceed 2:14 maximum at any time, while the teacher-child ratio for classrooms serving four-year-old children does not exceed 2:20 maximum at any time. Classrooms of mixed three- and four-year-old children follow the Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Three-Year-Old Children including the teacher-child ratio. The maximum classroom group size does not exceed 14 children at any time. There are no separate requirements for ratios in special education classrooms. IEP committees should consider the most appropriate placement for each individual student. There are no waivers for teacher-child ratio requirements.

2. Requirement for Length of School Day and Term

The length of the full-day school year will be no less than 1,080 instructional hours in no less than a 180-day school year, which results in six hours of instruction per day. The length of the half-day school day will be no less than 540 instructional hours in no less than a 180-day school year, which results in three hours of instruction per day. {Mississippi Code Annotated § 37-13-63 & 67}

3. Requirements for Instructional Day

The instructional day includes all aspects of the child's day (e.g. learning center activities, large and small group activities, individual instruction, and guided physical activity). At a minimum, the instructional day in a full-day program includes 360 instructional minutes (6 hours), 40 minutes of physical activity, 120 minutes of learning centers, and 30 minutes of quiet/rest time. At a minimum, the instructional day in a half-day program includes 180 (3 hours) instructional minutes, 20 minutes of physical activity, 60 minutes of learning centers, and quiet/rest time as appropriate for the children. Additional information on these requirements is in Section II of this document.

4. Requirements for Physical Activity

a. **Full-Day Program** Applies to programs offering six or more hours of instruction per day. Children engage in physical activity for a minimum of 40 minutes, and a maximum of 60 minutes during a full-day program. The minutes assigned to physical activity do not have to occur continuously or consecutively. Weather permitting, physical activity takes place outside. Outdoor play experiences will occur unless a weather advisory is in effect, or the play space is unsafe due to damp or wet conditions. If outdoor play is not possible per one or more of these conditions, teachers provide 40 to 60 minutes of indoor physical activity documented in lesson plans.

b. **Half-Day Program** Applies to programs offering fewer than six hours of instruction per day. Children engage in physical activity for a minimum of 20 minutes, and a maximum of 30 minutes during a half-day program. The minutes assigned to physical activity do not have to take place continuously or consecutively. Outdoor play experiences will occur unless a weather advisory is in effect, or the play space is unsafe due to damp or wet conditions. If outdoor play is not possible per one or more of these conditions, teachers provide 20 to 30 minutes of indoor physical activity documented in lesson plans.

5. Requirement for Quiet Time

Children in full-day programs engage in a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 60 minutes of quiet time daily. Children in half-day programs that are less than six (6) hours in length are not required to rest, but are provided quiet time as appropriate. Activities during quiet time may include individual activities, looking at books/reading, listening to books on tape, drawing, or resting, as appropriate for each individual student.

6. Requirement for Nutritional Provision

All full-day programs provide a minimum of one meal per day. Meals meet nutritional requirements identified in the USDA National School Breakfast/Lunch Program Guidelines or the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Guidelines, whichever is applicable.

7. SAMPLE Full-Day Pre-Kindergarten Schedule

Time	Activity	Minutes	Instructional Time
7:00-7:30	Arrival/Free Choice Centers	30 Minutes	Yes
7:30-7:50	Breakfast*/Storytelling	20 Minutes	Yes
7:50-8:10	Whole Group Read Aloud	20 Minutes	Yes
8:10-8:20	Morning Exercise (Move to Learn)	10 Minutes	Yes
8:20-8:55	Extension Class/Teacher Planning (music, library, physical education, computer, art)	35 Minutes	Yes
8:55-9:10	Whole Group Intro to Centers	15 Minutes	Yes
9:10-10:30	Small Group/Free Choice Centers	80 Minutes	Yes
10:30-10:50	Lunch*	20 Minutes	Yes
10:50-11:05	Whole Group Math	15 Minutes	Yes
11:05-12:05	Small Group/Free Choice Centers	60 Minutes	Yes
12:05-12:15	Thinking and Feedback	10 minutes	Yes
12:15-12:55	Physical Activity	40 Minutes	Yes
12:55-1:40	Quiet Time	45 Minutes	Yes
1:40-2:00	Let's Find Out About It (LFOAI)/Problem Stories /Snack*	20 Minutes	Yes
2:00-2:30	Story Acting/Songs, Word Play, and Letters (SWPL)/Closure	30 Minutes	Yes
2:30-2:45	Dismissal	15 Minutes	No
2:45-3:30	Teacher Planning	45 Minutes	No

Required Minutes	Sample Schedule Required Minutes
Instructional: 360 Minimum	Instructional: 450
Center Time: 120 Minimum	Center Time: 170
Quiet Time: 30 Mimimum-60 Maximum	Quiet Time: 45
Physical Activity: 40 Minimum-60 Maximum	Physical Activity: 50
Songs, Word Play, and Letters (SWPL) 15 Minimum	Can be done throughout the day

*Meal times for this age group should be a learning time. Promotion of different skills can be learned during meal time such as taking turns, pre-reading and pre-math skills, problem-solving skills, fine motor skills, etc. Teachers will discuss concepts with children that support social and emotional, physical development, speaking and listening, approaches to learning, and science standards.

8. SAMPLE Half-Day Pre-Kindergarten Schedule

Time	Activity	Minutes	Instructional Time
7:30-7:55	Breakfast*/Storytelling/Free Choice Centers	25	Yes
7:55-8:15	Read Aloud	20	Yes
8:15-8:35	Physical Activity	20	Yes
8:35-8:45	Intro to Centers	10	Yes
8:45-9:45	Small Group/Free Choice Centers	60	Yes
9:45-10:05	Thinking and Feedback/Snack	20	Yes
10:05-10:35	Extension Class/Teacher Planning (music, library, physical activity, art, computer)	30	Yes
10:35-10:55	Whole Group Math/Songs, Word Play, and Letters (SWPL)	20	Yes

Time	Activity	Minutes	Instructional Time
10:55-11:35	Small Group/Free Choice Centers	40	Yes
11:35-11:50	Let's Find Out About It (LFOAI)/Problem Stories	15	Yes
11:50-12:00	Story Acting	10	Yes
12:00	Dismissal		

Required Minutes	Sample Schedule Required Minutes
Instructional: 180 Minimum	Instructional: 270
Center Time: 60 Minimum	Center Time: 100
Quiet Time: As Appropriate	Quiet Time: 0
Physical Activity: 20 Minimum-30 Maximum	Physical Activity: 20 *****Due to physical education extension** Class, physical activity may be more than 20 minutes on certain days
Songs, Word Play, and Letters (SWPL) 15 Minimum	Can be done throughout the day

*Meal times for this age group should be a learning time. Promotion of different skills can be learned during meal time such as taking turns, pre-reading and pre-math skills, problem-solving skills, fine motor skills, etc. Teachers will discuss concepts with children that support social and emotional, physical development, speaking and listening, approaches to learning, and science standards.

B. Staff

1. Required Certification for Teachers and Assistant Teachers in an Early Learning Collaborative (ELC) Program

The Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013 requires that teachers and assistant teachers in any of the Early Learning Collaborative classrooms be qualified in the following manner:

Teacher

A teacher shall possess a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child development, or an equivalent field. A teacher may also possess a bachelor's degree in any field and have at least twelve (12) credit hours of coursework in early childhood education, child development, or an equivalent field approved by an institution granting a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child development, or an equivalent field; or have a bachelor's degree in any field and have completed a specialized early childhood training program deemed equivalent by the State Department of Education to twelve (12) hours of approved coursework.

*If teachers are in a public-school setting, they will need to also follow the chart below.

General Education ELC Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms

License Requirement	AND	Additional Requirements
Hold a Pre-K/K (153) License		
OR		
Hold a K–3 (116) License or Hold a K–4 (152) License	**AND**	Complete twelve (12) early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Attain a Passing Score on the MSBE Approved Licensure Assessment to add 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **OR** Complete an early childhood training program*

License Requirement	AND	Additional Requirements
OR		
Hold a K–6 (120) License	**AND**	Complete requirements to add N-1 (150) supplemental endorsement **OR** Attain a Passing Score on the MSBE Approved Licensure Assessment to add 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **OR** 12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Complete an early childhood training program*

*Completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved early childhood education training program includes the Child Development Associate (CDA), National Board Early Childhood Certification, Director's Credential, Montessori Credential, and the MDE's intensive specialized early childhood training program (122 Pre-K add on endorsement). MDE considers additional state, regional, or nationally approved programs upon request. Entities may submit program component documentation to earlychildhood@mdek12.org for consideration. Please note that the completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved training program or MDE prescribed twelve (12) hours of coursework only qualifies a prospective early childhood education teacher or early childhood education assistant teacher to serve three- and four-year old children in Mississippi classrooms and does not lead to an endorsement/licensure unless it is explicitly stated and outlined in the official Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12 document is located at https://mdek12.org/licensure. To review the most accurate and up-to-date licensure requirements, please visit the Office of Educator Licensure webpage at https://mdek12.org/licensure/.

Assistant Teacher

An assistant teacher in the Early Learning Collaborative Pre-K program shall possess an associates degree in early childhood education, child development, or an equivalent field; **or** an associate's degree in any field and a Child Development Associate credential, a Montessori certification, or an equivalent certification; **or** a high school diploma/GED and verification of WorkKeys and a Child Development Associate credential, a Montessori certification, or an equivalent certification.

General Education ELC Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms

License Requirement	AND	Additional Requirements
Early Childhood Associate's Degree		
OR		
Associate's Degree	**AND**	12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Complete an early childhood training program**
OR		
High School Diploma/GED AND Verification of WorkKeys® Scores***	**AND**	12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Completion of an early childhood training program**

*These hours can be included in the Associate's Degree or 60 College Credit Hours
**Completion of an early childhood training program includes the Child Development Associate (CDA), National/State Director's Credential, Montessori Credential, and the MDE's intensive specialized early childhood training program. MDE considers additional state, regional, or nationally approved programs upon request. Entities may submit program component documentation to earlychildhood@mdek12.org for consideration. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) requires assistant teachers to have a CDA or equivalent, at a minimum. Please note that the completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved training program or MDE prescribed twelve (12) hours

of coursework only qualifies a prospective early childhood education teacher or early childhood education assistant teacher to serve three- and four-year old children in Mississippi classrooms and does not lead to an endorsement/licensure unless it is explicitly stated and outlined in the official Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12 document is located at https://mdek12.org/licensure. To review the most accurate and up-to-date licensure requirements, please visit the Office of Educator Licensure webpage at https://mdek12.org/licensure/.

*** Prior to 2017, assistant teachers would have met WorkKeys® requirements: a Reading for Information score of 4, an Applied Mathematics score of 4, and a Writing or Business Writing score of 3;

OR

After 2017, assistant teachers must meet the WorkKeys® Silver Level certification: Workplace Document score of 4, an Applied Mathematics score of 4, and a Graphic Literacy score of 4.

Child Care & Head Start Program Teaching Staff in Early Learning Collaboratives

Classrooms participating in an Early Learning Collaborative shall follow the guidance above for the qualification requirements of teachers (page ~~15~~33) and assistant teachers (page ~~17~~35).

Caveat

If an offsite entity manages staff, the staff will also fall under the employing entity's staff requirement guidance.

2. Required Certification for Teachers and Assistant Teachers in a State Invested Pre-Kindergarten (SIP) Program

General Education Teachers

General Education teachers in a State Invested Pre-K (SIP) are required to follow one of the pathways listed below.

General Education Public School Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms

License Requirement	AND	Additional Requirements
Hold a Pre-K/K (153) License		
OR		
Hold a K-3 (116) License or Hold a K-4 (152) License	**AND**	Complete twelve (12) early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Attain a Passing Score on the MSBE Approved Licensure Assessment to add 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **OR** Complete an early childhood training program*
OR		
Hold a K-6 (120) License	**AND**	Complete requirements to add N-1 (150) supplemental endorsement **OR** Attain a Passing Score on the MSBE Approved Licensure Assessment to add 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **OR** 12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Complete an early childhood training program*

*Completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved early childhood education training program includes the Child Development Associate (CDA), National Board Early Childhood Certification, Director's Credential, Montessori Credential, and the MDE's intensive specialized early childhood training program (122 Pre-K add on endorsement). MDE considers additional state, regional, or nationally approved programs upon request. Entities may submit program component documentation to earlychildhood@mdek12.org for consideration. Please note that the completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education

approved training program or MDE prescribed twelve (12) hours of coursework only qualifies a prospective early childhood education teacher or early childhood education assistant teacher to serve three- and four-year old children in Mississippi classrooms and does not lead to an endorsement/licensure unless it is explicitly stated and outlined in the official Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12 document is located at https://mdek12.org/licensure. To review the most accurate and up-to-date licensure requirements, please visit the Office of Educator Licensure webpage at https://mdek12.org/licensure/.

Assistant Teachers

General Education and Special Education assistant teachers in a SIP are required to follow one of the pathways listed below.

General Education Public School Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms

License Requirement	AND	Additional Requirements
Early Childhood Associate's Degree		
OR		
Associate's Degree OR 60 College Credit Hours	**AND**	12 early childhood college credit hours* OR Completion of an early childhood training program**
OR		
High School Diploma/GED AND Verification of WorkKeys® Scores***	**AND**	12 early childhood college credit hours* OR Completion of an early childhood training program**

*These hours can be included in the Associate's Degree or 60 College Credit Hours
**Completion of an early childhood training program includes the Child Development Associate (CDA), National/State Director's Credential, Montessori Credential, and the MDE's intensive specialized early childhood training program. MDE considers additional

state, regional, or nationally approved programs upon request. Entities may submit program component documentation to earlychildhood@mdek12.org for consideration. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) requires assistant teachers to have a CDA or equivalent, at a minimum. Please note that the completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved training program or MDE prescribed twelve (12) hours of coursework only qualifies a prospective early childhood education teacher or early childhood education assistant teacher to serve three- and four-year old children in Mississippi classrooms and does not lead to an endorsement/licensure unless it is explicitly stated and outlined in the official Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12 document is located at https://mdek12.org/licensure. To review the most accurate and up-to-date licensure requirements, please visit the Office of Educator Licensure webpage at https://mdek12.org/licensure/.

*** Prior to 2017, assistant teachers would have met WorkKeys® requirements: a Reading for Information score of 4, an Applied Mathematics score of 4, and a Writing or Business Writing score of 3;

OR

After 2017, assistant teachers must meet the WorkKeys® Silver Level certification: Workplace Documents score of 4, an Applied Mathematics score of 4, and a Graphic Literacy score of 4.

3. **Required Certification for Teachers and Assistant Teachers in a Public School Pre-Kindergarten Program**

General Education Teachers

General Education teachers in a public school Pre-K are required to follow one of the pathways listed below.

General Education Public School Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms

License Requirement	AND	Additional Requirements
Hold a Pre-K/K (153) License		
OR		

License Requirement	AND	Additional Requirements
Hold a K-3 (116) License or Hold a K-4 (152) License	**AND**	Complete twelve (12) early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Attain a Passing Score on the MSBE Approved Licensure Assessment to add 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **OR** Complete an early childhood training program*
OR		
Hold a K-6 (120) License	**AND**	Complete requirements to add N-1 (150) supplemental endorsement **OR** Attain a Passing Score on the MSBE Approved Licensure Assessment to add 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **OR** 12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Complete an early childhood training program*

*Completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved early childhood education training program includes the Child Development Associate (CDA), National Board Early Childhood Certification, Director's Credential, Montessori Credential, and the MDE's intensive specialized early childhood training program (122 Pre-K add on endorsement). MDE considers additional state, regional, or nationally approved programs upon request. Entities may submit program component documentation to earlychildhood@mdek12.org for consideration. Please note that the completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved training program or MDE prescribed twelve (12) hours of coursework only qualifies a prospective early childhood education teacher or early childhood education assistant teacher to serve three- and four-year old children in Mississippi classrooms and does not lead to an endorsement/licensure unless it is explicitly stated and outlined in the official Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12 document is located at https://mdek12.org/licensure. To review the most accurate and up-to-date licensure

requirements, please visit the Office of Educator Licensure webpage at https://mdek12.org/licensure/.

Special Education Teachers

Special Education teachers are required to follow one of the pathways listed below.

Special Education Public Schools Pre-Kindergarten Classrooms

License Requirement	AND	Additional Requirements
Hold Birth-K Special Education License (211)		
OR		
Hold Mild to Moderate Disability K-12 (221) License **or** Hold Severe Disability K-12 (222) License **or** Hold Mild to Moderate Disability K-8 (223) License	**AND**	12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Attain a Passing Score on the MSBE Approved Licensure Assessment to add 153 (Pre-K/K) endorsement **OR** Complete an early childhood training program*

*Completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved early childhood education training program includes the Child Development Associate (CDA), National Board Early Childhood Certification, Director's Credential, Montessori Credential, and the MDE's intensive specialized early childhood training program (122 Pre-K add on endorsement). MDE considers additional state, regional, or nationally approved programs upon request. Entities may submit program component documentation to earlychildhood@mdek12.org for consideration. Please note that the completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved training program or MDE prescribed twelve (12) hours of coursework only qualifies a prospective early childhood education teacher or early childhood education assistant teacher to serve three- and four-year old children in Mississippi classrooms and does not lead to an endorsement/licensure unless it is explicitly stated and outlined in the official Guidelines for Mississippi Educator Licensure K-12 document is located at https://mdek12.org/licensure. To review the most accurate and up-to-date licensure

requirements, please visit the Office of Educator Licensure webpage at https://mdek12.org/licensure/.

Assistant Teachers

General Education and Special Education Assistant teachers in a public school Pre-K are required to follow one of the pathways listed below.

License Requirement	AND	Additional Requirements
Early Childhood Associate's Degree		
OR		
Associate's Degree OR 60 College Credit Hours	**AND**	12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Complete an early childhood training program**
OR		
High School Diploma/GED AND Verification of WorkKeys® Scores***	**AND**	12 early childhood college credit hours* **OR** Complete an early childhood training program**

*These hours can be included in the Associate's Degree or 60 College Credit Hours
**Completion of an early childhood training program includes the Child Development Associate (CDA), National/State Director's Credential, Montessori Credential, and the MDE's intensive specialized early childhood training program. MDE considers additional state, regional, or nationally approved programs upon request. Entities may submit program component documentation to earlychildhood@mdek12.org for consideration. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) requires assistant teachers to have a CDA or equivalent, at a minimum. Please note that the completion of a Mississippi State Board of Education approved training program or MDE prescribed twelve (12) hours of coursework only qualifies a prospective early childhood education teacher or early childhood education assistant teacher to serve three- and four-year old children in MS classrooms and does not lead to an endorsement/licensure unless it is explicitly stated and outlined in the official Licensure Guidelines K-12 document. To review the most accurate and up-to-date licensure requirements, please visit the Office of Educator Licensure section of the MDE website.

***Prior to 2017, Teacher Assistants would have met WorkKeys® requirements: a Reading for Information score of 4, an Applied Mathematics score of 4, and a Writing or Business Writing score of 3;

OR

After 2017, Teacher Assistants need to meet the WorkKeys® Silver Level certification: Workplace Document score of 4, an Applied Mathematics score of 4, and a Graphic Literacy score of 4.

The Office of Educator Licensure will continue to oversee the obtainment of endorsements. The Office of Early Childhood will be responsible for any other components of qualification.

4. Requirement for Professional Learning

All teaching staff (teachers and assistant teachers) and program administrators complete at least fifteen contact (15) hours of professional learning annually for program instructional staff specific to the education of pre-kindergarten children. Administrators that manage pre-kindergarten teachers shall gain the required hours of professional learning through online or on-site training. This variety of content could include program administration, family engagement, and early childhood instructional content approved or offered by the Mississippi Department of Education and/or Mississippi Department of Health. Please visit the MDE early childhood professional learning webpage for additional resources: www.mdek12.org/Professional-Development.

Section IV

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPORTATION

A. GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Families are viewed as a partner and the child's first teacher. Teachers provide families with information and resources that could help their children. Families have opportunities to volunteer in the classroom and participate in enrichment opportunities.

1. Requirement for Family Handbook

Each pre-kindergarten program develops and distributes a family handbook that addresses the program philosophy, goals and specific information unique to the program (e.g. curriculum, credentials, and assessments.) This information may be included in the district handbook, but should be clearly identified for families.

2. Requirements for Family Communication

Teacher/parent conferences are conducted at least three times during the pre-kindergarten year to inform parents or guardians of child's progress. The first parent conference at the beginning of the year consists of an information gathering session from the parent. Additional winter and spring conferences consist of a progress update to the parent. If documented attempts to meet with parents or other responsible persons fail, telephone conferences can be substituted. Communication is conducted on a regular basis. Communication between school and home could consist of notebooks/folders, newsletters, conferences, emails, and phone calls.

3. Requirements for Volunteer Participation

Parents, guardians, and community members are encouraged to participate in various activities such as developing learning games for home or classroom use, sharing information with the class about their work skills or profession, or sharing their talents through conducting music and/or art activities. Volunteers are not in the classroom without a teacher or assistant teacher present and are not used to meet the minimum adult-to-child ratio. Volunteers that serve in a school more than 120 hours per school

year participate in an orientation session, sign a confidentiality agreement, and consent to a background check that is conducted by the district.

B. TRANSPORTATION

1. Requirement for Transportation

All transportation is optional except for children with IEPs. Transportation requirements regarding children with IEPs are determined by the IEP Committee.

2. Requirement for School Bus Safety

All pre-kindergarten programs choosing to transport children adhere to Mississippi Code Annotated § 37-41-3. All liability and related expenses are the responsibility of the pre-kindergarten program. The National Highway Transportation Safety Association (NHTSA), Federal Code: 45 CFR 1310.15 (a), requires that all Head Start children, children preschool age or younger ride in Child Safety Restraint Systems (CSRS). Child Safety Restraints include car seats, safety vests or built in child restraints such as seat belts. In addition to the National Highway Transportation Safety Association (NHTSA) Guidelines, the following caregiver ratio should be followed when transporting children.

- If five (5) to sixteen (16) pre-kindergarten children are being transported on a bus, one (1) caregiver in addition to the driver should be on the bus.
- If seventeen (17) to thirty-two (32) pre-kindergarten children are being transported on a bus, two (2) caregivers in addition to the driver should be on the bus.
- Caregivers should be 18 years of age or older and an agency employee.

Section V

PHYSICAL SETTINGS AND OUTSIDE PLAY

A. PHYSICAL SETTINGS

1. Guidelines for Existing Structures

a. Existing Classrooms

i. Requirements for Existing Classrooms

1. The classroom consists of no less than 35 square feet per child.
2. Classrooms with typically developing, or a blend of typically and atypically developing children are a minimum of 600 square feet and free from excess storage that prevents full usage of classroom square footage.
3. Pre-kindergarten classrooms are to be located at ground level.
4. Every closet latch is such that children can open the door from the inside.
5. The maximum distance to an exit from any point in the building does not exceed 150 feet. The maximum distance from the classroom door at the corridor to an exit does not exceed 100 feet.
6. All electrical outlets accessible to children should be a type called “tamper-resistant electrical outlets.” These types of outlets look like standard wall outlets but contain an internal shutter mechanism that prevents children from sticking objects like hairpins, keys, and paperclips into the receptacle. This spring-loaded shutter mechanism only opens when equal pressure is applied to both shutters such as when an electrical plug is inserted. In existing facilities that do not have “tamper-resistant electrical outlets”, outlets should have “safety covers” that are attached to the electrical outlet by a screw or other means to prevent easy removal by a child. “Safety plugs” should not be used since they can be removed from an electrical outlet by children. All newly installed or replaced electrical outlets that are accessible to children should use “tamper-resistant electrical outlets.” In areas where electrical products might come into contact with water, a special type of outlet called Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) should be installed. A GFCI is designed to trip before a deadly electrical shock can occur. To ensure that GFCIs are functioning correctly, they should be tested at least monthly. GFCIs are also available in a tamper-resistant design. (Source: Caring for Our Children 5.2.4.2, https://nrckids.org/CFOC)
7. The classroom is clean and sanitary in a safe and secure environment.

8. All classrooms are air conditioned.

ii. Recommendations for Existing Classrooms

1. Where multiple pre-kindergarten units occur within a school or building, they are grouped adjacent to one another for teacher and child interaction and for optimum use of common facilities.
2. Each pre-kindergarten classroom has a work counter of at least 12 feet with at least one sink. The sink is stainless steel or porcelain, standard with gooseneck fitting on one side and a drinking bubbler on the other. The sink has cold water only. A paper towel dispenser accessible to students and a trash receptacle should be located near the sink.
3. 110-volt wall plugs should be located every 10 feet to 15 feet around the classroom.

b. Existing Bathrooms

i. Requirements for Existing Bathrooms

1. Classrooms are located no more than 125 feet from a bathroom.
2. Every toilet room door lock is designed to permit opening of the locked door from the outside in an emergency, and the opening device is readily accessible to the staff.
3. For children with disabilities who are not yet toilet trained, a changing table is provided in the bathroom or classroom.
4. All bathrooms are adequately stocked with toilet tissue.
5. No items other than toilet tissue or bathroom supplies are stored in bathrooms. Cleaning supplies may be kept in the bathroom only if out of reach of children.

ii. Recommendations for Existing Bathrooms

1. A toilet room in the classroom is available for pre-kindergarten children.
2. Toilet seats in bathrooms are 10 to 13 inches from the floor.
3. Lavatories are 24 inches from the floor.

c. Existing Furniture

i. Requirements for Existing Furniture

1. Furniture is of an appropriate height for young children.
2. Tables and chairs are provided rather than desks.
3. At least one small book case or book display shelf is provided per classroom for children to access literature in the classroom.

ii. Recommendations for Existing Furniture

1. At least two small bookcases or book display shelves are provided to allow children access to literature in the classroom.
2. A personal area is provided within the classroom for teachers, providing these items do not significantly diminish space for use by children.

d. Existing Floors

i. Requirements for Existing Floors

1. Each classroom contains a 9 x 12-foot area rug or individual carpet squares, or similar material, to be used for large group meetings. Carpets or similar soft flooring surfaces are properly sanitized annually and replaced as needed.

ii. Recommendations for Existing Floors

1. Classroom areas not carpeted are covered with resilient flooring or other easily cleaned material. Roll-type resilient flooring has the advantage of a minimum amount of jointing.

e. Building Codes for Existing Structures

i. Requirements for Building Codes for Existing Structures

1. All building construction conforms to the Southern Building Codes, the American Disabilities Act, the Life Safety Codes, and to any other city or county building codes.

ii. Recommendations for Building Codes for Existing Structures

1. There are no recommendations for building codes.

f. Storage and Space in Existing Structures

i. Requirements for Storage and Space in Existing Structures:

1. Storage will be provided at the school for teaching and classroom supplies. Storage may not decrease classroom space available to students. Classrooms are organized and clutter is kept to a minimum.

ii. Recommendations for Storage and Space in Existing Structures

1. Base cabinets are installed below all counters. Doors are attached to some cabinets, while some are left open to serve as shelves. Open cabinet (18 x 24 inches and 24 x 36 inches) will accommodate large paper used for easel painting.

2. Cabinets, 12 inches deep, are installed over the entire counter area for general storage.
3. Open storage units (cubbies) are available for every student. Each unit to be four feet high and two feet wide with coat hanging space at the bottom and a storage area at the top. Coat hooks should be installed 36 inches from the floor.
4. Adequate storage space should be provided. The storage units may include one wall of built-in cabinets or moveable storage sections. Most storage units are accessible to children to facilitate independence and responsibility within the classroom. Storage space, above the reach of the children, is available for use by teachers.
5. Adequate space for display of children's work is provided. Bulletin boards can be located on walls and/or fastened to the backs of cabinets and bookcases.
6. A teacher work area of 180 to 200 square feet is allocated for use by every two to three pre-kindergarten teachers. This area is needed for individual assessment of children, conferencing with parents, making classroom materials, and planning meetings.

2. Guidelines for New Structures

a. New Classrooms

i. Requirements for New Classrooms

1. The classroom is a minimum of 1,000 square feet.
2. The minimum classroom width is 24 feet, except in pod-type structures. The classroom is free from excess storage that prevents full usage of classroom square footage.
3. Classrooms contain operable lighting with area controls that ensure adequate lighting throughout the room. Switches within reach of the children are located at the doors. Toilet rooms contain lighting fixtures.
4. The maximum distance to an exit from any point in the building does not exceed 150 feet. The maximum distance from the interior classroom door at the corridor to an exit does not exceed 100 feet.
5. Pre-kindergarten classrooms are located at ground level.
6. Every closet latch is such that children can open the door from the inside.
7. All newly installed electrical outlets accessible to children who are not yet developmentally at a kindergarten grade level of learning should be a type called “tamper-resistant electrical outlets.” These types of outlets look like standard wall outlets but contain an internal shutter mechanism that

prevents children from sticking objects like hairpins, keys, and paperclips into the receptacle. This spring-loaded shutter mechanism only opens when equal pressure is applied to both shutters such as when an electrical plug is inserted. “Safety plugs” should not be used since they can be removed from an electrical outlet by children.

In areas where electrical products might come into contact with water, a special type of outlet called Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) should be installed. A GFCI is designed to trip before a deadly electrical shock can occur. To ensure that GFCIs are functioning correctly, they should be tested at least monthly. GFCIs are also available in a tamper-resistant design. (Source: Caring for Our Children 5.2.4.2, https://nrckids.org/CFOC)

8. The classroom is clean and sanitary in a safe and secure environment.
9. All classrooms are air conditioned.

ii. Recommendations for New Classrooms

1. All pre-kindergarten units within one school or building are grouped in the same general vicinity for optimum use of common facilities.
2. A classroom clock is in each classroom.
3. 110-volt wall plugs are located every 10 to 15 feet around the classroom.
4. A minimum of 50 square feet of window area per unit is available in each classroom. Windows are located no more than two feet from the floor. Windows are able to be opened from the inside for ventilation purposes. A generous glass window area is in place to overlook the playground and promote an indoor-outdoor atmosphere. Roofing overhang and installation of blinds or shutters are provided to combat excessive sunlight.
5. Careful consideration is given to the location of pre-kindergarten units in new structures. Each classroom has a door opening onto the playground or other attractive outdoor space. A six-foot roof overhang makes the outdoor area usable on a rainy day as an outdoor learning center.

b. New Bathrooms

i. Requirements for New Bathrooms

1. Each classroom contains a minimum of one bathroom that consists of a toilet and lavatory, or at the district's option the lavatory may be omitted if the work counter area is equipped with a sink and is in close proximity to the toilet room door. The toilet paper holder is placed within a child's reach from the toilet. In classrooms where children are not yet toilet trained, a changing table is installed.

2. Individual toilet rooms are required to accommodate the physically handicapped and follow ADA regulations.
3. Every toilet room door lock is designed to permit opening of the locked door from the outside in an emergency, and the opening device is readily accessible to the staff.

ii. Recommendations for New Bathrooms

1. One bathroom/shower combination is provided for every eight pre-kindergarten units.

c. Furniture in New Classrooms

i. Requirements for Furniture in New Classrooms

1. Tables and chairs are provided rather than desks.
2. Chairs in the pre-kindergarten classroom adjust from 8 to 14 inches so that all children's feet will touch the floor.
3. All tables adjust from 20 inches to 24 inches in height.
4. Furniture is of an appropriate height for young children.
5. At least one small book case or book display shelf is provided per classroom for children to access literature in the classroom.

ii. Recommendations for Furniture in New Classrooms

1. A body-length, shatter-proof wall or floor mirror is in the dramatic play/housekeeping center area or near the toilet area.
2. At least two small bookcases or book display shelves, designed to display book covers/titles, are provided to allow children access to literature in the classroom.
3. A personal area be provided within the classroom for teachers, providing these items do not significantly diminish space for use by children.
4. A teacher work area of 180 to 200 square feet minimum is allocated for use by every two to three pre-kindergarten teachers. A proportionately larger space shared by all pre-kindergarten teachers in a school would suffice. This room is made inviting through use of carpeting and appropriate furniture. Items in the space include a four-drawer file cabinet, two chairs, a work counter, or table storage shelving.

d. Floors in New Classrooms

i. Requirements for Floors in New Classrooms

1. Classroom areas are covered with resilient flooring or other easily cleaned material. Roll-type resilient flooring has the advantage of a minimum amount of jointing.

2. Each classroom contains a 9 x 12-foot area rug or individual carpet squares, or similar soft flooring surface, to be used for large group meetings. Carpets or similar soft flooring surfaces will be properly sanitized annually and replaced as needed.

ii. Recommendations for Floors in New Classrooms

1. There are no recommendations for floors in new classrooms.

e. Building Codes for New Classrooms

i. Requirements for Building Codes for New Classrooms

1. All building construction conforms to the Southern Building Codes, the American Disabilities Act, the Life Safety Codes, and to any other city and county building codes.

ii. Recommendations for Building Codes for New Classrooms

1. There are no recommendations for building codes in new structures.

f. Storage and Space in New Classrooms

i. Requirements for Storage and Space in New Classrooms

1. Open storage units (cubbies) are provided for each student.
2. Wall receptacles are placed 10 feet to 15 feet apart in each classroom. Any receptacle in the counter area are not located near a sink. A minimum of six outlets is installed.
3. Every closet latch is such that children can open the door from the inside.
4. Built-in cabinets or portable storage areas are constructed to promote accessibility of materials to the child to encourage the selection of activities and to facilitate room clean-up and to serve as learning center dividers. The height of cabinets and storage furnishings does not diminish teachers' ability to visually supervise children.
5. Classrooms are organized and clutter is kept to a minimum.

ii. Recommendations for Storage and Space in New Classrooms:

1. Base cabinets are installed below all counters. Doors are attached to some cabinets, while some are left open to serve as shelves. Open cabinet (18 x 24 inches and 24 x 36 inches) will accommodate the large paper used for easel painting.
2. Cabinets, 12 inches deep, are installed over the entire counter area for general storage.

3. Open storage units (cubbies) are available for every student. Each unit is four feet high and two feet wide with coat hanging space at the bottom and a storage area at the top. Coat hooks are installed 36 inches from the floor.
4. Adequate storage space is provided. The storage units include one wall of built-in cabinets or moveable storage sections. Most storage units are accessible to children to facilitate independence and responsibility within the classroom. Storage space, above the reach of the children, is available for use by teachers.
5. Adequate space for display of children's work is provided. Bulletin boards can be located on walls and/or fastened to the backs of cabinets and bookcases.

B. OUTDOOR PLAY AREA

1. Guidelines for Outdoor Play Areas

a. Outdoor Play Areas

i. Requirements for Designated Outdoor Play Areas

1. A designated area for supervised outside periods during the pre-kindergarten day is provided. Pre-kindergarten students do not simultaneously share an area with children in first grade or older during designated outside periods. The minimum classroom width is 24 feet, except in pod-type
2. To allow for all children to engage in outdoor play together, a fully accessible outdoor play space is provided for children requiring adaptive equipment. Activities are provided to allow for and encourage inclusive play.
3. Appropriate playground equipment and landscape design is provided to facilitate learning and ensure safety.
4. Playground equipment and landscape design is developmentally appropriate for three- and/or four-year-old children according to National Standards adopted by the Mississippi Department of Health.
5. The outside play area has defined boundaries to protect children from environmental hazards. Boundaries are sufficient to prevent vehicles and other hazards from entering the play area as well as prevent children from exiting the play area alone.

ii. Recommendations for Outdoor Play Areas

1. The outdoor play area is a minimum of 4,300 square feet for two pre-kindergarten classes. For each additional class, another 1,400 square feet is added.
2. A covered area is located on the playground to allow children refuge from the sun and to serve as a play area during inclement weather. This area is 225 to 300 square feet for each pre-kindergarten class, with a sloped concrete surface to shed water.

Source code: Section 37-21-7 (Adopt)