

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The Office of School Readiness**

The Office of School Readiness (OSR) is housed within the Alabama Department of Children's Affairs and is charged with administering Alabama's state funded Pre-K program. OSR funds pre-K classrooms through a competitive grant process and administers the program in a variety of settings that include:

- Public schools
- Private childcare and schools
- Head Start programs
- Community based programs
- Faith based programs
- Military programs

OSR was created in the 2000 legislative session. In the first year of operation, OSR funded 8 pilot pre-K programs. Currently, OSR funds 309 pre-K programs and supports the professional development of a high quality workforce through education, training, and on-site coaching.

The Code of Alabama sections relating to OSR are contained in Appendix T.

### **High Quality Pre-K**

Alabama's state funded First Class Pre-K program, has been awarded the highest quality rating by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) for the past seven years. OSR is dedicated to working with pre-K programs to ensure that Alabama's 4-year-olds have access to high quality learning experiences so that they are prepared for school success.

Research shows that children benefit the most from high quality early learning experiences. OSR works with classrooms to provide those high quality experiences in Alabama. Chart 1 outlines the quality criteria defined by NIEER as well as how Alabama implements the criteria in its First Class Pre-K classrooms.

Chart 1: NIEER Quality in Alabama’s First Class Pre-K Program

Quality Indicators	Office of School Readiness Recommendations
<b>Early Learning Standards</b>	Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children (Online at <a href="http://www.children.alabama.gov">www.children.alabama.gov</a> under the Office of School Readiness section)
<b>Teacher Degree</b>	Lead teacher must have a Bachelor’s Degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development, at minimum
<b>Teacher Specialized Training</b>	Lead teacher must have specialized training in early childhood field
<b>Auxiliary Teacher Degree</b>	Auxiliary teacher must have a Child Development Associate credential (CDA) or equivalent (9 hours of approved coursework in child development), at minimum
<b>Teacher In-Service</b>	Lead teacher must have at least 30 hours yearly in-service professional development and training
<b>Maximum Class Size</b>	Maximum number of children per classroom must be 20 or fewer; recommended number is 18
<b>Staff-Child Ratio</b>	Lowest acceptable ratio of staff to children in classroom must be 1:10 or better
<b>Screening/Referral and Support Services</b>	Provide vision, hearing and dental health screenings and referrals and at least one additional support service to families; all parents submit a physical exam form; all parents complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 (ASQ-3) developmental screener
<b>Comprehensive Curriculum</b>	First Class Pre-K classrooms will implement the Alabama First Class Framework, which consists of the Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children, First Class Program Guidelines, First Class Classroom Guidelines, the ASQ-3 Developmental Screener and the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment. Classroom guidance and support will be provided by First Class Coaches.
<b>Monitoring</b>	Site visits and monitoring will be provided by First Class Monitors to ensure quality and compliance. <i>The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS)</i> and other assessments are administered to ensure the program is meeting children’s needs.

## **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

### **PA1 Compliance with OSR Program Guidelines Required**

The Program Guidelines have been created and published by OSR to ensure that programs provide a safe and high quality learning environment for the students in Alabama's state funded First Class Pre-K program.

The Program Guidelines also provide guidance and regulations for the expenditures of state funds. If programs do not use state dollars for the purpose for which they are intended, those programs will be immediately defunded. The Department of Children's Affairs (DCA) Commissioner or the OSR Director may immediately defund a program if grant funds are not used according to these guidelines and/or applicable state and federal laws.

**Failure to adhere to any of the written OSR Program Guidelines may result in a warning, probation, suspension, and/or immediate defunding of the program.** A work-plan will be given to programs placed on probation, and implementation of the work-plan will be supported by the OSR staff. If the program continues to be deficient, OSR may suspend or defund the program. A defunded program must wait one year to reapply for a First Class Pre-K grant. Programs may be immediately defunded if violations are considered severe.

The decision of the DCA Commissioner or OSR Director is final concerning defunding a program. However, a program that has been defunded may submit, in writing, a response to the deficiencies outlined in the defunding letter.

### **PA2 Financial Guidelines**

OSR funds high quality pre-K programs through a competitive grant application process. Grants are funded by state funds appropriated through the Alabama legislature each year. All programs should understand that the receipt of state dollars is a responsibility and should ensure that funds received are spent for the purposes of high quality pre-K in the classroom for which they are appropriated.

#### **PA2.1 Awarding of Contracts**

Contracts will be awarded to First Class providers through a competitive process, subject to funding availability, previous program compliance (for continuation programs), and identified regional need. Programs are reviewed annually for refunding based on the availability of funds and adherence to OSR recommendations and stipulations. It is important that programs demonstrate financial solvency and sound fiscal management. All programs are expected to receive and spend state education trust fund dollars in accordance with state and federal requirements. If funds are spent in ways not approved by OSR or in violation of state and federal law, OSR will discontinue the disbursement of funds.

## **PA 2.2 Selection of OSR First Class Pre-K Sites**

The basis for selection of applicants proposing to operate an OSR First Class Pre-K program will be based on the applicant's ability to demonstrate, in their application, the most effective implementation of a First Class Pre-K program. Interested applicants will go through a competitive grant process, which is conducted **annually**. Since PLUS grants are only for the first year, newly funded PLUS grantees will be required to reapply for a different grant type after their first year. Existing programs will be required to reapply every two years.

The criteria for selection will include:

- The quality of the proposed program as indicated by adherence to the OSR Program Guidelines
- The qualifications and experience of the applicant and staff in planning, organizing and providing comprehensive child development services to families and children at the community level
- The program design and suitability of facilities and equipment proposed to be used in carrying out the program
- Cost effectiveness of the proposed program
- The need for pre-K services in the community served by the applicant

## **PA2.3 Grant Application and Notification of Contract Awards**

All approved programs will receive written notification.

## **PA2.4 Class Budgets**

All classes must have 18 students in order to receive funding. If a classroom has less than 18 students, there should be approved waivers to decrease the number of students required (see Section PA 4.5.) Budgets for the upcoming year should be submitted to OSR no later than September 1st. (see Appendix B). Budgets must reflect the total amount of all funds used to support the OSR classroom including 25% matching funds, and parent fees (if collected.) Budgets are required at the beginning of the year, middle of the year and end of year and must be entered into the OSR database using the required template (Appendix B.) Sites not complying with budget submission by required dates will be penalized. See page 8 of the OSR Program Guidelines for penalties regarding late submission of paperwork.

## **PA2.5 Contract Signatory**

The legal signatory for the program entity must sign the contract.

## **PA2.6 Disbursement of Funds**

Funds to Pre-K programs will be disbursed in three equal payments, subject to the availability of funds and on receipt of completed, required paperwork. Anticipated disbursements of funds will

begin in November, February, and July. First Class programs cannot wait until the first disbursement from OSR to pay the lead and auxiliary teacher salaries or to purchase required equipment and supplies for the OSR classroom.

**All OSR funds must be spent by September 30, 2014** or funds will be returned to OSR. A spending plan for funds remaining on May 31st must be submitted to the program’s First Class Monitor by June 15<sup>th</sup>.

**PA2.7 Budget Guidelines**

Each program is expected to provide at least a 25% match (cash or in-kind). The following items may be included in your budget for OSR funds:

<b>Type of Expenditure</b>	<b>Allowed Items</b>	<b>Documentation Required</b>
<b>Personnel Costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay for lead teacher and auxiliary teacher in compliance with salary scale in Appendix E.</li> <li>• Administrative costs (Must not exceed 6% of grant amount)</li> <li>• Substitute teachers (Must provide substitute teacher in absence of either lead or auxiliary teacher)</li> <li>• Payroll taxes</li> <li>• Background checks</li> <li>• Accounting (part of 6% admin costs)</li> </ul> <p>Note: OSR requirements are that lead teachers and auxiliary teachers are paid within the pay scale provided by OSR in Appendix E. This amount does <b>not</b> include benefits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of cancelled checks from bank statements</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insurance, retirement or other benefits for lead teacher and/or auxiliary teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of cancelled checks from bank statements</li> </ul>
<b>Educational Equipment and Supplies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional materials and supplies for classroom</li> <li>• Playground equipment and supplies</li> <li>• Equipment over \$500 must be approved by OSR staff</li> <li>• Classroom furnishings (Supply lists and furnishings lists are available in Appendix V)</li> <li>• Classroom electronic equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit card statements or copies of cancelled checks from bank statements</li> </ul>

<b>Travel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel in support of classroom</li> <li>• In-state field trips (including travel costs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit card statements or copies of cancelled checks from bank statements</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration, travel, lodging and food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit card statements or copies of cancelled checks from bank statements</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom maintenance and cleaning supplies</li> <li>• Computer support (limited)</li> <li>• Utilities (\$1,000 maximum)</li> <li>• Parent programs and involvement</li> <li>• Safety equipment and supplies</li> <li>• Food for children (prior approval required)</li> <li>• Administrative supplies (\$500 maximum)</li> <li>• Advertising (\$1,000 maximum)</li> </ul>	<p>At least one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit card statements</li> <li>• Copies of cancelled checks from bank statements</li> <li>• Receipts</li> <li>• Purchase orders</li> </ul>
<b>Health Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision, hearing and dental health screenings (see Appendix L for a list of screening providers)</li> <li>• Health services and supplies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit card statements or copies of cancelled checks from bank statements</li> </ul>

All equipment over \$500.00 must be inventoried using the form in Appendix W; inventory lists should be kept on-site and reviewed by First Class Monitors.

All budget changes that exceed 10% of a line item must be approved by the First Class Monitor prior to the expenditure.

### **PA2.8 Program Fees**

All children must receive the same opportunities during the 6.5 hour program day. The amount of parent fees allowed depends on the type of First Class grant awarded to the grantee:

For Excellence Grants, programs may charge parents the normal cost of child care that is common in the local community.

For Tiered and Plus Grants, fees may be charged, but must not exceed the amounts outlined in Appendix F.

If programs choose to collect parent fees, they must show, on the budget form provided, how that money is reinvested in the OSR classroom.

**No child may be denied access due to the family's inability to pay requested parent fees.** Sites may seek help from local task forces for scholarships and fundraising events.

Field trips made during the day must be free and available to all children. Pre-K funds may be used to provide field trips or other appropriate activities for children. **If extracurricular activities such as computer, dance, or art are included in the 6.5 hour day, they must be free and available to all First Class children.**

**No additional fees**, for anything other than meals, may be required of any child for the provision of First Class services (e.g., registration, uniforms, field trips, curriculum fees, classroom supplies, photographs, t-shirts). Voluntary donations may be requested. However, no child may be denied participation if families do not give requested donations.

### **PA2.9 Fee Structure**

Documentation that explains the fee structure for non-pre-K program days (holiday/vacation times) for children, transportation (optional) and/or food services shall be given to each family. Copies of this documentation should be kept on file.

### **PA2.10 Uniforms**

Centers with uniform policies may request that parents dress children in uniforms. OSR Program Directors are urged to provide uniforms for those who cannot afford them or work with community resources to secure uniforms.

## **PA3 Documentation Requirements**

First Class Pre-K Programs are expected to complete, submit, and file all documents required by OSR. Copies of all First Class documents and records, for each program year, should be retained on-site for three (3) years following the final financial report for that year.

### **Information completed on-line:**

1. Child Registration Form (Appendix G)
2. Teacher Training Verification (Appendix D)
3. Site Demographic Information (Appendix A)
4. Standardized Site Budget (Appendix B)
5. Teacher Demographic Information (Appendix C)
6. Child Registration Forms for children on the waiting list (Appendix G)
7. End of the Year Report completed by OSR Directors with input from the teachers (Appendix CC)

Information to be kept on-site:

1. Child Registration Forms for children on the waiting list (Appendix G)
2. Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 screeners for every child (Appendix Y)
3. Parent Involvement Log (Appendix S)
4. List of suggested parent workshops
5. Teacher training verification (copies of certificates etc.)
6. New Student Checklist (Appendix N)
7. OSR Equipment Inventory Form (Appendix W)
8. Parent Conference Verification Forms (Appendix R)
9. Copies of Parent Contracts (Appendix H)
10. Notice of Receipt and Explanation of Code of Student Behavior (Appendix I)
11. Parent Orientation Verification Form (Appendix P)
12. Required list of equipment, materials, & supplies/supply purchase list (Appendix V)
13. Timeline for submission of paperwork
14. Vision, Hearing and Dental Health Screening Forms for all children (Appendix K)
15. Physical Examination Forms for all children (Appendix J)
16. Proof of immunizations (typically a blue card) or affidavit citing religious beliefs.

Originals to be mailed to OSR:

1. Teacher transcripts (official from college or university)
2. Criminal background checks (if applicable; see section TS3.1)

Mailing Address:  
Office of School Readiness  
P.O. Box 302755  
Montgomery, AL 36130-2755

Forms to be picked up by First Class Monitors:

1. Original Parent Contracts (Appendix H)

The pre-K provider must keep copies of all documents on file. For a list of documents needed for children who enroll any time after September 1st, please see Appendix N (New Student Checklist).

**Failure to submit and maintain the reports and information listed above will result in withholding of funds.** Continued failure to submit documents on time (i.e. more than once) will result in discontinuation of the First Class grant. Please see the timeline for OSR Pre-K Sites for comprehensive list of forms and due dates.

Programs that are more than **30 days** late with all required paperwork will receive checks reduced by **\$2,000**. If a site is **60 days** late with required paperwork, the program will be placed on **probation** and funds for the **current disbursements will be forfeited**. If the site is **90** days late w/required paperwork, the **site may be defunded** for the next year.

## **PA4 Program Delivery**

### **PA4.1 Instruction Time and Number of Days**

The Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children is the guiding document for lesson planning and classroom instruction. The Performance Standards provide the learning outcomes to ensure that Alabama's 4 year olds enter school ready to succeed. The standards have recently been updated to incorporate special education standards for preschool children.

The First Class program is designed to provide a full day of developmentally appropriate instruction and support for 4-year-old children. The pre-K program shall provide 6.5 hours of high quality and developmentally appropriate activities and instruction, five days per week. OSR recommends 180 days per year for eligible 4-year-old children. Each grantee is funded for 187 days to include 7 days of professional development for staff.

Both lead and auxiliary teachers should be compensated and are expected to work for at least 187 days per year; 180 days are for classroom instruction, 7 days are for professional development to improve classroom practice.

### **PA4.2 Dates of Operation**

The First Class programs will begin no later than September 1st. Sites in public schools will be expected to coordinate with the local school calendar adopted by the local board of education. Head Start programs and local childcare programs are encouraged to follow their local school system calendar.

### **PA4.3 Program/Staff Hours**

The 6.5 hours of children's program shall begin no earlier than 7:30 a.m. The remaining 1-hour of the lead teacher and auxiliary teacher's 7.5-hour funded day should be used for a variety of First Class program activities, such as parent conferences, meetings with First Class Coaches and Monitors, planning, etc. The 7.5-hour day must be solely dedicated to pre-K operations. The daily classroom schedule will be approved by the First Class Coach at their first visit.

### **PA4.4 Wrap- Around Services**

OSR does not require or provide extended day services. Extended day services for pre-K children may be provided at the parent's expense. Income eligible families may receive services through the Department of Human Resources, Childcare Management Agency office or the Department of Family and Children's Services subsidized childcare program.

#### **PA 4.5 Enrollment**

First Class Pre-K programs are expected to begin the school year with a minimum of 16 children in the classroom. By September 30<sup>th</sup>, programs are expected to either have a full enrollment of 18 children, or approved waivers to support having less than 18 children. Waivers may be requested for children with diagnosed disabilities or significant developmental delays that require additional time and attention from the teaching staff. See Appendix M for Waiver Request form that should be submitted through the OSR database. Please e-mail the First Class Special Needs Coordinator for notification that a waiver request has been submitted.

#### **PA4.6 Screenings and Referrals**

Upon admission into First Class, the pre-K provider shall ensure that evidence of age-appropriate, up-to-date immunizations or signed religious beliefs affidavits against such immunizations are maintained on-site for each child.

Physical examinations should be completed by the child's primary care physician. Parents may use the form provided by OSR in Appendix J or they may submit a form used by their physician as long as it contains the required information. These forms should be turned in to the program no later than **September 30th**.

Pre-K programs are required to offer vision, hearing and dental health screenings on-site. It is the responsibility of First Class Pre-K programs to bring in trained professionals to conduct the vision, hearing and dental health screenings. The OSR Program Director will have completed screening forms available for First Class Monitors to review (Appendix K). All vision, hearing and dental health screenings should be completed by **December 31<sup>st</sup>**.

#### **PA4.7 Community Collaboration**

The First Class Pre-K program should work with the county's Children's Policy Council (CPC), Early Childhood Education committee. Children's Policy Councils are coordinated by Liletta Jenkins ([334.353.2710](tel:334.353.2710)/[liletta.jenkins@dca.alabama.gov](mailto:liletta.jenkins@dca.alabama.gov)) at the Alabama Department of Children's Affairs. The Early Childhood Education Committees will be working to gather data about location of education programs and services available for 4-year-olds in each county. Community collaboration is an important component in the continuing growth of high quality pre-K. Pre-K Directors are strongly encouraged to participate in local Children's Policy Council and Early Care and Education Committee meetings.

#### **PA4.8 Licensing**

The facility must abide by minimum standards and hold a current license from the Department of Human Resources (DHR.) Exempt programs must show proof of exemption. For licensing information, contact the Alabama Department of Human Resources Child Care Services 334-242-1310 or via the web at [www.dhr.alabama.gov](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov).

**First Class programs that are placed on probation by DHR are automatically suspended by DCA/OSR. Funds are forfeited during the period of probation.**

#### **PA4.9 Accreditation**

If you are an accredited site by NAC, NAEYC or SACS, please send accreditation documentation to OSR within 30 days of your program start date. OSR encourages all sites to pursue accreditation from appropriate organizations.

#### **PA4.10 Transportation**

Transportation services are not provided by OSR. However, individual sites that choose to provide transportation must adhere to local transportation guidelines, laws, and DHR Minimum Standards (i.e. safety belts/car seats).

#### **PA4.11 Initial Screening and Ongoing Assessment**

The pre-K provider shall ensure that child assessment procedures reflect appropriate practices for young children. Assessments should incorporate information from multiple sources, including health records, parental input, and child observations. Any assessment instruments used should be valid, reliable, culturally sensitive, and individually administered by trained personnel.

The use of pass/fail criteria, report cards/ variations of report cards, or letter grades **are not** developmentally appropriate practices and **are not** to be part of the OSR First Class program.

OSR classrooms are required to have **parent completed** ASQ-3 screeners done by September 30<sup>th</sup>. Parents should be given the entire ASQ-3 protocol except for the back page. This page will be scored and completed by the teachers. Completion of the ASQ-3 can be counted for 1 hour of parent involvement credit. If parents have not returned a completed ASQ-3 in a timely manner, the teacher may complete the screener. However, it should be completed based on teacher observations of the child. Teachers should not complete each task with a child to answer the questions on the screener (See Appendix Y.) After the teachers have scored the ASQ-3, they will provide feedback to the parents at parent teacher conferences.

OSR classrooms are also required to use the online version of the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment. They are also expected to adhere to the three checkpoints that are established by OSR. **These dates are October 4, 2013, January 16, 2014 and May 16, 2014.**

#### **PA4.12 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting and Investigations**

It is required by law for anyone associated with the OSR First Class Pre-K program to report suspected abuse. Please see full text of Alabama's Mandatory Child Abuse and Neglect reporting law in Appendix X.

The pre-K provider must notify OSR anytime there is an open abuse or neglect investigation involving the OSR First Class Pre-K classroom and resolution is completed.

OSR will temporarily suspend all First Class Programs that are suspended by DHR for the length of time that it takes the program to be reinstated by DHR.

## **PA5 Enrollment**

### **PA5.1 Open Enrollment**

Registration and enrollment for the program must be open and nondiscriminatory. There must be a wide distribution of registration notices in English and Spanish. The notices should state that a **random selection drawing** will be used to choose the children in the OSR First Class classroom. Notice for registration **MUST** be posted at least one month in advance of registration date in locations such as childcare centers, pediatrician offices, health departments, Children Policy Council meetings, and newspapers. Beginning in 2014, registration posters will be provided by OSR. The random selection drawing should be done in a public forum as well.

Registration notices **MUST** include: (a) date, time, location and required information needed for registration, (b) nondiscriminatory and equal opportunity statements, and (c) the date and time of the random selection drawing. Children cannot be denied participation on the basis of income, race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (TITLE IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Title 11 of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976); or disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) in educational programs.

Classrooms receiving Title 1 funding and OSR funding may not consider any testing criteria in their random selection process. For example, a Title 1 program may not screen children and place only the lowest scoring children in the random selection drawing for the OSR classroom.

Income may not be used as a consideration for enrollment.

### **Suggested timeline of registration/enrollment events for EXISTING classrooms:**

- February: Programs should place registration notices around the community (program & First Class Monitors & Coaches)
- April 1 – 30: Programs will accept registration forms from parents. Parents should also provide a copy of their most recent utility bill to as proof of Alabama residency.
- May (first week)- Programs will hold a random selection drawing and notify parents of their child's enrollment status

**Newly selected sites will be notified of their timeline during the grant award process.**

**NOTE-** if your classroom is located in a center that currently has a program for 3-year-old children, those children MAY NOT automatically be placed in the OSR First Class Pre-K classroom. Those children must submit registration forms and be placed in the random selection drawing like all other children from the community who submit registration forms.

Recruitment for the classroom should continue throughout the year in order to maintain enrollment and a comprehensive waiting list. Children who drop from the program after April 1st do not have to be replaced.

OSR supports diversity in First Class Pre-K classrooms. However, OSR funds cannot be used to create special education pre-k classrooms. It is strongly recommended that OSR classrooms have no more than 2 children with diagnosed disabilities or significant developmental delays.

### **PA5.2 Waiting Lists**

Registration forms must be maintained on site for all children who are not attending the program due to a lack of space. Children on the waiting list must also be entered into the OSR database. Please continue to accept registration forms from families throughout the year.

## **THE ALABAMA PRE-K CLASSROOM**

### **CR1 Learning Environment**

First Class Pre-K providers are expected to provide a learning environment which is at minimum clean, safe, and conducive to high quality learning. OSR staff will conduct an assessment of the environment and make recommendations for improvement as needed. (see Appendix U for Classroom Guidelines.)

Pre-K providers shall maintain appropriate equipment, materials and supplies for each First Class classroom (see Appendix V.) Classroom furniture is required at the beginning of the school year.

#### **CR1.1 Purchase of Equipment, Materials, and Supplies**

It is expected that each First Class classroom will provide a high quality learning environment which includes appropriate classroom equipment, materials and supplies. First Class funds may be used for purchase of equipment, materials and supplies for the classroom. Material purchases over \$500 need to be approved by the First Class Monitor and a copy of purchases should be given to them. Documentation of purchases over \$500 must be provided to OSR using the Classroom Inventory and Purchase List (Appendix W).

#### **CR1.2 Ownership of Equipment**

If a new classroom purchases equipment using First Class funds from OSR and is in existence for less than two years, the program will be responsible for reimbursing OSR for the equipment. If the 3<sup>rd</sup> check has not been sent out, the money will be withheld from that check.

### **CR2 Classroom Delivery**

#### **CR2.1 Space**

Each classroom shall have licensed space for 18 children, which includes a minimum of 35 square feet per child and 60 square feet (per child) on the playground.

#### **CR2.2 Teacher Student Ratio and Classroom Make-Up**

Enrollment of 18 children in all OSR classrooms is expected. This provides a 9 to 1 teacher: child ratio. Head Start classrooms are able to have no more than 20 children in their classroom which will insure a 10:1 ratio; however, they may request permission from Head Start to remain at 18. Head Start Classrooms must submit an OSR Waiver Request Form to request to increase their class size over 18 children (Appendix M.)

Two adults (lead teacher, auxiliary teacher, and/or substitute) must be present at all times, with the exception of the rest time. If either teacher is absent, the First Class program MUST provide a substitute. OSR funds may be used for substitute teachers. The OSR First Class lead or auxiliary teacher may not be taken out of the OSR classroom to fulfill any other role or duty in the school, Head Start Center or childcare center. Sites will be fined \$500 for each instance if they are reported to OSR staff. Reoccurring violations will result in a program being defunded.

### **CR2.3 Classroom Size Waivers Granted for Children with Diagnosed Disabilities and/or Significant Developmental Delays**

Classrooms are expected to have 18 children enrolled by September 30th. If the initial classroom make-up using a random selection drawing includes children with diagnosed disabilities or significant developmental delays, programs may choose to observe those children for the first few weeks to determine if a waiver application is warranted. This waiver would allow the classroom to have fewer children as long as that child remains in the class. If the waiver is not approved, the program would be expected to add an additional child to the classroom, from the waiting list, if there is one. OSR classrooms can have no more than 2 children with diagnosed disabilities or significant developmental delays.

If a Head Start classroom has 20 children and more than 2 children with diagnosed disabilities or significant developmental delays, the Head Start program will be responsible for providing an additional staff member to be in the classroom at all times.

Please see Appendix M for the waiver request form. This form should be completed in the OSR database and an e-mail should be sent to the OSR Special Needs Coordinator for notification that a waiver request has been submitted.

If a child is identified as having a diagnosed disability or a significant developmental delay after the school year begins and another child drops out of pre-K or is dismissed from pre-K, the teacher may request a waiver to decrease the classroom size. Documentation must include a meeting with the parents to provide them information to direct them to the local education agency that is responsible for the identification and evaluation of children with disabilities. For contact information to local special education coordinators contact the Alabama State Department of Education at 334.242.9700 or [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu).

### **CR2.4 Children with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**

Children with diagnosed disabilities and significant special needs should receive services and staffing in accordance with their IEP if there is one (see Section CF 1.3.) OSR teachers should have a copy of all IEPs for the children in their classroom. OSR lead teachers should attend all IEP meetings if possible.

## **Attendance expectations for children receiving special education services in locations other than the First Class Pre-K classroom**

Occasionally, it will be necessary for children to receive special education services outside of the pre-K classroom. They may be provided in other sites in the community such as Head Start centers and elementary schools. It is acceptable for children to be absent from the pre-K program to receive these services as long as they are in attendance for at least 75% of the school week. The pre-K teacher should have documentation from the parent or local school system stating where the services will be provided (location), the frequency of the services (number of days per week) and the duration of the services (30 minutes, an hour etc.) The teacher should also document the actual amount of time the student will be absent to ensure that the child will be in attendance for 75% of the school week. This information, along with a copy of the child's current IEP, should be kept on file in the pre-K classroom.

### **CR2.5 Administration of Medication**

First Class Pre-K providers must adhere to state licensing standards and federal and/or state law when administering medication to children (e.g. the Baby Douglas Law).

### **CR2.6 Classroom Equipment, Materials and Supplies**

Each classroom is expected to provide developmentally appropriate furnishings, decorations, manipulatives and activities. A list of approved equipment, materials, and supplies can be found in Appendix V.

### **CR2.7 Outdoor Play Area**

Age appropriate, fenced-in, playground should be made available each day. Other opportunities for outside activities are encouraged (ex. tricycle trail, green space, gardens, etc.) Playgrounds should have a minimum of 60 square feet per child.

## **CR3 Instructional Services/Curriculum**

### **CR3.1 Curriculum**

The pre-K provider shall present a complete educational program that is age appropriate and in accordance with the Alabama Developmental Standards for Preschool Children. All First Class providers must use the OSR First Class Framework. All curriculum and supplemental material purchases must be pre-approved by the program's First Class Coach.

### **CR3.2 Orientation**

An on-site parent orientation for all teaching and administrative staff and families shall be provided within 20 working days of commencement of pre-K services for children. Orientation may also occur during the Summer or prior to the start of the school year. See Appendix Q for suggested topics to cover during parent orientation.

### **CR3.3 Rest Time**

In order to maximize activities, rest time should not exceed one hour per day except to address specific needs of individual children. During the one hour scheduled rest period a ratio of one adult providing direct supervision to 18 children is acceptable. Teachers may only use this time for planning or teacher breaks. ALL First Class Pre-K programs MUST provide rest time and use cots during rest time rather than mats for the children (in compliance with DHR Minimum Standards).

### **CR3.4 Other Program Components**

Breakfast, lunch, snacks, rest and supervised outdoor play are part of the First Class Pre-K program.

No part of the day may be religious in nature. A moment of silence is acceptable. Activities religious in nature must take place outside of the 6.5-hour school day.

Field trips are an important part of the educational experience. OSR recommends at least 1 off-site field trip. OSR funds may be used to pay for in-state field trips only.

## **THE ALABAMA PRE-K CHILD AND FAMILY**

The First Class Pre-K program does not discriminate against any child or family based on race or color, national origin, religion, class, gender, disability, or income. The First Class program encourages diversity in each of its classrooms. Any First Class grant recipient found to discriminate will be immediately defunded from the First Class program.

The intent of the program is to provide state supported, high quality, voluntary pre-Kindergarten for Alabama's 4-year-olds.

### **CF1 Pre-Kindergarten Child**

#### **CF1.1 Age Requirement**

Children must be four years of age on or before September 1, based on acceptable documentation, such as birth certificates, passports, official medical documents, or official documents from other countries. Children who are **5** years of age and are eligible for Kindergarten **may not** enroll in Alabama's First Class Pre-Kindergarten program.

Children must be toilet trained upon entering the program, unless a medical condition exists that is documented by the child's physician.

#### **CF1.2 Residency Requirement**

The child must be an Alabama resident and maintain residency while enrolled. For purposes of this program Alabama resident is defined as a child who resides in the state of Alabama, with proof of residence required (e.g. current utility bill). School systems may restrict residency to their school districts, but a written policy adopted by the local Board of Education must be in place in order to restrict enrollment.

#### **CF1.3 Children with Disabilities**

States and local school districts are required by federal law to educate preschool age children with disabilities in typical early childhood programs alongside children who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires programs to include children with disabilities in pre-k classrooms side-by-side with their typically developing peers (Appendix EE.)

### **CF2 Parent/Family Participation Requirements**

First Class Pre-K programs shall provide meaningful opportunities for families to be engaged in their child's education. **First Class programs shall develop a comprehensive plan for family engagement** to implement strategies designed to develop partnerships with families

and build reciprocal relationships that promote shared decision-making. This plan is due October 1<sup>st</sup> and will be reviewed by the First Class Monitor.

Parent/family participation in the OSR First Class Pre-K program is required. Parents are responsible for completing 12 participation hours each school year. Examples of ways to participate are completion of the ASQ-3, attending field trips, volunteering in the classroom, attending parent enrichment meetings and completing take-home activities. Teachers must specify the amount of time a parent will earn when working with their child on a project at home. When the project is returned to school, the teacher will document the amount of time the parent has earned and record it in the parent involvement log (see Appendix S.)

Children may **not** be dismissed from OSR classrooms due to lack of parent involvement.

### **CF2.1 Parent Programming**

The following are examples of meaningful opportunities for families to be engaged in their child's education:

1. Home visits, including home visitation programs such as HIPPY, Parents as Teachers;
2. Formal and informal parent/teacher conferences;
3. Classroom visits and options for parents and families to participate in classroom activities;
4. Parent education;
5. Family involvement in decision making about their own child and about their child's early childhood program; and
6. Opportunities to engage families outside of the regular service day.

### **CF 2.2 Parent Orientation**

All OSR programs are required to have a parent orientation meeting within the first 20 working days of the school year. Orientations may also be held in the Summer before school starts. A list of topics to discuss at this meeting is found in Appendix Q. Parent attendance at orientation must be documented on the Parent Orientation Verification and Sign-In Sheet (Appendix P.)

### **CF2.3 Parent/ Teacher Conferences**

At least two individual conferences per year between the lead teacher and parent/guardian are required. Both conferences should be documented in each child's on-site file by use of the Parent Conference Verification Form (Appendix R.)

## **CF 3 Student Attendance**

### **Procedures for Student Attendance**

Pre-K providers should formulate written procedures for addressing issues regarding attendance and tardiness. **Daily attendance records should be maintained on-site and include the dates when a child is absent and the dates/times when a child arrives late or leaves early.** The attendance procedures should specify actions to be taken by the pre-K provider if attendance issues become problematic. For example, the procedures could require a phone call to parents after three unexcused absences or tardies; a letter to parents from the director after six absences or tardies; a parent conference after eight or nine absences; referral to the First Class Coach after ten absences. The goal of the attendance policy is to assist families in establishing and maintaining regular school attendance patterns.

### **CF 3.1 Chronic Attendance Issues**

**Chronic tardiness** is defined as late arrival or early departure more than 2 days per week. A definition of tardiness should be developed by the provider. A five to ten minute drop off time is an acceptable part of a tardiness definition.

**Chronic absenteeism** is defined as missing more than 4 days per month without medical or other reasonable explanation. Chronic tardiness or absenteeism may also be defined by an established regular attendance pattern(s), e.g., if a child is late every Monday or absent every Tuesday or leaves early every Friday.

### **Dismissal Due to Chronic Tardiness or Chronic Absenteeism**

Providers are required to document efforts to assist parents/guardians of children who do not attend on a regular basis, are routinely late, or routinely leave the program early in improving attendance. A meeting with the parent/guardian should occur to determine the reason(s) for the problem and identify ways to resolve the problem. Inability to resolve the problem after documented interventions should be referred for dismissal consideration. Please send a written request for dismissal to your First Class Coach. The following information should be included:

1. Number of school days so far in the year
2. Number of days the child has been absent and/or
3. Number of days the child has been tardy
4. Information regarding parent conferences to discuss tardiness and/or absenteeism and ways that were discussed to increase attendance and/or decrease tardiness

**The program may only dismiss the child if approval is granted and received, in writing, from the First Class Regional Manager.**

**Consecutive Absenteeism** is defined as not attending class for 10 consecutive days without a medical or other reasonable explanation. Children who are consecutively absent **must be dismissed** and removed from the OSR roster. OSR approval should be requested in writing and sent to the First Class Coach. The following information should be included in the request:

1. Dates the child was absent from the program
2. Date of documented parent meeting to discuss the absenteeism (if meeting was held)
3. Last date the child attended the program (this will be the dismissal date)

**The program may only dismiss the child if approval is granted and received, in writing, from the First Class Regional Manager.**

## **CF4 Discipline, Suspension and Dismissal**

### **CF4.1 Student Discipline**

No employee shall use any form of corporal punishment (which includes but is not limited to paddling, striking, pulling, pushing, swatting, placing hands on, or hitting) as a method of discipline in the First Class program. **No** use of time-out will be allowed. Examples of appropriate practices include: redirection, encouragement, problem solving, effective planning, calming strategies and smooth, engaging transitions.

### **CF4.2 Reasons for Suspension or Dismissal of a Child from the Program**

Parents are required to sign a Notice of Receipt of the First Class Code of Student Behavior (Appendix I) upon enrollment. OSR recognizes that there is a broad range of abilities considered developmentally appropriate for 4- year-old children. Once children have an appropriate amount of time to acclimate to the classroom environment, typical differences in behavior and skills will be apparent. When a teacher notices a child has significant behavioral, developmental or health issues, individualized interventions may be necessary. Information from the parent-completed ASQ-3 combined with information from the first GOLD checkpoint may be used to substantiate the need for a parent conference to discuss a referral to the local school system's special education program for services and supports.

**Programs must follow the procedures outlined below regarding modified attendance, suspension, or dismissal.**

### **CF4.3 Procedures for Modified Attendance (requires prior approval)**

In some instances it may be necessary to have a student attend a modified school day to be successful. Examples may include a child who is extremely disruptive or difficult to manage during certain parts of the day. A child may have a hard time transitioning to school in the morning so it may be suggested that he temporarily come in 30 minutes after school starts in order to miss all of the chaos that goes on with lots of children arriving at the same time. If naptime occurs at the end of the day and a child is very disruptive during that time, he may temporarily be allowed to end his day prior to naptime.

Modified attendance (i.e. less than 6.5 hours of instructional time a day) requires prior approval from the First Class Regional Manager and the First Class Special Needs Coordinator. Modified attendance should be used in conjunction with child specific interventions and documented responses to the intervention. A referral for special education testing should also be discussed with the parent and documented. Programs must contact their First Class Coach to discuss requests for modified attendance and the submission of the necessary documentation detailed below. Requests for a modified day should include the following information:

1. Specific reason(s) a modified day is being requested.
2. Interventions already implemented to help the child benefit from the program, including any immediate suspensions.
3. Information including all documentation of written correspondence and meeting notes documenting ongoing involvement with the parents, including the discussion regarding a special education referral.
4. Behavioral documentation and instructional observations of the child supporting the modified attendance request
5. Documentation of consultation with local school system special needs personnel (if the child has an active IEP,) results of implemented interventions, and status of special education referral if applicable
6. Documentation of consultation with any other outside resources (i.e. child’s pediatrician, counseling services, or local school system, etc.)
7. A written schedule including the length of the child’s proposed day, proposed daily schedule including times and the activities during this time period and the justification for the proposed schedule
8. A written plan describing how the child’s attendance will be increased over time to the typical 6.5 hour day.

The First Class Coach will consult with the First Class Regional Manager and the First Class Special Needs Coordinator for approval.

**CF 4.4 Procedures for Immediate Suspension**

An immediate suspension for up to two (2) days can be made in **emergency** situations any time the pre-K provider determines a child is causing harm to himself/herself or others; or, a child is unable to successfully participate in program activities (e.g. a child may exhibit behaviors that require a teacher to be one on one with him/her.) **Programs can implement immediate suspension (up to two days each) on a maximum of three occasions per child.** No prior OSR approval is needed; however, the program’s First Class Coach must be notified, the day the suspension occurs, using the Suspension Notification Form (Appendix O) that such action has been taken.

If all three immediate suspensions have been used and a child is a danger to self, peers, or staff; the child may be sent home for the day with a plan for the child's successful return. Use the following procedure:

1. Contact your First Class Coach the same day. Your First Class Coach will follow up with the teacher to consider accommodations such as a modified attendance, extended suspension, or dismissal.
2. Prepare all documentation of behaviors and strategies used to address concerns. The documentation must state the behavior, how often the behavior occurs, the interventions used, and the child's response to the interventions.
3. Schedule a conference with the child's parent during the two days the child is suspended, to discuss strategies and options. Document the conference, including parent's signature.

#### **CF 4.5 Procedures for Extended Suspension (requires prior approval)**

An extended suspension (i.e., more than two days and/or after more than three incidents of immediate suspension) requires prior approval from the First Class Regional Manager and the First Class Special Needs Coordinator. Examples of instances where this may be appropriate include but are not limited to: a program needing to wait for onsite intervention from local special education personnel or the OSR Special Needs Coordinator, waiting for a child to have a medication adjustment with a physician, or waiting to meet with parents to develop a plan for the child to be successful in the OSR classroom.

The following information is needed to request an extended suspension and should be sent to the First Class Coach:

1. Reason(s) extended suspension is being requested and the length of the extended suspension
2. Interventions attempted to help the child benefit from the program, including all immediate suspension information
3. Documentation of written correspondence and meeting notes showing ongoing involvement with the parents, including the parent's signature
4. Documentation of behavioral and instructional observations of the child supporting the extended suspension request
5. Documentation of consultation with local school system special needs personnel if the child has an active IEP, results of application of interventions, and status of special education referral if applicable
6. Documentation of consultation with any other outside resources (i.e. child's pediatrician, counseling services, etc.).

All extended suspension requests including supporting documentation should be sent to the First Class Coach who will consult with the First Class Regional Manager and the First Class Special Needs Coordinator. **Final approval for extended suspension requests will be made in writing by the First Class Regional Manager and the First Class Special Needs Coordinator within 5 working days.**

#### **CF 4.6 Procedures for Dismissal (requires prior approval)**

It is the intent of OSR that no child is dismissed from the First Class program unless absolutely necessary. Once a child has been enrolled, he/she cannot be dismissed from the pre-K program unless one of the following occurs: chronically disruptive, documented habitual pattern of behavior, repeatedly or substantially interferes with the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with the students in the class or with the ability of the other students to learn; and/or causing harm to himself/herself or others, involves three (3) or more incidents of aggression that could cause serious injury and significant property damage or destruction.

These incidents will be considered in the determination to approve dismissal but **do not** guarantee an automatic dismissal.

Pre-K providers must submit the following information to their First Class Coach:

1. Reason(s) dismissal is being requested
2. Attempted interventions to help the child benefit from the program, including any suspension information
3. All documentation of written correspondence and meeting notes showing ongoing involvement with the parents, including parent signatures
4. Behavioral and instructional observations of the child supporting the requested dismissal
5. All documentation of consultation with local school system special needs personnel if there is an active IEP, results of application of suggested interventions, and status of special education referral if applicable
6. Documentation of consultation with any other outside resources (i.e. child's pediatrician, counseling services, etc.)

All dismissal requests including supporting documentation should be sent to the First Class Coach who will consult with the First Class Regional Manager and the First Class Special Needs Coordinator. **Final approval for dismissal requests will be made in writing by both the First Class Special Needs Coordinator and the First Class Regional Manager within 10 working days.**

#### **CF 5 Obtaining Intervention from a First Class Special Needs Coordinator**

When teacher resources have been exhausted and typical strategies have not been successful or effective, teachers may request intervention from a First Class Special Needs Coordinator using the Intervention Request Form (Appendix FF.) This form should be completed with as much detail as possible and sent to the program's First Class Coach. The First Class Coach will forward the form to the First Class Regional Manager. The First Class Regional Manager will then consult with the First Class Special Needs Coordinator to determine the needed course of action. Some examples of the interventions provided may include a phone consultation or an on-site visit to observe the child and offer additional interventions and strategies.

## **THE ALABAMA PRE-K TEACHING TEAM**

### **TS1 Lead Teachers**

#### **TS1.1 Days of Service**

All lead teachers are funded for 187 days of service (180 days of classroom instructional services and 7 days of pre/post planning and/or staff training). The teacher is expected to work and be compensated based on 7.5 hours of work per day which includes 6.5 hours of instruction and 1 hour of planning.

*Note: If a First Class provider requires teachers to work more than 187 days, the provider cannot use First Class program funds for this expense.*

#### **TS1.2 Age Requirement**

All lead teachers must be at least 21 years of age or older.

#### **TS1.3 Education Requirements**

Lead teachers must have at least one of the following:

- Human Environmental Science Degree with a concentration in Early Childhood Development or Child Development.
- Early Childhood Education degree (B.S., B.A., or M.A. /M.S.) with P-3 teacher certification.
- Special Education degree in Early Childhood with a minimum of 18 credit hours in early childhood/child development coursework, and teacher certification.

Note: Teacher certification is only required for teachers employed in public schools.

Waivers are no longer granted for teachers without the above credentials, effective August, 2011. Official transcripts on all NEW lead teachers must be submitted to OSR no later than October 1, 2013. Transcripts must be official from the institution. All degrees must be from an institution that has received regional accreditation.

#### **TS1.4 Lead Teacher Salary**

Lead teacher salaries must be based upon the OSR Teacher Salary Schedule for non-public school teachers (see Appendix E), and upon the State Department of Education Teacher Salary Schedule for public school teachers ( Appendix E). The aforementioned is the base salary and does not include benefits.

Programs are responsible for paying teacher salaries out of local funds until First Class funds are distributed to the program.

## **TS2 Auxiliary Teachers**

### **TS2.1 Days of Service**

All auxiliary teachers are funded for 187 days of service (180 days of classroom instructional services and 7 days of pre/post planning and/or staff training). All auxiliary teachers are expected to work and be compensated for a 7.5 hour work day to include 6.5 hours of instruction and 1 hour of planning in coordination with the lead teacher.

*Note: If a First Class provider requires auxiliary teachers to work more than 187 days, the provider cannot use First Class program funds for this expense.*

### **TS2.2 Employment Requirements**

An auxiliary teacher must meet all of the following minimum requirements:

- Be at least 19 years of age.
- Possess a high school diploma or GED.
- Possess a Child Development Associate credential (CDA) OR at least 9 credit hours of college coursework in the field of Early Childhood Education or Child Development from a regionally accredited institution.
- Possess appropriate experience (at least 12 *months*) working in early childhood or experience in other OSR approved settings.

Official transcripts of college coursework or a copy of the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential for all **NEW** auxiliary teachers must be submitted to OSR no later than October 1, 2013. Transcripts must be official from the institution. All college coursework must be from an institution that has received regional accreditation.

### **TS2.3 Auxiliary Salary**

A minimum salary for auxiliary teachers is indicated on the OSR Salary Scale (Appendix E). The aforementioned is the base salary and does not include benefits.

Programs are responsible for paying teacher salaries out of local funds until First Class funds are distributed to the program.

## **TS3 General Personnel Requirements**

### **TS3.1 Criminal Background Checks**

All First Class program personnel must have a satisfactory criminal background check and fingerprinting, with documentation on file with their employer. Providers must mail an official copy of approval or the criminal background application to OSR 30 days after the program begins or the teacher(s) is hired. Criminal background checks are required of all First Class program personnel including substitute teachers.

Volunteer parents may not be left in the classroom unsupervised by classroom personnel. If First Class personnel are convicted of criminal behavior after employment in the First Class classroom, the grantee must inform OSR promptly.

### **TS3.2 Employees**

All First Class program personnel are employees of the pre-K provider, not OSR or the State of Alabama. First Class Pre-K personnel may not occupy more than one position during the 7.5 hour day (e.g. director and teacher; director and auxiliary teacher).

### **TS3.3 Substitutes**

The First Class provider shall ensure that a substitute lead teacher and/or substitute auxiliary teacher is present and working when the regular teacher(s) are absent, whether due to illness, required training or personal leave, etc. Long-term substitutes, longer than 3 weeks, should meet OSR teacher requirements for the teacher they are replacing. Each site is responsible for compensating all substitutes. OSR funds may be used to pay substitute teachers.

Criminal background checks are required for all substitute teachers. Official copies of background checks must be submitted to OSR for long-term substitutes.

## **TS4 Professional Development Requirements**

### **TS4.1 Importance of Professional Development**

In order to maintain quality teaching standards, annual professional development is required for all staff directly associated with the First Class program. The OSR staff will work with a variety of providers to develop and deliver professional development for high quality pre-K.

### **TS4.2 Attendance at Training**

All levels of administrative, teaching and support staff are required to attend training offered or approved by the OSR. Lead teachers must attend a minimum of 15 hours of OSR sponsored training each year plus 15 additional hours of training offered by local or regional programs, for a **total of 30** training hours. Auxiliary teachers must attend a minimum of 10 hours of OSR sponsored training each year plus 10 additional hours training offered by local or regional programs for a **total of 20** hours.

Because professional development is an important component of quality, OSR expects all sites to make training opportunities accessible to staff by paying for training, travel and substitutes from OSR funds. “No shows” at any OSR sponsored training will be charged \$500/site. The \$500/site will be deducted from the next pre-K payment.

Online professional development opportunities approved by OSR may also serve as professional development hours. First Class Coaches are the best resources to learn about professional development opportunities and expectations.

Documentation of training hours must be kept on file by certificates of attendance .When it is held, the OSR sponsored pre-K conference (1 ½ days) is mandatory training for all lead and auxiliary teachers. Sites that have no representation at the conference will be charged \$1,000/site.

### **TS4.3 Training Reimbursement to Staff**

The provider shall ensure that pre-K funds are used to pay for substitute teachers and costs associated with staff travel (e.g. meals, lodging, mileage at the state mileage rate, which is currently .565) to all required state training sessions. In addition, the providers shall pay staff salaries and expenses for all required OSR trainings (up to 7 days), within **30 days** of training and/or upon receipt of invoices from teachers.

## **SUPPORT FROM OFFICE OF SCHOOL READINESS**

### **TA1 Technical Assistance Support**

The Office of School Readiness will work closely with program sites to ensure the highest possible quality pre-K programs. The First Class Regional Managers, First Class Special Needs Coordinators, First Class Coaches and First Class Monitors will work closely with directors, lead teachers and auxiliary teachers throughout the year and will be available for consultation regarding questions about the program, enrollment, approval of equipment/materials/supplies requests, training needs, and other assistance.

OSR classrooms will be assigned a First Class Coach and a First Class Monitor. First Class Coaches will support classroom teachers by providing assistance with adhering to the **Classroom Guidelines**. They will also connect teachers and administrators among First Class programs. First Class Monitors will assist OSR Directors in adhering to the **Program Guidelines** and grant compliance.

OSR will also have First Class Special Needs Coordinators that will assist programs in working with children with disabilities, developmental delays and behavior challenges. They will consult with teachers and coaches utilizing technology (e-mail, videos, photographs), phone conversations and on-site visits.

### **TA2 On-Site Evaluation**

#### **TA 2.1 Monitors**

First Class Monitors will work closely with OSR Directors. They will monitor and evaluate program progress during monthly planned and random on-site visits throughout the year. They will provide guidance, support and resources to insure program quality.

#### **TA 2.2 Coaches**

First Class Coaches will provide feedback, coaching and assessments through regular site visits. Evaluation data are important for the overall First Class program and serves the purposes of continuous program improvement as well as measurement of progress toward goals. First Class Coaches will work closely with classroom teachers to identify and track progress toward goals.

## **Disciplinary Action for Non-Compliance with OSR Regulations**

### **DA 1 Suspension of Pre-K Sites**

- Disciplinary action will be imposed on pre-k sites that DO NOT meet OSR Program and/or Classroom Guidelines and stipulations by prescribed dates
- Recommendations and stipulations will be documented and shared with each site by First Class Monitors during each site visit
- Failure to comply with stipulations as mandated by the OSR Program Guidelines and given by assigned monitors may result in the recommendation of suspension.
- The assigned First Class Monitor will notify the program director, in writing, of intentions to suspend funding unless good cause is shown why such action should not be taken.

The suspension notice shall include:

- The reason(s) for the proposed suspension
- The effective date of the proposed suspension
- Information which states that the program has the opportunity to submit written material in opposition to the intended suspension and meet with the informal hearing committee

No funds will be disbursed to a program during suspension proceedings. Fund disbursement will begin when the program is reinstated or back in good standing.

### **DA 2 Informal Hearing**

- An informal hearing committee will be composed of at least three OSR administrators.
- The assigned monitor will arrange a time and place for the informal hearing. Notice of the informal hearing date and time will be sent to the program and the informal hearing committee.
- If the program does not show for a hearing, the informal hearing process will continue.
- The informal hearing committee will determine the suspension status of a program.
- The decision of the informal hearing committee regarding suspension of a site will be made within five business days after the conclusion of the informal hearing. The written decision of the informal hearing committee will be promptly transmitted via certified mail to the assigned monitor and program director.
- A program who wants to appeal the suspension must forward a notice of appeal to the assigned monitor within ten (10) days after receipt of the suspension. The appeal must be made in writing and must fully set forth the grounds for the appeal and be accompanied by all of the documentation that the program believes is relevant and supportive of its position.

- Within five (5) days after receipt of the notice of appeal, the assigned monitor will contact the OSR Associate Director who will arrange a date and time for the formal hearing

### **DA 3 Formal Hearing**

- The assigned monitor will notify the program of the date and time for the formal hearing.
- The formal hearing committee will be composed of the Commissioner of the Department of Children’s Affairs (DCA), OSR Director or designee and the lead First Class Monitor or designee.
- A formal hearing will be scheduled no later than thirty (30) days after the assigned monitor has received the notice of appeal from the program.

### **DA 4 Termination of Pre-K Sites**

- The assigned monitor may recommend a site for termination.
- Funding may be terminated for any or all of the following reasons:
  1. The program has misused or lost program funds
  2. The program is no longer a licensed center
  3. The program provides false data in submitted reports
  4. The program has failed to comply with the required guidelines and reporting requirements that are outlined in the OSR Program Guidelines
  5. The program has failed to correct one or more deficiencies identified by the assigned monitor in an evaluation or documented during a site visit, in a timely manner
- The assigned First Class Monitor will notify the program, in writing, of intentions to terminate funding
- Within five (5) days of the recommendation for termination, the assigned First Class Monitor will contact the OSR Associate Director who will arrange a date and time for the formal hearing.
- A formal hearing will be scheduled within thirty (30) days of the recommendation for termination
- If the program director does not show for a formal hearing, the formal hearing process will continue.
- The OSR formal hearing committee may terminate funding.
- The decision of the formal hearing committee regarding termination of funds will be made within five (5) business days after the conclusion of the formal hearing. The written decision of the formal hearing committee will be promptly transmitted via certified mail to the assigned monitor and program.
- The decision of the formal hearing committee is final and MAY NOT be appealed.
- No funds will be disbursed to a program during termination proceedings.

## **DA 5 Conduct of Formal Hearing**

- The presiding officer (OSR Associate Director) shall conduct a full and fair hearing, avoid delay, maintain order, and make a sufficient record of the facts and issues. To accomplish these ends, the presiding officer shall have all powers authorized by law and may make all procedural and evidentiary rulings necessary for the conduct of the hearing. The hearing shall be open to the public unless the presiding officer for cause shown, otherwise determines.
- The assigned First Class Monitor and program director are entitled to present their case by oral and/or documentary evidence, to submit rebuttal evidence and to conduct such examination and cross-examination as may be required for a full and true disclosure of all facts bearing on the issues. The issues shall be those stated in the filed notice.
- The decision of the formal hearing committee regarding suspension or termination of funds will be based on evidence provided during the hearing process and made within five (5) business days after the conclusion of the formal hearing.
- The written decision of the formal hearing committee will be promptly transmitted via certified mail to the assigned monitor and program.