

**The Alabama  
Office of School Readiness  
Department of Children's Affairs**



**FIRST CLASS**

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**ALABAMA'S VOLUNTARY  
PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

Request for Proposals  
2011

Deadline: **June 7, 2011**

## **Overview of First Class: Alabama's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program**

*Alabama's First Class Pre-Kindergarten Program* builds on a system that is voluntary, economical, and open to all children. The goal is to expand the program and provide high quality Pre-Kindergarten to all the four-year-old children in the state of Alabama whose parents desire it for them.

### **Building on a Foundation**

First Class will consist of two components: 1) *Pre-K Excellence Grants* of \$45,000 that will be awarded to public school systems, Head Start centers, private childcare centers, and other community based early learning programs to help them meet the "Alabama High Quality Pre-K Standards" and 2) *Pre-K State Supported Slots* that will provide varying levels of funding (up to \$87,120) to Pre-K classrooms based on the number of low and middle income children they serve. This model allows Alabama to build on its existing preschool infrastructure, recognize quality that already exists, and encourage and support increasing quality, while providing affordable access to voluntary, high-quality Pre-K for a much greater number of Alabama's four year-olds. Programs must decide on which of the two grants that are described above would best fit their needs.

### **Flexible and Affordable**

The *Pre-K Excellence Grants* are designed to meet the individual needs of each classroom. While some classes may need funds to hire a qualified teacher, others may need more funds for teacher training, to invest in a stronger curriculum, or to provide health or developmental screenings. Programs that receive Pre-K Excellence grants can charge fees to parents based on the program's tuition rate. *Pre-K State Supported Slots* will be calculated on a sliding scale, with the family and the state paying different portions based on household income. In order to ensure program viability, each classroom will have the option to charge up to \$300 per child per month, which is still less than the average price of traditional childcare.

### **High Standards and Strong Technical Assistance**

Alabama has already established very high standards for Pre-K – the highest in the nation. These standards range from teacher credentials to the amount of space in a classroom. The *Pre-K Grants* will help bring all participating classrooms up to those standards. In addition, Pre-K teachers will receive strong professional development based on the Performance Standards for four-year-olds. Specific training (15 hours each year) will be provided to Pre-K teachers during regional trainings and the annual Pre-K conference. Finally, the children's academic, social, and basic health needs will be evaluated early to ensure that they receive the care they need, and each classroom will be monitored to make certain that Alabama's high standards are continuously met.

### **Sound Investment**

First Class, while open to all children, is not a traditional "universal" model. Unlike some states that have created brand new programs, the Alabama Pre-K Excellence model builds on existing public schools, federally-funded programs, small businesses, and non-profits to ensure that the program is economical for the state and affordable for all families.

## **Funding Strategy**

### **First Class: Alabama's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program**

The funding strategy for First Class: Alabama's Voluntary Pre-K Program is designed to use limited available funding resources to reach the most Alabama four-year-old children. The strategy raises the quality and expands the capacity of existing programs for four-year-olds that are ready to meet the quality standards of the First Class Pre-K program.

**Pre-K Excellence Grants.** Grants of \$45,000 are available for each classroom to assist the applicant program in meeting the Alabama High Quality Pre-K Standards. These grants may be used for additional salary costs for qualified teaching staff, curriculum and learning materials, or other costs related to meeting the standards. A description of the proposed use of these funds must be included in the application, and the Office of School Readiness reserves the right to deny funds for any purpose not related to meeting the standards.

**Pre-K State-Supported Slots.** Pre-K classrooms that choose to participate in First Class by accepting Pre-K State Supported Slots may not charge more than \$300 per child per month, which is less than the average cost of standard child care. However, to help make First Class even more affordable, and thus accessible to even more children, the Office of School Readiness will grant **up to \$87,120** in additional assistance to programs to help defray the cost of Pre-K for parents. This additional grant money will be provided through an allocation of Pre-K State Supported Slots to each applicant program, based on the number of children (18) enrolled from families with household incomes falling within the sliding scale enclosed in *Appendix B*.

**The Alabama Office of School Readiness  
First Class: Alabama's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program  
2011 Grant Application**

**Instructions**

The Office of School Readiness announces the request for proposals for First Class: Alabama's Voluntary Pre-K Program. Please follow the directions in the application carefully. Make sure you read this RFP thoroughly before completing.

*Eligibility to Apply:* Public school systems, Head Start programs, faith-based centers, college/university lab schools, and licensed childcare centers in all counties are eligible.

Please send one clipped unbound copy and four stapled copies of the completed application *and* all supporting materials (i.e. photographs, support letters). **DO NOT SEND** binders, folders, or covers. Application can be no more than eight numbered pages (excluding application forms), single-spaced, Times New Roman or Palatino Linotype font, 12 inch font size, with one inch margins. Photographs of proposed Pre-K sites should be labeled and placed in the envelope with the applications.

Please mail or hand-deliver application to:

Attn: RFP

Office of School Readiness

Alabama Department of Children's Affairs

135 S. Union Street, Suite 215

Montgomery, Al 36130

**Note: Applications must be received by the deadline date of **June 10, 2011** at **5:00pm.****

Please use the Office of School Readiness 2010-2011 Operating Guidelines for First Class Pre-Kindergarten Programs and the Office of School Readiness Alabama Performance Standards programs serving for four-year-olds. You can find these documents on our website listed below.

*<http://www.dca.alabama.gov/firstclass.htm>*

Grantor: Department of Children's Affairs

Contact Person: Dr. Marquita Furness Davis

135 S. Union Street, Suite 215

Montgomery, Al 36130

[marquita.davis@dca.alabama.gov](mailto:marquita.davis@dca.alabama.gov) or 334-353-2700

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Trellis Smith at 334-353-2715 (wk), 334-324-1316 (wk cell), 334-728-0309, or [trellis.smith@dca.alabama.gov](mailto:trellis.smith@dca.alabama.gov).

**Section A: Title Page**

**Instructions: Complete each item. The authorized person (e.g. Executive Director, Superintendent, and Program Director) must sign and date.**

Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Type (*i.e. private child care, faith-based, Head Start, college/university center, public school*):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Center Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Application Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Pre-Kindergarten Program Director (*if different from above*):  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Curriculum: (Check All That Apply)**

\_\_\_ Creative Curriculum

\_\_\_ DLM Early Childhood Express

\_\_\_ High Reach-PASSPORTS

\_\_\_ High Scope

\_\_\_ Houghton Mifflin Pre-K

\_\_\_ Opening the World of Learning

\_\_\_ Scholastic Early Childhood

\_\_\_ The Investigator Club

\_\_\_ Other (Please Name) \_\_\_\_\_

\*Must Be Approved

**Please indicate the grant for which you are applying (please select one):**

\_\_\_ Pre-K Excellence Grants (\$45,000) – annual renewal

\_\_\_ Pre-K State Supported Slots (up to \$260 per child per month) – annual renewal

**Please indicate whether the grant will be used to establish a new classroom within your facility or if the grant will be used to raise the quality of an existing classroom:**

\_\_\_ New Classroom

\_\_\_ Existing Classroom

**Person authorized to give final approval and sign application and contract:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section B: Quality Commitment

**Instructions:** Please check each item to verify that requirements for the proposed site will be met. The authorized person must sign and date.

All Pre-Kindergarten Providers must follow the operating guidelines established by the Office of School Readiness, to qualify, a potential provider **MUST**:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Child must be four years old on or before September 1, 2011.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each classroom shall have no more than 18 students with a 9:1 student to staff ratio.
  - Programs can apply for a waiver to allow up to 20 children (10:1 ratio) or less than 18 children(>9:1) per classroom if they can document that the waiver will not adversely affect the students and will not affect the program's ability to meet other standards. (e.g. children with involved disabilities); this waiver is available for *Head Start* and *Public School* programs only.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have a Pre-K Advisory Council to guide and contribute to the functioning of the local Pre-Kindergarten program.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have adequate classroom space – 45 square feet per child\* or 810 square feet (*in one room*) for 18 children. Please include room dimensions with your grant application. (*Also provide photographs of room*).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have access to an age-appropriate playground (*Provide photographs of playground and equipment*).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have water and toilet facilities easily accessible to the classroom.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hold a current license from the Department of Human Resources, provide evidence of exemption from licensure, or be legally operating in the state of Alabama (*all programs must meet the OSR High Quality Pre-K Standards, see Appendix A*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have background checks for personnel of the Pre-Kindergarten program class.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have teachers who meet the following credentials:

### Lead Teacher

- Must be 21 years of age or older
- Must have **at least one** of the following credentials listed below:
  1. Certified in Early Childhood Education
  2. Four-year degree in Child Development

### Assistant Teacher

- Must be 19 years of age or older
- Must possess a high school diploma or equivalent



## Section C: Program Description (Narrative)

**Instructions:** Please explain, in detail, your efforts in the areas below. This section should be no more than eight pages. For all attachments (excluding application forms), please use single spaced, Times New Roman or Palatino Linotype font, one inch margins, and font size 12.

**Note:** Incomplete applications (i.e. missing information, photographs, etc.) will *not* be read.

### I. OVERVIEW (20 points)

Please provide an overview of your program.

- Describe your program (history, mission, and vision of program) and your target population
- Provide an overview of how you will set up your classroom(s) and how the 6½ hours of instruction will be carried out.
- Describe how children will be selected for the classroom(s) i.e., random selection, promotion, assessment of need, or a combination. (*Note: First come first serve will not be allowed, e.g. families waiting in line and spending the night for slots. Also, teachers and administrators children will not be given preference for slots, this is not allowed*).
- Include evidence that the program will be housed in an appropriate sized room with pre-existing playground equipment, located near an appropriate water fountain and toilet. (*Attach pictures of classroom and playground.*)

### II. EVIDENCE OF NEED (15 points)

Provide and describe evidence of need for establishing a Pre-Kindergarten class in your local community. Include the number of four-year-olds in your community, number of Pre-Kindergarten programs operating in your area, economic conditions in the community, and other factors you deem appropriate to demonstrate need (e.g. academic factors).

### III. QUALIFICATIONS/PRIOR EXPERIENCE (5 points)

Provide the qualifications of the person(s) who will be responsible for the operation/administration of the program. Describe prior experience in administering grants and in providing services for Pre-Kindergarten children. Include level of education, certification/credentials, curriculum training, and other related workshops/classes attended.

### IV. COLLABORATION (10 points)

Provide three letters of support, one letter **must** be from your local Children's Policy Council and the other two from any partnering agencies or community organizations.

### V. CURRICULUM (20 points)

Describe how your curriculum will address each of the eight domains (*Emergent Literacy, Emergent Numeracy, Creative Arts, Science and Environmental Education, Technology, Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, and Physical Health and Development*) described in the Alabama Performance Standards for four-year-olds.

## **VI. PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM**

How will family enrichment and parent involvement opportunities be provided? What types of communication will occur between parents and teachers throughout the year? Who will provide programming for the parents, how often will opportunities for enrichment be offered, and how will topics for parent workshops be selected?

**Section D: Budget**  
**(20 Points)**

*Instructions:* Please include a proposed classroom budget, using the First Class Pre-K Budget Form provided. Include a one-page, double spaced budget narrative describing how funding is needed to help your program meet the “Alabama High Quality Pre-K Standards.” Please show how you are going to provide a 25% match, which can include parent fees, local/federal funding, private donation, or additional in-kind costs. In addition to your match and cost to run a quality pre-k program, please base your budget on either a slot grant for \$87,120 or an excellence grant for \$45,000.

(Note: Remember that this amount cannot be used to supplant, only to supplement.)

## First Class Pre-K Budget Form

Budget Category	Classroom 1	Classroom 2 (if applicable)	Classroom 3 (if applicable)	Total by Category
<b>Personnel</b>				
<b>Lead Teacher</b>				
<b>Assistant Teacher</b>				
<b>Administrator</b> (no more 9 than 6% of grant)				
<b>Substitutes</b>				
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>				
<b>Travel</b> ( <i>including lodging</i> )				
<b>Training</b>				
<b>Administrative Supplies</b> ( <i>include janitorial &amp; health supplies</i> )				
<b>Postage</b>				
<b>Classroom Equipment</b>				
<b>Classroom Maintenance</b>				
<b>Safety Enhancement</b>				
<b>Field Trips</b>				
<b>Health Services</b>				
<b>Food</b>				
<b>Instructional Materials</b>				
<b>Special Education Services</b>				
<b>Computer Support</b>				
<b>Utilities</b>				
<b>Transportation</b>				
<b>Playground Equipment</b>				
<b>Advertising</b>				
<b>Parent Involvement</b>				
<b>Insurance</b>				
<b>Parent Fees</b>				
<b>Other</b> ( <i>i.e. background checks, auditing, accounting</i> )				
<b>TOTAL</b>				

## APPENDIX A

# Alabama High Quality Pre-Kindergarten Standards

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1. Programs shall operate at least 180 days each year and at least 6.5 hours a day.
2. Each classroom shall meet DHR Child Care Licensing Standards.
3. Each classroom shall have no more than 18 students with a 9:1 student to staff ratio.
  - Programs can apply for a waiver to allow up to 20 children (10:1 ratio) or less than 18 children(>9:1) per classroom if they can document that the waiver will not adversely affect the students and will not affect the program's ability to meet other standards. (e.g. children with involved disabilities)
4. Each classroom **shall** have a lead teacher with at least a B.A. or B.S. in Child Development or Early Childhood Education. Assistant teachers **shall** have a CDA or 9 hours of college coursework in early childhood.
5. Each program shall have signed parental contracts with the legal guardian of each child and shall demonstrate parent or guardian participation for at least 6 hours each year.
6. Each program shall utilize curricula approved by the Office of School Readiness.
7. Each child shall be assessed based on OSR assessment requirements.
8. Each teacher shall have at least 30 hours per year of OSR approved Pre-K professional development.
9. Each child shall receive a health screening including physical health, developmental delay, vision, hearing, and dental by December 1, 2011.
10. Each classroom shall have an appropriate environment as indicated by a set score on the OSR approved program environment assessment.

Procedure: In order for programs to be certified as meeting these standards, they must allow OSR monitors and technical assistants to conduct standard assessments, review documentation, and observe each classroom.

## APPENDIX B

### Estimated Breakdown of Pre-K State Supported Slots

Please use the following Sliding Scale to determine the breakdown of the Pre-K State Supported Slots. This requires that you estimate the income level of each child's family based on the need described in Section C: II. (Use the scenario listed below as a reference for completing the chart. NOTE: Visit the First Class website (<http://www.children.alabama.gov>) for a "Pre-K State Supported Slot Calculator."

#### Sliding Scale for Pre-K State Supported Slots

<i>Monthly Payment Component</i>	<i>Percent of Federal Poverty Level</i>			
	<b>0%-200%</b>	<b>201%-300%</b>	<b>301%-400%</b>	<b>&gt; 400%</b>
<b>Parent or Local Portion (Monthly)</b>	\$40.00	\$100.00	\$200.00	\$300.00
<b>OSR Portion (Monthly)</b>	\$260.00	\$200.00	\$100.00	\$0
<b>Total Per Child (Monthly)</b>	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00

### 2011 Federal Poverty Guidelines

<b>Household size</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>133%</b>	<b>150%</b>	<b>200%</b>	<b>300%</b>	<b>400%</b>
1	\$10,890	\$14,484	\$16,335	\$21,780	\$32,670	\$43,560
2	14,710	19,564	22,065	29,420	44,130	58,840
3	18,530	24,645	27,795	37,060	55,590	74,120
4	22,350	29,726	33,525	44,700	67,050	89,400
5	26,170	34,806	39,255	52,340	78,510	104,680
6	29,990	39,887	44,985	59,980	89,970	119,960
7	33,810	44,967	50,715	67,620	101,430	135,240
8	37,630	50,048	56,445	75,260	112,890	150,520