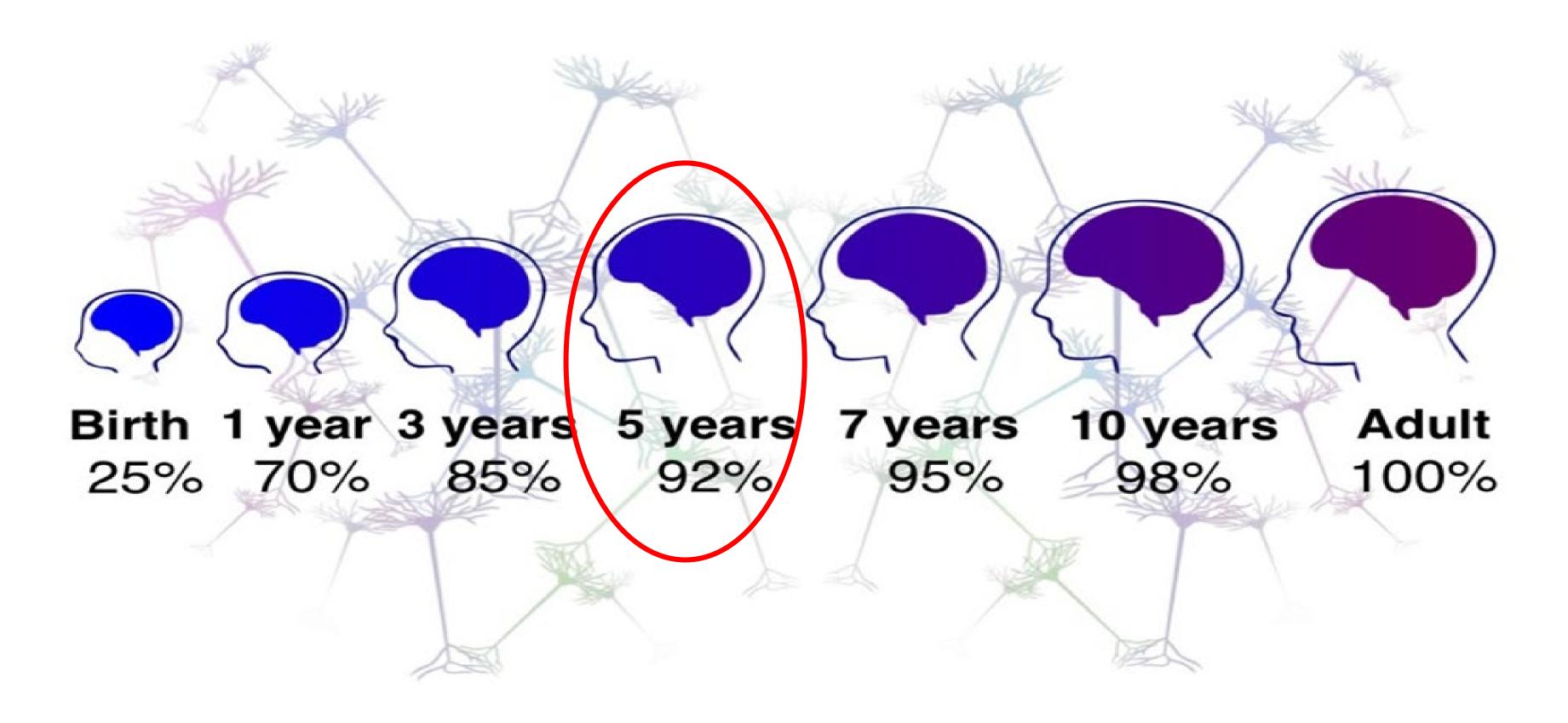


Early Years of Life Matter

Nobel Prize winner Professor James Heckman's work with a consortium of economists, psychologists, statisticians, and neuroscientists shows that early childhood development directly influences economic, health and social outcomes for individuals and society.

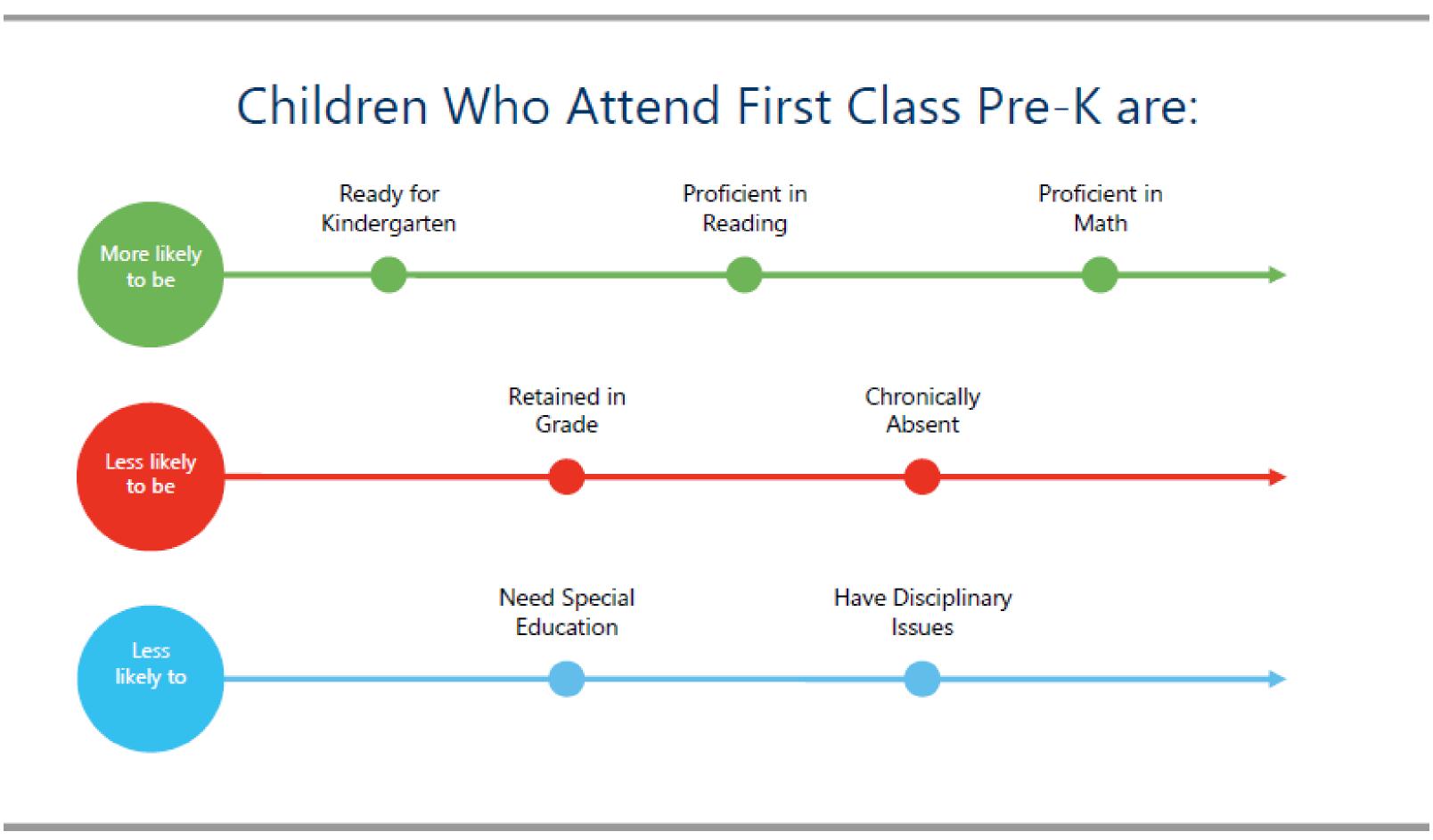


Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education

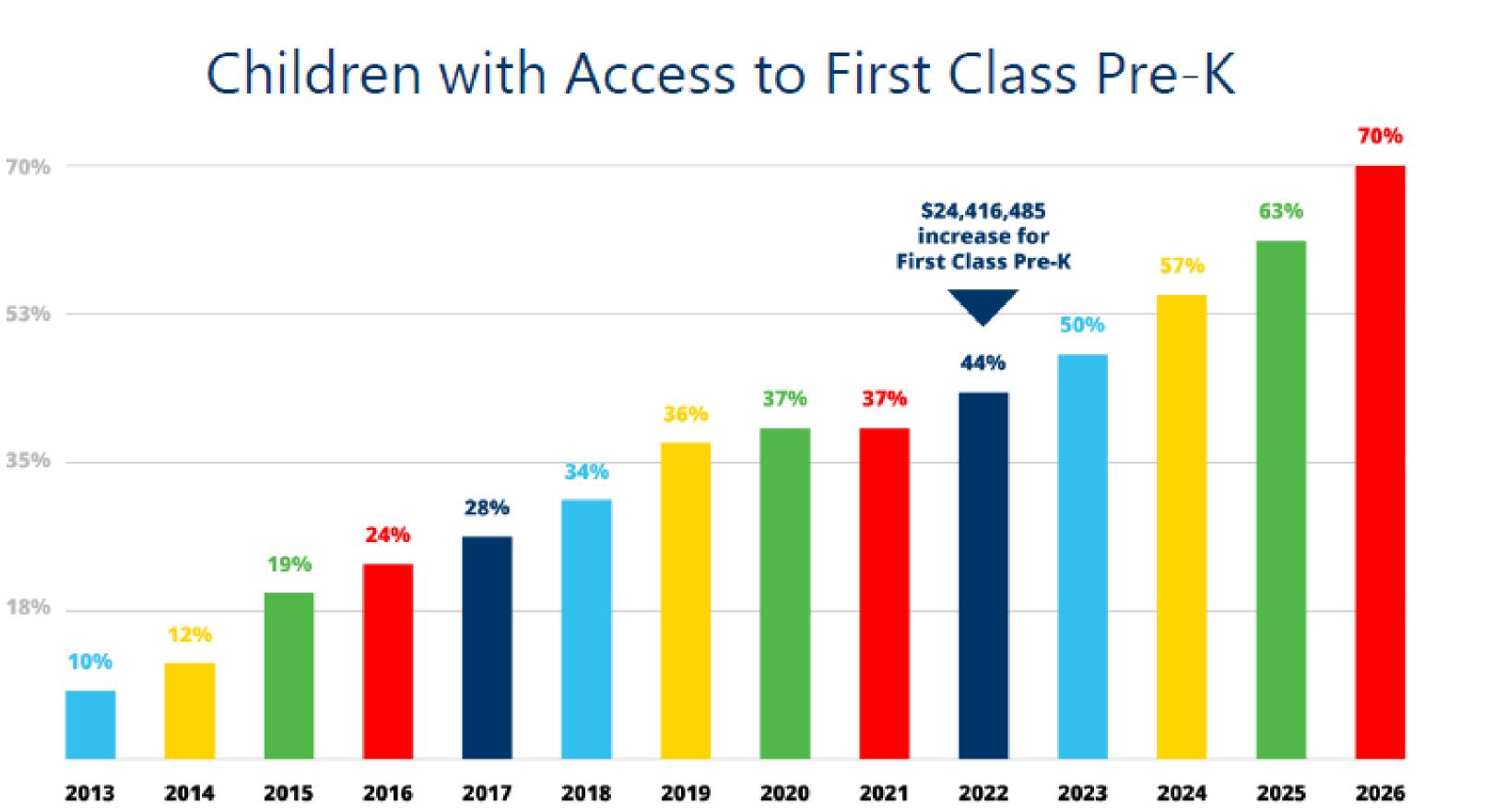


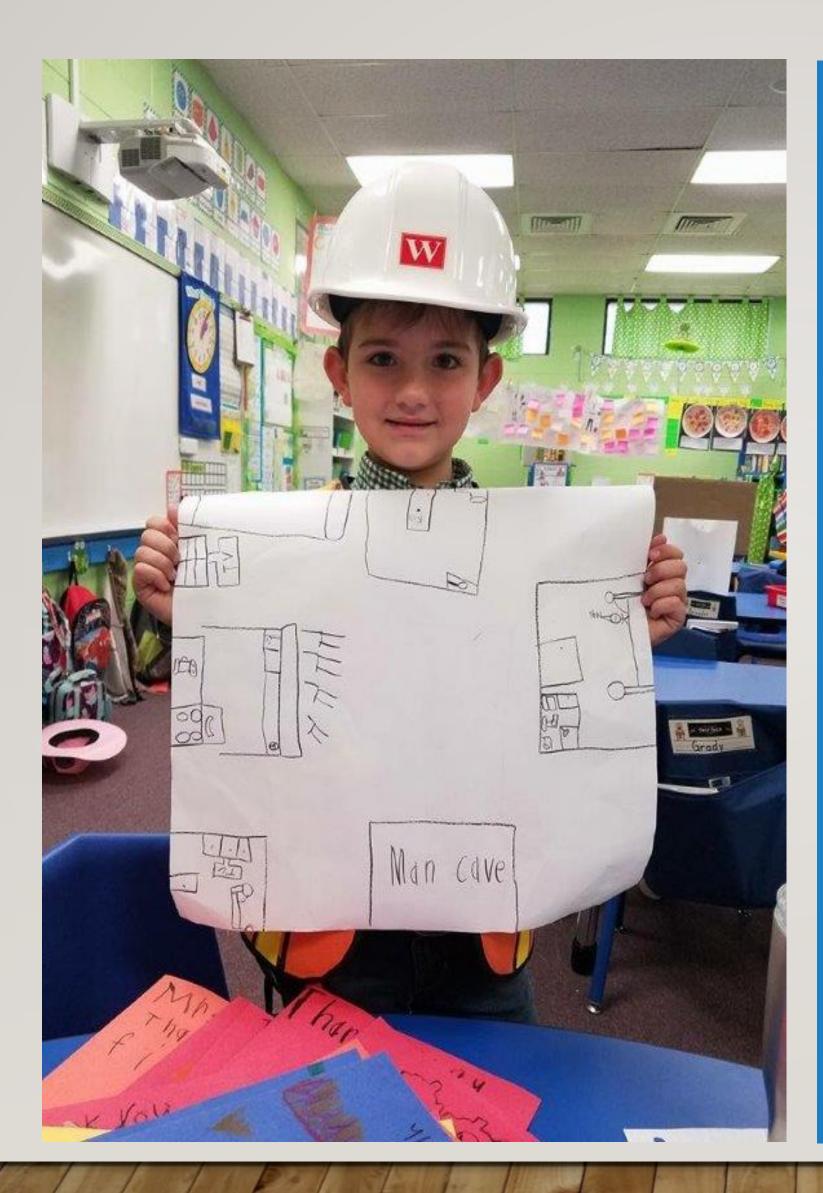
Patricia Kuhl, Ph.D. Co-Director, Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences and Director, NSF Science of Learning Center, University of Washington, Seattle

Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education



Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education

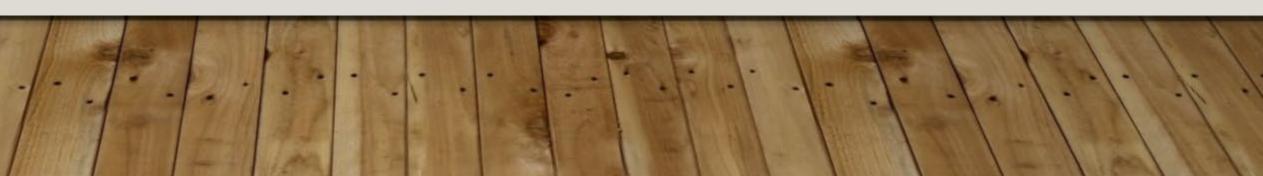




66 Alabama needs a comprehensive approach of collaboration that improves education from Pre-K to the workforce. That's the goal of Strong Start, Strong Finish.

> Every child deserves a strong start to their educational experience.

Developmentally-appropriate policies will strengthen and support education from Pre-K through the third grade. This impacts a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development. - Governor Kay Ivey



FIRST CLASS PRE-K PROGRAM GUIDELINES 2021-2022

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION **OFFICE OF SCHOOL READINESS**





The Program Guidelines ensure that programs provide a safe and high-quality learning environment.

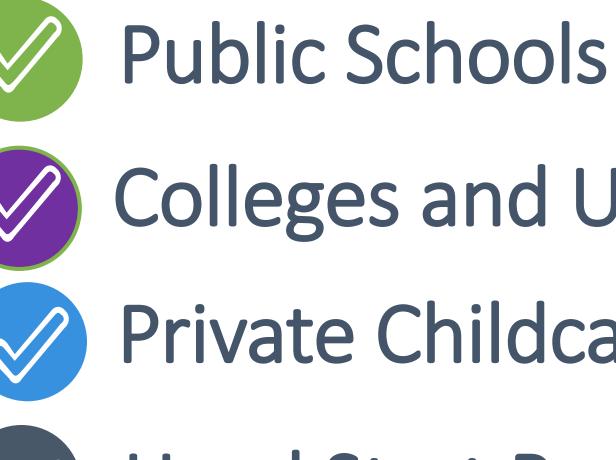
The Program Guidelines also provide guidance and regulations for expenditure of state funds.

The Office of School Readiness will be serving over 1,375 pre-k classrooms in the upcoming 2021-2022 school year.

Introduction











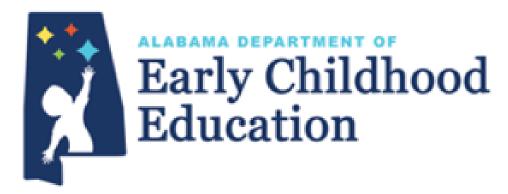
Colleges and Universities Private Childcare & Schools Head Start Programs Faith Based Programs

Military Programs



Program Administration





Honor Barbara J. (

Dear First Class Pre-K Teachers and Program Directors:

Thank you for your commitment to providing high quality early learning environments for Alabama's four year old children. I am proud that for the 15th consecutive year, First Class Pre-K has been awarded the highest quality rating from the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).

Alabama continues to make significant investments towards educating our youngest learners through the First Class Pre-K program, and those investments are recognized at the national level. This is only made possible through the hard work of First Class Pre-K educators and administrators, continuous leadership from Governor Ivey, and bipartisan legislative commitment to quality early childhood education.

The staff of the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education is here to support you and we wish you an outstanding year of teaching and learning!

Educationally,

Barhan J. Cooper

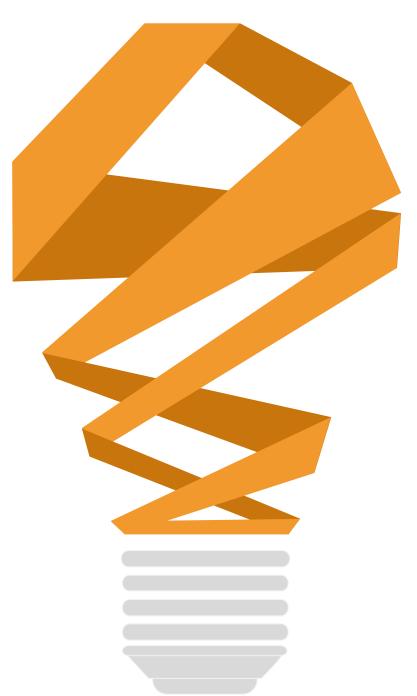
Dr. Barbara Cooper, Secretary Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education

Honorable Kay Ivey, Governor

Barbara J. Cooper, Ph.D., Secretary

11

High-Quality Pre-K What are the non-negotiables?



- \checkmark Ensure the utilization of child assessment data through the ongoing use of Teaching Strategies GOLD (daily documentation is required)
- Maintain safe, clean, neat and organized learning environments \checkmark
- One hour of joint team planning and coordination
- ✓ Two staff in classroom at all times (except during nap time)
- Child-centered learning environments
- Avoidance of any types of worksheets at all times
- DHR licensed, or in case of public schools meet DHR safety requirements \checkmark
- Fully participate with the Office of School Readiness staff for continuous \checkmark improvement
- \checkmark Teachers must be provided the materials and supplies needed to support pre-k classrooms. Monitors and coaches will have ongoing conversations with the program director about the quality of classroom materials and supplies.

The Department's expectations are that provided trainings, coaching, and opportunities for professional growth will contribute to a teacher's acquisition of high-quality developmentally appropriate teaching practices. If one year of funding has transpired without a teacher showing satisfactory progress towards quality instruction based on coaching observations, child assessment results, and adherence to both program/classroom guidelines, the program may be defunded unless said teacher(s) is replaced.

Online Systems



ECEData is the online data system used by the Office of School Readiness to capture program, teacher, and child demographics as well as the classroom budget.



TS GOLD is the online formative assessment tool utilized to document each child's progress throughout the year and to guide instruction and planning (there will be 3 checkpoints during the year-October 27, February 9, May 18)



ASAP is an online student registration program provided by the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education



Foundant is the online management system that is used to capture all information regarding the award.



DECA-P is a social-emotional assessment with a behavioral screener component completed by the teacher for each child.



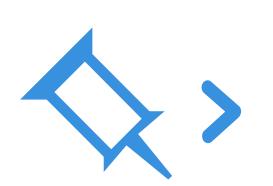
ASQ-3 is a developmental screener completed by the parent.



Where do I find the fully executed MOU?

Electronically signed MOUs will be stored in Foundant. MOUs are available to print by selecting the FollowUp Packet button.

Access to Foundant: https://www.grantinterface.com/Common/LogOn.as px?eqs=ApVvmgXCk2Xs9VuqJK32bKA1kbokh6pm0



For additional information on accessing Foundant, contact Tammy Gibson: tammy.gibson@ece.alabama.gov

The OSR Initial Budget

This is your program's work plan, once approved by your Regional Director, it is the expectation that programs will carry out pre-k activities according to your budget plan.

	OSR Budget	Additional Funds 1	Source 1	Additional Funds 2	Source 2	Additional OSR Funds Granted	Total
Quality Instruction		Fullyconser	Cain				
Lead Teacher Salary		Tun Seres.	- Stuff				
Lead Teacher Benefits							
Auxiliary Teacher Salary							
Auxiliary Teacher Benefits							
Substitutes							
Payroll Taxes							
Background Checks							
Professional Development							
Registration							
Professional Development							
Mileage							
Professional Development							
Stipends Teacher Training							
Resource Teacher(s)							
ublications and Resources for							
Sub Totals							

The sample budget shown may look differently for Head Starts because their budgets will have primary source of funding first.





- **Entered in ECEData system no later than September 30**
- > 18 students enrolled to receive full funding
- >25% supplemental/in-kind funds required
- > Other braided funds (designation must be documented between state and federal funds)
- Reflect parent fees if collected
- > Administrative total cost category not to exceed 6% of total grant award
- **Budget amendments may be made January 1-31**

Budget Guidelines

Individual non-consumable items over \$300 must be preapproved by your First Class Monitor or Regional Director prior to the purchase and inventoried on Appendix M.



- **Inventory lists (Appendix M) should be kept on-site.**
- Itemized receipts or itemized paid invoices must be given to the Monitor or Regional Director within 90 days from the date of purchase or the purchase is ineligible to be paid from **OSR funds.** All OSR funds must be spent and accounted for by September 30 following each funding year. First Class Monitors will track all purchases on a monthly budget
 - tracker.
- All budget changes that exceed 10% per line item must be approved by the First Class Monitor prior to the expenditure.





S OSR wants to know the sum of the actual cost to operate your First Class Pre-K program.



For example, if, in your initial budget you budgeted \$1,000.00 for instructional materials, but by May you had actually spent \$1,200.00. This amount should be indicated on the budget 'Total' column.

Parent Fees

If your program chooses to collect parent fees (tuition), you must show on the budget how those fees are reinvested into the current OSR classroom. **Documentation that explains the fee structure for non-pre-k program must** be provided to parents. Copies should be kept on file.

The amount of tuition depends on the type of funding you were awarded (See Appendix B for OSR sliding fee scale and contact your Regional **Director for individual support with this process).**



No child may be denied access/dismissed due to a family's inability to pay requested fees (tuition).



No supply list may be required; you may request voluntary donations, but these must be labeled as such.

If a child is designated as being served by Title I, migrant or homeless funds, programs should refer to the guidance of their local education agency ("LEA") concerning charging fees to these students.

Documentation Requirements

First Class Pre-K Programs are expected to complete, submit, and file all documents required by OSR in a timely manner, as required in Program Guidelines

Copies of all documents and records for each classroom should be retained on site for 3 years following the final financial report for that year.

OSR documentation is confidential and must be stored under lock and key.



Documentation to be Mailed to OSR



ALSDE T-Cert documentation will now be accepted pending approval by Regional Director

Official Teacher Transcripts, required for all new auxiliary teachers and any non-certified lead teachers.

- **Electronic transcripts coming directly from the regionally a**. accredited college or university via email must be sent to officialtranscript@ece.alabama.gov
- **b.** For official transcripts mailed to OSR they must be unopened and mailed directly from the regionally accredited college or university to the following address. **Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education Office of School Readiness Attn: Teacher Transcripts** P.O. Box 302755 Montgomery, AL 36130-755

Required Documentation



Background Check Verification Form (Appendix C) must be filled out for each classroom and notarized. These form must be sent to the following address within 10 days of school start date:

Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education Office of School Readiness Attn: Official Background Checks P.O. Box 302755 Montgomery, AL 36130-2755



Program directors in a Public School, or other currently DHR licensed program are only required to sign the verification statement at the bottom of the form and have it notarized.







Funded for 187 days; 7 days teacher PD/180 days of classroom instruction

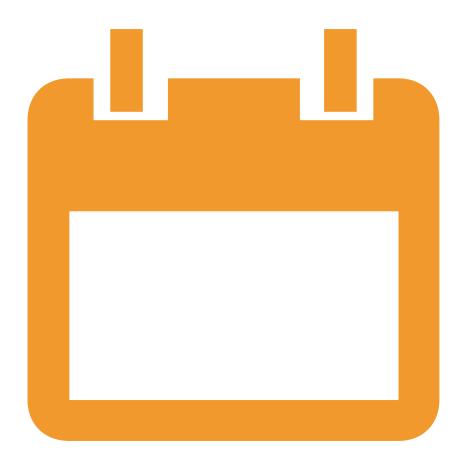


Child's program at least 6.5 hours daily/5 days per week; start time no earlier than 7:30 am (children should not be dismissed before 6.5 hours of instruction).



Teachers work at least 7.5 hours daily/5 days per week; the remaining 1 hour must be solely dedicated to the pre-K program for teacher collaboration/planning and other First Class Pre-K activities (parent conferences, etc.).





First Class Pre-K programs will begin no later than September 1.

Classrooms in public schools should coordinate with the local school calendar adopted by the BOE.

Head Starts and Private Childcares are encouraged to follow their local school system calendar.

Days missed for inclement weather must be made up unless a state of emergency was declared for the corresponding school system in which the classroom exists (a revised calendar with dates must be submitted to the First Class Monitor and also provided to the parents). Teachers must be paid if the Governor declares a state of emergency.

Required Health Information, Screenings, & Referrals

Proof of Immunizations or signed religious belief affidavits against immunizations should be on file in the building where the classroom is located.



Appendix D is the Parent Permission Form and is to be signed within the first 20 days of school to give permission for screenings or to opt out; Appendix E is the Health Screening Record and is to be completed by a nurse or trained professional and is due October 31. After the screenings are completed, parent should sign that they have been given the results of their child's screening by December 31 on Appendix D.



Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 (ASQ-3) Developmental Screener

The Office of School Readiness is partnering with:



To facilitate the screenings and to connect families with **Care Coordinators.**

First Class Pre-K Coaches and Monitors will guide your classroom teachers in their responsibilities in completing the process.

Programs may contact Liletta Jenkins of the Children's Policy Council (see page 14) to schedule a Play With Purpose: Ages and Stages event to assist parents in completing the ASQ-3 Developmental Screener.

For additional support, please call 1-833-939-0336



Recruitment



All programs are required to utilize the online ASAP registration platform which was carefully selected and custom-designed to meet the needs of First Class Pre-K (see Appendix S).

Notices for recruitment must be publicly posted at least 1 (one) month in advance of the random selection drawing in locations such as childcare centers, pediatrician offices, health departments, Children Policy Council meetings, newspapers, and/or social media where appropriate. Digital recruitment flyers will be provided to First Class Pre-K programs by the OSR.

Recruitment and advertising for the classroom should continue throughout the year in order to maintain enrollment and a comprehensive waiting list. The list of students who are preregistered in ASAP and who were not selected for an available position in the program, along with new students who register via ASAP during the year, will be on the waiting list. This list must be maintained for all children who are not attending the program but wish to. If a child withdraws from the classroom at any time during the year, the next child on the waiting list should be added to the classroom within 3 school days. For more information, refer to the ASAP Guide (Appendix S).

First Class Pre-K Classroom

OSR will conduct assessments of the environment and make recommendations for improvement as needed.

Classrooms should be set up and ready to begin by the first day of school (See Appendix P for required list of equipment, materials, and supplies).



Providers are expected to provide a learning environment that is clean, safe, and conducive to high quality learning.

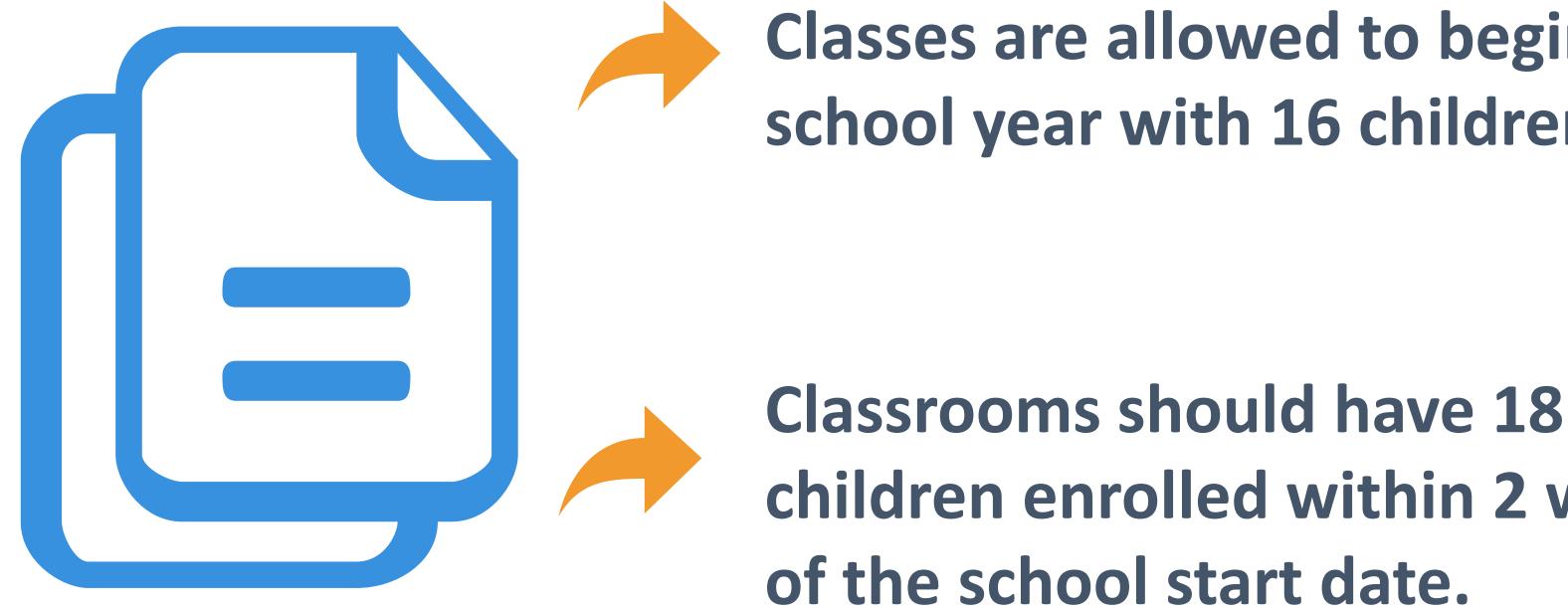


Teacher/child ratio 9:1



- **Outdoor minimum space requirement 60** square feet per child
- Two adults present with children at ALL times (except nap)
- Neither lead or auxiliary teachers may be used to fulfill another role or duty during the pre-k day. Programs will be fined \$500 for each instance. Ensure that all personnel dealing with pre-k are aware of this expectation.

Enrollment Requirements





Classes are allowed to begin the school year with 16 children.

children enrolled within 2 weeks



Children with diagnosed disabilities and significant special needs should receive services and staffing in accordance with their IEP (see section CF 1.4).



Teachers should attend all IEP meetings if possible and have a copy or access to all IEPs for children in their classrooms.



Teachers should complete a student change report reflecting IEP referral results. See Laserfiche link Appendix T in the Program Guidelines Appendices.



Outdoor Play Area



Enclosed by fence or wall at least 4 feet high





Some form of shade provided











Alabama's Standards for Early Learning and Development.

Teaching Strategies GOLD is the state assessment tool that guides appropriate alignment of the standards with the teacher's instruction.

If a program chooses to purchase a curriculum as a supplement, it is important that it aligns with the standards and GOLD assessment. All curricula must promote appropriate instructional practice and be used as a supplement to the Alabama First **Class Pre-K Framework.**





All First Class instruction should be guided by the

Religious Curriculum must be taught outside of

Orientation

On-site orientation must be provided for families within 20 days prior to the start of the school year.



The Parent/Family Engagement Sign-In (Appendix I) should be completed for every family engagement opportunity offered. The Parent/Family Engagement Log (Appendix K) should be updated each time a Parent/Family Engagement activity is held.

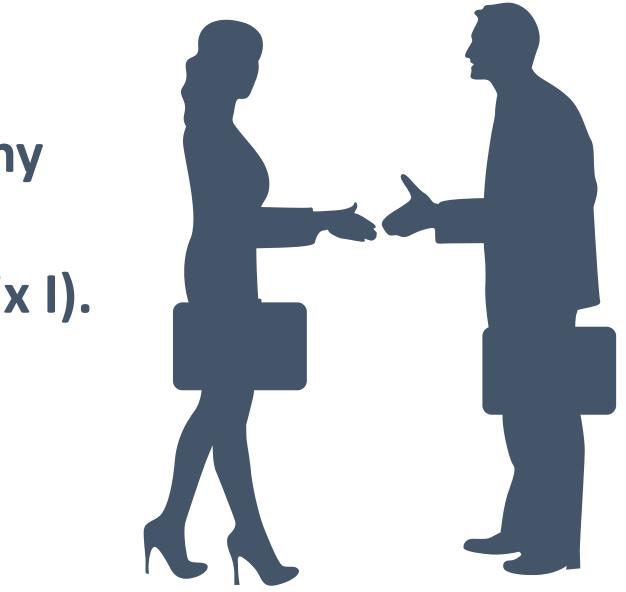


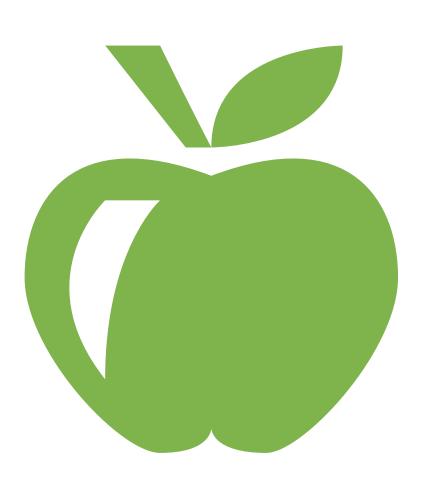
Monitors will check the Parent/Family Engagement Sign-In (Appendix I) for verification.



Teachers should schedule a meeting for any families who were unable to attend the original meeting (have them sign Appendix I).







Other Components

- Meals/snacks
- \rightarrow

Field Trips

at least one off campus in-state field trip is required must be free for each child should involve enrichment activities should be in-state unless paid with funds other than OSR programs should develop their own policies regarding field trips

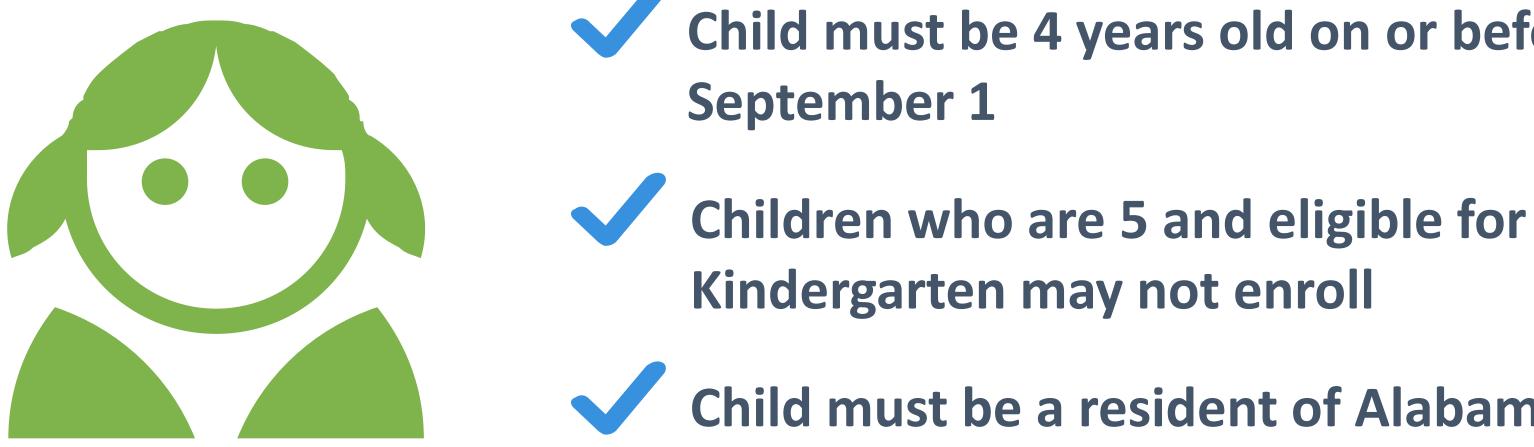


Rest and supervised outdoor play



Pre-K Child and Family

Pre-K Child and Family



- Parent must prove Alabama residency (such as a current utility bill)
- School systems may restrict attendance to their school districts, but must have a written policy adopted by the local **Board of Education in place**



Child must be 4 years old on or before

Child must be a resident of Alabama



Family Engagement Expectations

First Class Pre-K programs must develop a comprehensive plan for parent/family engagement no later than October 1. This plan will be reviewed by your Monitor.



An annual calendar specifying ways families may earn hours along with the number of hours earned specified should be provided to all pre-k families.



The plan should include some take home activities.



Family Engagement Expectations (continued)

Families are responsible for completing 12 participation hours during the year.



Flyers should be sent home in advance of any Parent/Family Engagement Opportunity as a reminder (see Appendix K for documentation log).



Although every effort should be made to ensure family engagement, no child should ever be dismissed for lack of family participation.

Strengthening Families

ALABAMA strengthening families

Strengthening Families is a research-based, cost-effective strategy to increase family stability, enhance child development and reduce child abuse and neglect. It builds five protective factors:

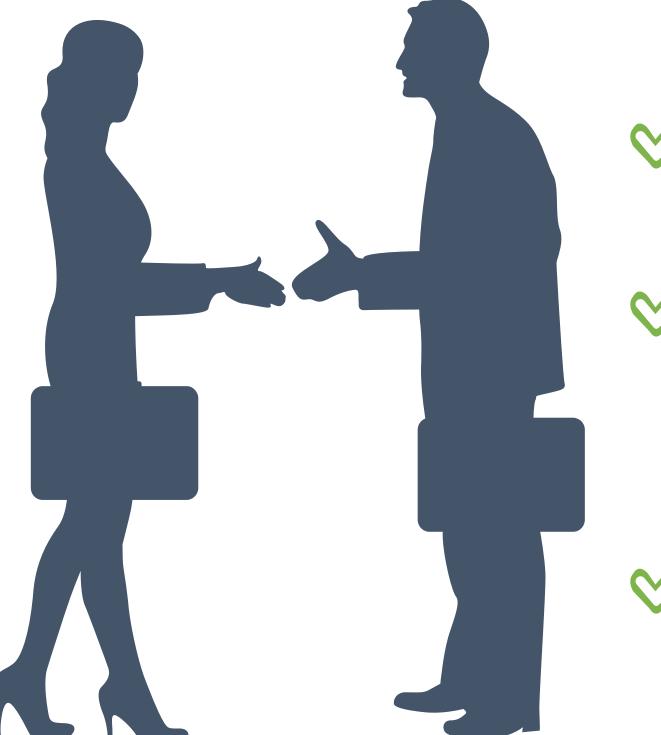
> **Parental resilience Social connections Knowledge of parenting and child development Concrete support in times of need** Social and emotional competence of children

Monitors will work with all third year teachers to implement the **Strengthening Families Program.**





Parent/Teacher Conferences



December 15

end of the school year

Both conferences are to be documented in each child's on-site file using the Teaching Strategies GOLD Family Conference Form



At least 2 individual conferences per year

1st Conference after the October GOLD Assessment checkpoint, but before

2nd Conference after the final GOLD Assessment checkpoint, but before the

Student Attendance

Pre-k providers are required to formulate written procedures to address issues regarding attendance and tardiness and the procedures should specify what actions will be taken by the pre-k provider if attendance issues arise. Monitors will review at the beginning of the year.



Daily attendance records are required to be maintained on-site for review. Monitors will collect monthly attendance rosters. Rosters should reflect all tardies and absences for each child. Cumulative attendance rosters are required at the end of the 1st and 2nd semesters, and are to be provided to your First Class Monitor.



Attendance records should also document when a child arrives late or leaves early.



Our goal is to assist families in establishing and maintaining regular school attendance patterns; procedures should be shared with families during orientation.

Chronic Attendance Issues

Chronic tardiness is defined as late arrival or early departure more than 2 days per week.



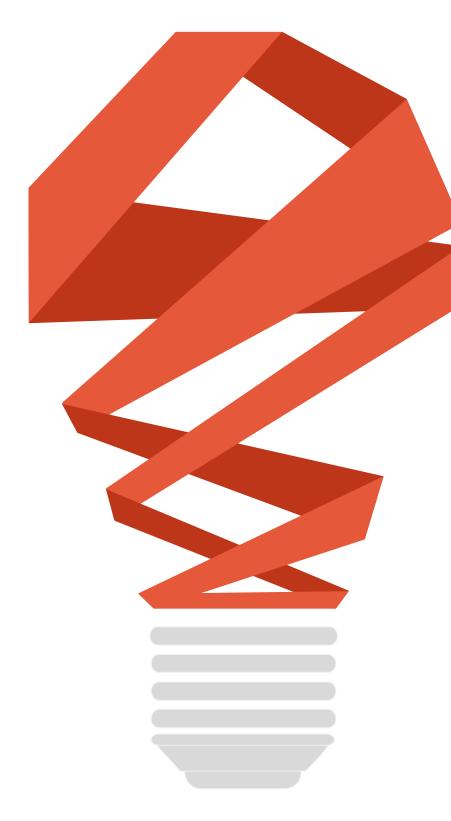
Chronic Absenteeism is defined as missing more than 4 days per month without medical or other reasonable explanation.



Chronic tardiness or absenteeism may also be defined by an established regular attendance pattern(s) (e.g., late every Monday, out every Friday, etc.).

If a child has missed 10 consecutive days in a row without a medical excuse or other reasonable explanation, contact your Monitor.

*Programs should attempt to contact child's parents if child has missed several consecutive days. These attempts should be documented.



Provider's Responsibility

Providers are required to document efforts to assist parents/families with attendance and/or tardiness issues in order to improve attendance.



A meeting should occur with the parent/family to determine the reason for attendance issues and identify ways to resolve the problem(s).



All parties at the meeting should sign and date the documentation for the meeting and this should be kept on-site.



See the Program Guidelines for further information.





No employee shall use > any form of corporal punishment.

No use of time-out is allowed.





45



Encouraging

Problem solving

Effective planning

Calming strategies

Smooth, engaging transitions

Significant Behavioral Concerns



If a teacher notices a child has significant behavioral, developmental, or health issues, individualized interventions may be necessary.



Information from the parent completed ASQ-3 **Developmental Screener combined with** information from the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment and DECA-P may be used to substantiate the need for a parent conference to discuss a possible referral to the LEA for services and support.





The Alabama Pre-K Teaching **Eam**



Must have a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development (at minimum)

Funded for 187 days of service; 7.5 hours of work per day 5 days per week

- 7.5 hours must be solely dedicated to the pre-K classroom (6.5 hours of instruction and 1 hour of planning with auxiliary teacher).
 - 7 days of Professional Development
- Public school systems should follow their local school system salary matrix for all lead teachers. All non-public school lead teachers should be paid according to the OSR Non-Public Lead & Auxiliary Teacher Salary Matrix found in the Appendices. *Note: This is base salary and does not include benefits!
- Official transcripts or teacher certification must be submitted to OSR within 30 days of hire date.



Auxiliary Teachers must:

Possess a high school diploma or GED

- Possess CDA or equivalent (at least 9 credit hours of college coursework in the field of ECE or CD from a regionally credited institution)
- Official transcripts (sent from institution) or copy of CDA must be submitted to OSR within 30 days of hire date.



Auxiliary Teacher (continued)



7.5 hours must be solely dedicated to the pre-k classroom (6.5 hours of instruction and 1 hour of joint planning with lead teacher)







General Personnel Requirements

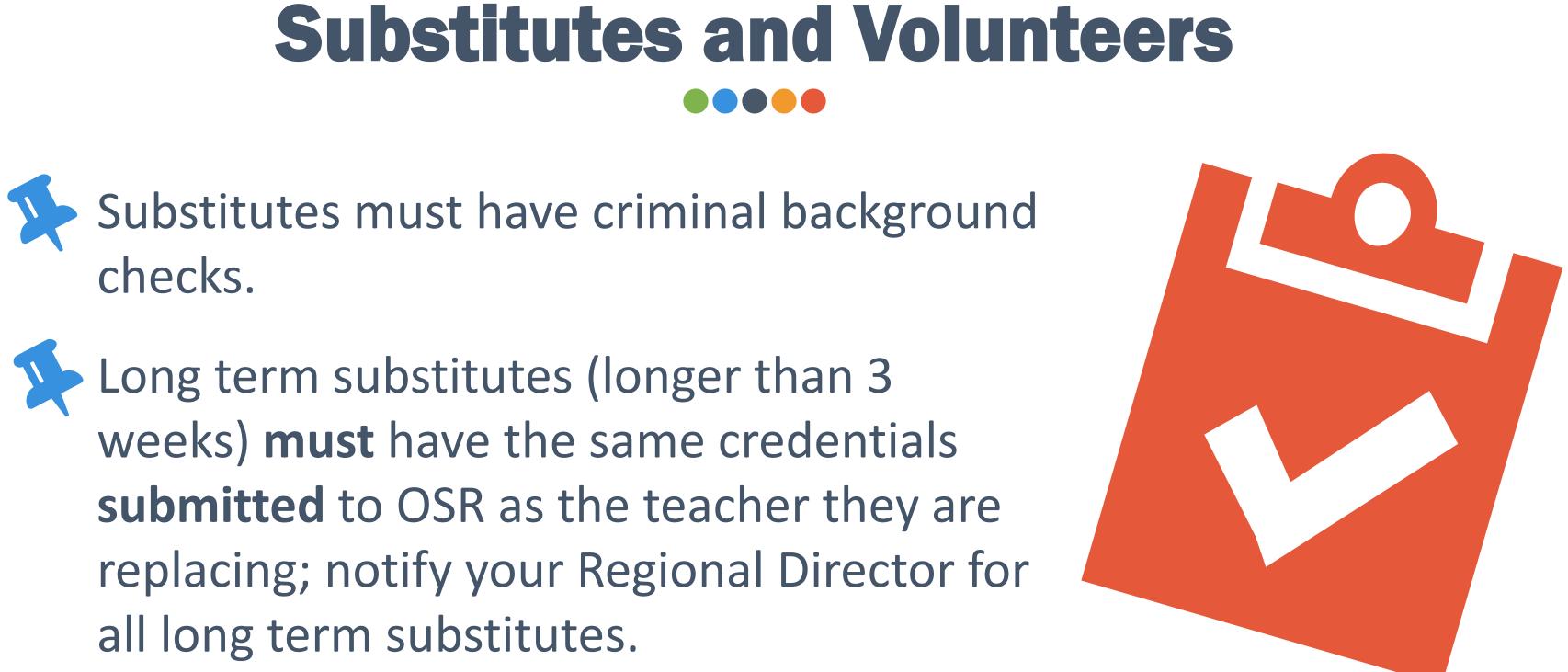
All First Class Pre-K program personnel are employees of the pre-k provider, not OSR or the State of Alabama.

Pre-k personnel may not occupy more than one position during the 7.5 hour day (e.g. director and teacher or director and auxiliary).

All First Class Pre-K program personnel must have a satisfactory criminal background check. All non-public schools must have the Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) background check with fingerprinting.

Documentation should be on file with employer







If either the lead or the auxiliary teacher is absent, a substitute must be present. In the case where both lead and auxiliary teachers are absent, 2 substitutes must be present.



Failure to hire a sub(s) will result in a \$500 fine per incident.



Volunteers may not be left in the classroom unsupervised by classroom personnel.

Professional Development Requirements

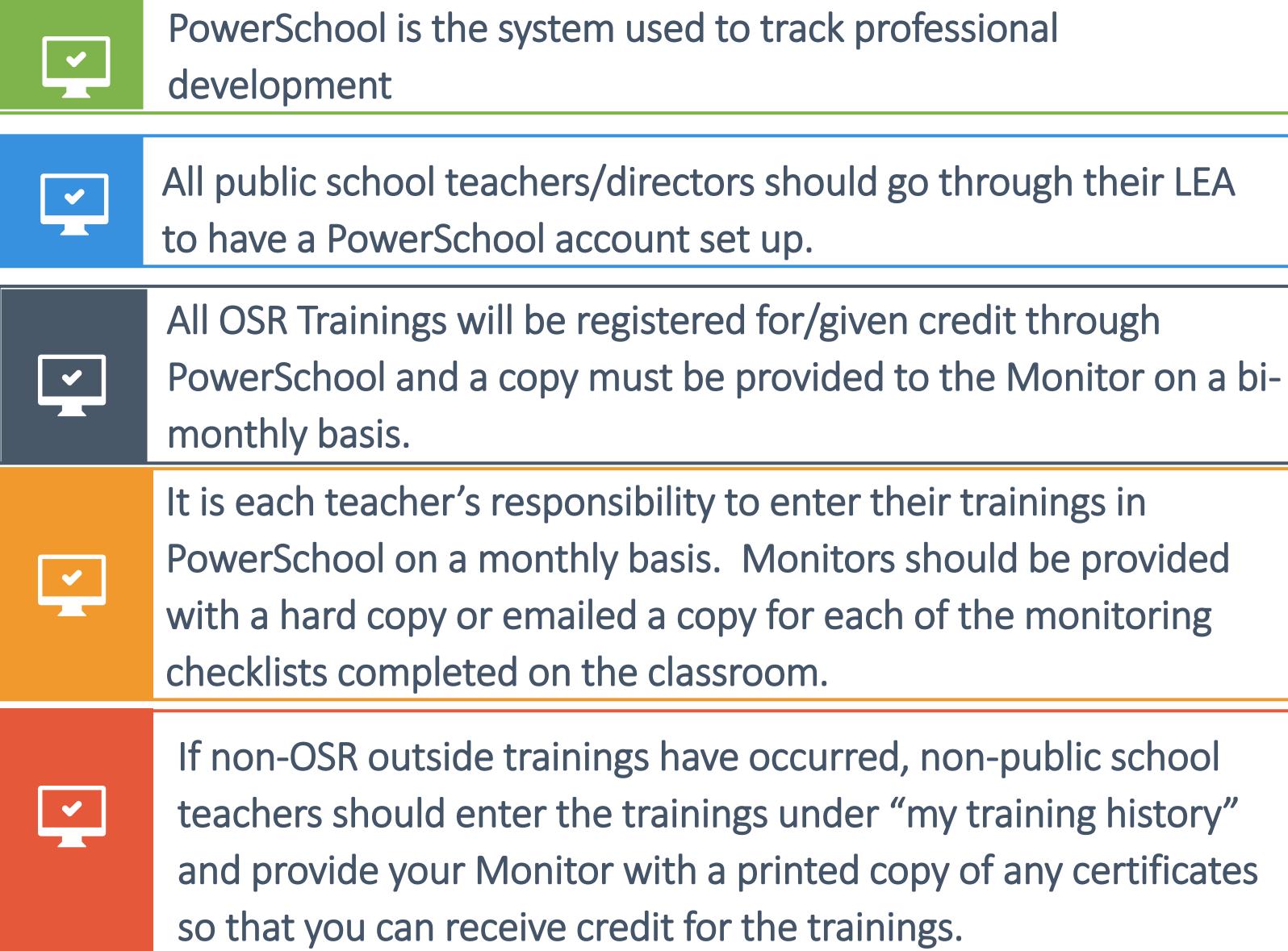


Lead teachers are required to attend a minimum of 15 hours of OSR sponsored trainings each year plus 15 additional hours offered by local or regional programs for a total of 30 total training hours

Auxiliary teachers are required to attend a minimum of 10 hours of OSR sponsored trainings each year plus an additional 10 hours training offered by local or regional programs for a total of 20 total training hours









Training Reimbursement to Staff



OSR funds may be used to pay for substitute teachers and cost associated with staff travel (e.g. meals, lodging, mileage at the current state rate of .58) for all First Class Pre-K required training sessions.

The pre-k provider shall pay staff salaries and expenses for all First Class Pre-K required trainings (up to 7 days), within 30 days of training and/or upon receipt of invoices from teachers.



Instructional Support Team



All OSR Classrooms will be assigned a First **Class Regional Director, a First Class** Monitor, and a First Class Coach.



OSR has a Professional Development Team that will be providing both required and optional trainings throughout the year.



First Class Pre-K Coaches



the Classroom Guidelines Will connect teachers and **Pre-K Programs** classroom visits

improvement goals



- Will support classroom teachers by providing assistance with adhering to
- administrators among First Class
- Will provide feedback, coaching, and observation through regular
- Will work closely with classroom teachers to identify and track progress towards continuous

First Class Pre-K Monitors

- Will assist pre-k program directors in adhering to the program guidelines and funding compliance
- Will enter bi-monthly Monitoring **Reports in the ECEData online data** system
 - Will work closely with program directors
- Will monitor and evaluate program progress during planned and random on-site visits throughout the year









<section-header>



Disciplinary Action for Non-Compliance with OSR Regulations could result in:



SUSPENSION of the pre-k classroom

of the pre-k classroom





61

Memorandum of Understanding

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is your agreement with OSR that you will comply with the First **Class Program Guidelines/Appendices** and First Class Pre-K Classroom Guidelines.

You should read these documents and become very familiar with them.





Funding Lifecycle Manager (Foundant)



Foundant is the online funding management system utilized by the Office of School **Readiness.**



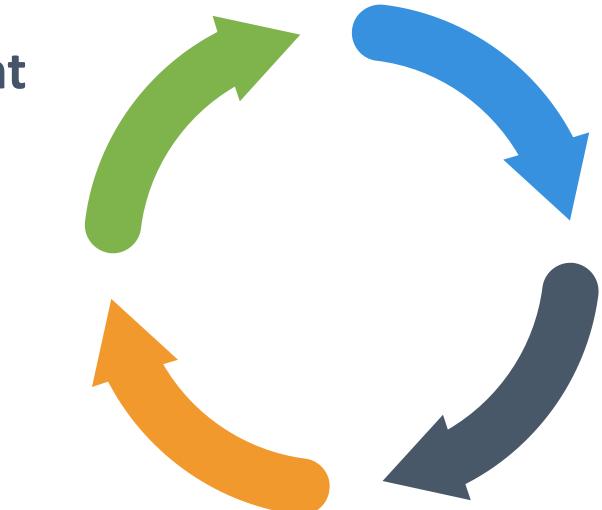
Directors will be expected to complete an Extension Funding Application yearly in Foundant.



New Classroom Funding (not Tiered or Excellence) will reapply for Excellence or Tiered Funds after 1st year of funding.



Foundant is where all new funds will be applied for as funding opportunities are announced.





Your First Class Regional Director, First Class Coach, and First Class Monitor are always great sources of information and support

You can access the Office of School Readiness online at www.children.alabama.gov for valuable information

OSR is your support system to ensure that Alabama's children are getting the high quality pre-k learning experience they deserve!

Please let us know if we can be of assistance!