

PRESCHOOL/EARLY CHILDOOD EDUCATION

Three-year-old children means children who will have their third birthday on or before December 1 of the fiscal year in which they are enrolled in a program approved by the California Department of Education (CDE) under the California State Preschool Program (CSPP). Children who have their third birthday on or after December 2 of the fiscal year, may be enrolled in a CSPP program on or after their third birthday. (Education Code 8205)

Four-year-old children means children who will have their fourth birthday on or before December 1 of the fiscal year in which they are enrolled in a CSPP program, or a child whose fifth birthday occurs after September 1 of the fiscal year in which they are enrolled in a CSPP program and whose parent or guardian has opted to retain or enroll them in a CSPP program. (Education Code 8205)

When approved by CDE under the CSPP, the district may operate one or more part-day or full-day preschool programs in accordance with law and the terms of its contract with CDE.

The district's CSPP program shall include all of the following: (Education Code 8207)

1. Age and developmentally appropriate activities for children
2. Supervision
3. Parenting education and parent engagement
4. Social services that include, but are not limited to, identification of child and family needs and referral to appropriate agencies
5. Health services
6. Nutrition
7. Training and career ladder opportunities, documentation of which shall be provided to CDE
8. Physical activity to support children's health

The district's preschool program shall include all required program components 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, as described in 5 CCR 18272-18281 and AR 5148 - Child Care and Development.

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 8207; 5 CCR 18136)

The district's full-day program shall operate for up to 246 days per year, unless the contract specifies a lower number of days of operation. (Education Code 8207)

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. (Education Code 8241, 5 CCR 18135, 18290)

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)

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.

Family Literacy Services

When any district preschool program receives funding for family literacy services pursuant to Education Code 8221, the Superintendent or designee shall coordinate the provision of: (Education Code 8220)

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 children in participating classrooms 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 academic skills of parents/guardians
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 and behavioral strategies\

- 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

Eligibility and Enrollment Priorities for Part-Day CSPP Programs

A three-year-old or four-year-old child is eligible for a part-day CSPP program if the child's family is one of the following: (Education Code 8208)

- 1. A current aid recipient
- 2. Income eligible
- 3. Homeless
- 4. One whose children are recipients of child protective services, or whose children have been identified as being abused, neglected, or exploited, or at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited

After all eligible three- and four-year-old children have been enrolled as provided above, a part-day CSPP program may provide services to children in families whose income is no more than 15 percent above the income eligibility threshold, as described in Education Code 8213. No more than 10 percent of all the children enrolled in the CSPP program shall be from families above the income eligibility threshold. (Education Code 8208)

In addition, after all otherwise eligible children have been enrolled as provided in the paragraphs above, a part-day CSPP program may provide services to three- and four-year-old children in families whose income is above the income eligibility threshold if those children are children with disabilities. Such children with disabilities enrolled in part-day CSPP program shall not count towards the 10-percent limit described above. (Education Code 8208)

A CSPP program operating within the attendance boundary of a school where at least 80 percent of students are eligible for free and reduced price lunch may enroll four-year-old children after all otherwise eligible children have been enrolled as provided in the paragraphs above. (Education Code 8208 and 8217)

The district shall certify eligibility and enroll families into their program within 120 calendar days prior to the first day of the beginning of the new preschool year. Subsequent to enrollment, a child shall be deemed eligible for a part-day CSPP program for the remainder of the program year. (Education Code 8208)

The district shall give priority for part-day CSPP programs as follows: (Education Code 8210)

- 1. The first priority for services shall be given to three-year-old or four-year-old

children who are recipients of child protective services or who are at risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited and for whom there is a written referral from a legal, medical, or social service agency. If the district is unable to enroll a child in this first priority category, the district shall refer the child's parent/guardian to local resources and referral services so that services for the child can be located.

2. The second priority for services shall be given to eligible four-year-old children who are not enrolled in a state- funded transitional kindergarten (TK) program. Within this priority category, eligible children with the lowest income according to the income ranking on the most recent schedule of income ceiling eligibility table, as published by the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) at the time of enrollment, shall be enrolled first.

If two or more families have the same income ranking according to the most recent schedule of income ceiling eligibility table, a child with disabilities shall be enrolled first. If there are no families with a child with disabilities, the child that has been on the waiting list for the longest time shall be admitted first.

3. The third priority shall be given to eligible three-year-old children. Within this priority category, eligible children with the lowest income according to the income ranking on the most recent schedule of income ceiling eligibility table, as published by the Superintendent at the time of enrollment, shall be enrolled first.
4. The fourth priority, after all otherwise eligible children have been enrolled, shall be children from families whose income is no more than 15 percent above the eligibility income threshold, as described in Education Code 8213. Within this priority category, priority shall be given to four-year-old children before three-year-old children.
5. The fifth priority, after all otherwise eligible children have been enrolled, shall be a child with disabilities whose family's income is above the income eligibility threshold, as described in Education Code 8213. Within this priority category, priority shall be given to four-year-old children before three-year-old children.
6. After all otherwise eligible children have been enrolled in the first through fifth priority categories, as described in Items #1-5 above, a CSPP program site operating within the attendance boundary of a school where at least 80 percent of students are eligible for free and reduced price lunch as described in Education Code 8217 may enroll any four-year-old children whose families reside within the attendance boundary of the qualified elementary school. These children shall, to the extent possible, be enrolled by lowest to highest income according to the most recent schedule of income ceiling eligibility table.

Notice of Action

Upon receiving a parent/guardian's application for services, the Superintendent or designee shall review the application and documentation and shall certify the eligibility of the family or child.

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)

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, 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 the parent/guardian 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 including, but not limited to, 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 18081, 18084, 18130, 18133)

Combined Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Classroom

When a child is eligible for both the preschool program and the district's TK program, the district may place the child in a classroom which is commingled with children from both programs as long as the commingled program meets all of the requirements of each program as well as the following requirements: (Education Code 8207, 48000)

1. An early childhood environment rating scale, as specified in 5 CCR 18281, shall be completed for the classroom.
2. All children enrolled for 10 or more hours per week shall be evaluated using the Desired Results Developmental Profile, as specified in 5 CCR 18272.
3. The classroom shall be taught by a teacher who holds a credential issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing in accordance with Education Code 44065 and 44256.
4. The classroom shall comply with the adult-child ratio specified in Education Code 8264.8.

5. Contractors of the district shall report the services, revenues, and expenditures for children in the preschool program in accordance with 5 CCR 18068.
6. The classroom shall not include children enrolled in TK for a second year or children enrolled in a regular kindergarten classroom.

Fees and Charges

Fees for participation in the district's full-day CSPP program shall be assessed and collected in accordance with the fee schedule established by the SPI in conjunction with the California Department of Social Services. (Education Code 8252; 5 CCR 18078)

However, for the 2021-2022 school year, family fees shall not be collected as specified in Education Code 8252.

In addition, no fee shall be charged to an eligible family whose child is enrolled in a part-day preschool program or a family that is receiving CalWORKs cash aid. (Education Code 8253; 5 CCR 18110)

A family may be exempt from the fees for up to 12 months if the child qualifies for preschool on the basis of being the recipient of child protective services or as being, or at risk of being, abused or neglected. (Education Code 8253)

The Superintendent or designee shall establish a process that involves parents/guardians in determining whether to require parents/guardians to provide diapers and/or 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 8254)

Disenrollment Based on Reduced Funding

When necessary to disenroll families from subsidized preschool services, families shall be disenrolled in reverse priority order for services as specified in Education Code 8210 and 8211 and as described above in the sections "Eligibility and Enrollment Priority for Part-Day CSPP Programs" and "Eligibility and Enrollment Priority for Full-Day CSPP Programs." (Education Code 8214)

Expulsion/Unenrollment Based on Behavior

A district preschool program shall not expel or unenroll a child based on the child's behavior, unless the district first takes the following actions to address the child's behavior: (Education Code 8222)

1. Inform the parents/guardians of the child's persistent and serious challenging behaviors and consult with the parents/guardians and teacher in an effort to maintain the child's safe participation in the program
2. If the child has an individualized family service plan (IFSP) or individualized education program (IEP), with written parent/guardian consent, contact the agency or district employee responsible for such plan or program to seek consultation in regard to serving the child
3. If the child does not have an IFSP or IEP, consider if it is appropriate to complete a

universal screening of the child, including, but not limited to, screening the child's social and emotional development, referring the parents/guardians to community resources, implementing behavior supports within the program, and considering an IEP for the child

If the district has taken the actions specified in items #1-3 above and the child's continued enrollment would present a serious safety threat to the child or other enrolled children, the district shall refer the parents/guardians to other potentially appropriate placements, the local child care resource and referral agency, or any other referral service available in the local community. The district may then unenroll the child. The district shall have up to 180 days to complete the actions described above. (Education Code 8222)

Children with disabilities may only be suspended or expelled in conformance with the procedures and limitations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Parent Hearing

If a parent/guardian disagrees with any district action to deny the 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, the parent/guardian 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)

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, the parent/guardian may, within 14 calendar days, appeal the decision to CDE. (5 CCR 18120-18122)

Policy adopted: Date pending