

PRESCHOOL/EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

When approved by the California Department of Education (CDE) under the California State Preschool Program, the district may operate one or more part-day preschool programs in accordance with law and the terms of its contract with the CDE.

(cf. 5148 - Child Care and Development)

The district's preschool program shall include all required program components, as described in 5 CCR 18272-18281 and AR 5148 - Child Care and Development, for the educational program, the creation of a developmental profile for each child, staff development, parent involvement and education, community involvement, health and social services, nutrition, and program evaluation. (5 CCR 18271-28281)

Minimum Hours/Days of Operation

The district's part-day preschool program shall operate a minimum of three hours per day, excluding time for home-to-school transportation, and for a minimum of 175 days per year unless otherwise specified in the program's contract. (Education Code 8235; 5 CCR 18136)

Staffing

The preschool program shall maintain an adult-child ratio of at least one adult for every eight children and a teacher-child ratio of at least one teacher for every 24 children. If the district cannot recruit a sufficient number of parents/guardians or volunteers to meet the required adult-child ratio, teacher aides shall be hired as necessary. (5 CCR 18135, 18290)

(cf. 1240 - Volunteer Assistance)

(cf. 6020 - Parent Involvement)

Any person employed at a district preschool and any volunteer who provides care and supervision to children at a preschool shall, unless exempted by law, be immunized against influenza, pertussis, and measles in accordance with Health and Safety Code 1596.7995 and AR 5148 - Child Care and Development. Documentation of required immunizations, or applicable exemptions, shall be maintained in the employee's personnel file. (Health and Safety Code 1596.7995)

(cf. 4112.4/4212.4/4312.4 - Health Examinations)

(cf. 4112.6/4212.6/4312.6 - Personnel Files)

In addition, preschool teachers shall present evidence of a current tuberculosis clearance and meet other requirements as specified in Health and Safety Code 1597.055.

Wraparound Child Care Services

In accordance with its contract with the CDE, the district may offer full-day services to meet the needs of eligible families through a combination of part-day preschool and wraparound child care services that are offered for the remaining portion of the day or year following completion of the preschool services. Child care and development services offered through

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this program shall meet the requirements of general child care and development programs pursuant to Education Code 8240-8244. (Education Code 8239)

Wraparound services shall operate a minimum of 246 days per year unless otherwise specified in the contract. Within this period of time, the part-day preschool program shall operate 175-180 days. After the completion of the preschool program, a part-time general child care and development program may operate a full day for the remainder of the year. (Education Code 8239)

Family Literacy Services

When any district preschool program receives funding for family literacy services pursuant to Education Code 8238.4, the Superintendent or designee shall coordinate the provision of: (Education Code 8238)

1. Opportunities for parents/guardians to work with their children on interactive literacy activities, including activities in which parents/guardians actively participate in facilitating their children's acquisition of prereading skills through guided activities such as shared reading, learning the alphabet, and basic vocabulary development
2. Parenting education for parents/guardians of participating children to support their child's development of literacy skills, including, but not limited to, parent education in:
 - a. Providing support for the educational growth and success of their children
 - b. Improving parent-school communications and parental understanding of school structures and expectations
 - c. Becoming active partners with teachers in the education of their children
 - d. Improving parental knowledge of local resources for the identification of and services for developmental disabilities, including, but not limited to, contact information for the district special education referral
3. Referrals to providers of adult education and instruction in English as a second language as necessary to improve parents/guardians' academic skills

(cf. 6200 - Adult Education)

4. Staff development for teachers in participating classrooms that includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Development of a pedagogical knowledge, including, but not limited to, improved instructional strategies

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- b. Knowledge and application of developmentally appropriate assessments of the prereading skills of children in participating classrooms
- c. Information on working with families, including the use of on-site coaching, for guided practice in interactive literacy activities
- d. Providing targeted interventions for all young children to improve kindergarten readiness upon program completion

(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)

Eligibility and Enrollment

Children eligible for the district's preschool program include those who will have their third or fourth birthday on or before September 1 of the fiscal year that they are being served. (Education Code 8208, 8235, 8236)

When a child is eligible for both the preschool program and the district's transitional kindergarten program, the family may choose the most appropriate program for the child. In accordance with the enrollment priorities described below, the child may be enrolled in both programs provided that the child is not enrolled in both programs for the same time period on the same day.

(cf. 5111 - Admission)

(cf. 6170.1 - Transitional Kindergarten)

Eligibility for subsidized preschool shall be as follows:

1. Children shall be eligible for subsidized preschool services if their family is a current aid recipient, income eligible, or homeless and/or the children are recipients of protective services or have been identified as being or at risk of being abused, neglected, or exploited. (Education Code 8235, 8263, 8263.1; 5 CCR 18131, 18134)
2. Children shall be eligible for subsidized wraparound preschool and child care services if their family meets at least one of the criteria specified in item #1 above and needs child care services due to either of the following circumstances: (Education Code 8239, 8263)
 - a. The child is identified by a legal, medical, or social services agency, the district liaison for homeless students, a Head Start program, or an emergency or transitional shelter as being a recipient of protective services, as being or at risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited, or as being homeless.

(cf. 6173 - Education for Homeless Children)

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- b. The parents/guardians are engaged in vocational training leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofession, or profession; are employed or seeking employment; are seeking permanent housing for family stability; or are incapacitated.

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a district waiting list in accordance with admission priorities. As vacancies occur, applicants shall be contacted in order of their priority. (5 CCR 18106)

First priority for enrollment in a preschool program shall be given to neglected or abused children 3 or 4 years of age who are recipients of child protective services or who, based upon written referral from a legal, medical, or social service agency, are at risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited. If unable to enroll a child in this category, the district shall refer the child's parent/guardian to local resource and referral services so that services for the child can be located. (Education Code 8236; 5 CCR 18131)

(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)

(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)

(cf. 1700 - Relations Between Private Industry and the Schools)

After all children with first priority are enrolled, the district shall give second priority to eligible children 4 years of age who are not enrolled in a transitional kindergarten program prior to enrolling eligible children 3 years of age. (Education Code 8236)

After enrolling all eligible children who meet the criteria for subsidized services, up to 10 percent of the program's enrollment, calculated throughout the entire contract, may be filled with children who exceed the age limitations and children whose family income is no more than 15 percent above the income eligibility threshold. (Education Code 8235; 5 CCR 18133)

The district may certify eligibility and enrollment up to 120 calendar days prior to the first day of the beginning of the preschool year. After establishing eligibility at the time of initial enrollment, a child shall remain eligible for the remainder of the program year. (Education Code 8237; 5 CCR 18082)

The district's decision to approve or deny a child's enrollment shall be communicated to the family through a written Notice of Action mailed or delivered within 30 days from the date the application is signed by the parent/guardian. (5 CCR 18094, 18095, 18118)

(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)

Subsequently, the Superintendent or designee shall mail or deliver a Notice of Action to a parent/guardian at least 14 calendar days before any intended change in services, including,

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but not limited to, an increase or decrease in fees, an increase or decrease in the amount of services, or termination of services, due to any of the following circumstances: (5 CCR 18095, 18119)

1. A determination during recertification or update of the application that the need or eligibility requirements are no longer being met or the fee or amount of service needs to be modified
2. Failure of the parent/guardian to document the family's need or eligibility after the district requested such documentation in writing
3. An indication by the parent/guardian that he/she no longer wants the service
4. The death of a parent/guardian or child
5. The conclusion of a limited-term agreement, provided that the parent/guardian has been informed in writing of the date that the services would terminate

For each child enrolled in the district's preschool program, the Superintendent or designee shall maintain a family data file containing a completed and signed application for services, documentation of income eligibility, and a copy of all Notices of Action. For each child not receiving subsidized services, the family data file shall also include records of the specific reason(s) for enrolling each child, the child's family income, and evidence that the district has made a diligent search for children eligible for subsidized services. (5 CCR 18130, 18133, 18081, 18084)

(cf. 1340 - Access to District Records)

(cf. 3580 - District Records)

(cf. 5125 - Student Records)

Fees and Charges

Fees for participation in the district's preschool program shall be assessed and collected in accordance with the fee schedule established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (Education Code 8273, 8273.2; 5 CCR 18078)

(cf. 3260 - Fees and Charges)

However, no fee shall be charged to an income-eligible family whose child is enrolled in a part-day preschool program, a family that is receiving CalWORKs cash aid, or a family that is otherwise exempted pursuant to Education Code 8273.1. (Education Code 8273.1; 5 CCR 18110)

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In addition, any family qualifying for subsidized preschool on the basis of having a child who is a recipient of child protective services, or having a certification by a county child welfare agency that services continue to be necessary, may be exempt from these fees for up to 12 months. Any family whose child is receiving subsidized preschool on the basis of being at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation may be exempt from these fees for up to three months, unless the family becomes eligible based on receipt of child protective services or certification of need by a county child welfare agency. The cumulative period of exemption for these purposes shall not exceed 12 months. (Education Code 8273.1)

The Superintendent or designee shall establish a process that involves parents/guardians in determining whether to require parents/guardians to provide diapers. This process shall also be used to determine whether and how much to charge parents/guardians for field trip expenses, within the limit specified in law. A child shall not be denied participation in a field trip due to the parent/guardian's inability or refusal to pay the fee, and no adverse action shall be taken against a parent/guardian for that inability or refusal. (Education Code 8273.3)

Disenrollment

When necessary due to a reduction in state reimbursements, families shall be disenrolled in the following order: (Education Code 8236, 8263.3)

1. Children 3 years of age whose families have the highest income in relation to family size shall be disenrolled first, followed by children 4 years of age whose families have the highest income in relation to family size.

At each age level, if two or more families have the same income ranking, the child with disabilities shall be disenrolled last. If there are no families that have a child with disabilities, the child who has received services the longest shall be disenrolled first.

2. Families of children 3 or 4 years of age who are receiving child protective services or who have been documented to be at risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited, regardless of income, shall be disenrolled last.

Parent Hearing

If a parent/guardian disagrees with any district action to deny his/her child's eligibility for subsidized preschool services, disenroll the child due to a funding shortage, increase or decrease fees, increase or decrease the amount of services, terminate services, or otherwise change the level of services, he/she may file a request for a hearing with the Superintendent or designee within 14 calendar days of the date the Notice of Action was received. Within 10 calendar days of receiving the request for a hearing, the Superintendent or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of the time and place of the hearing, which, to the extent possible, shall be convenient for the parent/guardian. (5 CCR 18120)

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The hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures specified in 5 CCR 18120 by a district administrator who is at a staff level higher in authority than the staff person who made the contested decision. Within 10 calendar days after the hearing, the district administrator shall mail or deliver a written decision to the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian disagrees with the written decision, he/she may, within 14 calendar days, appeal the decision to the CDE. (5 CCR 18120-18122)

Regulation
approved:

WHEATLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT
Wheatland, California