

**Executive Committee (Acting on Behalf of Board)**  
**(Virtual Meeting)**  
Thursday, August 27, 2020  
**President's Report**

**A. North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC) Updates / DCDEE Updates / Legislative Updates**

1. **NCPC** – Continuing to meet twice weekly with network executive directors.
  - Update on going into 100% allocation: budget amendments anticipated in October/November. Additional information provided to NCPC regarding our reversion dollars and impact of COVID-19. The budget amendment to go into 100% allocation will include our carry-forward funds from our reversion.
  - \$5M in additional CARES funding (part of a total of \$20M for early childhood). Focus will be on supporting families. Specific work will be on supporting families experiencing toxic stress and the providers who support them through resilience training and support for business software for Family Child Care Homes to increase access to high quality child care. All partnerships in the network will have access to training and support around these areas. Included in the proposals are access to technology for families to access services and Family Child Care Homes to utilize online resources.
  - Amy Cubbage started her role as President of NCPC on August 3.
2. **DCDEE** – Ariel Ford has been named the new director for DCDEE. Her start date was August 24. She is returning to NC after stints in Delaware and Tennessee.
  - Subsidy programs will begin operating under normal processes in September. Payment will be based on actual attendance. Parent Fees will no longer be waived. Parents also received notice of these changes from DCDEE.
  - Programs that are open must meet enhanced health and safety standards.
  - PPE and cleaning supplies being provided by state to child care providers. Open programs being shipped 4-8 week supplies directly to sites. Providers have begun receiving these supplies in multiple shipments.
  - DCDEE is working to address concerns related to COVID-19 including payment when a facility is closed due to quarantine, when a subsidized child is not able to attend a facility due to being quarantined, and school-age children attending facilities full-time now that has started for the year.
  - A special meeting of the Child Care Commission has been called for **August 27, 2020, from 9:00 am until 12:00 pm by WebEx**. Comments on the rules (attached) may be submitted by email to [Dedra.Alston@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Dedra.Alston@dhhs.nc.gov) or by mailing to Dedra Alston, Division of Child Development and Early Education, 2201 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2200. The comment period ends on September 2, 2020. There will not be a time set aside for public comment during this meeting however, the public is invited to listen to the meeting by clicking: <https://ncgov.webex.com/ncgov/onstage/g.php?MTID=ec6c7fb3c84fe0d0956daef0b798367d6>
  - NC PreK Guidance for reopening released August 3 (see attached).

- DCDEE sent out a survey for updated information on school-age child care availability.
- 3. **NC Legislature** – The General Assembly goes back in session September 2 to continue to address COVID-19 relief and allocation of federal CARES money. There are critical needs for child care and family needs related to COVID-19. No action has been taken at this time on the **Leandro Action Plan for 20-21**.
- 4. **NC Justice Center along with Moms Rising and the National Domestic Workers Alliance hosted a statewide Digital Town Hall on Early Childhood Education in NC on August 25.** It was widely attended by child care providers and families.
- 5. **Federal Legislation** – House and Senate has worked on additional COVID relief bills. The bills continue to vary widely. There is relief for early childhood and schools in the bills.
- B. Grant Opportunities/Updates**
  - 1. **Infrastructure Grant Opportunities:** Have requested proposal from Steve Fleming for third phase of work to complete design plans as well as potential phasing of the project.
  - 2. **PDG RFPs from NCPC for Regional Family Connects Pilots and Family Engagement:** NC has received a no-cost extension for year one of the PDG. Priorities for this year have been identified. Family Connects is on the priority list for this year, though modified. The focus will be on single counties, rural or high need with the innovation of telehealth. Application will be done by Letter of Interest. The PDG grant also included funding for NC Pre-K sites for Teaching Strategies GOLD. Roll out of the Teaching Strategies platform, including training, to NC PreK classrooms is in process as sites reopen for the new school year.
- C. COVID-19 Updates**
  - 1. **PFC implemented its HR 110 Communicable Disease Policy on Monday, March 16. Building closed to general public March 30 and this status continues.**
  - 2. **Phase 2:** We are implementing procedures and protocols following federal and state health and safety guidelines for returning to work. The Governor has extended Phase 2 Safer at Home through September 11.
  - 3. **PFC Guidelines:**
    - a. Staggered schedules continue, determined by supervisors by department to manage business and programmatic functions. Staggered schedules may include a combination of teleworking and on-site work.
    - b. Staff continuing to telework the majority of work time include TAs and Professional Development staff and staff who are in high-risk categories.
    - c. Masks provided to all staff to reinforce the 3 Ws.
    - d. PFC Staff, Tenants and their clients, and contractors (i.e. cleaning and security) must complete a screening questionnaire for COVID-19 prior to entry into the building.
    - e. Family First Paid Sick Leave and FMLA Expansion available for those staff who meet the criteria.
    - f. Virtual options for contact with families and providers continue. Limited face-to-face contact with families and providers done with supervisor guidance when dictated to complete deliverables. In those cases, procedures for 3 Ws and screening are followed.
    - g. Began limited utilization of conference room space for groups of no more than 10 people effective

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June 22 in order to meet deliverables. Screening procedures, the 3 Ws and cleaning procedures must be followed by all participants including the facilitator of the group.

- h. Enhanced cleaning of the building throughout the day continues.
- i. The building is restricted to PFC staff, tenants and tenant clients by appointment only. Access is Monday-Friday only, with client appointments during the hours of 8:30 am – 6:00 pm. The building remains closed on weekends and PFC recognized holidays through Phase 2.
- j. Per Policy HR 110, President maintains regular contact with Board Chair for review and continuation of services. Regular communication going out to Board. Decisions are made based on state guidance and mandates.
- k. Email Updates and DHHS Guidance documents posted on website: [ccpfc.org](http://ccpfc.org).

#### D. RFPs

- 1. **The RFP for the Three-Year Smart Start Grant Cycle** July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2024 is being prepared for public notice.
- 2. **The RFP for a new phone system** to replace our current antiquated system has been developed and prepared for public notice.

#### E. Events

- 1. **Board and Committee Meetings:** Meetings will be conducted virtually at least through the end of Phase 2 due to space limits of conference rooms for social distancing. When we resume face-to-face meetings, a virtual option will continue to be available.
- 2. **All Staff Virtual meetings:** Effective July 8 conducted second and fourth Wednesdays, 2:30-3:30 pm through the duration of the COVID-19 emergency.
- 3. **Virtual New Board Orientation:** Friday, August 28, 2020, 8:30-11:00am. Registration link sent via email by Belinda Gainey.
- 4. **Tenant Virtual Meeting:** Thursday, September 3, 4:00-5:30 pm. If you are interested in attending, let Mike Yeager and Belinda Gainey know.
- 5. **Virtual Provider meetings focused on School-age programming and general information will be hosted by the CCR&R department in September.** The school-age programming meeting is being done in collaboration with the Statewide School Age Coordinator through the CCR&R Council. Dates and times TBD.
- 6. **Forward March Conference:** This conference was cancelled in March. At this point we do not expect it to be rescheduled this fiscal year. The planning group will reconvene after the first of the year to determine next steps.



# NORTH CAROLINA EARLY EDUCATION COALITION

## Child Care Is Essential, but Funding is Inadequate and Inequitable



### New Blog

By: Michele Rivest,  
Policy Director, NC  
Early Education  
Coalition

**I am going to start with something we all know and something policymakers across the county are saying: child care is essential.**

Child care is essential for today's workforce, for young children's healthy development and learning, and for our state's economic prosperity. It's very clear that North Carolina will not be able to go back to work without affordable, reliable and high-quality child care in all 100 counties. Our state's future economic recovery depends on the recovery of the child care industry.

**But despite all the proclamations that child care is essential, the child care system has always been seriously underfunded, and the child care financing system is broken.**

COVID-19 has laid bare the fundamental flaws in the way child care is financed and funded. Child care is not funded like public education. Instead, it operates as a small business enterprise, and the market approach of supply and demand just doesn't work.

- Parents pay the majority of the costs.
- Child care is hard to find, particularly for infants and toddlers.
- Government funding only pays about 25% of the child care costs in North Carolina, with inadequate and complex subsidy rates.
- The workforce is undervalued and underpaid.

**This is the child care financing dilemma: parents can't afford to pay more, providers can't afford to operate quality child care programs, and teachers can't afford to work for such low wages and no benefits.**

If child care is truly essential, it needs significant public investment to make sure every child in every community has an equal opportunity to a sound basic education starting in early childhood.

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## **Take Action: Tell Congress to #SaveChildCare**

The child care crisis existed long before COVID-19, and the issues outlined in this blog are not new. But the pandemic has exacerbated these problems and presented many more challenges. The lack of sufficient public investment has forced child care programs, educators and families into a series of impossible choices with heartbreaking consequences.

There is still time for Congress to save child care by making a significant investment in the next COVID-19 relief package. Please keep the pressure on and keep up your phone calls and emails! Take action now to help ensure the next relief package includes significant funding to save child care, before it's too late.

[Take Action Now](#)

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## ***Interim COVID-19 Reopening Policies for NC Pre-K Programs***



### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) FOR NC PRE-K CONTRACTORS, PROVIDERS and STAFF**

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
<b>Program Year</b>	Is it okay to start 1/2 the class on Tuesday Sept 8, 2020, and then the other 1/2 on Wed Sept 9, 2020, with all attending face to face on Sept 10, 2020, and all days following? As in no instruction prior to Sept 8th other than an orientation day.	Yes

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
<b>Mode of Instruction</b>	Are there any restrictions for a school-based site to open in August for traditional in-person instruction or a hybrid mode of instruction?	No.
	If a family has chosen the fully remote option for health reasons, what happens to them after Nov 6, 2020, if no extensions are granted?	The November 6, 2020, date only applies to the full remote option, meaning the whole county or program has chosen remote, not an individual family. Families may request remote learning for the full program year. Please refer to the chart on page 4 of the guidance for the definitions of each option.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Mode of Instruction	If a private facility is open for in-person instruction 5 days per week to private paying families, does the NC Pre-K classroom also have to be open 5 days per week or can they choose the hybrid option?	DCDEE expects for NC Pre-K classrooms to be offered the same opportunity for in-person instruction as other classrooms. The NC Pre-K site would have to justify their decision to choose this type of hybrid mode of instruction. Please refer to section 4: Mode of Classroom Instruction, section A, regarding specific mode of instruction for NC Pre-K if a school district, private child care facility, or Head Start program has buildings open or closed for in-person instruction for any students or children.
	If a parent requests remote learning after face to face instruction has begun this classroom, is then considered hybrid?	Please refer to chart on page 4 of the guidance for the definitions of each option.
	If public schools are providing 2 days in-person instruction and 3 days remote, is that considered traditional in-person or hybrid?	It is hybrid. Please refer to the chart on page 4 of the guidance for the definitions of each option.
	If the school system is doing full remote, can the private sites in that county go fully remote in order to use their NCPK classrooms for school age children?	No. If NC Pre-K classrooms are going to open, they should be open to provide in-person instruction to NC Pre-K children. Please refer to the following section of the guidance for further information. Section 4. Mode of Classroom Instruction, part B: Circumstances When Remote Learning May Be Needed. NC Pre-K slots/classrooms are being fully reimbursed for the 2020-2021 program year and should not be filled with non-NC Pre-K children.
	If an NC Pre-K site is choosing full-time in-person instruction, is it also allowed to have a few built in remote learning days throughout the year to try to teach families and teachers how to do remote in case it was ever needed in the future?	DCDEE encourages planning and sharing with families. However, sites can only choose one option for service delivery. In this case, the site would have to choose either all traditional/ in-person instruction or hybrid. Please refer to the guidance, section 4. Mode of Classroom Instruction, part B: Circumstances When Remote Learning May Be Needed. This may be an something sites may consider doing as part of their teacher work days and/or some parent/teacher conferences.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Mode of Instruction	Just to clarify, a fully remote classroom means they are not receiving any in-person instruction correct?	Yes, that is correct. Please refer to the chart on page 4 of the guidance for the definitions of each option.
	May families choose the remote instruction even if the child/family is not considered high-risk?	Yes. Please refer to the following section of the guidance for further information. Section 4. Mode of Classroom Instruction, part B: Circumstances When Remote Learning May Be Needed.
	If an NC Pre-K Sites has shared space with school age children, is that an exception to offer remote learning only?	No. If NC Pre-K classrooms are going to open, they should be open to provide in-person instruction to NC Pre-K children. Please refer to the guidance, section 4. Mode of Classroom Instruction, part B: Circumstances When Remote Learning May Be Needed. NC Pre-K slots/classrooms are being fully reimbursed for the 2020-2021 program year and should not be filled with non-NC Pre-K children.
	One of the school systems has already announced closure through December. Can they appeal the Nov. 6, 2020 deadline?	Public schools have the ability to continuously operate under Plan C with no exceptions for NC Pre-K. NC Pre-K contracting agencies will include this information on the reporting workbooks that will be provided to them by the NC Pre-K state office.
	The local Head Start sites will start the year with all remote learning as an option; is this going to be a problem?	No. A school district (or Head Start program) may choose to operate exclusively under Plan C with no exceptions for NC Pre-K. <i>(Section 4B of the guidance)</i> However, if their buildings are open to serve other children then they should also offer in-person instruction to NC Pre-K children. <i>(Section 4A of the guidance)</i>
	If the NC Pre-K classrooms are open 5 days a week, but a family chooses to do remote will that be okay?	Yes. That's the hybrid option. Also, please refer to the guidance, section 4. Mode of Classroom Instruction, part B: Circumstances When Remote Learning May Be Needed.
	If the school system changes the method of instructions (i.e. moves to Plan C/remote only), who gets notified of the change?	NC Pre-K contracting agencies will include this information on the reporting workbooks that will be provided to them by the NC Pre-K state office.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Mode of Instruction	Do districts have to offer remote?	Yes. The remote learning option must be available to students under certain circumstances. Please refer to the guidance, section 4. Mode of Classroom Instruction, part B: Circumstances When Remote Learning May Be Needed.
	Can in-person instruction only be offered unless remote is needed due to shut down for exposure or does remote have to be offered from the beginning?	Yes, sites may choose to select an in-person only mode of instruction. However, even when selecting the Traditional/In-Person mode of instruction, a remote learning option must be available to students under certain circumstances. Please refer to the guidance, section 4. Mode of Classroom Instruction, part B: Circumstances When Remote Learning May Be Needed.
	Some of the families are saying they would not be comfortable coming into the classroom at all. Do they have the option of remaining in remote learning all year?	Families may request remote learning for the full program year. Please refer to the chart on page 4 of the guidance for the definitions of each option.
	What happens if the public-school NC Pre-K classrooms begin the school year with the hybrid option but then decide to move to Plan C?	While school districts are strongly encouraged to prioritize having NC Pre-K students physically present in classrooms, they may choose to operate under Plan C without exceptions for NC Pre-K.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Health and Safety Guidance	The local public school is requiring additional health measures (limited class sizes, staggered days, etc.) – the guidance says public preschool should follow additional measures – does this apply to NC Pre-K?	<p>Preschool classrooms in public school are subject to <b>child care health guidance</b> when in the classroom and other areas of the building and/or campus that fall under the child care center license. Pre-K children are only expected to follow additional health protocols when they are utilizing/present in common areas of the school and the K-12 guidance places no age restrictions on the protocol.</p> <p><i>For example, while preschool children, according to the child care guidance, would not be expected to social distance in the classroom, they may be asked to social distance while eating in the cafeteria, visiting the media center, etc.</i></p>

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Health and Safety Guidance	Please provide guidance regarding face masks for NC Pre-K classes in public school settings. Can a public school require children in pre-k to wear face masks?	<p>Preschool classrooms in public school are subject to <b>child care health guidance</b> when in the classroom and other areas of the building and/or campus that fall under the child care center license. The Child Care Health Toolkit does not require masks for preschool children but does recommend cloth face coverings be considered for preschool children <b><i>if it is determined they can reliably wear, remove, and handle masks following CDC guidance throughout the day.</i></b></p> <p>When Pre-K children are utilizing/present in common areas of the school they may be asked to wear cloth face coverings in accordance with specific school health protocols.</p>

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Remote Learning	When will the Teaching Strategies Digital Learning Solution be available to our sites?	DCDEE is working to ensure access to the digital platform from Teaching Strategies for every classroom as soon as possible. More information will be provided on how to access the system online.
	Can administrators have access to the Teaching Strategies Digital Learning Solution training as well?	Yes, there will be opportunities for administrators to participate in the trainings, as well – their participation is encouraged!
	What date will the Teaching Strategies Digital Learning Solution training be? How long is this course?	Teaching Strategies Digital Learning Solution trainings began in August. An email was sent on August 19, 2020, with a link and instructions.
	Please share a sample schedule for remote learning.	More resources, including example schedules for how to structure a week in remote-only or hybrid instruction, will be made available for teachers as soon as possible.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Remote Learning	How will teachers get access to Teaching Strategies online?	DCDEE is working to ensure access to the digital platform from Teaching Strategies for every classroom as soon as possible. More information will be provided on how to access the system online.
	IS DCDEE paying for the Teaching Strategies subscriptions for each child, as well as, the start-up fee? Will DCDEE reimburse those who have already ordered? Are these resources separate from the typical Teaching Strategies curriculum?	Every classroom with at least one NC Pre-K child enrolled will have access to the comprehensive Teaching Strategies Digital Learning Solution. More information will be shared as soon as possible to provide next steps for credits for sites who already have Teaching Strategies accounts.
	If a NC Pre-K site is currently documenting family engagement events in ChildPlus, does this meet the requirement of capturing family engagement in writing. If not, please clarify expectations for documentation.	To date, DCDEE has not specified formats or templates for documentation of family engagement practices/required Check-Ins.
	There are parents who have requested remote due to family members being at-risk. They do not have Internet service. Is it acceptable to provide paper packets weekly if no other solution can be reached and the weekly check-ins are completed?	Meeting the family's needs is the most important aspect of providing remote instruction, particularly for families who self-identify as high-risk. Remote moments could be provided through dropping off activities for the family outside their door, meeting for a socially-distanced interaction, or another method that best meets the family's specific circumstances to be able to engage in their child's learning and development.
	Where is this specific training for Teaching Strategies?	Information on how and when to sign up for Teaching Strategies Digital Learning Solution trainings was emailed on August 19, 2020.
	Will the free Teaching Strategies include the assessment piece for each child? Or just the Distance Learning piece?	The Teaching Strategies Distance Learning Solution includes assessment resources to support ongoing, individualized supports for every child through Teaching Strategies Gold.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Remote Learning	Would it safe to advise teaching staff that they will receive The Creative Curriculum® Cloud options including the App and Gold online assessment for this school year?	DCDEE is currently working to ensure access to the digital platform from Teaching Strategies for every classroom as soon as possible. More information will be provided on how to access the system online.
	With a hybrid delivery model, what is recommended for a teacher to deliver 6.5 hours of in-person instruction and 6.5 hours of remote instruction materials without going outside of their normal NC Pre-K day if there is only one teacher in the classroom?	This is not a recommendation nor a requirement of DCDEE. NC Pre-K site staff are encouraged to develop a schedule or plan that allows teachers to provide a mixed delivery of services within the 6.5-hour day to NC Pre-K children. This means a combination of in-person and remote instruction. Sites must determine the use of other onsite staff for support if there is only one teacher.
	Please provide any suggestions as to how to monitor private sites with requirements for professional development and family contact?	NC Pre-K contracting agencies are encouraged to use the Interim COVID-19 Reopening Policies as a guide for developing monitoring processes. Contracting agencies must determine locally what will work best for their county/region.
	If an NC PreK teacher has most of her students in the classroom, but has some students participating in remote learning, is the NC Pre-K teacher expected to instruct all those students simultaneously?	NC Pre-K site staff are encouraged to develop a schedule or plan that allows teachers to provide a mixed delivery of services within the 6.5-hour day to NC Pre-K children. This means a combination of in-person and remote instruction, which can happen simultaneously at times. Please refer to section 6. Remote Learning Requirements in the guidance.
	Some students will be receiving in-person instruction 4 days and 1 day will be remote. Are the family check-ins required during that one remote day, even though in-person two-way communication is occurring 4 days a week?	In this scenario, where children are receiving 4 days of in-person instruction each week, teachers would not have to hold family check-ins. Teachers would still be required to provide remote moments as outlined in the guidance.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Remote Learning	Please confirm the number of Remote Moments required for hybrid classrooms.	Teachers are <b>required</b> to offer Remote Moments at least once a day to children/families who are participating in remote learning. Please refer to section 6 D of the guidance.
	There have been a lot of success with families watching recorded live videos from the teacher. If a recorded live video was posted to TS Family Portal, would that count as the “second” offered time or do both remote moments need to be live?	Remote Moments are blocks of live, direct, remote instruction. Therefore, recordings would not meet the requirement.
	When you are referring to a.m. and p.m. offerings of Remote Moments, is that within the typical PreK day (8-3) or outside of traditional hours?	Yes, it is within the regular 6.5-hour, NC Pre-K day. NC Pre-K teachers are encouraged to be mindful of family needs when scheduling Remote Moments but are <b>not</b> required to provide instruction outside a typical in-person teaching schedule.
	Do you mean 5 Remote Moments per day or per week?	5 Remote Moments per week.
	Will DCDEE provide a reporting template for NC Pre-K classrooms (like the weekly work plan from the spring) and NC Pre-K contracting agencies to report remote learning?	Currently, DCDEE is not providing a specific template for NC Pre-K classrooms to submit remote learning information to the state office. This can change in the coming weeks. DCDEE may decide to ask NC Pre-K sites and contracting agencies to complete a survey later. In addition, NC Pre-K contracting agencies will be required to complete a workbook every 2 weeks and submit to DCDEE as instructed. This workbook is still being developed and will be shared in the coming weeks.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
<b>Payment and Attendance</b>	Fourteen (14) of the contracted slots were not allocated by the NC PreK Committee and we're awaiting geographical needs of submitted applications. How should these allocations now be handled?	Contracting agencies should continue to follow their normal processes for allocating and/or reallocating slots. Payments will be made to sites based on slots allocated during the relevant service period. Slots that are not allocated will not be reimbursed.
	If we are making payment for full allocation, there won't be much money from direct services to reallocate to the specified items. Is there other funding available?	DCDEE was approved to release an RFA for additional administrative funds as has been done in past years. NC Pre-K contracting agencies will be able to request up to 2% of the contract budget less the Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) for administrative expenses that includes supplies, etc.
	Are the actual administrative costs for July entered on the July FSR in addition to the 1/10 payment FSR?	One-tenth payment should be used to cover July expenditures
	Is the NC Pre-K contractor allowed to give the sites a deadline for filling slots?	Contracting agencies should continue to follow their normal processes for allocating and/or reallocating slots. Payments must be made to sites based on slots allocated during the relevant service period. As always, any changes to slot allocations must be made in accordance with NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance.
	Are we still using the KIDS app for the summary attendance when we submit the FSRs?	Yes. Contracting agencies will continue to use NC Pre-K KIDS to track attendance and payment. Further guidance will be shared as soon as possible.
	Is there any budget training being offered for NC Pre-K?	One-on-One training will be offered. Training can be requested by email at <a href="mailto:dcdee_ncprekfsr@dhhs.nc.gov">dcdee_ncprekfsr@dhhs.nc.gov</a>
	At this time, we will not be able to place all eligible children due to having a high number of over income but eligible. We are in excess of our 20% if all children are placed at this time. Is there flexibility in serving children over 75% SMI but eligible?	Currently, no changes have been made to the eligibility requirements for NC Pre-K children nor to the expectations for how children are placed/prioritized for services. We will continue to review and assess the situation and we will notify you if eligibility requirements change.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
<b>Payment and Attendance</b>	Can the budget be amended to take some of the direct funds and move them to administrative to make allowable purchases and allocate slots based on the difference?	<p>Yes, according to the COVID-19 Reopening Guidance, NC Pre-K contracting agencies can move up to 2% of the direct services budget to admin to pay for approved items. However, if all slots are allocated to providers, then there will not be any funds remaining to move.</p> <p>DCDEE was approved to release an RFA for additional administrative funds as has been done in past years. NC Pre-K contracting agencies will be able to request up to 2% of the contract budget less the Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) for administrative expenses that includes supplies, etc.</p>
	Can the CCDF FSR be submitted as it normally would or is it part of the 1/10 of Payment 1?	<p>Yes, the contract period begins July through June. NC Pre-K contractors can begin submitting a CCDF FSR for July expenditures on or before August 14, 2020.</p> <p>No, CCDF is not part of the one tenth of payment I.</p>
	If a site doesn't have any children enrolled in the slots allocated to them, will they still receive payment for those slots?	Yes, that NC Pre-K site will still receive payment for their total allocated slots. DCDEE made this decision to help sustain NC Pre-K programs during the COVID-19 pandemic as we start the 2020-2021 program year.
	Does the entire amount have to be given to the NC Pre-K site or can some direct funds be used to purchase specified items mentioned in the guidance?	<p>NC Pre-K contractors must reimburse sites based on the assigned teacher rate and the number of slots allocated to the classroom.</p> <p>NC Pre-K contractors must obtain approval from the Early Education Branch for the flexible use of direct service funds and upon approval submit a budget revision requesting to move designated funds from Direct Services to Admin.</p>
	Does a proposal for the COVID-19 Emergency Funds have to be submitted or is a budget revision enough?	<p>There is no COVID-19 Emergency Funding.</p> <p>DCDEE is allowing requests for the flexible use of direct service funds to purchase specified items mentioned in the guidance.</p> <p>NC Pre-K contractors must obtain approval from the Early Education Branch for the flexible use of direct service funds and upon approval submit a budget revision requesting to move designated funds from Direct Services to Admin.</p>

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
<b>Payment and Attendance</b>	Regarding the classroom summary of attendance, will all sites still have to record attendance regardless of the mode of instruction?	Yes. Contracting agencies will continue to use NC Pre-K KIDS to track attendance and payment for all children and classrooms. Further guidance will be shared as soon as possible.
	On the FSR workbook - Payment 1, is 1/10 of each line item added for the one-time August payment?	NC Pre-K contractors should calculate the total administrative costs by adding Category A (Total Human Resources) and Category B (Total Operational Expenses/Capital Outlays) excluding "Direct Services". The total for services should include Direct Services and Subcontracting and Grant line items. Contractors should use the current expenditure column to designate the line item estimated expenditures should be expended. This one-time payment must not exceed one-tenth of your regular admin and services total in FSR Workbook #1. Your FSR should look just like you would normally submit.
	How are these one-time payments to be distributed if they are not associated with teacher qualifications? What are the funds to be used for by the sites?	These funds are to be used as requested on the FSR, which are based on allowable line item expenditures.
	How can direct service dollars be used for the cleaning and supplies if the providers receive their allotment each month?	<p>According to the COVID-19 Reopening Guidance, agencies can move up to 2% of the direct services budget to admin to pay for approved items. However, if all slots are allocated to providers, then there will not be any funds remaining to move.</p> <p>DCDEE was approved to release an RFA for additional administrative funds as has been done in past years. NC Pre-K contracting agencies will be able to request up to 2% of the contract budget less the Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) for administrative expenses that includes supplies, etc.</p>
	If NC Pre-K teachers start home visits in August, but kids' attendance starts in September, will we be reimbursed for August or just September?	Yes. NC Pre-K contractors will resume submission (including CCDF) on or before the tenth business day in September for August services.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Payment and Attendance	If it is required to pay all sites for all contracted slots as opposed to enrolled slots, are direct services funds in place in the contracts to allow to request the 2% direct services move to administrative costs and still be able to pay for all slots for all year?	No additional direct service funds were added to the contracts. However, according to the COVID-19 Reopening Guidance, agencies can move up to 2%. <u>If all slots are allocated to providers, then there will not be any funds remaining to move.</u>  DCDEE was approved to release an RFA for additional administrative funds as has been done in past years. NC Pre-K contracting agencies will be able to request up to 2% of the contract budget less the Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) for administrative expenses that includes supplies, etc.
	Is it a requirement to request the 1/10th in August or is it optional?	All NC Pre-K contractors who would like to receive the one-time payment of 1/10 must have submitted an FSR by August 14, 2020.
	Are the subcontracts ready to be used?	No changes were made to the subcontract template at this time. NC Pre-K contracting agencies will be notified of any future changes to this document. NC Pre-K contracting agencies should follow the Interim COVID-19 Reopening Policies for NC Pre-K Programs as written.
	Do we move money for direct services (DS) to administrative or Not Otherwise Classified (NOC)?	Contractors wanting to move funds to purchase specified items mentioned in the guidance must obtain prior approval from the Early Education Branch and upon approval submit a budget revision requesting to move designated funds from Direct Services to Admin per designated line category.
	Are NC Pre-K Contractors supposed to calculate the 10% with the charges for July and place them under Payment II?	NC Pre-K contractors should use the Payment I tab. The one-tenth payment should be used to cover July expenditures. Payment should not exceed 1/10 <sup>th</sup> of the NC Pre-K contractor's total regular NC Pre-K funds in FSR Workbook #1.
	What date will NC Pre-K providers receive a payment?	According to policy, DCDEE has thirty days upon the date of receipt for payment. If there are issues with the FSR, this will cause a delay in payment.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
<b>Payment and Attendance</b>	Is the first payment to sites for the full allocation regardless of teacher qualifications?	Yes. Contractors will be receiving 1/10 of their contracted allocation amount which was generated based on the rates/slots that each county budgeted for on their Direct Services Calculator. Contractors are expected to provide payment to sites based on what has been budgeted for them regardless of a classroom teacher's qualifications at the time of the one-time payment.  Payments for the remainder of the year will be based on the assigned teacher rate and the number of slots allocated to each classroom.
	There are some NC Pre-K sites that have requested August to May payment and some that request September to June payment. Since we are receiving 1/10 in September, does that mean NC Pre-K sites would not be able to select August to May for payment?	NC Pre-K contractors requesting the one-time payment will receive their first payment of ten payments in August. Those opting not to receive the one-time payment will receive their first payment in September.
	What is the expectation for building classrooms? For example, if a site is allocated 4 classrooms but currently only has 24 children enrolled should they spread those children into 4 classrooms and staff accordingly?	The expectation is that all classrooms that have been allocated more than 9 NC Pre-K slots will be staffed by an appropriately qualified lead teacher AND teacher assistant regardless of whether those slots are served in-person, remotely, or are unfilled. The actual placements/assignments of children to classrooms remains a local determination.
	What is the Payment 2 option?	Please disregard payment tab 2 as an option.
	What line on the FSR does the 1/10, one-time payment get coded to?	NC Pre-K contractors should use the current expenditure column to designate the line item category in which expenditures should be requested. Payment should not exceed 1/10 <sup>th</sup> of NC Pre-K contractor's total regular NC Pre-K funds in FSR Workbook #1

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Payment and Attendance	When I entered the 1/10 in tab 1, the amount populated into tab 2. I had to enter the amount in tab 2 for my totals to populate correctly, what do I do?	Please contact DCDEE via email at <a href="mailto:dcdee_ncprekfsr@dhhs.nc.gov">dcdee_ncprekfsr@dhhs.nc.gov</a> to request a revised workbook.
	When will the budget FSR workbooks be received?	FSR Workbooks have been sent out as of August 7, 2020. All contractors must review the workbooks to ensure accuracy of the budgeted line items. Any errors, must be emailed immediately to: <a href="mailto:dcdee_ncprek@dhhs.nc.gov">dcdee_ncprek@dhhs.nc.gov</a> .
	Will the 2% come from the allocated slot budget? Will we need to take slots away from NC Pre-K providers to support the funding for remote purchases?	<p>No additional direct service funds were added to the contracts for the ability to move 2%, so if all slots are allocated to providers, then there will not be any funds remaining to move. Slots should not be reduced in order to utilize direct services funds in other ways.</p> <p>DCDEE was approved to release an RFA for additional administrative funds as has been done in past years. NC Pre-K contracting agencies will be able to request up to 2% of the contract budget less the Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) for administrative expenses that includes supplies, etc.</p>
	Will there be Capacity Building Funds?	DCDEE was approved to release an RFA for additional administrative funds as has been done in past years. NC Pre-K contracting agencies will be able to request up to 2% of the contract budget less the Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) for administrative expenses that includes supplies, etc.
	If a site has been allocated slots but no children are enrolled, can that site still receive payment?	Yes. Payments will be generated based on the assigned teacher rate and number of slots allocated to the classroom. Classrooms must be staffed by an appropriately qualified lead teacher AND teacher assistant (if allocated more than 9 slots) regardless of whether those slots are served in-person, remotely, or are unfilled. Sites are expected to recruit and make efforts to fill all allocated slots.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Payment and Attendance	As the NC Pre-K contracting agency, the local sites are responsible for recruitment. How are we to monitor to ensure recruitment efforts continue?	NC Pre-K contracting agencies should be providing oversight to recruitment activities to ensure NC Pre-K sites are actively working to fill allocated slots. NC Pre-K contractors may determine locally exactly how they will provide oversight to ensure that recruitment is occurring in accordance with the NC Pre-K program requirements.
	What documentation will NC Pre-K sites have to submit to document attendance and participation in family check-ins for children who are in the hybrid or remote mode of instruction?	Contracting agencies will continue to use NC Pre-K KIDS to track attendance and payment for all children and classrooms. Further guidance will be shared as soon as possible.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Reporting Requirements	Will the Sept. 4, 2020, report be submitted via survey?	No, the Sept. 4, 2020, report will be submitted via an excel worksheet that has been prepopulated with county data for NC Pre-K contracting agencies to complete. This worksheet will be sent out via email prior to the due date to allow agencies time to submit.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Miscellaneous	I did not receive the Interim COVID-19 Reopening Policies. How do I receive mass emails?	If you are an NC Pre-K Contracting Agency and you are not receiving mass emails from NC Pre-K, please contact the NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant in your county and they will submit your information to our NC Pre-K Coordinator. You may also email the NC Pre-K Coordinator, Patricia McCarter at <a href="mailto:patricia.mccarter@dhhs.nc.gov">patricia.mccarter@dhhs.nc.gov</a> . DCDEE updates are sent through Constant Contact. To receive important updates, <a href="#">please subscribe</a> .

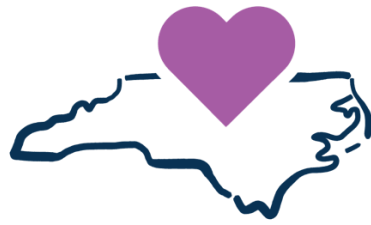
TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Miscellaneous	Can home visits be combined with parent orientation to allow for children to be screened while teachers are meeting with parents?	The NC Pre-K Requirements and Guidance places no restrictions or expectations around how orientation and home visit sessions are conducted. These decisions can be made locally.
	What is the recommendation for public sites where the LEA has decided to not allow PreK classrooms to utilize the playground even though they have separate playgrounds as part of their licensed space?	Preschool classrooms in public school are subject to child care health guidance when in the classroom and other areas of the building and/or campus that fall under the child care center license. Child care health guidance does not restrict preschool children from utilizing outdoor play spaces.
	Can contractors reject the remote offer if the center doesn't have an acceptable delivery plan?	NC Pre-K sites have the option to implement remote learning if they are meeting the requirements outlined in the <i>Interim COVID-19 Reopening Policies for NC Pre-K Programs</i> .
	Are doctor notes required for teaching staff that request remote learning due to high risk status?	The Division of Child Development and Early Education does not govern human resource practices that occur between employee and employer.
	How are we to cover teacher absences due to COVID illness? If a teacher is sick, will a substitute need to do all required tasks?	Sites should follow NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance and NC Child Care Rule to ensure appropriate substitute staff are in place and can carry out instruction for children when permanent teaching staff are unavailable.
	If class numbers are less than 9 children, do classrooms still need a FT teacher assistant in addition to a teacher? Can other slots be filled with private pay if the site is being reimbursed for 18 but have fewer students?	The expectation is that all classrooms that have been allocated more than 9 NC Pre-K slots will be staffed by an appropriately qualified lead teacher AND teacher assistant regardless of whether those slots are served in-person, remotely, or are unfilled. Sites are expected to recruit and make efforts to fill all allocated slots. Slots should NOT be filled with non-NC Pre-K children.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Miscellaneous	If you have a teacher in a public-school setting that has a medical concern and would like to only teach remotely, what do we do about the kids in her room that will be attending two days a week for in-person (face-to-face) instruction?	It is the expectation that high-quality services will be delivered to all children whether they are learning in-person or remotely. NC Pre-K sites must ensure that appropriate approved teaching staff and/or substitute teaching staff are in place and available to provide services when the permanent teaching staff is unavailable.
	What are the recommendations if a teacher is high risk and requests to telework, but a center is open and serving children?	The Division of Child Development and Early Education does not govern human resource practices that occur between employee and employer. However, sites may consider flexibilities based on the number of NC Pre-K classrooms and staff they have available to them.
	If it is known that a family has chosen full remote, does this child count in ratio?	A child who is not physically present would not count in the classroom ratio; <b>however</b> , the expectation is that all classrooms that have been allocated more than 9 NC Pre-K slots will be staffed by an appropriately qualified lead teacher AND teacher assistant regardless of whether those slots are served in-person, remotely, or are unfilled.
	When will guidance be provided in regard to teacher compensation?	The <i>Interim COVID-19 Reopening Policies for NC Pre-K Programs</i> did not address teacher compensation. However, the expectation is that all classrooms that have been allocated more than 9 NC Pre-K slots will be staffed by an appropriately qualified lead teacher AND teacher assistant regardless of whether those slots are served in-person, remotely, or are unfilled. In addition, all NC Pre-K staff should continue to be paid for the services they provide, regardless of the mode of instruction. Further guidance may be released later if necessary.

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER
Who do I contact with further questions about...?	NC Pre-K Attendance/Databases?	Janessa Nieves, NC Pre-K Manager <a href="mailto:janessa.nieves@dhhs.nc.gov">janessa.nieves@dhhs.nc.gov</a>

TOPIC	QUESTION	ANSWER	
Who do I contact with further questions about...?	NC Pre-K Payments/FSRs/Budget?	DCDEE NC Pre-K Budget Unit <a href="mailto:dcdee_ncprekfsr@dhhs.nc.gov">dcdee_ncprekfsr@dhhs.nc.gov</a>	
	NC Pre-K Remote Learning Expectations?	NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants	
		Jeanne Barnes ( <i>South East</i> ) <a href="mailto:jeanne.barnes@dhhs.nc.gov">jeanne.barnes@dhhs.nc.gov</a> (919) 814-6357	Jennifer Griffith ( <i>West</i> ) <a href="mailto:jennifer.griffith@dhhs.nc.gov">jennifer.griffith@dhhs.nc.gov</a> (919) 609-6921
		Sharon Stukes ( <i>Central</i> ) <a href="mailto:sharon.stukes@dhhs.nc.gov">sharon.stukes@dhhs.nc.gov</a> (704) 594-0151	Frances Minton ( <i>North East</i> ) <a href="mailto:francis.minton@dhhs.nc.gov">francis.minton@dhhs.nc.gov</a> (919) 604-7626
		Please refer to the <a href="#">NC Pre-K Program Unit Regional Map</a> as some counties have been recently shifted due to a change in staffing.	
	Other NC Pre-K topics?	NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants ( <i>see contact information above</i> )	
	The NC Pre-K listserv?  For NC Pre-K Contracting Agencies only.	Patricia McCarter, NC Pre-K Program Coordinator <a href="mailto:patricia.mccarter@dhhs.nc.gov">patricia.mccarter@dhhs.nc.gov</a>	
Child Care Health Guidance?	Contact your child care health consultant. You can find the contact information at the <a href="#">Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center site</a> .		
Cleaning supplies or food for my facility?	Contact your local Smart Start partnership if you are unable to locate food, cleaning supplies, or other essential resources in your area. You can find the contact information for your local Smart Start partnership at the <a href="#">Smart Start site</a> .		

TOPIC		
Helpful Links	<a href="#">Latest COVID-19 Information for Child Care</a>	<a href="#">Interim COVID-19 Reopening Policies for NC Pre-K Programs</a>
	<a href="#">ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit</a>	<a href="#">StrongSchoolsNC: Public Health Toolkit (K – 12),</a>
	<a href="#">Remote Learning Resources</a>	<a href="#">Memorandum on Preschool Programs and K-12 Public Health Guidance</a>
	<a href="#">Moodle</a>	<a href="#">Weekly Work Plan</a>
	<a href="#">COVID-19 Child Care Payment Policy</a>	<a href="#">NC DPI Online Pedagogy Considerations for Digital Instruction</a>
	<a href="#">CDC - People Who Are at Increased Risk for Severe Illness</a>	<a href="#">Help for Buying Food</a>



**#StayStrongNC**

# Interim COVID-19 Reopening Policies for NC Pre-K Programs

August 3, 2020



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Child Development  
and Early Education



# Interim COVID-19 Reopening Policies for NC Pre-K Programs

**NC Pre-K Contracting Agencies must provide this guidance to all NC Pre-K sites and NC Pre-K teaching staff no later than August 7, 2020. Sites should contact their Contracting Agency and Contracting Agencies should contact their NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant with questions about this guidance. For specific questions about contracts, please contact your DCDEE Contract Administrator.**

## 1. Background

On July 14<sup>th</sup>, Governor Cooper [announced](#) state plans for the reopening of NC public schools under a Plan B model which enforces health protocols including cleaning, screening, and social distancing. limits the service capacity for public schools and enforces strict health protocols. As of July 29<sup>th</sup>, over half of school districts across the state have opted for even stricter criteria by keeping schools closed and supporting remote learning, only (Plan C).

The NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) is the governing authority for all licensed child care facilities in the state of North Carolina; therefore, NC Pre-K classrooms, whether located in public school sites or nonpublic/private sites, fall under the jurisdiction of DCDEE.

From March 14<sup>th</sup> (when public schools across the state were first closed for in-person instruction) through the end of the school year, DCDEE partnered with Duke University to study the experiences of NC Pre-K lead teachers, teacher assistants, administrators, and contracting agencies during the unprecedented experience of remote learning across NC Pre-K classrooms. In July 2020, the Duke Center on Child and Family Policy [published a report](#) analyzing the survey responses of over 3,000 NC Pre-K teachers, which was a response rate of approximately 90%. The report highlights the efforts NC Pre-K teachers undertook to suddenly transition to remote learning. This report also identifies areas where NC Pre-K teachers may need more support as they prepare for offering any remote learning in 2020-2021 school year, including:

- Providing formal guidance and training regarding the adaptation of classroom curriculum for remote learning;
- Supporting the effective use of video-based communication platforms; and
- Establishing guidelines and supports for teachers to provide remote learning services regularly throughout the week.

The findings from the July 2020 report are integrated into the guidance that follows here.

The following guidance is meant to address reopening expectations specific to **NC Pre-K programs and classrooms. This guidance applies to all NC Pre-K classrooms, regardless of the setting in which they operate (public school,\* private child care center, Head Start program.)** This guidance may be amended by the NC Pre-K state office as needed in accordance with changes in trends related to COVID-19.

\*Note: While preschool sites operating in public schools are not expected to follow all requirements outlined in the K-12 public health guidance ([StrongSchoolsNC: Public Health Toolkit \(K – 12\)](#)), they are expected to follow any additional health protocols that may be implemented by their individual schools in response to the new K – 12 schools public health guidance. For example, while preschool children, according the child care guidance, would not normally be expected to social distance, they may be asked to social distance while eating in the cafeteria.

## 2. Goals for the 2020-21 NC Pre-K Program Year

We know that our children learn best when they have the opportunity to be together with their classmates and teachers. COVID-19 has presented many challenges to the way we work, live, learn and socialize with each other. Our goals seek to provide as much stability and proven in-person instruction as possible as we navigate through the pandemic.

- **All NC Pre-K students receive the benefit of fully in-person instruction to the fullest extent possible.**
- **All parents/guardians are offered the option of in-person instruction for the full program year.**
- **Recognizing the unique challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, remote learning will be available for all NC Pre-K students as an option of last resort and used as sparingly as possible (*such as during time-limited school entry periods where schools are in remote learning only, during necessary quarantine periods.*)**
- **All remote learning offered will meet standard quality measures that support children's healthy development and engage families in their children's learning.**

## 3. Program Year

Program year will operate for a full 36 weeks as usual, 6.5 hours per day, 5 days per week, beginning no later than September 8<sup>th</sup>.

We encourage NC Pre-K programs to use the weeks before NC Pre-K instruction officially begins (which for all sites is no later than September 8<sup>th</sup>) to conduct child/family orientation, conduct home visits, and stagger entry of children virtually or in-person, as well as ensure teachers are trained and prepared to deliver multiple modalities of instruction (refer to *Remote Learning Requirements, Section 6*).

## 4. Mode of Classroom Instruction

- A. The NC Pre-K program is built upon a developmentally appropriate, play-based, interactive instruction and classroom environments.
- DCDEE strongly encourages NC Pre-K programs to prioritize having students physically present in Pre-K classrooms for the 2020-2021 school year.
  - If a school district, private child care facility, or Head Start program has buildings open for in-person instruction for any students or children, the NC Pre-K program must also offer Traditional/In-person or Hybrid instruction, unless any of the circumstances in Section 4B are met.
  - If a school district, private child care facility, or Head Start program does not have buildings open for in-person instruction, the NC Pre-K program may still be offered in Traditional/In-Person or Hybrid instruction, unless any of the circumstances in Section 4B are met.
    - Regardless of which plan a school district chooses to operate (Plan B/hybrid instruction or Plan C/remote instruction), school districts are strongly encouraged to prioritize having NC Pre-K students physically present in classrooms.
  - NC Pre-K sites must select from the three learning modes in the table below and inform their Contracting Agency.
  - Contracting Agencies must notify DCDEE regarding their sites' initial mode of instruction (traditional/in-person, hybrid, or remote learning) by Friday, September 4, 2020 at 5:00PM.

- The full remote learning option will be available to Pre-K sites through November 6, 2020 only. This option may be extended depending on COVID-19 metrics and future state directives.

Traditional/In-Person	Hybrid	Full Remote Learning
<p>No children are learning remotely; all children are learning in the classroom.</p> <p><b>Even when selecting the Traditional/In-Person mode, a remote learning option must be available to students under certain circumstances (such as during necessary quarantine periods, if closure for deep cleaning is needed, for high-risk students)</b></p>	<p>Pre-K classroom/site is delivering a mix of in-person and remote learning to the same group of children – for example, if a school district is alternating days/weeks when students are in and out of school buildings or the classroom/site is providing some children with full-time in-person learning and other children with full-time remote learning.</p>	<p>No children are learning in the classroom; all children are learning remotely.</p>

#### B. Circumstances When Remote Learning May Be Needed

- During the weeks prior to instruction starting on September 8<sup>th</sup> (e.g., home visits and orientation may be done remotely)
- If NCDHHS issues a directive that requires closure and/or reduced capacity to minimize the spread of COVID-19
- If a COVID-19 cluster (5 or more cases) occurs at an NC Pre-K site and the Local Health Department recommends that the site and/or classroom(s) should close temporarily for cleaning
- If a parent/family has requested remote learning due to the child and/or a household member being high-risk for severe illness due to COVID-19
  - Information on who is at a higher risk for severe illness due to COVID-19 is available from the [CDC](#) and [NCDHHS](#).
- If a parent/guardian requests remote learning due to concerns over their child's health or safety in a traditional/ in-person setting
- If a child is not able to attend for an extended amount of days due to the child and/or household member(s) being sick and/or quarantined due to COVID-19
- If the NC Pre-K teaching staff has requested to telework due to their own high-risk status
- If a school district (or Head Start program) chooses to operate exclusively under Plan C with no exceptions for NC Pre-K.

## 5. Health and Safety Guidance

All preschool programs in public schools and private sites are required to follow the health and safety guidance outlined in the [ChildCareStrongNC Public Health Toolkit](#), in accordance with the [Memorandum on Preschool Programs and K-12 Public Health Guidance](#).

## 6. Remote Learning Requirements

There is limited evidence on best practices for remote learning for young children. DCDEE is committed to

providing a thoughtful approach to accessing high-quality early learning for children/families who must participate remotely, due to circumstances outlined in Section 4B. The information in this section describes an innovative effort to align in-person and remote instruction to all children receiving the NC Pre-K program.

DCDEE will seek ongoing feedback from families, educators, and staff on their experiences participating in remote learning. DCDEE does not want access to technology to be a barrier or limiting factor for any family's participation in remote learning resources. Therefore, it is expected that teachers will take a proactive, flexible, and responsive approach to families' needs to ensure participation.

#### **A. Method and Duration of Delivery:**

A traditional in-person NC Pre-K day is 6.5 hours of time in the classroom, including direct instruction, nap time, snacks, transitions, child-initiated play, and outdoor play. A child/family engaged in remote learning instead of in-person instruction should also be provided with an equivalent 6.5 hours, which includes direct instruction via remote learning (such as Remote Moments, section 6D), nap time, snacks, transitions, child-initiated play, outdoor play, family-led engagement activities, and 1:1 family check-ins (see Section 6E).

However, it would not be considered developmentally appropriate for a young child to receive 6.5 hours of direct remote instruction via a video meeting, for example, each day. Instead, NC Pre-K teachers should provide short direct instruction and provide activities and learning opportunities for children and families to engage in independently that total approximately 6.5 hours of available material daily for a remote learner/family.

#### **B. Teaching Strategies Remote Learning Solution:**

Remote learning and in-person learning should be coordinated so that children/families who may have to alternate between remote learning and in-person instruction have a seamless learning experience. DCDEE is providing the Teaching Strategies distance learning resources for all teachers and staff who support classrooms with at least one NC Pre-K child. Approximately 85% of NC Pre-K classroom teachers already use the Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment platform and will be familiar with content. The Teaching Strategies distance learning resources are also aligned with other approved NC Pre-K curricula.

The Teaching Strategies Distance Learning Solution will provide resources to teachers and families including:

- 24/7 access to digital curriculum allowing for consistency across in-person and remote learning
- Remote access to professional development best practices for in-person and remote learning
- Developmentally appropriate assessment resources
- Developmentally appropriate family-facing resources, including videos and activity instructions
- Two-way communication between teachers and families through a mobile application

NC Pre-K teachers are **strongly encouraged** to utilize Teaching Strategies resources for in-person instruction, and are **required** to use Teaching Strategies resources for remote instruction. Teachers should regularly supplement Teaching Strategies curriculum and materials as needed to support their individual students' and family needs.

More information on Teaching Strategies Distancing Learning Solution and other resources will be shared in the next few weeks.

#### **C. Training Requirements:**

All NC Pre-K lead teachers and teacher assistants, regardless of selected mode of instruction for their

site/classroom, will be expected to complete three (3) training sessions on the Teaching Strategies Distance Learning Solution throughout the school year, and will be expected to complete one (1) of those 3 training sessions by **Friday, September 4<sup>th</sup>**.

DCDEE will provide a training schedule for NC Pre-K teachers, and will also provide training opportunities for teachers, coaches, and administrators on topics such as best practices utilizing technology in remote learning. These trainings will be detailed in a forthcoming communication.

#### **D. Remote Instruction: ‘Remote Moments’**

Remote Moments are blocks of live, direct, remote instruction delivered daily by lead teachers or teacher assistants. Teachers are **required** to:

- Offer Remote Moments at least once a day to children/families who are participating in remote learning.
  - For classrooms that are fully remote (i.e. no in-person learning is taking place), teachers must offer at least two (2) sessions with the same content at different times of day (e.g., offered once in the morning and once in the afternoon) to increase families’ ability to attend the session.
- Ensure that the timing of delivery of Remote Moments is consistent and predictable for families.
- Frequently communicate and advertise how to access remote content.
- Offer Remote Moment materials to families based on family needs, such as reliable access to technology or primary home language.
- Create Remote Moment content on the following developmental domains from the North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development: Approaches to Play and Learning, Emotional and Social Development, Health and Physical Development, Language Development and Communication, Cognitive Development.
  - Some examples of high-quality Remote Moments could include circle-time or group activities like a read aloud, a shared writing activity, or a number fluency activity.

It is **recommended** that teachers:

- Provide Remote Moments through a virtual platform, such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, and/or using Teaching Strategies digital resources.
- Plan Remote Moments that last for no more than 30 minutes at a time.
- Plan for Remote Moments that allow for two-way communication where teachers, children, and families can speak directly to one another.
- Plan Remote Moments separately from in-person instructional time and designed specifically for remote learners.
- Alternatively, plan Remote Moments that include together in-person and remote learners through a video platform set up during regularly scheduled in-person learning time (e.g., during a shared writing activity, video conferencing would allow remote learners to contribute to the conversation in real time.)
- Lead teachers or teacher assistants can plan and implement Remote Moments, depending on scheduling needs and maximizing time during the typical in-person learning day.
- Consider virtual field trips as a Remote Moment.
- Refer to the [NC DPI Online Pedagogy Considerations for Digital Instruction page](#) for guidance on protecting student safety and privacy while using audio and video conferencing services.

#### **E. Family Engagement: ‘Check-ins’**

Family/Child Check-ins are opportunities for the lead teacher (with teacher assistant as an optional participant) and a child/family to connect live through two-way communication (the teacher communicates with the

child/family, and the child/family communicates back) every week while the child/family is participating in remote learning. A Check-in could take place through a call, video conference, or through a socially-distanced in-person visit while everyone wears face coverings. A Check-in may be a brief conversation, or it could be a longer period of time depending on child/family need.

Building a strong relationship through frequent, quality interactions with families is always important – but even more important when providing remote learning. Families also need to be kept informed changes in schedule or protocols.

Lead Teachers are **required** to:

- Offer at least one Check-in every week to each child/family participating in remote learning
- Prepare for and document every Check-in in writing
- Make every reasonable effort to communicate with the family in an accessible manner, such as:
  - Adjust the timing of a Check-in given family feedback on scheduling
  - Attempt to contact a family member through multiple formats (text message, phone call, in-person socially-distanced visit with all people wearing face coverings) if other avenues are unsuccessful
  - For non-English dominant families, provide communication through an interpreter (e.g. staff, family member, etc.)

It is **recommended** that Lead Teachers:

- Provide applicable technical resources and support to families to participate in Check-ins (e.g. downloading the Teaching Strategies family application)
- Utilize weekly Check-in time to
  - Provide updates on procedures related to the school or site's response to COVID-19
  - Share ongoing information on the child's developmental progress using evidence-based observations
  - Provide individualized recommendations for activities and engagement opportunities for the family to best be able to support their child
- Encourage families to bring questions, concerns, ideas, and evidence of learning at home (e.g., pictures of activities)
- Encourage the child to be an active participant in the Check-in

## **F. Daily Instruction in Hybrid Learning Classrooms**

Teachers are **required** to:

- Align the pacing/content of in-person and remote learning (e.g., utilize Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum online resources and aligned family activities to create in-person lesson plans and remote activities on the same topics)
- Provide the families of remote learners a consistent schedule of Remote Moments for families to opt into throughout the week
- Provide Teaching Strategies family engagement resources every day to children and their families, and supplement with any additional, relevant resources as needed
- Highlight opportunities for families to submit evidence of learning remotely through the Teaching Strategies platform or through other methods (e.g., sharing pictures of completed activities, sharing videos of the child engaging in the activity)
- Coordinate at least one (1) 'Check-in' per week for each remote learner/family

Teachers are **not** required to provide instruction outside a typical in-person teaching schedule. For example: an assistant teacher could monitor the children in-person during nap time, while the lead teacher conducts a Remote Moment in another room for virtual learners and families.

#### **G. Daily Instruction for Classrooms with Remote Learners Only**

*Entirely remote classrooms with at least one NC Pre-K child and no in-person instruction*

Teachers are **required** to:

- Plan for and deliver five (5) discrete Remote Moments with different activities throughout the week utilizing Teaching Strategies Distance Learning Solution resources
  - Each daily Remote Moment's content must be repeated twice at different times of day (e.g., offered once in the morning and once in the afternoon) to increase families' ability to attend the session
- Throughout the week, Remote Moments must align to the developmental domains: Approaches to Play and Learning, Emotional and Social Development, Health and Physical Development, Language Development and Communication, and Cognitive Development
- Provide the families of remote learners a consistent schedule of Remote Moments for families to opt into throughout the week
- Provide Teaching Strategies family engagement resources every day to children and their families
- Highlight opportunities for families to submit evidence of learning remotely through the Teaching Strategies platform or through other methods (e.g., sharing pictures of completed activities, sharing videos of the child engaging in the activity)
- Coordinate and provide at least two (2) 'Check-ins' per week for each remote learner/family. In a Full Remote Learning environment, it is essential that children/families remain in contact with their teacher; Therefore, the requirement is two (2) Check-ins as opposed to one (1).

#### **H. Attendance in Hybrid or Full Remote Instruction**

A child/family's attendance and participation in remote learning is defined as participating in weekly check-ins (either 1 or 2 depending on the mode of instruction). While participation in Remote Moments is beneficial for children/families, it will likely be more reliable for teachers to document ongoing participation in Check-ins as a way to track attendance.

## **7. Payment Policy**

### **A. For the 2020-2021 school year, DCDEE will provide payments to NC Pre-K Contracting Agencies based on their contracted slots for the 2020-2021 school year.**

DCDEE will provide payment for all contracted slots to provide stabilization to NC Pre-K programs during the COVID-19 pandemic when overall child care enrollment has been low as families have opted to keep children at home. Payment during the 2020-2021 school year will not be based on attendance. Payments will be generated based on the assigned teacher rate and the number of slots allocated to the classroom. Therefore, Contracting Agencies must allocate the maximum number of contracted slots to their NC Pre-K sites, as all slots will be funded regardless of attendance. However, contracting agencies must continue to engage in active recruitment strategies and family outreach events and make every effort to fully enroll eligible children in all

available slots. Contracting agencies will be required to report on enrollment numbers, attendance trends, and recruitment events as further detailed in the Reporting Requirements (section 8) of this guidance document.

#### **B. Changes to Cash Advances:**

Cash advances will not be offered during the 2020-2021 NC Pre-K program year. Instead, all NC Pre-K Contracting Agencies will receive a one-time **payment** at the beginning of the program year. Contracting Agencies will receive 1/10 of their total contracted amounts (administration and direct services). This payment is **not** a cash advance and will not require repayment or reconciliation at the end of the fiscal year. However, this amount will be deducted from the contractor's total contracted amount. FSRs for this one-time payment should adhere to fiscal policy and be submitted by the 10<sup>th</sup> business day of August (Friday, August 14, 2020). Contracting agencies should distribute this one-time payment to all sites according to their allocated slots regardless of teacher qualifications.

#### **C. Payment Submission Process:**

The Contracting Agency must submit the following items to DCDEE by the 10th business day of the month following the month of service to receive payment:

- An Electronic signed Financial Status Report: This form is not generated from NC Pre-K Kids, therefore it must be prepared by the Contractor and signed by the Superintendent, Chairman of the Board, CEO, or designee, or the Chief Fiscal Officer or designee.
- A signed Summary of Classroom Attendance: This form, signed by the Contractor, is generated from NC Pre-Kids after all classroom information for the month is entered.

Please note:

- A signed copy of each Monthly Attendance Report should be maintained on site by contractor for monitoring purposes.
- DCDEE accepts the Site Administrator (or designee) and Contractor's signatures as certification of each child's attendance and that the classroom is in compliance with the NC Pre-Kindergarten requirements.
- The Contractor must submit an FSR each month during the contract period.

Further guidance on the payment submission process is forthcoming.

#### **D. COVID-19 Emergency Procedures for Requesting Use of Direct Service Funds:**

**DCDEE will allow requests for the flexible use of direct service funds for purposes including purchases of.**

- Cleaning supplies to meet health/safety guidelines
- Personal protective equipment for staff (e.g., cloth face coverings)
- Technology for staff and families to engage in remote learning activities (e.g., tablets)
- Toy/book lending libraries for circulation to children's homes
- Supplies to support remote learning (e.g., manipulatives, child-sized scissors, writing and drawing supplies)
- Travel for home visits
- Professional development (technology, appropriate practice, etc.)

Contracting Agencies can request flexible use of direct service funds following the below process:

1. The NC Pre-K Contract Administrator presents a proposal for the use of direct service funds to the local NC Pre-K Committee. The amount may not exceed 2% of the total contract allocation.
2. The NC Pre-K Committee approves proposal for use of direct service funds.

3. The local NC Pre-K Contract Administrator submits approved proposal to the DCDEE Early Education Branch for approval ([Lorena.gonzalez@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Lorena.gonzalez@dhhs.nc.gov)).
4. DCDEE reviews proposal, budget and supporting documentation (e.g., committee minutes, product descriptions, price list, etc.).
5. DCDEE notifies local NC Pre-K contract administrator in writing with a decision (approved/need additional information/denied) within five (5) business days of receipt of proposal. When additional information is requested, the review period may exceed five (5) business days.
6. Upon approval, a budget revision must be submitted to move direct service funds from the contract budget line Direct Services Contractor or Subcontracting and Grants Direct Services to contract budget line item 11 "Other" (h) "Not Otherwise Classified."
  - Instructions for completing a budget revision can be found at the following link: [https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/N/NCPre-K\\_Budget\\_Revision\\_Instructions.pdf](https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/N/NCPre-K_Budget_Revision_Instructions.pdf)
7. The following documentation must be submitted to [dcdee\\_ncprekfsr@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:dcdee_ncprekfsr@dhhs.nc.gov):
  - The budget revision justification form and budget revision template are located here: <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Home/DCDEE-Sections/North-Carolina-Pre-Kindergarten-NC-Pre-K>
  - Contracting Agencies should scroll down and click on "NC Pre-K Budget Revisions," then click to download the "Budget Revision Justification Form" and "Budget Revision Template."

#### **E. Payment During Site Closures:**

NC Pre-K sites may need to close classrooms/facilities at some point during the school year due to COVID-19 exposure or positive cases. NC Pre-K programs will continue to receive payment based on contracted/allocated slots regardless of whether classrooms/facilities need to close due to COVID-19 exposure or positive cases. However, teachers in these sites will be expected to provide remote learning services with children and families if the facility needs to close due to COVID-19.

## **8. Reporting Requirements**

- A. NC Pre-K Contracting Agencies are required to provide ongoing, regular reports on their respective sites to DCDEE in the following areas:
  - Mode of instruction provided (traditional/in-person, hybrid, or full remote learning) at each of the sites
  - Number of teachers/TAs providing traditional/in-person and/or full remote learning
  - Number of children enrolled/placed in traditional/in-person and/or full remote learning
  - Number of children attending traditional/in-person, hybrid and/or full remote learning (refer to Section 6H for note about attendance in hybrid or full remote learning)
  - Number of enrolled children who tested positive for COVID-19 in the past reporting period
  - Number of staff who tested positive for COVID-19 in the past reporting period
  - For programs conducting traditional/in-person instruction, whether there were any closures in the past reporting period, and how many days was the site closed
- B. **Frequency of reporting:**
  - **Initial Mode of Instruction (Due Friday, September 4, 2020, 5:00PM)**
    - Contracting Agencies are required to report

- 1) The initial mode of instruction (Traditional/In-Person, Hybrid, or Remote Learning) that each of their sites will be using for the first nine (9) weeks of instruction; and
- 2) Why the sites are selecting this mode of instruction

- **Ongoing Reporting: September 8<sup>th</sup> through end of school year**

- NC Pre-K Contracting Agencies are required to submit a report on the regular items outlined above every other Tuesday at 5:00PM
- The dates and reporting periods are as follows:

Report Due Date	Reporting Period
September 22, 2020	September 8, 2020 - September 18, 2020
October 6, 2020	September 21, 2020 – October 2, 2020
October 20, 2020	October 5, 2020 – October 16, 2020
November 3, 2020	October 19, 2020 – October 30, 2020
November 17, 2020	November 2, 2020 – November 13, 2020
December 1, 2020	November 16, 2020 – November 27, 2020
December 15, 2020	November 30, 2020 – December 11, 2020
December 29, 2020	December 14, 2020 – December 25, 2020
January 12, 2021	December 28, 2020 – January 8 2021
January 26, 2021	January 11, 2021 – January 22, 2021
February 9, 2021	January 25, 2021 – February 5, 2021
February 23, 2021	February 8, 2021 – February 19, 2021
March 9, 2021	February 22, 2021 – March 5, 2021
March 23, 2021	March 8, 2021 – March 19, 2021
April 6, 2021	March 21, 2021 – April 2, 2021
April 20, 2021	April 5, 2021 – April 16, 2021
May 4, 2021	April 19, 2021 – April 30, 2021
May 18, 2021	May 3, 2021 – May 14, 2021
June 1, 2021	May 17, 2021 – May 28, 2021
June 15, 2021	May 31, 2021 – June 11, 2021
June 29, 2021	June 14, 2021 – June 25, 2021

### C. Method of Reporting:

Each NC Pre-K Contracting Agency will be emailed a personalized Excel workbook that is prepopulated with their NC Pre-K sites (based on the information in the NC Pre-K Plan database). Each workbook contains one worksheet for reporting each site's mode of classroom instruction (due September 4<sup>th</sup>) as well as separate, identical worksheets for each two-week reporting period. Contracting Agencies will complete the relevant worksheets and email the workbooks to Patricia McCarter, NC Pre-K Coordinator at [patricia.mccarter@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:patricia.mccarter@dhhs.nc.gov) by the specified due date.