

### **Policy 5148.3: Preschool/Early Childhood Education**

The Governing Board recognizes the value of high-quality preschool experiences to enhance children's social-emotional development and acquisition of instructional knowledge, skills, and abilities. The Board desires to provide a supervised and cognitively rich learning environment designed to facilitate the transition to kindergarten for two-, three-, and four-year-old children.

The Superintendent or designee shall collaborate with the local child care and development planning council, the county office of education, other public agencies, organizations, and/or private preschool providers to assess the availability of preschool programs in the community and the extent to which the community's preschool needs are being met. The Board encourages the development of a comprehensive districtwide and/or countywide plan to increase children's access to high-quality preschool programs.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide information about preschool options in the community to parents/guardians upon request.

#### **District Preschool Programs**

When the Board determines that it is feasible, the district may contract with the California Department of Education (CDE) to provide preschool services in facilities at or near district schools, either directly or through a subcontract with a public or private provider. District preschool programs shall comply with all health and safety laws and regulations, including, when applicable, licensure requirements pursuant to 22 CCR 101156.

The Board shall approve, for the district's preschool program, a written philosophical statement, goals, and objectives that reflect the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the families to be served and address the program components specified in 5 CCR 17701-17711 and the accompanying administrative regulation. (5 CCR 17701)

The Board shall set priorities for establishing or expanding services as resources become available, giving consideration to the benefits of providing early education programs for at-risk children and/or children residing in the attendance areas of the lowest-performing district schools.

Preschool classroom needs shall be addressed in the district's facilities master plan, including an assessment as to whether adequate and appropriate space exists on school sites. As necessary, the Superintendent or designee shall provide information to the Board regarding facilities financing options for preschool classrooms and/or facilities available through partnering organizations or agencies.

Because parents/guardians are essential partners in supporting the development of their children, the Superintendent or designee shall involve them in program planning through the establishment of a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC).

The Superintendent or designee shall coordinate the district's preschool program, transitional kindergarten program (TK), and elementary education program to provide a developmental continuum that builds upon children's growing skills and knowledge. In order to provide families with the option of a full-day, high-quality instructional program, the district may enroll children who are in a TK or kindergarten program in a California State Preschool Program (CSPP) before and/or after the regular school day.

The Superintendent or designee shall recommend strategies to link the district's preschool program with other available child care and development programs in the district or community in order to assist families whose child care needs extend beyond the length of time that the district's preschool program is offered.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the plan to provide access to full-day learning programs the year before kindergarten addresses the needs of preschool children and their families as specified in Board Policy 6170.1 - Transitional Kindergarten. (Education Code 8281.5)

If an early enrollment child is enrolled in the district's TK program, the district shall concurrently offer the child enrollment in the district's CSPP, subject to available space. (Education Code 48000.15)

A child's eligibility for TK enrollment shall not impact family eligibility for a preschool or child care program. (Education Code 8205, 48000)

The district's program shall be aligned with the California Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations (PTKLF) curriculum frameworks developed by CDE which identify the knowledge, skills, and competencies that children typically attain as they complete their first or second year of preschool. The program shall be designed to facilitate children's development in essential skills in the areas of language and literacy, mathematics, physical development, and social-emotional development.

The Superintendent or designee shall identify dual language learners in district preschool programs, and shall collect and report related data to CDE as required by Education Code 8241.5. The district's preschool program shall include activities and services that meet the needs of dual language learners for support in the development of their home language and English. (Education Code 8203)

The district's preschool program shall serve children with exceptional needs as required by Education Code 8208. Children with exceptional needs attending any CSPP shall be educated in the least restrictive environment in accordance with 20 USC 1412.

The district's preschool program shall provide appropriate services to support the needs of at-risk children.

To maximize the ability of children to succeed in the preschool program, the program shall support children's health through proper nutrition and physical activity and shall provide or make referrals to available health and social services as needed.

The program shall care for the social/emotional development and well-being of children by providing early childhood mental health consultation services (ECMHC) as outlined in Education Code 8243. Additionally, ECMHC helps reduce suspension and expulsion and supports teachers to manage challenging behaviors.

**Parent Engagement and Strengthening:** The district preschool program shall encourage volunteerism by families participating in the program and shall communicate frequently with parents/guardians of enrolled children regarding their child's progress, including parent orientation, regular parent meetings and at least 2 parent/teacher conferences per year (Education Code sections 8201-8203, 8207 and 8231; 5 CCR Section 17705).

### **Staffing**

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals in district preschool programs possess the appropriate permit(s) issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, meet any additional qualifications established by the Board, and participate in professional development opportunities designed to continually enhance their knowledge and skills.

### **Eligibility, Enrollment, and Disenrollment**

Preschool admissions policies and procedures shall be in writing and available to the public. Such policies and procedures shall include criteria designating those children whose needs can be met by the program and services, the ages of children who will be accepted, program activities, any supplementary services provided, any field trip provisions, any transportation arrangements, food service provisions, and a health examination requirement. (5 CCR 17743; 22 CCR 101218.1)

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that subsidized preschool is provided to eligible families to the extent that state and/or federal funding is available and shall establish enrollment priorities in accordance with Education Code 8208, 8210, and 8211 and 5 CCR 17746-17748.

To receive preschool services, a child and the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be required to provide evidence of residency in California, which may be established by providing evidence of a California street or post office address. However, any person identified as experiencing homelessness shall only be required to submit a declaration that the person resides in California. (5 CCR 17745)

Preschool eligibility determinations shall be made without regard to a child's immigration status or that of the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) unless the child or the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) are under a final order of deportation from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (5 CCR 17745)

The district's program shall not suspend, expel or unenroll a child or persuade or encourage a child's parents/guardians to voluntarily unenroll from the program based on the child's behavior, unless the expulsion or unenrollment is in accordance with the procedures specified in the accompanying administrative regulation.

When necessary due to a reduction in state reimbursements, families may be disenrolled as specified in the accompanying administrative regulation.

### **Program Evaluation**

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement an annual plan of program evaluation which conforms to state requirements. (5 CCR 17709-17711)

The Superintendent or designee shall report to the Board annually regarding enrollment in district preschool programs and the effectiveness of the programs in preparing preschoolers for transition into the elementary education program.

### **Complaints**

The district's uniform complaint procedures, with modifications as necessary, shall be used to investigate and resolve complaints alleging violation of applicable health or safety requirements for license-exempt programs operating under the CSPP. However, licensed programs shall refer complaints alleging health and safety violations to the California Department of Social Services. (Education Code 8212; 5 CCR 4610, 4611, 4690-4694, 17781)