



Alabama First Class Pre-K

# GUIDELINES



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF

Early Childhood  
Education

**ALABAMA CHILDREN DESERVE A STRONG START!**



# Alabama First Class Pre-K GUIDELINES

Adjustments or modifications to the Office of School Readiness Guidelines  
may be made at the discretion of the  
Secretary of the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education.

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*\*Alabama First Class Pre-K is a high-quality program of excellence that is continually improving. Suggestions are welcomed.*

# FIRST CLASS PRE-K FRAMEWORK

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# INTRODUCTION

## THE OFFICE OF SCHOOL READINESS

The Office of School Readiness (OSR) and the Alabama Department of Children’s Affairs were created in the 1999 legislative session. In 2015, the department’s name changed to the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE). The primary function of the OSR is to support school readiness by fully administering Alabama’s state-funded pre-kindergarten program. In the first year of operation, eight pilot pre-k programs were funded. Since then, state funding for Alabama First Class Pre-K (FCPK) has increased, and the program has expanded into all 67 counties. The Code of Alabama sections relating to the OSR are contained in Appendix L.

## FIRST CLASS PRE-K GUIDELINES AND FRAMEWORK

FCPK Guidelines and Framework are designed to support the growth and development of Alabama’s four-year-old children. They are a set of expectations that provide quality early learning environments with qualified teachers, appropriate practices, and needed materials. A successful program adheres to FCPK Guidelines and practices sound fiscal management to sustain ongoing high-quality learning opportunities for children and families. The FCPK Framework includes an OSR support team that works closely with programs to support quality and continuous improvements. All FCPK classrooms will be assigned a Region Director, a Monitor, and a Coach.

- **Region Directors** support high-quality early learning and care for four-year-olds in a designated area. They recruit and establish FCPK classrooms to ensure access. RDs build ongoing partnerships with providers to ensure program compliance for optimal child outcomes.
- **Monitors** work closely with Program Directors. They monitor and evaluate program progress during planned and random onsite visits throughout the year. They provide guidance, support, and resources to ensure program quality.
- **Coaches** develop an equitable learning partnership with teachers, relying on individualized strength-based observation and reflection for professional growth. It is a collaborative process that empowers teachers to reach their full potential and achieve their goals. It helps teachers improve their skills and knowledge, ultimately leading to better child outcomes.

## HIGH-QUALITY PRE-K

Alabama’s state funded First Class Pre-K program has met the 10/10 National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) Quality Benchmarks since 2006. Chart 1 outlines the quality criteria defined by NIEER as well as how Alabama implements the criteria in its FCPK classrooms. All FCPK classroom learning is based on the Alabama Standards for Early Learning and Development (ASELD). ASELD extends the community’s understanding of the way in which young children develop and learn, offering a set of shared expectations that reflect the state’s quality initiatives.

The OSR is dedicated to partnering with pre-k programs to ensure that Alabama’s four-year-olds have access to responsive and developmentally appropriate, relationship-based learning

*“School readiness involves more than just children. School readiness, in the broadest sense, is about children, families, early environments, schools, and communities. Children are not innately ‘ready’ or ‘not ready’ for school. Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interactions with other people and environments before coming to school.”*

*Alabama Transition to Kindergarten ToolKit*



experiences to prepare them for future school success. Community collaboration is essential to the success of these partnerships expanding access to FCPKs. Providers partner with their local Children’s Policy Council (CPC) to plan for successful implementation of FCPKs in their communities. The Children’s Policy Council early childhood education committees work to gather data about locations of educational programs and services available for four-year-olds in each county. The CPC website may be found at [alcpc.org](http://alcpc.org).

## NIEER QUALITY BENCHMARKS

QUALITY INDICATORS	OFFICE OF SCHOOL READINESS RECOMENDATIONS
<b>Early Learning and Development Standards</b>	Alabama Standards for Early Learning and Development (ASELD)
<b>Lead Teacher Degree</b>	Lead teacher must have a bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development, at a minimum.
<b>Lead Teacher Specialized Training</b>	Lead teacher must have specialized training in early childhood and participate in on-going professional development in the learning of preschool-age children.
<b>Auxiliary Teacher Degree</b>	Auxiliary teacher must have a Child Development Associate credential (CDA) or a minimum of 9 hours of approved coursework in child development and participate in on-going professional development in the learning of preschool-age children.
<b>Professional Development, coaching, individualized plans for lead and auxiliary teachers</b>	Lead teacher must have at least 30 hours of yearly in-service professional development and training; auxiliary teacher must have at least 20 hours of yearly in-service professional development and training.
<b>Maximum Class Size</b>	Maximum number of children per classroom is 20 or fewer; recommended number is 18.
<b>Staff-Child Ratio</b>	Lowest acceptable ratio of staff to children in the classroom is 1:9. 1:10 is permissible only for Head Start classrooms.
<b>Screenings and Referrals</b>	Physical, vision, hearing, dental and developmental screenings and referrals must be provided.
<b>Supports for Curriculum Implementation</b>	Supports for curriculum implementation include, but are not limited to, the Alabama First Class Pre-K Framework, the Alabama Standards for Early Learning and Development, and ADECE staff support.
<b>Continuous Quality Improvement System</b>	Site visits and monitoring will be provided by ADECE staff to ensure continuous quality and compliance. Assessments are administered to ensure the program is meeting children’s needs and high-quality standards.

Source: NIEER State of Preschool Yearbook, [nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbooks](http://nieer.org/state-preschool-yearbooks)





*Ninety percent of brain development occurs during a child's first five years of life. Early childhood experiences establish either a sturdy or a fragile foundation for everything that follows.*  
*Alabama School Readiness Alliance*

## **Section 1: The Alabama First Class Pre-K Child and Family**

Home and the early learning environment are the two most important worlds for a young child. When these two are bridged in positive and respectful ways, children feel secure. In FCPK, parents/families are engaged as partners and recognized as their child's first and most important teacher.

### **1.1: THE PRE-K CHILD**

A high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten is an effective early childhood educational program that prepares four-year-olds to succeed socially, emotionally, and academically in kindergarten and beyond. The intent of the First Class Pre-K (FCPK) program is to provide state-funded, voluntary pre-k for Alabama's four-year-olds. FCPK does not discriminate against any child or family based on race or color, national origin, religion, class, gender, disability, or income and encourages diversity in each of its classrooms.

#### **1.1A: 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 five years of age and are eligible for kindergarten may not enroll in Alabama First Class Pre-K.

*\*An opinion of the Attorney General states in effect that under the common law, one's age is computed by including the day of birth so that a given age is attained the day before the birthday anniversary. (Authority: Ala. Code §16- 28-4 (1975) Interpretation based on Report of Attorney General of Alabama October-December 1963, Volume 113, page 20).*



## 1.1B: RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

- The child must be an Alabama resident and maintain residency while enrolled.
- For purposes of this program, an 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. A written policy adopted by the local Board of Education must be in place prior to the school year start date to restrict enrollment to that school district only.

## 1.1C: REQUIRED HEALTH INFORMATION

- Upon admission into a First Class Pre-K classroom, the pre-k provider ensures that an up-to-date immunization record or signed religious beliefs affidavits against such immunizations are maintained onsite for each child.

## 1.1D: CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires state and local school districts to educate preschool-age children with special needs in typical early childhood programs to the maximum extent appropriate.
- IDEA's least restrictive environment directive requires the inclusion of children with disabilities in the general education program. Local education agencies are responsible for the identification and evaluation of children with disabilities and for the provision of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to children found to be eligible for special education and related services (Appendix O).

## 1.2: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

FCPK programs provide meaningful opportunities for families to be involved in their child's education. Ongoing communication helps relationships grow and often prevents misunderstandings. Regular school-home communication (i.e., notebooks/folders, newsletters, emails, conferences, phone calls, etc.) should be provided in each family's preferred communication mode and home

language as much as possible. This is an opportunity to focus on positive accomplishments, to encourage review and discussion of daily school activities, and to share parenting resources.

- Annual Family Engagement Activity Plans, specifying ways parents earn a minimum of 12 participation hours, will be reviewed by the FCPK Monitor.
  - A monthly calendar/flyer/newsletter outlining upcoming family engagement opportunities will be shared at the beginning of each month with FCPK families and the FCPK Monitor.
  - Required Parent/Family Engagement Sign-in Sheet is Appendix I.
  - Required Parent/Family Engagement Log is Appendix K.
- An onsite family orientation meeting is required within the first 20 working days of the school year.
  - A list of topics to discuss at this meeting is Appendix J.
  - Programs must have families complete the Parent/Guardian Contract, Appendix H.

*“When early care and education providers and families work together to share information, plan together, and support the child’s abilities, needs, interests, and progress, children are more likely to succeed in school and life.”*

*(Cairone & Mackrain, B11)*



- At least two individual conferences per year between the teachers and parent/guardian are required.
- The first conference should be held after the October GOLD® checkpoint but prior to December 15. TS GOLD® Data, ASQ, and Health Screeners are shared during the first conference.
  - The second conference should be held after the final GOLD® checkpoint and prior to May 31.
- Conferences should be documented using the Teaching Strategies™ GOLD® Family Conference Form. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to use the GOLD® Development and Learning Report for parent conferences if finalization is not possible before holding parent conferences.
  - Monitors will verify signed parent conference forms onsite.
- In-state field trips and onsite enrichment experiences are an important part of the education process and family engagement.
  - OSR funds may be used to pay for these experiences.
  - Field trips/onsite enrichments, and all accompanying costs, made during the day must be free and available to all FCPK children.
  - Programs develop their own policies regarding safety and transportation for in-state field trips.
  - Coaches and monitors will have ongoing communications regarding one minimum in-state field trip.
- A daily behavior log for each child is not considered family engagement nor an appropriate form of communication. Behavior logs are not to be utilized in FCPK Classrooms.
- Children may not be dismissed due to lack of parent/family participation.

### 1.3: STUDENT ATTENDANCE

There is a strong connection between attendance and long-term school success. Regular attendance ensures pre-k children benefit from participating in quality early learning experiences. To support children's regular attendance, providers formulate written procedures for addressing issues regarding attendance and tardiness.

The goal of the attendance policy is to assist families in establishing and maintaining regular school attendance patterns. Attendance issues are best handled before they reach chronic levels. Daily attendance records should be maintained onsite and include the dates when a child is absent and the dates/times when a child arrives late or leaves early. Program attendance expectations will be reviewed by the FCPK monitor.

When forming program attendance policies:

- Providers will consult the current Alabama Attendance Manual: [https://www.alabamaachieves.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/CAS\\_2023814\\_2023-2024-Attendance-Manual\\_V1.0.pdf](https://www.alabamaachieves.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/CAS_2023814_2023-2024-Attendance-Manual_V1.0.pdf)
- Attendance policies include procedures such as: the teacher/director contacts the family or caregiver on the first day of absence; after 3rd consecutive absence, the teacher/director provides home learning resources such as ReadyRosie, etc.
- Teacher will notify program director and monitor of irregular attendance patterns. Examples

*Children's attendance in early learning programs can impact their school readiness and school success. Children who are chronically absent, or who miss 10% of the school year, are less likely to read on grade level by third grade and are more likely to be chronically absent in later grades. Family engagement can make an impact! When families understand the importance of regular attendance, and when professionals track and follow up with families when children are absent, attendance improves and so do children's opportunities to learn.*

*Attendance Works*

of irregular attendance may include: *missing consecutive days, missing same day every week, frequently leaving early, frequent tardiness, etc.*

- Dismissing a child due to irregular attendance should only be used as a last resort. Programs must demonstrate multiple efforts to engage parents to encourage attendance with the goal of helping parents keep children in the program.
- The Attendance Works Handout in Appendix U will be provided to families.

#### **1.4: FIRST TEACHER HOME VISITING**

The First Teacher Home Visiting program delivers parent education and support through home visits with families. Programs use evidence-based home visiting models to educate and assist families in finding appropriate social services to help them with any unmet needs. There are First Teacher Home Visiting programs available in nearly all counties across the state. Models vary, but some programs may choose to enroll women prenatally and continue to stay involved with the family until the child enters kindergarten. Other programs work specifically on school readiness with preschool-aged children. For more information on home visiting programs, see Appendix V.







*Research shows that teachers are the single most important classroom factor in a child's learning. (Hattie 2017; Hattie 2015)*

## **Section 2: The Alabama First Class Pre-K Classroom**

The FCPK classroom is inclusive of the teachers, the children, and the environment. The environment becomes another teacher in the classroom when learning areas are welcoming and well-organized, allowing children to interact and learn together. The social environment (schedules, responsibilities, expectations, and routines) works in tandem with the physical environment (space, materials, displays, learning areas, furniture, and maintenance) to create a supportive learning community. When teachers establish a positive learning culture, it helps improve attention, reduces anxiety, and supports emotional and behavioral regulation of children. The OSR Team supports the classroom by providing coaching, professional development, and recommendations for continuous improvement.

### **2.1: THE CLASSROOM TEACHERS**

A child's development and skill mastery are dependent on a caring adult who nurtures and supports their growth. Teachers provide experiences that help children gather and build knowledge about their world. All FCPK classrooms are required to have a qualified Lead and Auxiliary teacher that share this responsibility. Teachers may not be taken out of the First Class Pre-K classroom to fill any other role or duty in the program.

#### **2.1A: TEACHER/CHILD RATIO**

Classrooms maintain a 1:9 teacher/child ratio at all times with the exception of nap. Head Start classrooms that choose to have an enrollment of 20 shall maintain a 1:10 teacher/child ratio.



## 2.1B: LEAD TEACHERS QUALIFICATIONS

- All lead teachers must be at least 21 years of age.
  - All lead teachers must possess one of the following degrees:
    - Early Childhood Education degree (B.S., B.A., or M.A./M.S.)
    - Human Environmental Science degree with a concentration in Early Childhood Development or Child Development.
    - Special Education degree in Early Childhood with a minimum of 18 credit hours in early childhood/child development coursework.
    - Elementary Education degree with a minimum of 18 hours in early childhood/child development coursework.
  - All non-public school lead teachers should be paid at least the minimum salary according to Appendix A. Public School systems should follow their local school system salary matrix. Programs may choose to pay above the minimum salary requirement and may use ADECE/OSR funds to do so.
- \*ADECE does not require teacher certifications. Teacher certification requirements are governed by the Alabama State Department of Education and Local Education Agencies. Questions about obtaining an Alabama Teaching Certificate need to be directed and answered by ALSDE only. Having an Early Childhood teaching certificate does not necessarily meet OSR teacher qualification requirements.*

## 2.1C: AUXILIARY TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

- An auxiliary teacher must meet all of the following minimum requirements:
  - Must possess a high school diploma or GED.
  - Must have 9 hours of Early Childhood Education College Coursework; or a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential through Council of Professional Recognition; or an Early Childhood Education Associate Degree; or Associate Degree Child Development
- A minimum salary for auxiliary teachers is indicated in Appendix A. The base salary does not include benefits. Programs may choose to pay above the minimum salary requirement and may use ADECE/OSR funds to do so.

## 2.1D: SUBSTITUTES/VOLUNTEERS/INTERNS

A substitute lead and/or auxiliary teacher is required when the regular teacher(s) is/are absent. Volunteer parents may not be left in the classroom unsupervised by classroom personnel.

- OSR funds may be used to compensate substitutes.
- Criminal background checks are required for all substitute teachers.
- Long-term substitutes, which are defined as those individuals teaching longer than 3 weeks, should meet the credentials of the teacher they are replacing. If a long-term substitute is required, the Region Director should be notified prior to the sub placement.
- The FPCK Director must contact the Region Director before the placement of interns and field experience students. Interns and field experience students cannot be counted in teacher/child ratio.

## 2.1E: TEACHER CREDENTIALS/BACKGROUND CHECKS

- Credentials
  - Prior to hiring, credentials are reviewed and approved by the OSR Credentialing Officer. This step is critical to having qualified lead and auxiliary teachers.
  - Unofficial transcripts may be used for review in the hiring process. However, the unofficial transcript is not acceptable documentation of coursework. All lead and auxiliary teachers must have official transcripts on file.
  - Official, unopened transcripts for all new teachers must be submitted to the OSR within 30 days following hire date.
  - All coursework/degrees must be earned from a regionally accredited institution.
- Every effort must be made to find a qualified teacher candidate. Prospective teachers that do not meet qualifications must have OSR approval to be placed on a waiver.
  - Waivers are an exception and are not automatically granted. All waiver requests are subject to review for approval. The hiring process should not be completed until final approval from the OSR is received.
  - Teachers on waivers should satisfy the requirements of the waiver in a timely manner. If needed, the applicant must re-apply for a waiver each school year and show significant progress and justification for a continuance of the waiver.
  - Teachers in the Apprenticeship program must work closely with the Region Director and the Workforce Development staff of the ADECE.
- Background Checks
  - All FCPK program personnel must have a satisfactory criminal background check, Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) background check and fingerprinting, with documentation on file with their employer.
  - Criminal background checks are required of all FCPK program personnel including substitute teachers and any other person having regular contact with the classroom children.
  - All classrooms must have a notarized Background Check Verification Form (Appendix C) submitted by mail to the Montgomery Office within 10 days of the first day of school and throughout the year as new employees are hired.
  - If an OSR grantee personnel is arrested or convicted of criminal behavior during employment in the FCPK classroom, the program must promptly inform the OSR.

## 2.1F: TEACHER DAYS/HOURS OF SERVICE

- Teachers are funded for 187 days of service.
  - 180 days of classroom instructional services provided to children.
  - Seven days of pre/post planning and/or professional development.
- Teachers are compensated based on 7.5 hours of work per day - 6.5 hours of instruction and 1 hour of joint planning time.
- If a program provider requires teachers to work more than 187 days, the provider cannot use First Class Pre-K program funds for this expense. If a First Class Pre-K program teacher is required to work more than eight hours per day, the teacher must be paid using non-FCPK funds.
- Teachers must be paid their normal salary during a governor-declared state of emergency and or pandemic event.
- Teachers may not occupy more than one position during the 7.5 hour teacher workday (e.g., director and teacher; director and auxiliary teacher).

## **2.1G: COACHING**

An integral development tool for both lead and auxiliary teachers is coaching. OSR Coaches are assigned to classrooms and are supports for teachers. It is important that the teaching team have a willingness to receive feedback and use it to improve one's practices. Region Directors will have ongoing conversations concerning nonperforming teachers. Coaching is provided for continuous improvement of effective teaching practices for child outcomes. Programs should consider replacing teachers not showing satisfactory progress.

## **2.1H: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The OSR provides required annual professional development for both lead and auxiliary teachers throughout the year. Provided trainings and opportunities for professional growth will contribute to a teacher's acquisition of developmentally appropriate teaching practices. Examples of required trainings: New Teacher Development, Teaching Strategies™ GOLD® Platform Training, Teaching Strategies™ GOLD® Interrater Reliability Certification, CLASS, Conferences, etc.

- OSR funds may be used to pay for training costs, travel, and substitutes.
  - In addition, the providers pay staff salaries and expenses for all required OSR trainings (up to 7 days).
- Lead Teachers must have a minimum of 30 hours per year.
  - 15 hours of OSR-sponsored training each year
  - 15 hours of training offered by local or regional programs
- Auxiliary Teachers must have a minimum of 20 hours
  - 10 hours of OSR-sponsored training each year
  - 10 hours training offered by local or regional programs.
- Selection of online professional development must have prior OSR approval.
- Teachers are required to document all local and OSR training attendance using PowerSchool. Teachers will keep copies of training certificates onsite for verification of attendance.

## **2.2: THE CLASSROOM SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

The FCPK classroom social environment is equally as important as the physical environment. It encompasses teacher-child interactions which support children achieving social and learning goals. It is crucial to the whole child development and fosters life skills of living in a community. A classroom community is a place where children have a sense of belonging, share interests, and experiences. Positive classroom communities set the stage for a child's development and learning, such as executive function skills leading to self-regulation and autonomy. Creating this environment is a shared responsibility of the lead and auxiliary teachers, the director, and all staff members (food service, custodial, special area teachers, volunteers, etc.) who work with the pre-k child in the FCPK classroom.

### **2.2A: BUILDING A CLASSROOM COMMUNITY**

FCPK teachers build a classroom community by supporting peer relationships and providing a predictable environment where all children are contributing members. Classroom routines and procedures are explicitly taught, modeled, and practiced supporting the child in successfully meeting expectations. Routines and procedures are regularly reviewed to make needed adjustments and scaffold children's understanding. Learning areas and materials should be gradually introduced taking great care to teach all procedures. The coach will support and guide teachers through this process.

To build the classroom community:

- Lead and Auxiliary teachers share and plan for instructional and assessment responsibilities, child supervision, and other classroom duties.
- Teachers build relationships by speaking to children in a pleasant tone, using words that convey care and respect.
- Teachers model desirable behaviors such as negotiating, sharing, and learning from mistakes.
  - Teachers use role-play to help children learn to communicate appropriately and work through peer conflicts.
  - Teachers engage all children in cleanup, transitions, celebrations, and other cooperative and community building activities.
  - Teachers interact with the children during Learning/Free Choice time and Gross Motor time to facilitate children’s play.
  - Teachers sit with the children during meals and snacks to facilitate appropriate conversation and to model respect, social skills, manners, and healthy nutritional habits.
- Teachers develop classroom rules with the children, not posted before the children enter the classroom. The rules are displayed in the classroom for continual reference throughout the course of the day.
- Refer to pages 37-78, of the ASEL for additional information on Relationships and Connections.

*“A preschool learning environment includes outside spaces, indoor places, and everything in between— toys, learning materials, wall displays, and equipment. It also includes the children and adults who interact in these spaces. The learning environment has an important impact on children’s efforts to build relationships, play and learn, eat, and rest.”*

*(Cairone & Mackrain, 107)*



## **2.2B: RESPONSIBILITIES AND JOBS**

All children have a job that contributes to the caring for the classroom. When children share the responsibility of taking care of the classroom, it builds community, encourages independence, and organizational skills. The process of explicitly teaching jobs at the beginning of the year so children are familiar with the job terms and responsibilities takes time. The coach will support and guide teachers through this process.

To support classroom community:

- Children are involved in deciding which jobs are needed and understand the importance of each to the classroom community.
- Job assignments are inclusive, rotated daily or weekly, and consistent, allowing all children to participate. They are not used as a reward or punishment.
- A classroom helper/job chart is displayed where it is visible and can be referred to throughout the day. Using photographs of children performing the jobs fosters ownership within the community. Other templates or commercial photographs are acceptable.

## **2.2C: DAILY SCHEDULE**

The daily schedule establishes a time and sequence for routines and experiences. Consistently following a schedule makes daily experiences predictable for children. It supports children’s individual and group needs thus helping the entire classroom community run smoothly. The schedule should include a balance of activity groupings that are child and teacher directed, as well as flexible enough to allow for children’s interests and needs. The coach will provide support in developing an appropriate




schedule and must be notified of any permanent schedule changes. A written schedule, including times, is posted outside the classroom door for directors, coaches, monitors, administrators, and visitors to view.

The Daily Schedule includes:

- Whole groups:
  - will last no more than 20 minutes at one time and may occur several times per day
  - build a sense of community and provide opportunity for children to communicate
- Small groups:
  - occur at least once per day
  - may last up to 20 minutes at one time based on the interest and learning of children. Small groups may occur several times per day
  - give children an opportunity for new skills and focus on content areas
- Free choice:
  - must be uninterrupted and should last for at least 1 hour 10 minutes one time per day, not including clean up
  - both teachers, moving around the room provide opportunities for student-led learning, individualized interest, and peer relationships
  - children are not to be pulled from free choice for small group instruction
- Read Aloud:
  - purposefully planned and occurs at least twice a day
  - book is developmentally appropriate, held and read by a teacher in front of the children. This is not a time to use an electronic device
  - teachers should introduce vocabulary, encourage discussion, and foster an appreciation for quality children's literature
- Gross Motor:
  - occurs daily for 60 minutes which can be broken into two times a day if needed
  - teachers are engaged and actively supervising during this time with the children
- Music and Movement:
  - thoughtfully planned and occur daily
  - teachers do not solely rely on a smart board or similar technology to meet this daily requirement
  - teachers should learn a repertoire of songs, chants, and fingerplays for enjoyment and mastering recall of both melody and lyrics. This type of quality music and movement encourages appropriate social interaction, teaches underlying literacy and math skills, and improves spatial awareness (crossing the midline)
  - a variety of resources and materials should be utilized to guarantee exposure to multiple musical genres and movements. See Appendix P
  - both teachers should actively engage in music and movement with the children, encouraging participation and enjoyment
- Rest Time:
  - occurs daily for 45-60 minutes
  - provisions should be made for children that indicate a need to rest during anytime of the day
  - appropriate accommodations should be made for early risers and non-nappers
  - cots and cot sheets are required in the FCPK classroom. Cot sheets and towels/blankets are required to be regularly laundered and sanitized
  - all children must be within sight and sound of the teacher during rest time

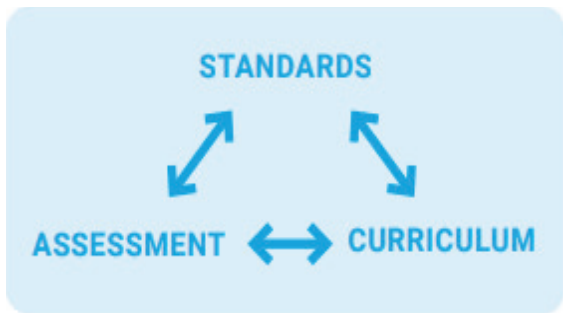
- A science experience is planned and occurs weekly to strengthen children’s understanding of the world and how things work.
- Lunch, snack, and transitions should be planned and accounted for when creating the schedule for the pre-k day.

	<b>DAILY SCHEDULE CHECKLIST</b>
	Schedule reflects a 6 ½ hour day.
	Whole groups are scheduled multiple times daily and do not exceed 20 minutes.
	Two planned and purposeful read alouds are scheduled daily.
	Music and movement is scheduled and occurring daily.
	Small group is scheduled daily and does not exceed 20 minutes.
	Free choice is scheduled daily for a minimum of 1 hour and 10 minutes, uninterrupted, and not including time to clean up.
	Rest time occurs daily for 45-60 minutes.
	Transitions, lunch, and snack have been planned and accounted for in schedule.
	Gross motor is scheduled for 60 minutes daily and may be broken into two blocks of time throughout the day.
	A picture schedule with words is posted near the whole group area and children should participate in monitoring.
	A science experiment is planned and occurs weekly.
	A daily schedule is submitted to the coach. Coaching support is available to develop and maintain an appropriate daily schedule.

## **2.2D: PICTURE SCHEDULE**

A picture schedule gives children a consistent opportunity to engage and participate in the monitoring of the daily activities. The labeled daily routine picture schedule with words is accessible and posted near the whole group area so it can be referenced often. Children consistently participate in monitoring the schedule (such as “moving the clothespin” to the next activity) and discussing the daily plans. The daily schedule is proven to be an effective tool in helping children navigate transitions from one activity to another.

- Photos of the children in various activities are ideal; commercial or teacher made photos are acceptable.
- The picture schedule includes daily activities and routines. Special events or weekly activities are added as appropriate.
- It is not necessary to include “clock times” in the picture schedule. The purpose of this schedule is to provide the children with a visual chronological reminder of the pre-k day.



## 2.2E: PLANNING, TEACHING, AND ASSESSMENT

Teachers facilitate children’s learning by observing, assessing, and intentionally developing experiences that build on children’s current knowledge and developmental level.

Intentional teachers interact directly with children. They ask questions to encourage thinking and problem solving and adapt experiences to meet individual children’s learning styles, interests, and needs. Coaches assist teachers with meeting the expectation of establishing a planning, teaching, and assessment cycle.

The Alabama Standards for Early Learning and Development (ASELD) is a critical component of the state’s early childhood system and offer shared expectations and a unified vision for responsive and developmentally appropriate, relationship-based learning experiences for all the state’s young children, birth to age 5.

- guide teachers’ understanding of what children can know, learn, and do
- support intentional learning experiences to facilitate children’s learning, decide the way in which those experiences will be provided, and the way in which they will be shared with other professionals and families.
- reflect the state’s quality initiatives and extend the community’s understanding of the way in which young children develop and learn
- additional copies of the ASELD document may be purchased using OSR funds

Teaching Strategies™ GOLD® (TS GOLD®)

TS GOLD® is the state assessment tool used to measure child growth and outcomes on the state’s early learning standards. Professionals use observation, the collection of artifacts or children’s work samples, and family input to establish goals and determine children’s progress towards meeting goals.

- Children demonstrate learning all throughout their day. Teachers develop a plan to collect, record, and enter the documentation. Documentation and preliminary levels are entered daily by both teachers to inform future learning opportunities. TS GOLD® reports are used for planning.
- Documentation taken over time is used to set levels for checkpoint. This might be 1, 2, 3 or more pieces per objective depending on the child’s learning. The focus should be on the quality of documentation, not just the quantity.

## 2.2F: CURRICULUM

The Alabama First Class Pre-K framework is an effective model, supporting young children as they develop and learn. Teachers use the ASELD to define the specific learning experiences and content that will be taught to children. Curriculum is built on feedback from the children themselves, family interests, and professionals’ knowledge of child development. Each teacher adapts the environment, activities, and interactions to guide children’s growth and learning.

- Programs that choose to purchase a curriculum, must select one that is aligned with the ASELD.
- FCPK teachers and administrators work closely with coaches and/or program monitors to choose a curriculum.
- Religious instruction or other religious activity is permitted during the 6.5-hour FCPK

day except insofar as it would prevent compliance with other program guidelines.

- All curricula must promote appropriate instructional practice and be used as a supplement to the Alabama First Class Pre-K Framework.

## 2.2G: LESSON PLANNING

Professionals facilitate children’s growth by intentionally planning learning experiences that build on children’s current knowledge and developmental level. Plans identify a theme or study topic to be investigated in depth. The length of time dedicated to this study depends on the topic and the interests of the children.

- All plans will be based on the ASELD. Teaching Strategies™ GOLD® Objectives and Dimensions will be used to assess children’s growth on the ASELD. Teachers are required to reference both resources in lesson plans.
- Weekly lesson plans are accessible in all FCPK classrooms. The coach will support the lesson plan format.
- Evidence that themes are incorporated in learning areas are noted in lesson plans.
- Lesson Plan Checklist:

	LESSON PLAN COMPONENT CHECKLIST
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesson plan format submitted to coach
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify a theme or study topic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Whole group activities are planned to include music and movement and shared writing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small groups planned with specific skills identified
<input type="checkbox"/>	Two read alouds planned daily
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plans to incorporate themes in learning areas
<input type="checkbox"/>	Weekly science lesson planned
<input type="checkbox"/>	Evidence of planned gross motor activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	ASELD and TS GOLD® documented in plans
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resources identified: books, songs, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesson plans are accessible, current, and organized

## 2.2H: WHOLE GROUP INSTRUCTION

Whole group strengthens classroom community. This time includes shared writing experiences such as daily news/morning message, opportunities for children to share, and learn respect for others. Teachers will be mindful of the amount of time they are expecting children to sit and engage as part of a large group. Teachers develop strategies to capture valuable GOLD® documentation during this time.

- Whole group occurs multiple times daily for up to 20 minutes per occurrence.



- Whole group may last five to eight minutes at the beginning of the year and increase up to no more than 20 minutes by the end of the year.
- Whole groups include music, movement, finger plays, read alouds, discussion of the picture schedule, job chart, etc. but does not include flashcards of any kind.

## **2.2I: SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION**

Children enter FCPK with different strengths, interests, and experiences. Small group learning allows a teacher to meet children where they are, customizing lessons that support, and encourage growth for each child. Back and forth conversations are easier in small groups and allow questions based on individual children’s imaginations and understandings. Small groups are not a part of free choice time. The coach will assist with planning appropriate small group learning as needed.

- Small groups of no more than nine children take place at least once daily. The composition of the groups is flexible based on the needs of the children.
  - Teachers may divide the children into three groups with both teachers conducting a small group simultaneously with two of the groups while an independent group of children work on fine motor activities, puzzles, etc.
  - The independent group must be always in full view and in supervision of both teachers.
- Time spent in small group is flexible based on children’s needs and learning. A small group may last five to eight minutes at the beginning of the year and increase up to no more than 20 minutes by the end of the year.

## **2.2J: TRANSITIONS**

Teachers should minimize wait times with thoughtful planning and preparation:

- Conduct transitions (hand washing, water breaks, bathroom, etc.) in small groups or individually when possible.
- Model and practice how you expect a transition to happen by giving children cues and establishing predictable routines with consistent goals.
- Purposeful scheduling and preparation minimize the need for unnecessary transitions throughout the day. Transitions should be accounted for when creating the classroom schedule.
- Embedded learning experiences into transitions keeps children engaged during unavoidable wait times.

## **2.2K: TECHNOLOGY**

Technology and media should be used to support learning - not an isolated activity and to expand young children’s access to new content. Screen time has been linked to increase anger/aggression and other behaviors. All videos, applications of technology, hardware (computers, iPads, iPods, Smartboards, etc.), and software should be carefully selected to support the ASELD and GOLD® Objectives and Dimensions. Teachers monitor the use of electronic devices to support children’s digital citizenship. For more detailed information about digital citizenship, please refer to pages 114-115 and Appendix Six of the ASELD document.

- Technology may be used for up to 15 minutes of individual use and 15 minutes of group use for a total of no more than 30 minutes per day.
  - Individual use of technology is limited to 15 minutes per day. Program required technology programs (i.e., Hatch, Waterford, Lexia, etc.) must be included in the student’s 15-minute independent use of technology.

- Supplemental use of technology to enhance group times should not exceed 15 minutes per day.
- Opportunities for using computer labs (located away from the classroom) should be limited to one time per week for no more than 30 minutes.
- Children should be redirected to other activities rather than waiting for electronics to be available. Teachers should develop a system to ensure that all children have a turn to use technology.
- Refer to the ASELD, pages 110-117, and Appendix Six for additional information on Technology in Early Learning Programs.

## 2.2L: WRITING/HANDWRITING

The classroom should be a print-rich environment with alphabet charts, writing models, morning messages, daily news, letters, labels, etc. to demonstrate the purposes of writing. Lined paper can be available in the Writing Area and throughout the room for exploration, but it is not used for instructional purposes. Formal, rote handwriting instruction and letter formation in large or small groups (tracing or copying) are not developmentally appropriate.

- Explicit instruction is provided to children on an individual basis in response to expressed interest.
- Children should have authentic ways to write their names. For example, signing-in is a daily part of the arrival process. This is a progression of skills: from recognition of the child's picture, to recognizing name, to tracing name, to copying name, to ultimately writing name independently by the end of the school year.
- Child-created stories, writing, and dictation should be exhibited to encourage writing.



## 2.2M: WORKSHEETS

The development of fine motor skills is best accomplished through experimentation with suitable materials such as playdough, puzzles, manipulatives, various drawing and writing instruments, paper and scissors, beads and laces, etc.

- Pre-made data collection, graphing, or recording sheets where children can document their own ideas and solve problems may be used.
- Coloring pages are closed ended and should not be used. Please consult the FCPK coach for guidance.
- Photocopied worksheets which require a child to match items (i.e., upper-lower case letters, rhymes, etc.), fill-in-the-blanks, trace or write repeated shapes, letters or numerals, use lines for handwriting, or any similar activity that demands one correct answer, are not developmentally appropriate in FCPK.

*The amount of space is important because it influences the number and types of activities that children can effectively engage in at the same time. Insufficient space can lead to conflicts due to crowding. ECERS*

*“Children are less likely to run and get in others’ way if traffic paths go around interest areas rather than from one end of the room to the other.”*

*(Cairone & Mackrain, 125)*



## 2.3: THE CLASSROOM PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

FCPK programs provide an environment which is clean, safe, and conducive to high-quality learning. A setting that is well designed supports goals for children and allows teachers to observe and interact with them in positive ways to support development and learning. Smaller, defined spaces allow children to concentrate on work and engage in complex play. Additionally, it allows for young dual language learners to demonstrate what they are learning across languages.

- Each classroom has space for 18 children.
  - A minimum of 35 square feet per child (630 square feet total)
- Classrooms are arranged to allow appropriate supervision of all children at all times.
  - Classrooms should be clean, organized, and free from non-instructional clutter.
    - Teacher areas are clutter free and must not intrude on children’s workspace. Teacher desks/filing cabinets are not recommended in FCPK classrooms to ensure a child-centered environment.
- Pre-K providers maintain appropriate equipment, materials and supplies for each pre-k classroom.
  - Classroom furnishings are to be in place at the beginning of the school year. Worn-out furnishings/non-functioning equipment are to be replaced/removed.
  - Consumables are replenished as needed and budgeted for annually.
  - Consult with FCPK coach and monitor prior to purchasing.
- Learning and Free Choice areas have required items that are in Appendix P. Consult FCPK coach about items.

- Refer to the ASELD for environment and material suggestions across domains.
- If a classroom is to be relocated for any reason, you must contact the region director for approval prior to the move.

### 2.3A: DISPLAYS AND BULLETIN BOARDS

Displays and bulletin boards serve a purpose. Children’s work being displayed honors their progress, interest, and development. Displaying photographs of the children and their families honors their culture and creates classroom community. Bulletin boards can be another teacher in the classroom, supporting instruction, pre-literacy, and interaction.

- To support the child’s visual ability display should be eye level.
- To value and respect child’s work each child should have their own display space.
- To support child’s learning, displays reflect current theme and/or interest and on the developmental level and abilities of children.

## 2.3B: REQUIRED LEARNING AND FREE CHOICE AREAS

Area arrangement is thoughtfully planned, clearly defined, and identified with a label or signs to support universal learning. These areas are accessible to all children. Routines for learning areas should be explicitly taught and modeled.

- Quiet and noisy areas are separated so they do not interfere with or distract from adjacent areas.
- Shelves and storage bins are labeled with words and photographs/pictures to support universal learning, easy access and independent clean up.
- Materials are rotated to support learning and children’s interests.
- Books and writing materials are available in all learning and free choice areas.

## 2.3C: SAFE PLACE



The safe place supports the child when they experience big feelings such as anger, sadness, frustration, too much excitement, etc. With the support of a teacher to co-regulate the big feelings, the child learns to handle the emotions in an appropriate way. The safe place is not a time out and is not used as a punitive space. This space is a protected area that teaches children that big feelings come, and they can be regulated. While this particular space is not in Appendix P, children have shown that they benefit from such a space in the classroom. A few points of guidance are provided below.

- This is the only learning area that is to support one child at a time and not a free choice center.
- The safe place is established in a visible, and accessible area of the room.
- This area contains soft furnishings, books, writing materials, sensory materials, and quiet puzzles or games.

## 2.3D: ART

The art area gives children the opportunity to create, represent, and communicate their ideas to others. It is intended for free exploration not dictated crafts. This area is located near a water source, with a variety of materials stored on open shelves in containers, allowing for easy access, and clean up by the children. A variety of materials should always be available.

- Children will have easy access to art material for exploration, interaction, and creative expression daily.
- Paint is out for daily use and easel is set up.
- Appendix P has specific requirements for items.
- Refer to the ASELD, pages 171-182, for additional information on Creative Art.

 <b>ART</b>	VS	 <b>CRAFT</b>
Creative, unique, original	vs	Similar or identical to other children's
Comes from within the child	vs	Directed by an adult
Open-ended, end results unknown	vs	Direction-oriented resulting in end product
Process is valued over end product	vs	Finished product valued over process
Allows for self-expression	vs	Copying and imitating expected

### 2.3E: FINE MOTOR AND MANIPULATIVES

Fine motor activities encourage the development of eye-hand coordination which is important as preschool children learn self-help skills and become ready for future skills such as writing. These skills do not naturally emerge, they involve coordinated efforts between the brain and muscles. Fine motor materials help practice the skills needed to handle small objects with fingers, especially the fingers and thumb working together. For example, children use sight to guide finger movements, such as looking to see where the hole is in a bead in order to push through string.

- Some classrooms combine the math and manipulative areas due to space limitations.
- Appendix P has specific requirements for items.
- Refer to the ASELD, pages 188-189, for additional information on fine motor development

### 2.3F: LISTENING

The Listening Area models fluent reading, introduces new vocabulary, and supports listening skills. This center is in a quiet area of the room with comfortable seating and includes a CD player/listening device, headphones, recorded stories/books. Appendix P has specific requirements for items. Please note: If you use an iPad in the Listening Area, this time counts as part of the device guidance in Section 2.2K. One of the goals of the Listening Area is to allow children to become familiar with print materials. Use of an electronic device in place of a printed book is not encouraged.

*“Most young children are uninhibited, enthusiastic performers and lovers of music and movement, both of which enrich children’s lives and learning in many ways.”*

*(Copple & Bredekamp, 177)*



### 2.3G: MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

When preschool children dance, they are using rhythm and space to learn more about their body’s ability to move, express ideas, and convey feelings. Listening to and producing various kinds of music while exploring instruments develops an appreciation for musical expressions.

- This area needs access to a CD player/music source separate from the Listening Area.
- A variety of songs from other countries and languages will be available.
- Appendix P has specific requirements for items.
- Refer to the ASELD, pages 174-177, for additional information on Music, Movement, and Dance.

### 2.3H: BLOCKS

In block play children learn math and science concepts. Block play also helps with problem-solving and developing gross and fine motor skills. Children use blocks as a representation of their world such as a house, street, or a farm. They begin to understand relationships as they work together cooperatively or as an individual. Blocks are building materials that children carefully place and balance to build structures. They are materials that do not restrict children by having to fit pieces together in a special way.

- Plastic interlocking blocks that fit together and small table blocks are considered fine motor materials and should be placed in Fine Motor area.
- The Block area has enough floor space for a minimum of three children to be able to independently build large structures.

- This area needs a large rug (for many classrooms the whole/ large group area) located in a space that is out of the traffic flow.
- Appendix P has specific requirements for items.

### 2.3I: DRAMATIC PLAY

When children invent dramatic play scenarios, they use oral language and cognitive skills which support reading comprehension. Dramatic play occurs when children act out roles and use figures such as small toy people in a dollhouse. During this time, children practice the most language skills in the classroom and develop social skills. Children who are successful in dramatic play have a good chance for success in school because of their language and social skills.

- The Dramatic Play area is large enough for at least three children to engage in self-created make-believe play and includes the following:
  - Theme related props for transforming the Dramatic Play area into imaginative play environments such as fantasy (capas, hats, costume jewelry), seasonal (scarves, mittens, raincoats, umbrella), beauty shop, camping, pet store, doctor’s office, department store, restaurant, etc.
  - The Dramatic Play area can be enhanced with “found” objects such as a real mixer, iron, or hair dryer with the cord removed, keys, phones, purses, baskets, shopping bags, etc.
  - Appendix P has specific requirements for items.
  - Refer to the ASELD, pages 178-181, for additional information on Drama and Acting.

*“Research shows that pretend play strengthens cognitive capacities, including sustained attention, memory, logical reasoning, language and literacy skills, imagination, creativity, understanding of emotions, and the ability to reflect on one’s own thinking, inhibit impulses, control one’s behavior, and take another person’s perspective.” (Copple & Bredekamp, 132)*

### 2.3J: SENSORY AND DISCOVERY TABLES OR BINS

The sensory area allows children the opportunity to manually experiment with a variety of materials, including but not limited to sand and water. Children should have the opportunity to dig, scoop, pour, and naturally compare and measure materials of different textures, volumes, and weights. In this learning area, children become little scientists. They ask questions and wonder why as they investigate and gather information. For many, sand and water activities are relaxing and stress-reducing. Very active children tend to calm down while running their fingers through sand or pouring from one container to another.

- Some classrooms combine the Sensory and Discovery area with the Science area due to space limitations.
- Appendix P has specific requirements for items.



*“Understanding the mechanics of the writing system has a moderate correlation with reading in the primary grades. Writing originates from drawing and is supported by make-believe play.”*

**ODL 106**



### **2.3L: READING/LIBRARY**

Helping preschoolers develop an enjoyable relationship with books is a vital step towards early reading skills. Early childhood professionals have an important role in preparing a child for lifelong literacy. Children need access to books to develop book handling skills, such as holding a book right-side up and progressing from front to back. Joining a child in this area to read a book together supports the child’s understanding that written word can be spoken. Reading to a child is also a vital step in building vocabulary in children, which has a direct correlation to later literacy. The Library is in a quiet section of the room with comfortable furnishings.

- The Library area has class-made books displayed.
- Additional language materials should be available such as: puppets, felt/flannel board story characters, and stuffed animals to enhance storytelling experiences.
- A minimum of one face-out display storage unit is required for visibility and easy access to books. Additional books should be organized in baskets or bins by themes or genres and rotated on a regular basis.
- Appendix P has specific requirements for items.
- Refer to the ASELD, pages 158-165, for additional information on Emergent Reading.

*Science is not just a set of facts for children to learn; it is a process or a way of thinking and understanding the world.*

**ASELD**



### **2.3K: WRITING**

The Writing area supports the development of the stages of writing. As emergent writing skills develop, young learners often mimic what they see in the world around them such as writing a shopping list and making notes. An important component of literacy involves connecting that print carries meaning.

- This area is separate from the Art area.
- Writing materials (paper and pencils) are available in all learning areas.
- Appendix P has specific requirements for items.
- See the ASELD document on page 268 for the Stages of Writing.

### **2.3M: SCIENCE/NATURE**

Preschoolers are curious about the natural world around them. Children need safe, hands-on opportunities to explore their surroundings using their senses: hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch. By exploring materials, children learn about weight, shape, color, and how things work, move, and change.

- To support children’s curiosity, a teacher-directed science experience occurs at least once a week.
- Reference books related to themes or seasons should be available.
- Appendix P has specific requirements for items.
- Refer to the ASELD, pages 100-109, for additional information on Science Concepts.

## 2.3N: MATH

Just as preschool teachers support children’s literacy, they use many opportunities during the day to promote competence in math. Preschoolers need many hands-on opportunities to explore quantity, size, and shape to build the foundation for later abstract mathematical learning. Math encourages children to analyze problems, create solutions, and encourages alternative approaches to problems. Through this process, essential skills are developed that will aid in school and lifelong success.

- Some classrooms combine the math and manipulative areas due to space limitations.
- Appendix P has specific requirements for items.
- Refer to the ASELD, pages 123-144, for additional information on Mathematical Thinking.

## 2.3O: OUTDOOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT/OUTDOOR PLAY

As children demonstrate balance, coordination, and strength, they are showing school readiness skills to do things such as balance in a chair and pay attention. The outdoor learning environment is an extension of the indoor classroom. Children develop their large muscle coordination through active outdoor play and need many opportunities to develop competence and confidence in their gross motor skills. While children develop many of their physical capabilities through play, they also need planned movement activities and structured physical skill development opportunities. The outdoor play area is arranged so children can be supervised by sight and sound at all times. Teachers practice active supervision, meaning they are moving around supervising, engaging in play with the children as well as monitoring all play.

- Sixty minutes of gross motor activity is required daily which may be broken into two blocks of time throughout the day if needed.
- A minimum of 60 square feet per child (1,080 square feet total) on the playground.
  - An age-appropriate, fenced-in, playground with shade should be made available each day and cannot be shared with younger or older children at time of play.
  - Provisions are made to ensure that children have the proper outerwear to engage in outside play year-round. For example, raincoats for drizzly days and coats/gloves for colder days.
  - Other opportunities for outside activities are encouraged (e.g. tricycle trail, green space, gardens, art, music, etc.)
  - Children with disabilities should be provided opportunities to participate in the outdoor curriculum and activities.
  - The OSR has at least one certified Early Childhood Playground Safety inspector per region to provide guidance and resources for safe environments and playground quality enhancement.
  - See Appendix Q for Playground Safety and Recommendations and Appendix P for Gross Motor items.
  - Refer to the ASELD, pages 185-187, for additional information on Physical Development

*Research tells us that children’s early math achievement is a bigger predictor of school success than reading!*

**ASELD**

*Young children are able to focus and pay better attention during and after physical activity.*

**ASELD**

## 2.4: CHILD BEHAVIOR

Children need, safe nurturing environments to learn to interact with others. When challenging behaviors arise, the impact is far-reaching and impacts not only the teacher and child but also the large classroom community and their families as well. Preschool expulsions and suspensions have long-term implications. The U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services warns that “young students who are expelled or suspended are as much as ten times more likely to drop out of high school, experience academic failure and grade retention, hold negative school attitudes, and face incarceration than those who are not.” (ED/HHS, 2014, p.3) *First Class Pre-K children are not to be expelled.*

### 2.4A: POSITIVE, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL APPROACHES

FCPK supports interventions for promoting social, emotional, and behavioral development of young children. Teachers should have a plan in place for scenarios involving serious social-emotional and behavioral concerns. Each classroom should create and discuss this plan with their coach before challenging situations arise. In the event challenges occur, the goal is to keep everyone safe and help all children build skills to be successful. In severe instances when a child is in danger of harming himself or others, safety, empathy, understanding, and strategies are needed to support the child through the upset. Parents should be immediately notified of the incident and a conference scheduled. During this conference, the teachers need to share effective, positive behavior strategies with the child’s parents to ensure continuity between the classroom and the child’s home. If behavioral concerns persist, alternative services and resources to assist the child and family should be pursued. Directors and teachers collaborate with coach to request the CONNECT Team and/or Mental Health Consultant support.

When challenging situations occur:

- Coaches provide support in utilizing Conscious Discipline, Devereux, “FLIP IT,” and/or other appropriate strategies.
- Teachers model conflict resolution processes as children learn to solve their own problems and conflicts by:
  - Acknowledging the conflict and the feelings of the children.
  - Allowing each child to speak and explain his/her perspective.
  - Helping the children decide on and implement a solution and plan different ways to behave in the future.
- Redirection shifts a child’s attention from what the child is currently doing to something safer or something that is preferable. Generally, redirection says, “You may not do X, you can do Y,” or, “You may not do X here, you can do X there or there.”
- Collect data on when the behavior is happening. A reviewing of data may find that an adjustment is needed to the daily schedule, routines, or procedures.
- Use ASELD as a guide for behavior expectations and Teaching Strategies™ GOLD® Social-Emotional Objectives/Dimensions as a guide to document concerns in the area of behavior. By using GOLD® as a documentation tool, this information will be valuable when conferencing with families and support personnel to pinpoint behavioral concerns.
- Escalate a request for support from CONNECT Team and/or Mental Health Consultant.
- If a child has an IEP in place, the IEP team should be consulted.

FCKP Program providers and teachers:

- Should never use any form of physical or mental punishment. This includes, but is not limited to paddling, striking, pulling, pushing, swatting, placing hands on, hitting, shaming, or threatening.
- Should not impose time-out or isolation, threats, closing learning areas and/or withdrawal of playtime.
- Should not use behavior charts, stoplights, and/or other displays of behavior documentation publicly to shame children.
- Should not use stickers, candy, treasure boxes, and other extrinsic rewards for the purpose of singling out children to reward good behavior.

## **2.4B: MODIFIED STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

- In some instances, it may be necessary for a child to have a modified school day to be successful. If a child is placed on modified attendance, this is a temporary placement. The goal is to ultimately have the child fully return to the classroom. Programs must contact their coach and region director to discuss requests for modified attendance and the submission of the necessary documentation (Appendix G).
- Any form of modified attendance (i.e., less than 6.5 hours of instructional time) requires prior approval from the region director.
- Modified attendance should be used in conjunction with child-specific interventions and documented responses to the intervention. Child-specific interventions may be provided in the form of home visiting and/or mental health consultation and should be discussed with the coach.



*“Alabama’s economic future depends on early investment in its kids,” said NIEER Director Steve Barnett. “Ensuring that every child has access to high-quality preschool can help pave the way for their success in school, on the job, and in Alabama’s communities.” ADECE website*

## **Section 3: The Alabama First Class Pre-K Program Administration**

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Successful FCPK program administration ensures that developmentally appropriate practices are maintained, qualified teachers are in place, and that all children have access to quality care and instruction. Administering a FCPK program encompasses equal access, daily operations, and fiscal responsibility. The OSR expects quality care and education for Alabama’s four-year-old children and the responsible use of taxpayer dollars. Therefore, adhering to the FCPK Guidelines is critical to staying in good standing and in partnership. Non-adherence to the FCPK Guidelines puts a program at risk of disciplinary action, including but not limited to, the termination of funding by the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education’s Office of School Readiness.

### **3.1: FIRST CLASS PRE-K DIRECTOR**

Program Directors are essential to the administration of a quality FCPK Program. They are tasked with adhering to all aspects of the FCPK Guidelines. The OSR offers support and professional development throughout the year.

- Monitors regularly meet with directors to review expectations in support of fiscal management including, but not limited to, the review of financial documentation of the program expenditures. Further guidance is given in the budget section of these guidelines.
- Training is offered to program directors on the grants management system, AlaCEED registration system, ECEDData information management, child development data such as GOLD® and other platforms used to administer a FCPK classroom.
- To adequately support classroom(s), program directors should make every effort to attend



professional development with teachers.

- Program directors are required to attend grantee training to ensure understanding of current guidelines.

### **3.2: FUNDING AWARDS**

The OSR funds FCPK classrooms in a variety of delivery systems (public schools, private childcares, faith-based programs, community partnerships, etc.) through a competitive funding process. All funds granted to programs are to provide a fully enrolled, high-quality pre-k classroom experience. Funding is contingent on adhering to FCPK Guidelines.

- Programs should have at least two month's operating costs in reserve as a sign of fiscal health. Fiscal health of the grantee organization is an important condition of receipt of state funds. Grantees and potential grantees will be assessed using an ADECE fiscal health risk assessment.
- All programs are expected to receive and spend funds in accordance with state requirements.
- Funds are disbursed in three or four payments based on program choice.
- FCPK programs will pay the lead and auxiliary teacher salaries and make required purchases according to established guidelines even if expenditures must be made prior to the first check disbursement.

#### **3.2A: SELECTION AND AWARDING OF FIRST CLASS PRE-K CLASSROOMS**

Interested applicants, new or existing, will go through an application process.

The criterion for selection includes:

- The need for four-year-old access in the community served by the applicant.
- The ability to offer high-quality early learning and care as stated in the FCPK guidelines.
- The program design and existing suitable facility.
- Demonstrated sound fiscal management practices.
- DHR licensing if applicable.

Process for awarding:

- Approved programs will receive electronic notification via email of the funding decision. Please note that such notification may come from the ADECE funding management system and may be caught in funded organization's spam filter. Efforts will be made to contact the recipient organization, but it is incumbent on the recipient to access the funding system for updates and notifications.
- In order for the State of Alabama and the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education to issue a payment:
  - A valid Vendor Code and Address Code must be provided through the State of Alabama Accounting and Resource System (STAARS) Vendor Self Service Portal.
  - Direct deposit of First Class Pre-K funds is required for all grantees.
- The legal signatory for the program entity must sign and submit the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The grantee organization is responsible for ensuring the building administrator and other relevant parties within the grantee organization receive copies of the MOU. The MOU may be accessed by the grantee organization's designated official to download copies as needed.
- The Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) must endorse the agreement.



### **3.2B BUDGET GUIDELINES**

Funds are to be used for the expressed purpose of meeting quality benchmarks. If funds are not utilized for the intended purposes, the recipient will be in non-compliance. It is important that programs demonstrate sound fiscal management. The following guidelines have been established to support programs in meeting the expectation:

- All private childcare providers will have a separate bank account solely dedicated for FCPK electronic deposits and expenditures. This account should be set up before first check disbursements are made and should be used solely for FCPK transactions.
- All budgets are completed and submitted by the program administrator in accordance with the timeline.
- Budgets reflect the total amount of all funds used to support the OSR classroom including but not limited to the minimum 25% supplemental funds.
- Any budget change greater than 10% per line item will need approval of the monitor.
- Supporting documentation of purchases should be provided to the monitor within 30 days from the date of purchase or the purchase may be deemed ineligible to be paid from OSR funds.
- In order to purchase a single item of more than \$300, a Permission to Purchase (Appendix M) Laserfiche form will be completed. Grantees must receive permission prior to such purchase or expenditure may be deemed ineligible for OSR funds.

### **3.2C: TUITION/PARENT FEES**

It is the intent of state policy makers that parents do not bear the burden for paying for state funded First Class Pre-K.

- Programs where the state funds are the primary funding source are not allowed to charge tuition, parent fees, nor monthly donations.
  - No child may be denied enrollment due to the family's inability to pay requested tuition/parent fees in programs where FCPK funds are a supplemental funding stream. All children must receive the same opportunities during the Pre-K day regardless of ability and/or willingness to pay tuition/ fees.
- No additional fees (other than meals) may be required of any child (e.g., registration, uniforms, field trips, curriculum fees, classroom supplies, photographs, t-shirts).
- Voluntary donations and/or supplies may be requested. No child may be denied participation if families do not give requested donations and/or supplies.

### **3.3: PROGRAM DELIVERY**

A successful program delivery has sound practices, adheres to licensing requirements and operating timelines. Children learn best in programs that are an extension of their community, where they feel safe and have a sense of belonging. Early childhood professionals are able to provide support to the family and create a safe, caring learning environment when they have an understanding of a child's development.

#### **3.3A: DHR LICENSING**

Programs must hold a current DHR license and abide by DHR Performance Standards. For licensing information, contact the Department of Human Resources Child Care Services at [dhr.alabama.gov](http://dhr.alabama.gov).

- Public school systems, military schools, colleges, and universities are not required to be licensed by DHR. However, all programs receiving OSR funding must adhere to DHR safety requirements for both the classroom and the playground.
- FCPK programs that are suspended or placed on probation by DHR are automatically suspended by the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, Office of School Readiness.
  - Program directors are required to report such suspension to their region director in writing within 24 hours of notification by DHR. The ADECE receives monthly reports of deficiencies and actions taken by DHR in child care centers in Alabama. If the ADECE receives notice of violations and/or probation before notified by the grantee, such grantee may be deemed ineligible for continuation of funding.
  - Funds are forfeited during the period of the DHR probation or suspension.
  - Funding is not automatically reinstated if the program’s license is reinstated by DHR.
  - The OSR reserves its right to review the program upon reinstatement of the DHR license to determine whether to reinstate funding, continue the OSR suspension, or terminate funding.

### **3.3B: CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING AND INVESTIGATIONS**

It is required by law for anyone associated with the FCPK program to report suspected abuse or neglect. See full text of Alabama’s Mandatory Child Abuse and Neglect reporting law in Appendix N. The pre-k provider must notify the OSR Director in writing immediately anytime there is an open abuse or neglect investigation involving the FCPK classroom or any classroom at the site and when resolution is completed.

*Complete and accurate recording of information standardizes processes, reduces oversights, and supports consistency in providing quality care for children.*

### **3.3C: DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

FCPK programs are expected to complete, submit, and file all required documents. Examples of required documentation include student information, teacher credentials, assessments, health records, budgets, etc. Failure to maintain and submit required documentation places a program out of compliance and may result in disciplinary action.

- Documents and records, for each program year, are retained onsite for six years after the end of the grant year per the requirements outlined in the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education Records Disposition Authority.
- OSR documentation is confidential and must be stored in a locked, secure, and compliant manner. Child records must kept confidential in compliance with all state and federal laws and regulations.
- Incident report in Appendix F is completed when a serious accident injury or medical situation occurs to inform the OSR.
- Appendices contains a timeline of required online and on-site documentation as well as specific guidance on document retention.

### **3.3D: ACCREDITATION**

The OSR encourages all programs to obtain accreditation from professional organizations. If a FCPK Program is accredited by a professional accrediting organization, please give accreditation documentation to your monitor within 30 days of the program start date.

### **3.3E: OPERATING TIMELINE**

The FCPK program provides high-quality, developmentally appropriate activities, and instruction in the following timeline:

- First day of attendance begins no later than September 1. Contact Region Director for support in beginning school structures as needed.
- Full enrollment in each classroom is 18 students by September 30.
- Head Start classrooms should follow the current *Head Start Performance Standards* enrollment requirements.
- The child’s instructional day begins no earlier than 7:30 a.m. and runs at least 6.5 hours. Drop off and pick up is not included in the 6.5-hour instructional day. Providers may choose to run longer than the 6.5 hour day to meet the needs of parents and families they serve.
- Classrooms operate 5 days per week and OSR recommends 180 days per year. (Each classroom is funded for 187 days to include 7 days of professional development for staff.)
- All delivery systems are encouraged to coordinate with the local school calendar.
- Days missed due to inclement weather must be made up unless a state of emergency was declared for the corresponding school system in which the site exists. Days may be added to the end of the year or taken from previously identified breaks i.e., spring break, etc. A revised calendar with dates must be submitted to the monitor and provided to all participating parents/families.
- E-Learning days are inclusive of instruction and assessment opportunities. Please contact your coach for specific, acceptable e-learning lesson plans. It is the intent of the OSR that e-learning is an exception and only occurs on rare occasions.
- OSR does not require, provide, or fund extended day services. Grantees may choose to operate such wrap-around services and may fund these activities through parent fees or other funding sources as available. Extended day may provide families with the tools to keep children enrolled in the First Class Pre-K program.

### **3.3F: MEALS AND SNACKS**

Lunch and snack time must be in the daily schedule. Programs may offer meals or parents may provide meals or snacks. Children who have healthy eating patterns are more likely to perform better socially and academically. FCPK providers are strongly encouraged to participate in The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

### **3.3G: ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION**

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

### **3.3H: TRANSPORTATION**

Individual program sites that choose to provide transportation must adhere to local transportation guidelines, laws, and DHR Minimum Standards, including restraints, harnesses, and/or car seats.

### **3.3I: UNIFORMS**

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

### **3.3J: REQUIRED HEALTH SCREENINGS**

All FCPK Providers must offer on-site physical, hearing, vision, and dental screenings.

- Screenings are to be completed by October 31<sup>st</sup>.
  - Screenings are strongly encouraged for any new children who enroll in the classroom after the initial screening deadline has occurred.
  - If a teacher has concerns about a child's physical health prior to the screening, it is strongly suggested to schedule a conference to discuss concerns with the child's parent or guardian.
- Screenings must be offered by trained professionals onsite. Programs may choose to partner with local providers in their area.
- Health screenings should be documented on Appendix E. However, other forms may be accepted as long as they contain the same information.
- The Health Screenings Permission and Review Form (Appendix D) is used for parental/guardian permission for screenings and acknowledgement of receiving results.
  - Parents or guardians have the option to opt-out of all or some of the screenings offered.
  - If a child has been screened by the family's health care providers within the last year, the parent may attach a copy to Appendix D.
  - Teachers review screeners at parent conferences and provide appropriate resources.

### **3.3K: DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS AND ASSESSMENTS**

Developmental Screening and Assessments are components of high-quality early childhood programs. They provide valuable information about each child's interests, strengths, and needs. Developmental screenings involve a partnership with families to provide a snapshot of a child's motor, cognitive, language, and social-emotional skills. Assessment is an ongoing process that includes observation and provides information about development over time.

OSR screenings and assessments are based on current practices/needs. They may change as needed to support children and families.

- The Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) - measures development in 5 domains: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, personal-social.
- Completed by parent/guardian either online or hard copies.
  - Completed hard copies are entered into the ASQ system by teachers.
  - It is the responsibility of the program to provide computer access and assistance to



- families if needed.
- ASQ-3 results are shared with families.
  - Teachers share results during the 1st semester family conference.
  - Scores in the gray/black areas on the screener will be shared by the teacher with the parents as soon as possible. The Universal Referral Form (Appendix R) will be shared at this time. Teachers email or fax completed forms to the intake specialist with the Alabama Partnership for Children. Coaches and/or monitors assist with this process.
- The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment for Preschoolers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (DECA-P2) is used in FCPK as a strength-based approach to promote resilience in children.
- The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (PPVT)
- Administered annually by ADECE staff to randomly selected Pre-K classrooms/students throughout the state.
- PPVT assessment is utilized to show growth in the area of receptive vocabulary and is a component of on-going research.

### **3.4: RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

The FCPK program must be open and non-discriminatory. A public random selection drawing will be used to choose the children in the FCPK classroom unless otherwise mandated by Federal law.

#### **3.4A: EQUAL ACCESS**

Children cannot be denied participation on the basis of income, sex, race, color, or national origin, or disability (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); (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. Income may not be used as a consideration for enrollment unless a program is federally mandated to do so.

The McKinney-Vento Act, reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, applies to homeless children attending LEA-administered preschools. 1 42 USC §11432(g)(i)(F)(i); US Dept. of Education (July 2016). Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program Non-Regulatory Guidance, N-4. States must ensure that homeless children have access to public preschool programs, administered by the state or local educational agency (SEA or LEA), as provided to other children. 42 USC §11432(g)(i)(F)(i). Children experiencing homelessness must receive priority and be provided a seat in the classroom. These children are not placed in random selection.

Random selection is used to ensure equal access for enrollment. For the following situations, contact your Region Director for guidance:

- Federal programs, such as Head Start classrooms, which must follow federal enrollment requirements.
- Programs that currently have 3-year-old children, that will be age eligible for First Class Pre-K.

*“Systematic, ongoing child assessment provides information on children’s development and learning. It helps inform curriculum planning, teaching, and individualizing for each child.”*

*Head Start ECLKC*

### **3.4B: RECRUITMENT**

Notices for recruitment must be publicly posted at least 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, etc. where appropriate.



#### Timeline of Recruitment Events for Existing Classrooms

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

#### January 15 - Pre-Registration Opens

- Programs should advertise by placing recruitment notices around the community. Recruitment notices must include: (a) date, time, location and required information needed for application, (b) non-discriminatory and equal opportunity statements, and (c) the date, time, and place of the random selection drawing (the OSR will send a flyer to all directors).
- Programs will conduct pre-registration via the online AlaCEED platform after recruiting at least one calendar month prior to the random selection drawing. (See Appendix S) The program is responsible for providing computer access and assistance to families if needed.

#### March 1-31 - Random Selection

- Programs will hold a public random selection drawing. Social media platforms are not encouraged. Programs should verify all pre registrants prior to start of the drawing. Contact region director for guidance.
- After children are drawn to fill all available positions during the random selection process, the remaining pre-registered children will continue to be drawn and numbered in the order they are drawn. This will be the order of the waiting list when new children are added to the classroom.
- Unique considerations for random selection:
  - If a program has multiple birth siblings (twins, triplets, etc.) all names should be placed in the drawing separately.
  - If one multiple birth sibling is drawn, all multiple birth siblings are added to the classroom.
  - In circumstances of children with shared addresses, please consult the RD.

#### April 1-30 - Child Status

- April 2-15 - Directors mark status
  - Children selected are marked in AlaCEED as “pending.”
  - Children drawn after classroom is filled are marked in AlaCEED as “waitlisted.”
- April 16-18 - Emails to Families
  - Automated emails are sent notifying families of *pending* or *waitlisted status*. Pre-K programs that want to opt out of automated emails must notify Region Director in writing by April 14<sup>th</sup>.

- *Families* are asked to accept or decline the *pending* position by contacting the FCPK Program Director within 7 days.
- April 19 - Change *status* in AlaCEED
  - *Completed* if the position is accepted and assign to classroom.
  - *Dropped* if the position is declined.
- May 15 - No student should be left *enrolled* after this date.

### **3.4C: MAINTAINING ENROLLMENT AND WAITING LISTS**

Recruitment and advertising for the classroom should continue throughout the year in order to maintain enrollment and waitlist. 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.

The OSR expects that all classrooms will maintain full enrollment throughout the school year. Programs must apply for an enrollment waiver if a classroom has fewer than 18 children. Classes with continued low enrollment may have disciplinary actions.

### **3.5: TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN PLANS**

Early childhood providers, schools, and community agencies work together to create seamless kindergarten transitions. To help guide this work, the OSR requires all funded FCPK programs, to use the Alabama Transition to Kindergarten Toolkit (ATKT) to develop their annual transition plans. (\*See Appendix T) Once plans are fully developed, programs should submit a copy of the transition plan to their respective monitor.

### **3.6: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION NONCOMPLIANCE**

The FCPK Guidelines have been created and published by the OSR to ensure that programs provide a safe and high-quality learning environment for the students in Alabama’s FCPK programs. If programs do not use state and federal funds as outlined in the FCPK Guidelines and MOU, these programs will be in noncompliance and at risk of losing funding. Disciplinary action will be imposed on pre-k classrooms that do not meet FCPK Guidelines and stipulations.

Noncompliance may result in a warning, probation, suspension, and/or immediate termination. Depending on the type of non-compliance, some disciplinary actions may rise to the level of probation, suspension, or immediate termination of partnership. The disciplinary actions may or may not be used in sequential order. The determination of the disciplinary action may be determined by the director of OSR and RD.

#### **3.6A: WARNING**

When noncompliance is found, programs will be notified they are out of compliance in a memo, letter, or other means of communication by the region director.

#### **3.6B: PROBATION**

On-going and repeated noncompliance issues may lead to programs being placed on probation for a specified amount of time and/or incur a fine. During this time, the OSR team will provide continued onsite support.

### **3.6C: SUSPENSION**

Suspension may occur when a program has been placed on probation by OSR due to repeated occurrences of noncompliance. No funds will be disbursed to a program during suspension proceedings.

- Grounds for Immediate Suspension:
  - First Class Pre-K programs that are placed on probation by DHR are automatically suspended by the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, Office of School Readiness.
    - Program directors are required to report probation to their region director in writing within 24 hours of notification by DHR.
    - Funds are forfeited during the period. Funding is not automatically reinstated if the program's license is reinstated by DHR. The OSR reserves its right to review the program upon reinstatement of the DHR license to determine whether to reinstate funding, continue the OSR suspension for a period of time, or terminate funding.
  - Immediate suspension may apply to DHR exempt programs in cases of child endangerment.
    - LEA program directors are required to report child endangerment to their region director in writing within 24 hours of incident.
    - Depending on the LEA's course of action, funds may be forfeited during the period of the LEA's investigation. Funding is not automatically reinstated. The OSR reserves its right to review the program to determine whether to reinstate funding, continue the OSR suspension for a period of time, or terminate funding.
  - The region director will notify the program director, in writing, of his/her recommendation to suspend funding.
    - 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 recommended suspension and/or request a hearing

### **3.6D: TERMINATION/DEFUNDING**

Programs may be defunded, and partnership immediately terminated if violations are considered severe. A defunded program must consult the OSR director before reapplying for First Class Pre-K funding.

- Grounds for Immediate Termination:
  - The Department of Early Childhood Education may immediately terminate funding in cases of child endangerment or gross negligence. Termination of pre-k sites is immediate when the facility and/or campus is found to pose any safety risk to the children. Aid will be terminated, and students will be removed from the facility. Thereafter, all unused funds must be refunded to the ADECE. Equipment, furniture, classroom materials and supplies as well as playground equipment shall be returned to ADECE if purchased with First Class Pre-K funds, and grantee will incur the cost of removal and delivery of said items. Alternatively, the program may keep said items and refund cost of said items to the department.
- Funding may be terminated for any or all, but not limited to, the following reasons:



- Child neglect and endangerment
- The program has misused or lost program funds.
- The program is no longer a licensed center.
- The program provides false data in submitted reports.
- The program has failed to comply with the required guidelines and reporting requirements that are outlined in the First Class Pre-K Guidelines.
- The program has failed to correct deficiencies identified by the assigned monitor in an evaluation or documented during a site visit, in a timely manner.
- Termination Recommendation:
  - The region director/OSR Director will notify the program, in writing, of his/her recommendation to terminate funding.
  - A formal hearing maybe scheduled upon request. If the program director does not appear at hearing, the hearing process will continue. The OSR hearing committee may terminate funding.
  - The decision of the hearing committee is final. No funds will be disbursed to a program during termination proceedings.
- Formal Hearing Regarding Termination
  - When a recommendation for termination of funding is made, a formal hearing may be requested by the program. The presiding officer (Secretary of Early Childhood Education) shall conduct a full and fair hearing upon request, 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.
- Formal Hearing Process:
  - The formal hearing committee will be composed of the Secretary of the ADECE, the OSR Director or designee, and the region director.
  - The region director and program director are entitled to present their cases 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 region director and program director.

If a decision is made to terminate, thereafter, all unused funds must be refunded to the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education. Equipment, furniture, classroom materials and supplies as well as playground equipment must be returned to the department if purchased with First Class Pre-K funds, and the program will incur the cost of removal and delivery of said items. Alternatively, the program can keep said items and refund cost of said items to the department.





# APPENDIX

## First Class Pre-K Guidelines

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# PROGRAM DIRECTOR

# CHECKLIST

TASK TO BE COMPLETED BY THE FIRST CLASS PRE-K PROGRAM DIRECTOR

01	Meet with Region Director and region team	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
02	Consult with Region Director concerning the process of OSR credential approval prior to hiring teachers	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
03	Ensure teachers, directors, registrars, CSFOs (and any others needing accounts in ECEData, GOLD, PowerSchool) complete the Personnel Profile Form	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
04	Review First Class Pre-K Program and Classroom Guidelines and Appendices	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
05	Attend new grantee guidelines training	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
06	Set up AlaCEED account	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
07	Order required furniture and materials	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
08	Contact Region Director when time and date is set to schedule room setup assistance	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
09	Ensure readiness of classroom/ cleaning and maintenance	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Schedule required trainings for Lead and Auxiliary Teachers	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>



11	Consult with Region Director concerning the process of OSR credential approval prior to hiring teachers	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
12	Consult with Monitor/Region Director to assist with budget	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
13	Technology Requirements: minimum of two tablet type devices	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
14	Curriculum	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
15	Complete conversion application for 2023-2024 funding	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
16	Schedule parent orientation date and time	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>
17	·Make copies of required FCPK documents for parent orientation packages	COMPLETED <input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix A: First Class Pre-K Timeline

STATUS	TASK	APPENDIX	SUBMISSION DEADLINE	SUBMISSION FORMAT
	<b>Initial Budget</b>		September 30th	ECEData
	<b>Accreditation Documentation</b>		September 30th	Copy to Monitor
	<b>Official Transcripts (All New Teachers)</b>		<p>Within 30 days of hire date</p> <p>Electronically Submit: officialtranscript@ece.alabama.gov</p>	<p>Complete the online Teacher Credential Verification form. *See Laserfiche link at the end of the Appendices</p> <p>Upload an unofficial transcript</p> <p>Mail official copy to: Alabama Dept. Early Childhood Education Attn: Teacher Transcripts P.O. Box 302755 Montgomery, AL 36130-2755</p>
	<b>Student Change Report</b> <i>(For new students or change in information for existing students)</i>	Online	As Needed	Laserfiche
	<b>Teacher Salary Schedules</b>	B		
	<b>Background Check Verification Form</b>	C	<p>Within 10 days of starting school</p> <p>*or within 10 days of employment date for any new staff hired during the school year</p>	<p>Mail official notarized copy to: Alabama Dept. of Early Childhood Education Office of School Readiness Attention: Background Verification Form P.O. Box 302755 Montgomery, AL 36130-2755</p>
	<b>Health Screening Permission &amp; Review</b>	D	Permission by the 20th day of school; parent review by Dec. 15th	On-Site
	<b>Child Health Screening Record</b>	E	October 31st	On-Site
	<b>Incident Report Form</b>	F	As Needed (but due to Region Director within 24 hours of incident)	Laserfiche
	<b>Modified Schedule Request Form</b>	G	As Needed	Laserfiche

	<b>Parent/Family Contract</b>	H	Within 20 days of start of school	Onsite
	<b>Parent/Family Engagement Sign-In</b>	I	Ongoing	Onsite
	<b>Yearly plan of Family Engagement Activities</b>			Onsite
	<b>Individual Parent/Family Engagement Log</b>	K	Ongoing	Onsite
	<b>Amended Budget</b>		January 31st	ECEData
	<b>Permission to Purchase</b>	M	Ongoing	Laserfiche
	<b>Director, Teacher, Parent End of Year Surveys</b>		Complete within two weeks of receiving	Electronic - participant will receive a link to the survey via email
	<b>Final budget</b>		April/May Refer to Monitor Checklist	ECEData
	<b>Help Me Grow Universal Resource Form</b>	R	As Needed	Electronic - to care coordinator for your area via email or fax

## **Appendix B: First Class Pre-K Lead & Auxiliary Teacher Base Salary**

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The salary schedule for lead and auxiliary teachers, otherwise known as the salary matrix, can be found on the Alabama State Department of Education website, [www.alabamaachieves.org](http://www.alabamaachieves.org).

Refer to Section 2.1 for information about required credentials for lead and auxiliary teachers.

## Appendix C: Background Check Verification Form

---

\*Due within 10 days of the start of the school year for all First Class Pre-K Classrooms. See the timeline for submission requirements.

The safety and security of students in all First Class Pre-K funded sites is very important to the Department of Early Childhood Education. First Class Pre-K program personnel, including substitute teachers and any other person having regular contact with the classroom children, must have a satisfactory criminal background check, Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) background check and fingerprinting on file with their employer. Volunteer parents may not be left in the classroom unsupervised by classroom personnel. If an OSR grantee personnel are arrested or convicted of criminal behavior during employment in the First Class Pre-K classroom, the program must promptly inform OSR.

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

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

ADECE requires that no unchecked adults be left alone with students (unless it's their own child) until a recently passed background check can be completed and verified by the ADECE.

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
(Program Director's name), verify all employees or volunteers who have contact with Alabama First Class Pre-K program students have recently and satisfactorily passed a background check. Please send a completed **notarized** Appendix C form with the program director's signature and the date the form was completed to:

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

---

Program Director's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State of Alabama County of \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_

---

Notary's Official Signature (Seal) \_\_\_\_\_ Commission Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix D: Health Screenings Permission and Review Form

---

The Alabama First Class Pre-K program is committed to making sure that pre-k children are healthy. To do this, our classrooms offer onsite health screenings at no cost. Please check the screenings you agree to allow medical personnel (such as nurses) and/or trained professionals to administer to your child. You may also choose to opt out of some or all of the screenings if you do not wish for your child to participate.

I agree that my child may participate in the following screenings:

Vision

Dental

Hearing

Physical

All of the above

---

My child has been screened within the last year for one or more of the above screenings and a copy of the screening(s) is attached.

---

I do **not** want my child to participate in any health screenings offered through the Alabama First Class Pre-K program.

---

Student Name

---

Parent/Guardian Signature

---

Date

---

Teacher Signature

---

Date

### TO BE COMPLETED AFTER PARENT/GUARDIAN HAS REVIEWED SCREENING RESULTS

I have been given the opportunity to review the results of the health screenings my child received.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SHOULD NOT SIGN BELOW UNTIL RESULTS HAVE BEEN REVIEWED!

---

Parent/Guardian Signature

---

Date

## Appendix E: Child Health Screening Record

**To be completed by a nurse or trained professional** – not the First Class Pre-K Teacher or Program Director

Class Name: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

### VISION

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Check one for each eye: Left:  Pass  Fail Right:  Pass  Fail

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Child missed screening due to:  Absence  Parent permission denied  
 Child non-cooperative  Enrollment after screening

Signature of Screener: \_\_\_\_\_

### HEARING

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Check one for each ear: Left:  Pass  Fail Right:  Pass  Fail

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Child missed screening due to:  Absence  Parent permission denied  
 Child non-cooperative  Enrollment after screening

Signature of Screener: \_\_\_\_\_

### DENTAL

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Results:  Should see a dentist  Normal exam/no concerns

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Child missed screening due to:  Absence  Parent permission denied  
 Child non-cooperative  Enrollment after screening

Signature of Screener: \_\_\_\_\_

### PHYSICAL

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Results: Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Body Mass Index (BMI): \_\_\_\_\_ Blood Pressure: \_\_\_\_\_

Concerns/Recommendations: \_\_\_\_\_

Child missed screening due to:  Absence  Parent permission denied  
 Child non-cooperative  Enrollment after screening

Signature of Screener: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F: ADECE Incident Report Form

Complete and submit the electronic version of the form shown below at [laserfiche.alabama.gov/Forms/ADECE-IRF](http://laserfiche.alabama.gov/Forms/ADECE-IRF) to report serious accidents, injuries, medical situations, or behavior incidents. Incidents involving a crime or traffic incident should be reported directly to the police. If possible, the report should be submitted within 24 hours of the incident. For extreme incidents, contact your Region Director immediately.

INFORMATION ABOUT ADULT PERSON INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT			
Full Name:			
Classroom Name:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Program Employee Name: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Partner Organization Employee Name: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Visitor/Volunteer Name: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Vendor Name: _____
INFORMATION ABOUT THE INCIDENT			
Date of Incident:	Time:	Parent Notified? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Police Notified? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Location of Incident:		DHR Notified? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Description of Incident (what happened, how it happened, factors leading to the incident, etc.) Be as specific as possible (attach additional sheets if necessary)			
Were there any witnesses to the incident? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, attach separate sheet with names, addresses, and phone numbers.			
Was there media coverage of the incident? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, identify the media outlet and attach news clipping if available.			
Was the individual injured? If so, describe the injury (laceration, sprain, etc.), the part of the body injured, and any other information known about the resulting injury(ies).			
Was medical treatment provided? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Refused			
If yes, where was treatment provided? <input type="checkbox"/> On site <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent Care <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Room <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
REPORTER INFORMATION			
Individual Submitting Report (print name):			
Signature:			
Date Report Submitted:			

Report received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Region Director Signature)

\*Region Director should forward a signed copy to the OSR Director.

Document any follow-up action taken after receipt of the incident report.

DATE	ACTION TAKEN	BY WHOM

SAMPLE

## Appendix G: Request for Modified Schedule

Complete and submit the electronic version of the form shown below at [laserfiche.alabama.gov/Forms/ADECE-RMS](https://laserfiche.alabama.gov/Forms/ADECE-RMS). Please note that if a child has a current IEP (Individualized Education Program), please disregard this form and consult with the IEP team for any modification(s) to the child's schedule.

Name of Class: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Coach: \_\_\_\_\_ Monitor: \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Director Submitting Request: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any other modified schedule?  Yes  No

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Diagnosis (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Is anyone from the local school system coming into your classroom to assist this child?  Yes  No

If yes, how often? \_\_\_\_\_

Has the child been referred for testing with results?  Yes  No

Is the child ineligible for services?  Yes  No

If the child does not have an IEP, have the parents agreed to a referral for special education testing?  Yes  No

Do you have the child's support for this modified schedule?  Yes  No

Modified Schedule Request  Approved  Denied Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Region Director verified child's schedule: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Date modified schedule lifted: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please describe examples of how this child requires more time from both teachers than other children in the classroom. Be as detailed as possible. We rely on this information to support our decision:**

1. Specific reason(s) a modified schedule is being requested.
2. Interventions already implemented to help the child benefit from the program.
3. Information including all documentation of written correspondence and meeting notes detailing ongoing involvement with parents/family, including the discussion regarding a special education referral.
4. Behavioral documentation and instructional observations of the child to support the modified schedule request.
5. Any additional documentation parents/family voluntarily provides, such as documentation of consultation with any other outside resources (i.e., child's pediatrician, counseling services, or local school system).
6. 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.
7. A written plan describing how the child's attendance will be increased over time to the typical 6.5 hour day.



## Appendix H: Parent/Guardian Contract

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Child's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Class: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

The intent is for your child to gain the greatest possible benefits from this preschool experience. As space is limited, selection to the program is a privilege that requires parental responsibilities. Each parent is asked to carefully consider the following requirements for participating in the program. Your signature will acknowledge that you understand and agree to abide by these guidelines.

I agree to:

- Attend an orientation session at the beginning of the school year
- Attend two scheduled family conferences (one per semester)
- Attend additional conferences when requested to discuss my child's progress
- Complete a minimum of 12 hours of parent involvement
- Have my child at school by \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. (children are not admitted into the building before \_\_\_\_\_ a.m.)
- Pick up my child at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. (children must be picked up no later than \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.)
- Send a written parent/doctor excuse to my child's teacher for every absence
- Submit all required forms and documentation to my child's teacher by given deadlines, such as the ASQ-3 Developmental Screener. (This screener is entered into the Enterprise Data Base System and may provide your family with connections to resources/support to benefit your child/family. Your child's teacher will provide instructions on the completion of the ASQ-3).
- Assume responsibility for my child's conduct and progress
- Work cooperatively with my child's teachers and other site personnel
- Give the ADECE permission to assess and follow the academic performance of my child
- Give permission to use my child's demographic information for ADECE reports and publications (no identifiable information will be directly associated with your child)
- Give permission for my child to receive any additional assessments administered for the First Class Pre-K program

I understand that this program is voluntary and that as the parent/guardian it is my responsibility to adhere to this Parent Contract and to work with the program to resolve any issues that may arise during the school year.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Appendix I: Parent/Family Engagement Sign-In

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Name of Class: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Activity: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Activity: \_\_\_\_\_ Number in Attendance: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name	Parent/Guardian Signature	Relation to Child
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		
17.		
18.		
19.		
20.		

Additional Information:

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## Appendix J: Parent/Guardian Orientation

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Topics to cover during parent/family orientation:

1. Explanation of First Class Pre-K
2. Local program policies, procedures, and attendance expectations (these should be provided in writing)
3. How to complete the required paperwork, including the Ages and Stages (ASQ-3) Developmental Screener
4. What a developmentally appropriate classroom for a 4-year-olds looks like
5. Help Me Grow information.
6. What parents should expect from the program.  
For example: what a typical day in pre-k looks like and that children will be participating in hands-on learning experiences rather than sitting and doing worksheets
7. What program staff will expect from the parents (see Appendix H Parent/Family Contract)
8. Information about parent/family engagement opportunities
9. Upcoming events and deadlines
10. Field trips during the year
11. Photo/video policy for students  
This is determined at the local level, but programs are required to have a photo/video policy in place prior to the beginning of the school year. Copies of the policy containing parent signatures indicating agreement/disagreement with the policy must be kept on site and parents/guardians must be given a copy of the policy as well

## Appendix K: Parent/Family Engagement Log

Teachers should complete a log at the end of the first semester and again at the end of the second semester by listing and totaling the number of hours for each child for each Family Engagement Opportunity held. Please give the completed form to your Monitor at the end of each semester. Remember to offer parent/family hours in 1-hour increments.

Class: _____	Year: _____	Parent's Name Example: John and Betty Doe	Family Orientation Date 2 Hours	ASQ-3 Screener Date 1 Hour	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Total
Example: Jane Doe																				
1.																				
2.																				
3.																				
4.																				
5.																				
6.																				
7.																				
8.																				
9.																				
10.																				
11.																				
12.																				
13.																				
14.																				
15.																				
16.																				
17.																				
18.																				
19.																				
20.																				
Monitor Initial																				
Date																				

## Appendix L: Code of Alabama for the Office of School Readiness

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*Alabama Office of School Readiness, Code of Alabama Section 26-24-23,24,25*

### **DUTIES OF OFFICE**

The Office of School Readiness shall do all of the following:

1. Establish criteria and administer such programs and services as may be necessary for the operation and management of a voluntary prekindergarten program.
2. Administer such programs and services as may be necessary for the operation and management of preschool and certain child development programs coordinating with the Department of Education for the inclusion of preschool special education.
3. Ensure that the prekindergarten program provides a developmentally appropriate preschool program emphasizing growth in language and literacy, math concepts, science, arts, physical development, and personal and social competence.
4. Receive and disperse any funds appropriated to the office from the Legislature for the establishment, operation, and administration of the prekindergarten program. The budget of the office shall be part of the Department of Early Childhood Education.
5. Assist local units of administration in this state so as to assure the proliferation of services under this article.
6. Coordinate with the regulatory division for the licensing of child care centers and with the administration of the United States child and adult care food programs at the child care centers participating in the prekindergarten program.
7. Issue annual reports to the Governor, secretary, and Legislature concerning the administration and operation of the prekindergarten program.
8. Provide leadership for enhancement of school readiness in this state by aggressively establishing a unified approach to the state's efforts toward enhancement of school readiness. In support of this effort, the office may develop and implement specific strategies that address the state's school readiness programs.
9. Safeguard the effective use of federal, state, local, and private resources to achieve the highest possible level of school readiness for the state's children.
10. Provide technical assistance to local programs.
11. Assess gaps in services.
12. By January 2001, adopt a system for measuring school readiness that provides objective data regarding the expectations for school readiness and establish a method for collecting the data and guidelines for using the data. The measurement, the data collection, and the use of the data must serve the statewide school readiness goals. The criteria for determining which data to collect should be the usefulness of the data to state policymakers and local programs' administrators in administering programs and allocating state funds and must include the tracking of school readiness system information back to individual school readiness programs to assist in determining program effectiveness.

*(Act 2000-613, p. 1230, §5; Act 2015-160, §1.)*



## ENTITIES THAT MAY PARTICIPATE

The following entities may voluntarily, but shall not be required to, participate in the programs and services administered by the Office of School Readiness:

1. Public schools.
2. Private schools.
3. Churches.
4. Existing public prekindergarten programs.
5. Existing private prekindergarten programs.
6. Existing nonprofit prekindergarten programs.
7. Any other entities or programs approved by the office.

*(Act 2000-613, p. 1230, §6.)*

## COLLABORATION ON PROGRAMS

As additional funds become available, all programs within each county participating in school readiness shall collaborate on early education and child care programs that are funded with state and/or federal funding including, but not limited to, adult and community education programs, Even-Start literacy programs, prekindergarten early intervention programs, Head Start programs, programs offered by public and private providers of child care, migrant prekindergarten programs, Title 1 programs, subsidized child care programs, and teen parenting programs, together with any additional funds appropriated or obtained for this section. These programs shall be components of the integrated school readiness program.

*(Act 2000-613, p. 1230, §7.)*



## Appendix N: Alabama's Mandatory Child Abuse and Neglect Law

*Code of Alabama Section 26-14, Reporting of Child Abuse or Neglect*

For the purposes of this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings respectively ascribed to them by this section:

(1) ABUSE. Harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare. Harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare can occur through nonaccidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse, or sexual exploitation or attempted sexual exploitation. Sexual abuse includes the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or having a child assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of the conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of the conduct; or the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children as those acts are defined by Alabama law. Sexual exploitation includes allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution and allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child for commercial purposes.

(2) NEGLECT. Negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child, including the failure to provide adequate food, medical treatment, supervision, clothing, or shelter.

(3) CHILD. Either of the following:

a. A person under the age of 18 years.

b. A person under the age of 19 years who is in need of protective services and does not qualify for adult protective services under Chapter 9 of Title 38.

(4) DULY CONSTITUTED AUTHORITY. The chief of police of a municipality or municipality and county; or the sheriff, if the observation of child abuse or neglect is made in an unincorporated territory; or the Department of Human Resources; or any person, organization, corporation, group, or agency authorized and designated by the Department of Human Resources to receive reports of child abuse and neglect; provided, that a duly constituted authority shall not include an agency involved in the acts or omissions of the reported child abuse or neglect.

### SECTION 26-14-2 - PURPOSE OF CHAPTER

In order to protect children whose health and welfare may be adversely affected through abuse and neglect, the Legislature hereby provides for the reporting of such cases to the appropriate authorities. It is the intent of the Legislature that, as a result of such efforts, and through the cooperation of state, county, local agencies and divisions of government, protective services shall be made available in an effort to prevent further abuses and neglect, to safeguard and enforce the general welfare of such children, and to encourage cooperation among the states in dealing with the problems of child abuse.

### SECTION 26-14-3 - MANDATORY REPORTING

(a) All hospitals, clinics, sanitariums, doctors, physicians, surgeons, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, osteopaths, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, physical therapists, nurses, public and private K-12 employees, school teachers and officials, peace officers, law enforcement officials, pharmacists, social workers, day care workers or employees, mental health professionals, employees of public and private institutions of postsecondary and higher education, members of the clergy as defined in Rule 505 of the Alabama Rules of Evidence, or any other person called upon to render aid or medical assistance to any child, when the child is known or suspected to be a victim of child abuse or neglect, shall be required to report orally, either by telephone or direct communication immediately, and shall be followed by a written report, to a duly constituted authority.

(b)

(1) When an initial report is made to a law enforcement official, the official subsequently shall inform the Department of Human Resources of the report so that the department can carry out its responsibility to provide protective services when deemed appropriate to the respective child or children.

(2) As soon as is practicable after a report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect is made, the Department of Human Resources shall make efforts to determine the military status of the parent or guardian of the child who is the subject of the child abuse or neglect allegation.

(3) If the Department of Human Resources determines that a parent or guardian under subdivision (2) is in the military, the

department shall notify a United States Department of Defense family advocacy program at the military installation of the parent or guardian that there is an allegation of child abuse or neglect that is being investigated that involves a child of the military parent or guardian.

(c) When the Department of Human Resources receives initial reports of suspected abuse or neglect, as defined in Section 26-14-1, including suspected abuse or neglect involving discipline or corporal punishment committed in a public or private school or suspected abuse or neglect in a state-operated child residential facility, the Department of Human Resources shall transmit a copy of school reports to the law enforcement agency and residential facility reports to the law enforcement agency and the operating state agency which shall conduct the investigation. When the investigation is completed, a written report of the completed investigation shall contain the information required by the state Department of Human Resources which shall be submitted by the law enforcement agency or the state agency to the county department of human resources for entry into the state's central registry.

(d) Nothing in this chapter shall preclude interagency agreements between departments of human resources, law enforcement, and any other state agencies on procedures for investigating reports of suspected child abuse and neglect to provide for departments of human resources to assist law enforcement and other state agencies in these investigations.

(e) Any provision of this section to the contrary notwithstanding, if any agency or authority investigates any report pursuant to this section and the report does not result in a conviction, the agency or authority shall expunge any record of the information or report and any data developed from the record.

(f) Subsection (a) to the contrary notwithstanding, a member of the clergy shall not be required to report information gained solely in a confidential communication privileged pursuant to Rule 505 of the Alabama Rules of Evidence which communication shall continue to be privileged as provided by law.

(g) Commencing on August 1, 2013, a public or private employer who discharges, suspends, disciplines, or penalizes an employee solely for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect pursuant to this section shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor.

## **SECTION 26-14-4 - PERMISSIVE REPORTING**

In addition to those persons, firms, corporations, and officials required by Section 26-14-3 to report child abuse and neglect, any person may make such a report if such person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected.

## **SECTION 26-14-5 - CONTENTS OF REPORTS**

The reports provided for in this chapter shall state, if known, the name of the child, his or her whereabouts, the names and addresses of the parents, guardian, or caretaker, and the character and extent of his or her injuries. The written report shall also contain, if known, any evidence of previous injuries to the child and any other pertinent information which might establish the cause of such injury or injuries, and the identity of the person or persons responsible for the same.

## **SECTION 26-14-6 - TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE CUSTODY**

A police officer, a law enforcement official, or a designated employee of the State or County Department of Human Resources may take a child into protective custody, or any person in charge of a hospital or similar institution or any physician treating a child may keep that child in his or her custody, without the consent of the parent or guardian, whether or not additional medical treatment is required, if the circumstances or conditions of the child are such that continuing in his or her place of residence or in the care and custody of the parent, guardian, custodian, or other person responsible for the child's care presents an imminent danger to that child's life or health. However, such official shall immediately notify the court having jurisdiction over juveniles of such actions in taking the child into protective custody; provided, that such custody shall not exceed 72 hours and that a court of competent jurisdiction and the Department of Human Resources shall be notified immediately in order that child-protective proceedings may be initiated. During such period of temporary custody, the director of the county department of human resources may give or cause to be given effective consent for medical, dental, health, and hospital services for any abused or neglected child.

## **SECTION 26-14-6.1 - DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR INVESTIGATION OF REPORTS**

The duty and responsibility for the investigation of reports of suspected child abuse or neglect shall be as follows:

(1) Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect involving disciplinary or corporal punishment committed in a public or

private school or kindergarten shall be investigated by law enforcement agencies.

(2) Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect committed in a state-operated child residential facility shall be investigated by law enforcement agencies.

(3) All other reports of suspected child abuse and neglect shall be investigated by the Department of Human Resources.

## **SECTION 26-14-7 - DUTIES OF DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

(a) The State or County Department of Human Resources shall make a thorough investigation promptly upon either the oral or written report. The primary purpose of such an investigation shall be the protection of the child.

(b) The investigation, to the extent that is reasonably possible, shall include:

(1) The nature, extent and cause of the child abuse or neglect;

(2) The identity of the person responsible therefor;

(3) The names and conditions of other children in the home;

(4) An evaluation of the parents or person responsible for the care of the child;

(5) The home environment and the relationship of the child or children to the parents or other persons responsible for their care; and

(6) All other data deemed pertinent.

(c) The investigation may include a visit to the child's home, an interview with the subject child, and may include a physical, psychological, or psychiatric examination of any child or children in that home. If the admission to the home, school, or any other place that the child may be, or permission of the parent or other persons responsible for the child or children, for the physical, psychological, or psychiatric examination, cannot be obtained, then a court of competent jurisdiction, upon cause shown, shall order the parents or persons responsible and in charge of any place where the child may be to allow the interview, examinations, and investigation. If, before the examination is complete, the opinion of the investigators is that immediate removal is necessary to protect a child or children from further abuse or neglect, a court of competent jurisdiction, on petition by the investigators and with good cause being shown, shall issue an order for temporary removal and custody.

(d) The county department of human resources shall make a complete written report of the investigation, together with its recommendations. Such reports may be made available to the appropriate court, the district attorney, and the appropriate law enforcement agency upon request. The county department of human resources shall make a written report or case summary, together with services offered and accepted to the state's central registry on forms supplied by the registry for that purpose.

### **SECTION 26-14-7.1 - DUE PROCESS RIGHTS FOR PERSONS UNDER INVESTIGATION BY DEPARTMENT**

Any person who comes under investigation by the Department of Human Resources for the abuse or neglect of a child or children and who is employed by, serves as a volunteer for, holds a license or certificate for, or is connected with any facility, agency, or home which cares for and controls any children and which is licensed, approved, or certified by the state, operated as a state facility, or any public, private, or religious facility or agency that may be exempt from licensing procedures shall be granted the following due process rights by the Department of Human Resources:

(1) The department shall notify the alleged perpetrator that an investigation has commenced against him or her after such investigation has officially begun in accordance with written policies established by the Department of Human Resources. The notice shall be in writing and shall state the name of the child or children allegedly abused, the date or dates that the alleged abuse is thought to have occurred, and the substance of the person's actions which are alleged to be abusive. The department shall establish and maintain written policies outlining the specifics of such notification and other policies deemed necessary and prudent by the department to inform the alleged perpetrator of his rights and the procedures utilized by the department involving child abuse and neglect investigations.

(2) If the department conducts an investigation relating to child abuse/neglect, the alleged perpetrator shall be notified of the investigator's conclusions.

(3) If the department's investigators conclude that child abuse/neglect is indicated, an investigative hearing may be held to confirm or reject the investigators' conclusions.

(4) The alleged perpetrator shall be given ten departmental working days from the receipt of the notification of the investigator's conclusions to request a hearing, and such request must be in writing. If no such request is received in the



department's office within ten departmental working days, the alleged perpetrator's opportunity for a hearing shall be considered waived by the department.

(5) The employer of an alleged perpetrator shall not be notified of the investigator's conclusions prior to a hearing or its waiver unless, in the opinion of the department's investigators, a child is in danger of abuse or neglect; in such case, any person in a position to discover, prevent, or protect the child from his abuse or neglect may be informed of information gathered in the investigation prior to a requested investigative hearing for the alleged perpetrator.

(6) The alleged perpetrator shall be notified of the date, time, and place of any investigative hearing. Such hearing shall not be open to the public.

(7) The alleged perpetrator shall have the following rights at any departmental investigative hearing:

a. The right to present his case himself or be represented by legal counsel or any other person.

b. The right to present written evidence, oral testimony, and witnesses.

c. The right to be provided by the department a short and plain written statement of the matters asserted which will be presented at the hearing.

d. The right to review and copy at cost any written or recorded statement made by the alleged perpetrator to departmental personnel in the course of the child abuse/neglect investigation. This request must be made prior to the date for the hearing.

e. The right to review and copy at cost, before or during the hearing, the written material and other evidence in possession of the department which will be placed into evidence at the hearing.

f. The right to inspect any exculpatory evidence which may be in the possession of departmental investigators, and the right to be informed of such evidence if known by departmental investigators before the hearing; provided, that a request for such evidence is made at least five working days prior to the date set for the hearing.

g. The right to review and copy at cost all non-confidential department documents pertinent to the case, including written policies and rights.

h. The right to cross-examine witnesses testifying at the hearing.

i. The right to request issuance of subpoenas to witnesses and compel attendance. This request must be received no later than ten calendar days prior to the hearing, unless a shorter time is agreed upon by the hearing officer.

j. The right to review and copy at cost all documents in the official hearing file maintained by the hearing officer.

k. The right to have a hearing officer appointed who shall be disinterested, fair, and impartial.

(8) The Department of Human Resources or its investigative hearing officers shall have the power and authority to issue subpoenas to compel attendance by and production of documents from any witness. Subpoenas may be served in the same manner as subpoenas issued out of any circuit court. Where any witness has been summoned by the Department of Human Resources, its commissioner or any of his or her agents, and the witness refuses to appear, testify, or produce records or documents as requested; then any circuit court in this state, or any judge thereof, on application, may issue an attachment for such person and compel him or her to comply with such order and the court or judge shall have power to punish for contempt in cases of disobedience of such order.

(9) The Department of Human Resources shall establish policies and written guidelines for the conduct and procedures involved in an investigative hearing. At such hearing, the fact that there was a finding by a juvenile court judge or by a criminal court that child abuse or neglect has occurred shall be presumptive evidence that the report should be marked indicated.

(10) The hearing officer shall notify the alleged perpetrator in writing of the hearing officer's decision.

(11) Results of investigative hearings:

a. If the hearing officer concludes that child abuse and/or neglect is "indicated," such findings and evidence shall be filed with the appropriate district attorney and other law enforcement officials which the department may deem necessary.

b. The alleged perpetrator's employer or licensing/certifying agency or group may also be notified of the "indicated" findings. Such notification shall be marked "Confidential" and "To Be Used Only For The Purpose Of Discovery Or Preventing Child Abuse." The department shall establish written policies for notification of employers, prospective employers and licensing/certifying agencies or groups.

## **SECTION 26-14-7.2 - CHILD DENIED MEDICAL TREATMENT DUE TO PARENTS' RELIGIOUS BELIEFS**

(a) When an investigation of child abuse or neglect by the Department of Human Resources determines that a parent or legal guardian legitimately practicing his or her religious beliefs has not provided specific medical treatment for a child, the

parent or legal guardian shall not be considered a negligent parent or guardian for that reason alone. This exception shall not preclude a court from ordering that medical services be provided to the child when the child's health requires it.

(b) The department may, in any case, pursue any legal remedies, including the initiation of legal proceedings in a court of competent jurisdiction, as may be necessary to provide medical care or treatment for a child when the care or treatment is necessary to prevent or remedy serious harm to the child, or to prevent the withholding of medically indicated treatments from infants with disabilities and with life-threatening conditions. Upon application by the department, the court may issue prelitigation or pretrial discovery orders for persons, medical records, and other documents or materials.

## **SECTION 26-14-8 - STATEWIDE CENTRAL REGISTRY**

(a) For the purposes of this section, the following words shall have the following meanings, respectively:

(1) INDICATED. When credible evidence and professional judgment substantiates that an alleged perpetrator is responsible for child abuse or neglect.

(2) NOT INDICATED. When credible evidence and professional judgment does not substantiate that an alleged perpetrator is responsible for child abuse or neglect.

(b) The Department of Human Resources shall establish a statewide central registry for reports of child abuse and neglect made pursuant to this chapter. The central registry shall contain, but shall not be limited to:

(1) All information in the written report;

(2) Record of the final disposition of the report, including services offered and services accepted;

(3) The names and identifying data, dates, and circumstances of any persons requesting or receiving information from the registry; provided, however, that requests for information and responses where no report exists may be destroyed after three years from the date of the request;

(4) The plan for rehabilitative treatment; and

(5) Any other information which might be helpful in furthering the purposes of this chapter.

(c) The Department of Human Resources shall establish and enforce reasonable rules and regulations governing the custody, use, and preservation of the reports and records of child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect reports and records shall be limited to the purposes for which they are furnished and by the provisions of law under which they may be furnished. The reports and records of child abuse and neglect and related information or testimony shall be confidential, and shall not be used or disclosed for any purposes other than:

(1) To permit their use to prevent or to discover abuse or neglect of children through the information contained therein, except reports or records in cases determined to be "not indicated" shall not be used or disclosed for purposes of employment or other background checks; or

(2) For investigation of child abuse or neglect by the police or other law enforcement agency; or

(3) For use by a grand jury upon its determination that access to such reports and records is necessary in the conduct of its official business; or

(4) For use by a court where it finds that such information is necessary for the determination of an issue before the court; or

(5) For use by any person engaged in bona fide research who is authorized to have access to such information by the Commissioner of the Department of Human Resources; or

(6) For use by any person authorized by a court to act as a representative for an abused or neglected child who is the subject of a report; or

(7) For use by a physician who has before him a child whom he reasonably suspects may be abused or neglected; or

(8) For use by an attorney or guardian ad litem in representing or defending a child or its parents or guardians in a court proceeding related to abuse or neglect of the child; or

(9) For use by federal, state, or local governmental entities, social service agencies of another state, or any agent of such entities, having a need for the information in order to carry out their responsibilities under law to protect children from abuse and neglect; or

(10) For use by child abuse citizen review or quality assurance or multidisciplinary review panels; or

(11) For use by child fatality review panels; or

(12) For public disclosure of the findings or information about the case of child abuse or neglect which has resulted in a child fatality or near fatality; the term "near fatality" means an act that, as certified by a physician, places the child in serious or critical condition. Information identifying by name persons other than the victim shall not be disclosed.

(d) The names of persons or information in the investigative report placed on the state's central registry which may be made

available to the alleged perpetrator's employer, prospective employer, or others are those cases that the Department of Human Resources or the investigative hearing officer has determined child abuse or neglect to be indicated.

(e) In the case of any child abuse or neglect investigation which is determined to be "not indicated," the alleged perpetrator may request after five years from the completion of the investigation that his or her name be expunged from the central registry so long as the Department of Human Resources has received no further reports concerning the alleged perpetrator during the five years, at which time the department shall expunge the name.

(f) Nothing in this section shall be construed as restricting the ability of a department to refuse to disclose identifying information concerning the individual initiating a report or complaint alleging suspected instances of child abuse or neglect, except that the department may not refuse such a disclosure in cases in which a court orders such disclosure after the court has reviewed, in camera, the record of the department related to the report or complaint and has determined that it has reason to believe that the person making the report knowingly made a false report.

(g) Any person receiving reports or records of child abuse or neglect or related information under this section shall maintain the confidentiality of the documents and information and not disclose it except as authorized by law.

(h) Any violation of the provision of confidentiality shall be a Class A misdemeanor.

#### Section 26-14-9 - Immunity from liability for actions under chapter

Any person, firm, corporation, or official, including members of a multidisciplinary child protection team, quality assurance team, child death review team, or other authorized case review team or panel, by whatever designation, participating in the making of a good faith report in an investigation or case review authorized under this chapter or other law or department practice or in the removal of a child pursuant to this chapter, or participating in a judicial proceeding resulting therefrom, shall, in so doing, be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.

#### Section 26-14-10 - Doctrine of privileged communications not grounds for exclusion of evidence as to child's injuries

The doctrine of privileged communication, with the exception of the attorney-client privilege, shall not be a ground for excluding any evidence regarding a child's injuries or the cause thereof in any judicial proceeding resulting from a report pursuant to this chapter.

#### Section 26-14-11 - Appointment of attorney to represent child

In every case involving an abused or neglected child which results in a judicial proceeding, an attorney shall be appointed to represent the child in such proceedings. Such attorney will represent the rights, interests, welfare, and well-being of the child, and serve as guardian ad litem for the child.

#### Section 26-14-12 - Establishment of regulations by Department of Human Resources

The State Department of Human Resources may establish such regulations as may be necessary to implement this chapter and to encourage cooperation with other states in exchanging reports to effect a national registration system.

### **SECTION 26-14-13 - PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO MAKE REQUIRED REPORT**

Any person who shall knowingly fail to make the report required by this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a sentence of not more than six months' imprisonment or a fine of not more than \$500.00.

### INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT TERMINOLOGY

A child with a disability is defined in IDEA as a child with at least one of thirteen specifically defined physical, emotional, learning, or cognitive disabilities and who, by reason of the condition, needs “special education” and “related services.” At the discretion of the state, the definition may also include children ages three through nine or any subset of that age range, which are experiencing developmental delays. Special Education is specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. A child with a disability is entitled to FAPE, a free appropriate public education. That public education should be provided in the LRE, the least restrictive environment. The term FAPE is defined in pre-k through secondary school special education as related services that are provided at public expense, without charge to the parent, under public supervision and direction; meeting the state’s educational standards; and addressing special education and related services the individualized educational needs of the student. IDEA’s least restrictive environment directive requires the inclusion of children with disabilities, in the general education program to the maximum extent appropriate. An LEA, local education agency, is responsible for the identification and evaluation of children with disabilities and for the provision of FAPE to children found to be eligible for special education and related services.

### BENEFITS OF FIRST CLASS PRE-K FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Rigorous educational research consistently shows that at-risk children who attend high-quality pre-k programs demonstrate gains in early learning skills and throughout their K-12 years. Significantly, research also shows that children with disabilities who attend pre-K in inclusive environments demonstrate gains in social skills, self-regulation, language development, and cognition. Moreover, integrating children with disabilities into typical pre-K programs does not simply improve the educational experience for the children with disabilities – pre-K classrooms that utilize inclusive materials and curricula, along with appropriate supports and services, provide social and educational benefits to the general pre-K population as well.

### ELIGIBILITY OF CHILDREN RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES IN A FIRST CLASS PRE-K PROGRAM

A child who meets the eligibility requirements for the Alabama First Class Pre-K program and is also eligible for special education and/or related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) will not be denied access to the random selection process in the Alabama First Class Pre-K program. Therefore, dual enrollment in special education and the Alabama First Class Pre-K program is permitted. Children should receive services and supports in accordance with their IEP. First Class teachers should seek to be on classroom children’s IEP committees and obtain copies of the children’s IEP in order to incorporate suggestions into class instruction. If a pre-K provider suspects that a child has a disability or significant developmental delay, they are responsible for talking to the parent regarding referring that child to the appropriate local education agency (LEA) so that the child may be tested for eligibility to receive special education services. For contact information to local special education coordinators contact the Alabama State Department of Education at 334-242-9700 or alsde.edu.

## Appendix P: Required Equipment, Materials, and Supplies

✓	<b>Appendix P: Required Equipment, Materials, and Supplies</b> <i>Materials are to be included in all classrooms the first year of operation and replaced in existing classrooms on an as-needed basis. All furnishings and equipment in a First Class Pre-K program should be age appropriate for 3-5-year-old children and should not be made of easily breakable materials.</i>	Notes
2.3d	<b>Art Area: Three to five of each of the following.</b>	
	Drawing-crayons (fat and small), markers, colored pencils, sidewalk chat, white and color drawing chalk.	
	Paints - variety of paints (tempera, finger, watercolor, glitter), dot art painters, paint brushes, sponges, sponge brushes, paint cups Art aprons	
	Paper - variety of sizes, weight, texture & colors	
	3D - play dough/clay, clay cutter and other clay equipment, Styrofoam, cardboard tubes, boxes, bottles, craft sticks, wood pieces, Styrofoam, cardboard tubes, boxes, bottles	
	Collage - sequins and spangles, paper shapes, yarn, string, ribbon, lace, felt, paper scraps, fabric scraps, wallpaper samples, wiggle eyes, chenille pipe cleaners, glitter, pom-poms, ribbon, lace fabric scraps, wallpaper samples	
	Tools - stencils, glue, scissors, hole punchers, tape (masking, clear, and colored), stapler and staples	
	Furniture - table and chairs, double easel, drying rack	
	Books related to area and Writing tools	
	Some items may be teacher made, collected, or parent donated.	
	Furniture - minimum of one shelf for materials	
2.3e	<b>Fine Motor and Manipulatives: Three to five of each of the following.</b>	
	Gears, magna-tiles, tweezer activities, tinker toys, connecting tubes, interlocking manipulatives, beads and strings, lacing cards, magnetic blocks, links	
	Puzzles (with many different subjects and number of pieces), floor puzzles, knob less and knobbed puzzles, Puzzle rack	
	Legos, bristle blocks, building logs	
	Small wood tabletop blocks	
	Books related to area and writing tools	
	Furniture - minimum of one shelf with bins	
2.3f	<b>Listening</b>	
	CD player or some other type of listening device	
	Headphones	
	Recorded stories/books	
	<i>Furniture-Storage for listening center</i>	

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✓	Appendix P: Required Equipment, Materials, and Supplies-con't	Notes
2.3g	<b>Music and Movement</b>	
	Instruments- CD player/listening device, set of 10 children's musical instruments (hand-made or purchased)	
	Music CDs, tapes, iPod/iPad/MP3	
	Variety of music tapes/CDs for children (minimum of 10)	
	Dance props- scarves, ribbon rings, streamers	
	Books related to area and writing tools	
	Furniture – minimum of one shelf for storage	
2.3h	<b>Blocks</b>	
	There should be enough blocks, space, and accessories for three or more children to build a large structure independently.	
	Unit blocks (starter set)	
	Cardboard bricks/hollow blocks	
	Small vehicles (cars and trucks)	
	Multi-cultural people figures	
	Traffic signs	
	Career people figures	
	Animal figures	
	Street rug	
	Large rug	
	Books related to area and writing tools	
	Furniture - minimum of two shelves	
2.3i	<b>Dramatic Play</b>	
	Books: families, food, phone books, catalogs, real estate books, menus, note pads	
	Dramatic play furnishings: play kitchen, table and chairs, child-size sofa, dress up clothes storage, mirror, doll house & people	
	Play kitchen set: dishes, pots, pans, eating and cooking utensils, food containers, plastic food sets, measuring implements, bowls, placemats, and paper napkins, telephones/cell phones.	
	Home props (minimum of three): broom, mop, vacuum cleaner, ironing board/iron, stroller, shopping cart, etc.	
	Dolls: (multicultural), doll clothes, doll furniture	
	Dress up clothes: community helpers, multicultural attire, and props such as shoes, hats, purses, wallets, scarves, dresses, ties, jackets.	

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✓	Appendix P: Required Equipment, Materials, and Supplies-con't	Notes
2.3i	<b>Dramatic Play- con't</b>	
	Occupational props (minimum of three): toolbox/tools, workbench, safety goggles, luggage, doctor kit, cash register, computer keyboard, receipt books	
	Theme related props for transforming the Dramatic Play area into imaginative play environments such as fantasy (capas, hats, costume jewelry), seasonal (scarves, mittens, raincoats, umbrella), beauty shop, camping, pet store, doctor office, department store, restaurant, etc.	
	The Dramatic Play area can be enhanced with “found” objects such as a real mixer, iron, or hair dryer with the cord removed, keys, phones, purses, baskets, shopping bags, etc.	
	<i>At least 3 or more types of dress up clothes, 2-3, props for at least 2 different themes available daily (menu, cash register, construction worker, etc.), 3 or more Home props (not counting dishes, pots and pans, plastic food). There should be a variety of “themes” available to be rotated and cultural diversity must be represented. Some items may be teacher made, collected, or parent donated.</i>	
	Books related to area and writing tools	
2.3j	<b>Sensory and Discovery Tables and Bins</b>	
	Plastic tubs or tables with covers	
	Include san, water, fake snow, ice, soil, colored water, plastic chips, paper shreds, seasonal/holiday objects	
	Cups, funnels, shovels, scoops, containers, magnifiers are available	
	Some classrooms combine the Sensory and Discovery area with the Science areas due to space limitations.	
2.3k	<b>Writing</b>	
	Books related to writing	
	Writing materials - variety of paper, clipboards, magna doodle, journaling/notebook pads, dry erase boards	
	Materials - catalogs, office forms, “junk” mail, telephones, message pads, guest checks, receipt books, order forms, envelopes	
	Writing Tools - pencils, pens, markers, crayons, chalk, erasers, pencil sharpener, dry erase markers/crayons, old computer keyboards, children’s name cards, word/picture cards, letter stencils, letter stamps	
	Furniture - writing center or table/chairs, Minimum of one shelf for materials	
	Some items may be teacher made, collected, or parent donated.	
2.3l	<b>Reading/Library</b>	
	A minimum of 36 books in the classroom library and/or other learning areas, representing the following genres/categories: concept books (ABC, number, shapes, rhymes, alliteration), picture books, wordless picture books, people, predictable books, animals, fantasy, realistic fiction, multicultural, fairy tales, Caldecott winners, pattern books, biography, nature/science, poetry/nursery rhymes, abilities, classics, and theme-related books.	
	Class-made books should be created and displayed on a regular basis.	

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✓	Appendix P: Required Equipment, Materials, and Supplies-con't	Notes
2.3l	<b>Reading/Library- con't</b>	
	<p>Additional language materials/props: puppets, felt/flannel board story characters and stuffed animals to enhance storytelling experiences.</p> <p>Library area furnishings: pillows, child-size rocker, child-size sofa and chair or beanbag chairs Rug Alphabet, beginning sounds and rhyming word Puzzles, 3-D letters, letter templates, felt/flannel board, felt board story pieces, Puppets, stuffed animals <i>Furniture - One face-out shelf for books</i> <i>One additional shelf (with baskets or bins) to Organize books</i> Some items may be teacher made, collected, or parent donated</p>	
	Library area furnishings: pillows, child-size rocker, child-size sofa and chair or beanbag chairs, rug	
	Alphabet, beginning sounds and rhyming word Puzzles, 3-D letters, letter templates, felt/flannel board, felt board story pieces, Puppets, stuffed animals	
	Furniture - One face-out shelf for books, one additional shelf (with baskets or bins) to Organize books	
	Writing tools	
	Some items may be teacher made, collected, or parent donated	
2.3m	<b>Science/Nature</b>	
	At least 3-5 examples of collections of natural objects, at least 1 living object, 3-5 examples of books and/or games, 3-5 examples of science tools for activities.	
	Include examples of life science/nature, physical science, and earth science: at least one living item such as a plant, fish, hermit crab, etc.	
	Include collections of natural objects: seeds, rocks, seashells, leaves, acorns	
	Required tools: magnifiers, measuring devices, balance scales, linear measuring devices, pipettes, magnets, tubs for sink/float, plastic trays for sorting, thermometers, flashlight, prisms (plastic), unbreakable mirrors, binoculars, maps and globes, color paddles, various types of scales, measuring cups and spoons, linear measuring devices, stopwatch, hourglass, magnifiersgraphing charts, pencils, and paper for recording data	
	Games and toys: books (realistic pictures appropriate for pre-k), Science matching cards/sequence, cards, games (realistic and fact based), realistic animals, realistic puzzles	
	View farm, live plants, aquarium	
	Balls and ramps	
	Feely Box	
	Furniture - minimum of one shelf	
2.3n	<b>Math</b>	
	Math area has 3-5 items in each of the following categories.	
	Counting/Numbers: counting animals/blocks, bingo games and chips, dominoes, counting games, magnetic numerals, unfix cubes, number/numeral puzzles, clocks, math themed books, number books, number peg puzzles, tangrams, counting bears/animals etc.	

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✓	Appendix P: Required Equipment, Materials, and Supplies-con't	Notes
2.3n	<b>Math- con't</b>	
	Geometry: pattern card blocks, shape puzzles, lacing shapes, geo-boards, parquetry blocks, magnetic shapes, etc.	
	Patterns: pattern cards and blocks, unifix cubes, beads and strings, attribute blocks, tangrams, etc.	
	Measuring: unifix cubes, chain links, wooden cubes, one inch tiles, digital clocks, balance scale, tape measure or ruler, yardsticks, thermometers, measuring cups, etc.	
	Data and Graphing: sorting trays and items to sort, measuring devices, variety of laminated graphs, "hula hoops" for Venn diagramming, pencils and paper for data recording, etc.	
	Furniture- minimum of one shelf	
	*Sometimes a "math" item may be present in another area such as thermometer in science, or a ruler in writing.	
2.3o	<b>Outdoor Play/Gross Motor</b>	
	An age-appropriate, fenced-in, playground with shade	
	A minimum of 60 square feet per child (1,080 square feet total) on the playground.	
	Climbing and sliding structures that provide challenge for increasing skills	
	Biles and paths to ride on and explore	
	Water and sand play equipment	
	Art studio	
	Structures or materials for imaginative play	
	Loose parts to enhance play	
	Furniture - minimum of one shelf	
	Natural features to experience seasons	
	Places to run, play ball, games, and balance	
	Wheel vehicles to pull or push	
	Balls	
	Walking board	
	Crawl through equipment	
	Toys for digging	
	Portable equipment would include balls, hoops, large trucks, tricycles with helmets, parachutes, and cones.	
	Stationary equipment would include developmentally appropriate climbing structures, sand/water table (if anchored), swings, etc. children should have the opportunity for gross motor both indoors and out	

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✓	Appendix P: Required Equipment, Materials, and Supplies-con't	Notes
<b>Rest</b>		
	Cots (one per child)	
	Cot sheets (one per child)	
	Cot carrier	
<b>Technology</b>		
	Minimum of two tablet type devices (such as iPad - must be compatible with Teaching Strategies GOLD™) Working internet connection to support technology	
<b>Miscellaneous Items</b>		
	Cubbies with hooks (one per child) *It is recommended that cubbies for storage of children's possessions be located in the classroom to be convenient for supervision, each child should have a separate cubby with hook so that coats, etc. do not touch.	
	Large rug for whole group area	
<b>Safety Equipment</b>		
	Electrical plug outlets	
	First aid kit (items such as gloves, scissors, tweezers, thermometer, bandages, tapes, gauze, band aids, safety pins, eye dressings, cold pack kept in freezer, current first aid instruction chart, contact information)	
<b>Other Suggested Materials and Additional Materials</b>		
	Pulleys, wedges, corks, marbles, small boats, ping pong balls, nuts and bolts, watering cans, small journals for observing and recording data, clipboards, plastic trays, tactile materials, etc.	
	ADDITIONAL ITEMS THAT MAY BE PURCHASED IF ADDITIONAL FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE: Additional unit blocks, block sets, large vehicles for block play Puppet stage and additional puppets Magnetic board and a variety of magnets Additional manipulatives Additional dramatic play dress-up props Additional art materials Additional paint and play dough/clay colors Child-size sofa and chair Playhouse, farm set, garage set; play mats such as town/farm Toolbox, tools, workbench, safety glasses Additional dolls/doll accessories	
<b>Please Note</b>		
	When purchasing shelving units, shelves should be low enough for teachers to easily see and monitor all children as they play in the indoor learning space. There should be a storage unit with individual cubbies for each child. When purchasing tables and chairs, the children's feet should be flat on the floor; table height should be approximately 8" above the chair seat. It is understood this will vary according to children in the classroom, and, therefore, might be a good idea to purchase a few chairs that are shorter than average for smaller children in the classroom.	

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# First Class Pre-K Playground Regulations and Recommendations

The Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education does not monitor or maintain outdoor play environments. It is the responsibility of the program to adhere to all state and federal regulations regarding safety. The OSR has one certified Early Childhood Playground Safety Inspector per Region to provide guidance and resources for safe environments and playground quality enhancement.



## The outdoor play environment MUST:



Include equipment that is age and developmentally appropriate.



Provide a minimum of 60 square feet for each child. This shall be for all 18 children at one time.



Provide opportunities and access for children with disabilities to participate in the outdoor curriculum and activities.



Contain an area for children to have large motor experiences such as running, climbing, balancing, riding, or swinging.



Be enclosed by a fence or wall at least four feet in height. The fence or wall shall be free from sharp protruding edges and have secured gates



Not contain concrete or asphalt under outdoor playground equipment, with the exception of wheel toys.



Be arranged so that staff can supervise children by sight and sound. Staff should practice active supervision, moving around supervising and monitoring play at all times.



Have playground equipment that is not designed to be portable, securely anchored so that it cannot be tipped over by an adult or child.



Not be shared with younger or older children at the time of play.



Contain resilient/fall surfacing extending six feet beyond the limits of stationary equipment.



Provide shaded areas to provide a break from the sun or heat.



Be well-drained and free from tripping hazards.



Be inspected prior to play. Wooden equipment must be checked for sharp areas and splintering wood that could cause cuts or splinters. Metal pieces of equipment must be checked for rust, if rust is visible it must be removed immediately. All broken toys and equipment must be removed and replaced immediately.



## Recommendations for the outdoor play environment:



If sandboxes are present, they should allow for drainage, be covered when not in use and be cleaned of foreign material on a regular basis.



Materials for activities such as dramatic play, block building, manipulative play, art and music should be present.



The environment should include a variety of natural and manufactured surfaces for children to explore.



There should be semiprivate areas where children can play alone or with a friend. Semiprivate areas should be visible at all times.



## Universal Referral Form

Help Me Grow Alabama (HMG) is a **free** information and referral line connecting parents and providers to information about child development and community resources. By completing this form, you are:

- signing up to receive **free** information from HMG on child development and community resources in your area,
- signing up to receive access to a **free** developmental screening tool called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) for each of your children—ages 5 and under,
- authorizing the exchange of information, if permission is given below, for the child(ren) listed between HMG and the provider listed on this form.

<b>Provider's Information</b>	<p><b>Provider Name (e.g. Agency, Center, Practice, School Name):</b> _____</p> <p><b>Contact Person:</b> _____</p> <p>Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____</p> <p>Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____</p>
<b>Family's Information</b>	<p><b>Parent or Guardian Name(s):</b> _____</p> <p>Street: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____</p> <p>Phone: _____ Email: _____</p> <p><b>Best time to contact:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Between ___ &amp; ___ <input type="checkbox"/> Anytime   <b>Best form of contact:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Text</p> <p><b>Please contact me in:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Other (including specific dialect): _____</p> <p><b>Child Name:</b> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female</p> <p>Date of Birth: _____ Premature? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, # of weeks early: _____</p> <p><b>Concerns/Reason for Referral:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Existing services and/or other referrals in progress:</b> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Ask me about my other children when you contact me.</b></p>

**By signing this form, I, the parent/legal guardian, authorize the release and use of the information above. I also give permission to Help Me Grow to maintain contact with the provider listed about the developmental and resource information provided to my family, so the provider can give us further support.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the parent/legal guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Email: [referrals@smartstartalabama.org](mailto:referrals@smartstartalabama.org) | Fax: 334-356-8230  
[www.helpmegrowalabama.org](http://www.helpmegrowalabama.org)

Revised August 2019



## Appendix S: Pre-Registration Responsibilities Timeline

<p><b>Step 1</b></p> <p>Jan 13<sup>th</sup> until Random Selection Drawing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director oversees community-wide recruitment and advertising of First Class Pre-K Pre-Registration (see English advertising flyer on p. 7 and Spanish version on p. 8)</li> <li>• Director views pre-registrations in AlaCEED from January 15th until Random Selection Drawing Date</li> <li>• Director oversees pre-screening of pre-registration applications for eligibility based on residency requirements, age requirements, etc. and changes status in AlaCEED of any student not meeting requirements to Dropped and does not include the student in the random selection drawing to be held in March</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 2</b></p> <p>March 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director holds random selection drawing according to First Class Pre-K Guidelines between March 1st and 31st (specific date to be determined and advertised by individual programs)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>April 1<sup>st</sup> through April 15<sup>th</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director marks drawing results in AlaCEED between April 1st and 15th.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student selected for available position = mark as Pending</li> <li>• Student selected for position on waitlist = mark as Waitlisted with the number indicating the order in which the student was drawn</li> <li>• Emails to pending and waitlist students go out from ADECE April 16-18</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 4</b></p> <p>Beginning April 19<sup>th</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director marks parent responses in AlaCEED for all students with Pending status beginning April 19th as parent responses are received             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent accepted available position = mark student as Enrolled</li> <li>• Parent declined available position = mark student as Dropped</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Director contacts parents from whom an accept/decline response has not been received to determine what the student's status should be and marks it in AlaCEED accordingly</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 5</b></p> <p>Beginning April 19<sup>th</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director makes class assignments in AlaCEED beginning April 19th as parent responses are received             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students marked as Enrolled must be assigned to a specific class in AlaCEED by August 1</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# Appendix T: Alabama Transition to Kindergarten Toolkit

The toolkit is located at [children.alabama.gov](http://children.alabama.gov) and includes:

## INTRODUCING ALABAMA'S TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN TOOLKIT

SECTION 1 – Introductory Letter from Alabama State Agency Leaders  
SECTION 2 – Enhancing School Readiness and the Transition to Kindergarten in Alabama

## DEVELOPING A TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN PLAN

SECTION 3 – Transition to Kindergarten: Collaboration, Connections, and Six Steps to Success  
SECTION 4 – Transition Activity Ideas by Connection  
SECTION 5 – Transition to Kindergarten Planning Template

## COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AROUND THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

SECTION 6 – Four Strategies for Getting the First 10 Years of a Child's Life Right (Education Week)  
SECTION 7 – Transition to Kindergarten: Why it Matters and How to Promote Success  
SECTION 8 – Family Engagement in the Transition to Kindergarten  
SECTION 9 – Integrating Attendance into the Transition to Kindergarten

## ESSENTIAL ALABAMA TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN RESOURCES

SECTION 10 – Combining Funds to Support Prekindergarten Programs  
SECTION 11 – Transition to Kindergarten for Students with Disabilities  
SECTION 12 – Social-Emotional Learning, Mental Health, and the Transition to Kindergarten  
SECTION 13 – Strategies to Serve All Children  
SECTION 14 – A Family Child Care Resources  
SECTION 15 – Sample Transition to Kindergarten Child Information Form





# Help Your Child Succeed in Preschool and Kindergarten Build the Habit of Good Attendance

## DID YOU KNOW...

Showing up on time every day is important to your child's success and learning from preschool forward.

Missing 10% of school (1 or 2 days every few weeks) can make it harder to:

- Gain early reading and math skills.
- Build relationships.
- Develop good attendance habits.

High quality preschool and kindergarten has many benefits!

- The routines your child develops will continue throughout school.
- Make the most of early grades by encouraging your child to attend every day.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Work with your child and his/her teacher to develop your child's strong attendance.

Talk about it – sing about it – make it an adventure!

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Share ideas with other parents for getting to school on time.

Before the school year starts

- Find out what day school starts and begin a countdown!
- Keep your child healthy and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Attend orientation with your child to meet teachers and classmates and find out about health and safety procedures.

Ready, Set, GO!

- If you are concerned your child may have Covid-19, call your school for advice. Ask for resources to continue learning at home if needed.
- Ask family members or neighbors for assistance if you need help.
- Try to schedule non-Covid-19 medical appointments and extended trips when school is not in session.
- If your child seems anxious about preschool or kindergarten, talk to the program director, teacher, your doctor or other parents for advice.

Revised October 2021



Visit Attendance Works at [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org) for free downloadable resources and tools!



# FIRST TEACHER HOME VISITING

## Goals for First Teacher:

- Improve family health outcomes
- Improve family economic self-sufficiency
- Increase access to community resources and support
- Prevent child abuse and neglect
- Reduce domestic violence



## How Home Visiting Works:

Through monthly visits, trained home visitors promote positive health and social outcomes by providing education, screening families' health, assessing their social support needs, and assisting families in accessing services in their local area.

## Facts about Home Visiting:

- Families and children can receive services prenatally through Kindergarten entry.
- Home visits are FREE. No insurance required or billed.
- No income requirements.
- Programs in all 67 counties in Alabama.

## Call for more information



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