



Program Content Recommendations for the Governor's Pre-Kindergarten Initiative

Process: The ECAC convened a group of their members with specific experience with Pre-Kindergarten programs to inform a set of comprehensive recommendations to consider as the Governor's staff creates the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the new Pre-K Initiative.

The group endorses the plan to make the RFP available to both school- and CBO-based sites.

Teacher Quality: The Birth – Grade 2 Certification prepares teachers to meet the social, physical, emotional, and academic needs of pre-kindergarten children. Teachers identified for this initiative should have earned this certification or be on their way through a non-traditional pathway to the Birth – Grade 2 certification, provided that they have training, education, and experience prior to leading classroom activity.

Teachers who have the Childhood Certification and are seeking the Early Childhood Extension should be required to earn at least 9 additional credits that includes the following content: child development (for children birth to age 8), family engagement and support, early childhood curriculum and programming based on observation and assessment skills, and field experience with children under the age of 5. (This recommendation comes from the NYS Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators and is endorsed by the ECAC.)

School Leaders: The selection of school leaders should include criteria for ensuring those individuals have the vision for implementing a high quality early childhood program with the capacity to assess and support the work of the teachers. School leaders should be provided with comprehensive orientation, training, coaching and technical assistance to align their programs with QUALITYstarsNY standards.

Dual language learners and children with disabilities/special needs: Professional development should be available to insure success of school leaders' and teachers' services as they strive to integrate children who are speaking more than one language and/or have special needs.

Quality in Program Standards: Consider giving priority points to programs who are already participating in QUALITYstarsNY and can demonstrate their improvement in quality.

Other programs, not yet participating in QUALITYstarsNY should be supported to participate and should submit a plan detailing their intent to reach 4 or 5 star ratings within the first year of implementation.

Quality in Learning Standards: Programs should share plans that indicate the ability to implement the Pre-K Foundation for the Common Core to increase school readiness and success. These plans should include the incorporation of the standards into interdisciplinary thematic units/project based learning, use of authentic assessments to gauge student progress towards those standards, and ways to provide ongoing feedback to teaching staff on their effectiveness in using standards and authentic assessments.

Comprehensive Services: To insure that the Governor’s Pre-K Initiative maximizes the effect and success of the program it is recommended that the comprehensive approach includes a focus and possibly, dedicated staff to integrate family support and social – emotional health supports.

Recruitment of Children: Programs must share a comprehensive plan, including multiple strategies targeted to reach the widest audience possible, to recruit children that indicates that the highest need children will receive priority for enrollment.

Transition: Programs must indicate a comprehensive plan to support successful transition to Kindergarten that includes support for families as well as children.

Transportation: Programs must share plans to provide transportation for children who need it.

Additional Notes from the Team:

It is advised that the Governor’s Office consider targeting current Head Start programs, where there are established target populations in programs with existing infrastructure and possible space to increase service for Pre-K. Applicants should include plans for ensuring any partnerships with existing providers maximize the use of resources from federal, state and local early childhood programs.