

2021-2022 NC PRE-K

REOPENING CALL MEETING: THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 2021

Meeting Layout/Instructions

- Please sign-in with your name and site name
- Please muted your mics
- Please submit questions in the chat box
- All questions will be reviewed as they are entered and will be addressed at the end
- This meeting is being recorded



PURPOSE: 2021-2022 UPDATES

AR-NITA DAVIS

2021-2022 INTERIM COVID-19 POLICIES REVIEW

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 9, 2021.

AS PART OF THE ANNUAL YEAR-END PROCESS, THE 2020-2021 NC PRE-K DATABASE SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN CLOSED OUT TO ALLOW FOR THE ROLLOVER OF DATA TO THE 2021-2022 SYSTEMS.

THE STATE ANTICIPATE CONTRACTORS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO ALL THREE NC PRE-K DATABASE SYSTEMS BY MID-AUGUST.

AUGUST 9TH—NC PRE-K PLAN
AUGUST 15TH—NC PRE-K KIDS
AUGUST 16TH—NC PRE-K APP

NC PRE-K DATABASE SYSTEMS YEAR-END SHUTDOWN AND ROLLOVER PROCESS



EES UPDATES

- **NC Pre-K Teacher Approvals**

- The EES Unit is currently reviewing Enrollment Applications for the 2021-22 school year August 2nd-6th and will continue to do so until the NC Pre-K Plan has reopened
- Contracting agencies should begin submitting change requests for lead teachers **as soon as the NC Pre-K Plan becomes available**
- Teacher Approval priority will be given for agencies who will be reimbursing sites for services delivered in August

EES UPDATES

Site Administrator's Contact Updates

The EES Unit has experienced massive delivery kickbacks when it comes to communicating with Site Administrators via email, specifically for the first round of Information Sessions.

The EES Unit introduced the NEW Change of Information Form in March 2021 that should be used to report changes in Site Administrators assignment and/or contact information

The form may be retrieved at:

https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Portals/0/documents/pdf/E/EES_Change_Form_2021.pdf?ver=aH6JulsugZwebqfrg9preg%3d%3d

EES UPDATES

2021-22 Teacher Employment/Eligibility Process

- Employment dates
- –Site Administrators should **not** include the first date of employment at the facility on the EES BK LT Enrollment Application for teachers moving from a previous role at the site
- –Site Administrators have been instructed to include the Date of Employment for the teacher's placement as a NC Pre-K/BK Lead Teacher.



NC PRE-K CHILD ENROLLMENT

Child Eligibility Reminders

- Once a child is deemed **eligible**, they *remain eligible throughout the program year*, regardless of changes to the family's situation.
- If a child was deemed **ineligible**, a *family may reapply if their situation has changed* since the initial date of application.
- Children who are determined eligible based on their family's income being at or below 75% of the state median income level are given the *highest priority and served first*
- Up to 20% of children whose families exceed 75% of SMI can be served if those children have other identified risk-factors

NC PRE-K CHILD ENROLLMENT

Military Families

- Any age-eligible child who is a child of either of the following shall be eligible for the program:
 - An active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States, including the North Carolina National Guard, State military forces, or a reserve component of the Armed Forces who was ordered to active duty by the proper authority within the last 18 months or is expected to be ordered within the next 18 months
 - or
 - A member of the Armed Forces of the United States, including the North Carolina National Guard, State military forces, or a reserve component of the Armed Forces who was injured or killed while serving on active duty
- Income does not determine eligibility, however, income should be considered when **prioritizing** children of eligible military families.
- **NOTE:** Beginning with the 2021-2022 program year, military families that exceed 75% SMI will **NOT** be counted towards the 20% restriction

2021-2022 INTERIM COVID-19 POLICIES REVIEW

- Health & Safety Guidance**
- Program Year**
- Classroom Staff**
- Mode of Instruction**
- Circumstances When Remote Learning May Be Needed**
- Remote Learning Requirements**
- Teaching Strategies Resources**
- Payment Policy**

2021-2022 INTERIM COVID-19 POLICIES REVIEW

- 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*.
- All NC Pre-K classrooms, whether located in public school sites or nonpublic/private sites, fall *under the jurisdiction of DCDEE*.

2021-2022 INTERIM COVID-19 POLICIES REVIEW

- This guidance is specific to NC Pre-K programs and classrooms and applies to ***all NC Pre-K classrooms***, whether they are located in public school sites or nonpublic/private sites.
- This guidance may be ***amended by the NC Pre-K state office as needed*** in accordance with changes in trends related to COVID-19.

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 ChildCareStrongNCPublic Health Toolkit, in accordance with the Memorandum on Preschool Programs and K-12 Public Health Guidance.
- 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.

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE

Preschool classrooms in public school are subject to child care health guidance while in the classroom and are only expected to follow additional health protocols when preschool children are utilizing/present in **common areas of the school**.

- –**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.*

PROGRAM YEAR

The NC Pre-K 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 7th.

CLASSROOM STAFF

Long-term Substitute Teachers

- For the 2021-2022 program year, DCDEE will continue to offer flexibility to programs by **waiving the 12-week limitation** for long-term substitutes serving in NC Pre-K classrooms.
- NC Pre-K Contracting Agencies will **not** be required to assign a lower per-child rate for classrooms who must hire long-term substitute lead teachers.
- NC Pre-K Contracting Agencies may reimburse classrooms at a higher “approved lead teacher” rate as long as funds are available within their Direct Service allocations.

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MODE OF CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

- DCDCC goal for 2021-2022 continues to be to provide as much stability and in-person instruction as possible to children and families. Therefore, it is expected that **ALLNC** Pre-K students will be provided **fully in-person instruction** for the 2021-2022 NC Pre-K program year.
- NC Pre-K programs will **NOT** be allowed to operate fully remote or hybrid classrooms for the 2021-2022 program year.
- **NOTE:** Remote learning may **only** be provided to children for limited periods of time and only as an option of last resort.

CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN REMOTE LEARNING MAY BE NEEDED

- Remote learning may be provided to children for a limited time in response to any of the following circumstances:
 - During the weeks prior to instruction starting on September 7th (e.g., home visits and orientation may be done remotely)
 - 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 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 NCDHHS issues a directive that requires closure and/or reduced capacity to minimize the spread of COVID-19

REMOTE LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

Remote learning may only be provided to children if one or more of the circumstances outlined in Section 6 have been met.

REMOTE LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

A. Method and Duration of Delivery:

An equivalent of 6.5 hours includes:

- direct instruction via remote learning
- Remote Moments (*section 7B*)
- nap time/snacks/transitions
- child-initiated play/outdoor play
- family-led engagement activities, and 1:1 family check-ins (*see Section 7C*)

REMOTE LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

B. 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:
 - Plan for and deliver five (5) discrete Remote Moments with different activities throughout the week utilizing Teaching Strategies Distance Learning Solution resources.
- Remote Moment content must align with the 5 developmental domains from the North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development.

REMOTE LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

B. Remote Instruction: 'Remote Moments' *(continued)*

- Teachers are **required** to:
 - Offer Remote Moments **at least once per day** if remote learning is being provided individually to **specific children** who are unable to attend in-person (ex. If a child must quarantine at home due to a COVID-19 exposure)
 - Offer Remote Moments **at least twice per day** if remote learning is being provided to **ALL children** (ex. If the whole classroom must close in response to a COVID-19 outbreak)
- 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.
- Offer Remote Moment materials to families based on family needs, such as reliable access to technology or primary home language.

REMOTE LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

C. Family Engagement: 'Check-ins'

- Opportunities for the lead teacher (with teacher assistant as an optional participant) and a child/family to connect live through weekly, two-way communication while the child/family is participating in remote learning.
 - *Could take place through a call, video conference, or through a socially-distanced in-person visit while everyone wears face coverings.*
 - *May be a brief conversation, or it could be a longer period of time depending on child/family need.*



REMOTE LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

C. Family Engagement: 'Check-ins' *(continued)*

- Lead Teachers are **required** to:
 - Prepare for and document every Check-in in writing
- A child/family's participation in the check-in should be documented and used as a means to track attendance.
 - Offer Family Check-ins **at least once per week** if remote learning is being provided individually to **specific children** who are unable to attend in-person (ex. If a child must quarantine at home due to a COVID-19 exposure)
 - Offer Family Check-ins **at least twice per week** if remote learning is being provided to **ALL children** (ex. If the whole classroom must close in response to a COVID-19 outbreak)

REMOTE LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

C. Family Engagement: 'Check-ins' *(continued)*

- Lead Teachers are **required** to:

- 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
 - For non-English dominant families, provide communication through an interpreter (e.g. staff, family member, etc.)

TEACHING STRATEGIES RESOURCES

DCDEE is continuing to provide access to the Teaching Strategies distance learning resources for all teachers and staff who support classrooms with **at least one NC Pre-K child.**

TEACHING STRATEGIES RESOURCES

A. Remote Learning

- NC Pre-K teachers must use Teaching Strategies resources for remote instruction.
- Teachers are **required** to:
 - 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)

TEACHING STRATEGIES RESOURCES

A. Remote Learning

B. Child Assessments

C. ReadyRosie Family Engagement

D. Professional Development and Training



PAYMENT POLICY 2021-2022

A. Payments

- For the 2021-2022 program year, DCDEE will provide payments based on the following:
 - For the months of **August through November:**
 - DCDEE will provide classroom-based payments in order 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. These classroom reimbursement rates will **NOT** be contingent on child enrollment or attendance.
 - Payments will be generated based on the **assigned teacher rate** and the **number of slots allocated** to the classroom.
 - 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.

PAYMENT POLICY 2021-2022

A. Payments

–For the months of **December through June:**

- DCDEE will provide payments based on the traditional “per-child”, attendance-based** model as summarized below and detailed in the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance.
- 100% reimbursement** will be provided when a child attends
 - 10 days or 50% of the operating days** during the month, **or**
 - at least one day** during the first and last month of classroom operation, **or**
 - at least one day** during the child’s first month of enrollment
- 50% reimbursement** will be provided when a child attends between **25% -50% of the operating days** during the month
- 0% reimbursement** will be provided when a child attends **less than 25% of the operating days** during the month
- 0% reimbursement** will be provided when a **slot is unfilled**

PAYMENT POLICY 2021-2022

B.COVID-19 Attendance Exceptions

- Per-child reimbursement rates will **not** be reduced if:
 - A NC Pre-K classroom/site is required to close due to COVID-19 exposure or positive cases, or
 - A child is unable to attend for an extended amount of days due to the child being sick and/or quarantined due to COVID-19
- **NOTE:** NC Pre-K teachers are required to provide remote learning services to children until in-person instruction can resume.

PAYMENT POLICY 2021-2022

B.COVID-19 Attendance Exceptions*(continued)*

- NC Pre-K programs must communicate with their NC Pre-K Contracting Agency to request a COVID-19 attendance exception.
- Contracting Agencies will be responsible for verifying remote learning services are provided in accordance with the guidance in Section 7 and documenting attendance exceptions in the NC Pre-K KIDS database system.

