



#StayStrongNC

# 2022-2023 Additional Guidance for NC Pre-K Programs

Published May 18, 2022 – Updated June 6, 2023



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



# 2022-2023 Additional Guidance 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. 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. Purpose

The **2022-2023 Additional Guidance for NC Pre-K Programs** serves as a replacement to the *Interim COVID-19 Policies for NC Pre-K Programs* and is meant to address program expectations specific to **NC Pre-K programs and classrooms** for the 2022-2023 program year. **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.

## 2. 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](#).

## 3. Program Year

The 2022-2023 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 6<sup>th</sup>. NC Pre-K programs are encouraged to use the weeks before NC Pre-K instruction officially begins to conduct child/family orientation, conduct home visits, engage in professional development training, etc.

## 4. Site Level Staff Flexibilities

### a. Long-term Substitute Teachers

While the expectation from DCDEE is that all sites will work to secure qualified lead teachers and teacher assistants, we recognize the impact that COVID-19 has had on the ability for programs to hire and/or maintain qualified staff. Therefore, for the 2022-2023 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.

In addition, for the 2022-2023 program year, 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. NC Pre-K Contracting Agencies should contact their NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant for assistance with entering rates in NC Pre-K Plan, if needed.

### b. Interim Site Administrators *\*New Flexibility for 2022-2023\**

While the expectation from DCDEE is that all sites will work to secure qualified Site Administrators, we recognize the impact that COVID-19 has had on the ability for programs to hire and/or maintain qualified staff. Therefore, for the 2022-2023 program year, DCDEE will offer flexibility to programs by **waiving the 12-week limitation** for Interim Site Administrators serving at NC Pre-K sites.

## 5. Mode of Instruction

Our goal for 2022-2023 continues to be to provide as much stability and in-person instruction as possible to children and families. Therefore, it is expected that **ALL** NC Pre-K students will be provided **fully in-person instruction** for the 2022-2023 NC Pre-K program year.

- **NOTE: Remote learning may only be provided to children for limited periods of time and only as an option of last resort.** See Section 6. *Circumstances When Remote Learning May Be Needed* for more information.

## 6. Circumstances When Remote Learning May Be Needed

NC Pre-K programs will **NOT** be allowed to operate **fully remote or hybrid classrooms** for the 2022-2023 program year. However, 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 6<sup>th</sup> (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 requiring closure or reduced capacity to minimize the spread of COVID-19
- In response to inclement weather or to natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding
- Other conditions impacting a child's ability to attend in-person such as illness, hospitalization, military leave, a family emergency, or crisis requiring family travel
- Other conditions that require the NC Pre-K site to close due to damages such as a fire

## 7. Remote Learning Requirements

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

### 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 7B), nap time, snacks, transitions, child-initiated play, outdoor play, family-led engagement activities, and 1:1 family check-ins (see Section 7C).

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. 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:

- i. Plan for and deliver five (5) discrete Remote Moments with different activities throughout the week utilizing Teaching Strategies Distance Learning Solution resources.
  1. Remote Moment content must align with the 5 developmental domains from the North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development.
- ii. 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)
- iii. 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)
  1. 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.
- iv. Offer Remote Moment materials to families based on family needs, such as reliable access to technology or primary home language.

### **c. 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:

- i. Prepare for and document every Check-in in writing
  1. A child/family's participation in the check-in should be documented and used as a means to track attendance.
- ii. 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)
- iii. 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)
- iv. Make every reasonable effort to communicate with the family in an accessible manner, such as:
  1. Adjust the timing of family check-ins to meet family's needs
  2. 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
  3. For non-English dominant families, provide communication through an interpreter (e.g. staff, family member, etc.)

#### **d. Additional Recommendations for Teachers**

- i. Provide Remote Moments through a virtual platform, such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, and/or using Teaching Strategies digital resources.
- ii. Plan Remote Moments that last for no more than 30 minutes at a time.
- iii. Plan for Remote Moments that allow for two-way communication where teachers, children, and families can speak directly to one another.
- iv. Plan Remote Moments separately from in-person instructional time and designed specifically for remote learners.
- v. 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.)
- vi. 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.
- vii. Consider virtual field trips as a Remote Moment.
- viii. 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.
- ix. Provide applicable technical resources and support to families to participate in Family Check-ins (e.g. downloading the Teaching Strategies family application)
- x. Utilize weekly Family Check-in time to:
  1. Provide updates on procedures related to the school or site’s response to COVID-19
  2. Share ongoing information on the child’s developmental progress using evidence-based observations
  3. Provide individualized recommendations for activities and engagement opportunities for the family to best be able to support their child
- xi. Encourage families to bring questions, concerns, ideas, and evidence of learning at home (e.g., pictures of activities) to the Family Check-in
- xii. Encourage the child to be an active participant in the Family Check-in

## **8. Payment Policy** *\*Revised August 30, 2022\**

### **A. Payments** *\*Revised Flexibility for 2022-2023\**

For the 2022-2023 program year, DCDEE will provide payments based on the following:

For the months of **August through October ONLY:**

- DCDEE will provide classroom-based payments as a support to NC Pre-K programs as sites continue to focus efforts on recruitment and enrollment of eligible children for the 2022-2023 program year.
- Classroom reimbursement rates will **NOT** be contingent on child enrollment or attendance for these months.
- 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.

**NOTE: Classroom-based payments will NOT be provided beyond October 2022.**

**For the months of November 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](#). (See *Section 4: The NC Pre-K Site – Subsection C. Program Attendance Policy*)
    - **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**
- a. COVID-19 Attendance Exceptions *\*Revised for 2022-2023\****

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.

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 above in Section 7 and documenting attendance exceptions in the NC Pre-K KIDS database system.

***\*\*If remote learning services are not provided or cannot be verified, then the attendance exception should NOT be applied. Payment would be made based on the child’s actual in-person attendance days.***

## **9. Legislative Rate Increases for Private Sites**

For the 2022-2023 program year, the Division of Child Development and Early Education will be implementing this legislative rate increase in accordance with the guidance below. **NC Pre-K sites are required to use the funds provided to increase the salaries of their NC Pre-K teachers as is intended by the General Assembly. Contracting agencies must develop a process for monitoring programs to ensure funds are used as intended.**

**a. Classroom Eligibility Requirements**

In order to be eligible to receive the rate increase, the NC Pre-K classroom **must be located in a private child care center, have 1 or more NC Pre-K children enrolled, and have a qualified lead teacher or long-term substitute in place** in the NC Pre-K Plan database.

- i. Private site classrooms that have been allocated slots and have qualified staff in place **will receive the full rate increase as long as at least one child qualifies for reimbursement.**
- ii. Classrooms located in public schools and head start sites **are not eligible** to receive the rate increase regardless of enrolled children or teacher qualification.

**b. Funding Amounts**

NC Pre-K classrooms that meet the eligibility criteria described above in Section A will receive a supplemental payment in the amount of \$4,895 which will be distributed in **10 equal payments of \$489.50** throughout the year. This amount equates to an **additional 2%** increase on top of the 2.145% increase received for the 2021-2022 program year.

Program Year	“Standard” Classroom Rate	Legislative Rate Increase	Total
2021-2022	<b>\$117,000</b> <i>(18 children x \$650 per child x 10 months)</i>	<b>\$2,510</b> <i>(\$117,000 x ~2.145%)</i>	<b>\$119,510</b>
2022-2023	<b>\$119,510</b>	<b>\$2,385</b> <i>(\$119,510 x ~2%)</i>	<b>\$121,895</b>
Total Legislative Rate Increase		<b>\$4,895</b>	

**c. Contract Amendment**

- i. Additional funding for legislative rate increases will be added to each NC Pre-K contracting agency’s Direct Services funding in a separate budget line item through NC Pre-K Contract effective July 1, 2022.
- ii. **Contractors will not need to send in a Line Item Budget** as this funding will be placed in the Subcontracting and Grants budget category in a separate line item in the contract amendment.
- iii. The funding breakdown will be included in the budget narrative as outlined below:

**Example: Funds budgeted for legislative rate increases for 10 classrooms for a total funding amount of \$48,950 (10 classrooms x \$4,895= \$48,950).**

**d. Payment Distribution**

Contracting agencies will request the legislative rate increases as part of the monthly NC Pre-K reimbursement process and will be responsible for distributing funding to NC Pre-K providers. The FSR will include the additional funds for private child care center rate increases on a separate line item under Subcontracting and Grants as budgeted in the contract.

The NC Pre-K Plan and NC Pre-K KIDS database systems will be modified to capture appropriate funding amounts for all eligible classrooms. NC Pre-K programs and contracting agencies will submit monthly attendance and reimbursement requests following **all usual processes**. NC Pre-K contracting agencies will be responsible for reviewing the monthly Summary of Attendance forms and ensuring that all classroom payments are accurately reflected. Any questions about discrepancies in your payment amount should be directed to your NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant.

## 10. Child Care Rule .3013 - NC Pre-K Teacher Assistant Education and Credentials

**\*UPDATED July 19, 2022\***

DCDEE recognizes that the requirements outlined in rule .3013 may have caused programs additional burden during a time when obtaining qualified staff has been challenging for everyone. In an effort to support NC Pre-K programs across the state, DCDEE will allow additional flexibilities to help educators and programs transition into rule .3013. These specific flexibilities are scheduled to expire June 2024.

**Additional flexibilities for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 program year only.**  
**However, some flexibilities are specific to 2022-2023. Please read carefully.**

- Teacher Assistants who have received a qualifying letter from our Workforce Education Unit certifying them as a Lead Teacher, may continue to serve as an NC Pre-K Teacher Assistant
  - If a Teacher Assistant **has at least 9 EC credit hours** on their qualifying letter, they will qualify as an NC Pre-K teacher Assistant for the 2022-2023 program year.
  - If a Teacher Assistant **has less than 9 EC credit hours** on their qualifying letter, they must enroll in approved EC courses **and complete** 9 EC credit hours by the end of the 2022-2023 program year. These courses must be completed by the spring of 2023 in order to count for the 2022-2023 program year.
- If a Teacher Assistant **does not meet the aforementioned flexibilities, nor do they currently hold a CDA nor hold or are working towards an Associate Degree**, they must enroll in CDA courses immediately in order to qualify as an NC Pre-K Teacher Assistant for the 2022-2023 school year and beyond.

As part of our partnership with Teaching Strategies, the CDA coursework will be offered for **free** through Quorum Training. More information on what that entails and how to enroll will be forthcoming in a separate email. Additional costs related to the CDA Application and certification may be covered through TEACH scholarships. Please reach out to the Child Care Services Association for additional information.

*\*\*As an added flexibility, any effort made by a Teacher Assistant to obtain the CDA by the end of the 2022-2023 program year will be recognized by **DCDEE as working towards their Associate Degree** since CDA courses may transfer as coursework toward an Associate Degree in Early Childhood. Teachers Assistants are expected to enroll for the required 6 semester hours per year as described in Rule .3013*

Information for NC Pre-K Teacher Assistant Education & Credentials may be found in the [NC Pre-K Program Requirements & Guidance Equivalencies](#)

- DCDEE is in the process of reviewing current acceptable degrees and equivalencies and will share any changes once they have been approved

**Although additional flexibilities have been put in place for the next two program years (2022-2023 & 2023-2024), DCDEE strongly encourages NC Pre-K Teacher Assistants to make every effort to meet the requirements of rule .3013. The additional flexibilities will help in many cases, but the ultimate goal should remain meeting rule .3013 as originally written and shared in the original guidance. (see New Rule Change below)**

**New Rule Change** – effective April 1, 2022

**NOTE: There are no provisions in this Rule change that allow for the “grandfathering” of new or existing staff.**

All teacher assistants shall have a high school diploma or its equivalent and shall either:



- **hold a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential; or**
- hold or be working toward an Associate Degree or higher in birth-through-kindergarten, child development, early childhood education, or an early childhood education related field. Teacher assistants working toward the Associate Degree shall make progress by completing a minimum of six documented semester hours per year.

**NEW:** All teacher assistants shall complete at least **15 hours of annual in-service professional development**. A combination of college coursework, Continuing Education Units (CEUs) or clock hours may be used to complete the requirements of this Rule.

The site-level administrator shall document the progress of any teacher assistants who are working toward the required education. This documentation must be maintained in the individual’s staff record available for review by the Division.

### Summary

- Limited Impact on Current Teacher Assistants
  - Over **70% of the teacher assistants** already hold an AAS Degree
- Continues to support education of early childhood workforce and professionalizing the field
- All teachers and teacher assistants must complete 15 hours of continuing education clock hours each year. NC Pre-K teachers and teacher assistants are provided many opportunities for professional development.
- **DPI aligned and supported** the updated language of the Child Care Rule .3013
- Positions NC Pre-K to **meet all 10 of the NIEER Quality Indicators** for NC Pre-K Programs

## **11. Session Law 2021-117 – Regulatory Reform**

### **Section 2: NC Pre-K School Options** *(effective January 1, 2022)*

- DCDEE will be required to post the following information on its website:
  - The educational opportunities for kindergarten offered by local school administrative units.
  - The educational opportunities for kindergarten offered by charter schools.
  - Scholarships for enrollment in nonpublic schools provided pursuant to Part 2A of Article 39 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes, or any successor program.

***This information shall be indexed or searchable by county, and the Division shall update the information on June 1 each year.***

- NC Pre-K programs will be required to provide all families with the address of the website where the information can be found and a brief description of the information available.
- Upon request, NC Pre-K programs must furnish to a family a list of the following educational opportunities located in the same county as the NC Pre-K facility, or, if specified, any other county:
  - The educational opportunities for kindergarten offered by local school administrative units.
  - The educational opportunities for kindergarten offered by charter schools.
  - Scholarships for enrollment in nonpublic schools provided pursuant to Part 2A of Article 39 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes, or any successor program.

***DCDEE is in the process of getting this information finalized and will ensure that all relevant links are shared with all NC Pre-K Contracting Agencies once available.***

## 12. Teaching Strategies Resources **\*UPDATED September 12, 2022\***

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.

The Teaching Strategies Distance Learning Solution provides 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

### a. **Remote Learning**

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

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

- i. Provide Teaching Strategies family engagement resources every day to children and their families
- ii. 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)

Teachers should regularly supplement Teaching Strategies curriculum and materials as needed to support their individual students' and family needs.

### b. **ReadyRosie Family Engagement**

Access to ReadyRosie is also being provided for all NC Pre-K programs in order to support increased engagement and partnership with families. NC Pre-K programs are **required** to enroll all NC Pre-K families in the ReadyRosie solution and **must** incorporate ReadyRosie resources into their existing family engagement plans.

**ReadyRosie Resources:**

- [ReadyRosie Back-to-School Checklist for Administrators](#)
- **New to ReadyRosie?** Check out [Getting Started with ReadyRosie for Teachers and Administrators](#)
- [NC PreK-ReadyRosie-Admin-and-Teacher-Info 2022 Spreadsheet](#)

### c. **Professional Development and Training/Teaching Strategies Quorum®**

For the 2022-2023 program year, DCDEE **will not require** teachers to attend scheduled trainings with Teaching Strategies. However, teachers and staff will still have access to training opportunities to complete the 15-hour PD requirement in child care rule at their leisure.

However, DCDEE **will require** new teachers to complete [The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool: Foundation Online Course](#). This training can be found in Quorum under The Creative Curriculum/Gold Coursework. Please see instructions on how to access Quorum below under Teaching Strategies Teacher Membership.

## Teaching Strategies Teacher Membership

As a NC Pre-K partner, you now have access to the new **Professional Development Teacher Membership** from Teaching Strategies. Continue your professional development and improve outcomes for children by following these quick steps:

### 1. Explore Live Courses & Classes Available through Quorum®

- a. Get unlimited access to live, flexible courses and over 400 hours of on-demand, research-based content.
- b. Complete annual CCDF training
- c. Complete CDA credential training
- d. Earn continuing education units (CEUs).

#### How do I access Quorum®?

- Log in to [www.my.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.my.teachingstrategies.com)
  - Select the Develop area at the top of your screen.
  - Select the “Go to Quorum®” button.
- [PD Teacher Membership Flyer](#)
- [How to Register for Live Classes and Courses](#)
- [CDA via Quorum Flyer](#)

### 2. Connect with Experts and Peers on The Hub

Engage and share experiences with experts and educators on **The Hub**. Join forums exclusively available to Teacher Members and connect with Teaching Strategies early learning experts. Plus, get exclusive access to weekly, live sessions exploring best practices in early childhood education.

#### How do I access The Hub?

- Log in to [www.my.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.my.teachingstrategies.com)
- Select The Hub area at the top of your screen.
- [Discover The Hub Now](#) (must be logged in to myTS)

**Resources & Support:** Teaching Strategies has also developed a variety of resources and guides to get you started for the new school year.

## Back-to-School with Teaching Strategies solutions

1. [Back-to-School Checklist for GOLD® & Creative Curriculum® Cloud Administrators](#)
  - a. **New to MyTeachingStrategies?** [Check out this NC PreK Guide](#)
  - b. [Make sure your teachers have access to the Library](#)
2. **Live Back-to-School Webinars**
  - a. [For Administrators](#)
  - b. [For Returning Teachers](#)
  - c. [For New Teachers](#)
3. **Pre-Recorded Back-to-School Webinars**
  - a. [For Administrators](#)
  - b. [For Teachers](#)

## Additional Support Resources

- 1) [Contact List](#)
- 2) [Teaching Strategies Monthly Office Hours](#)
- 3) [Schedule a Consultation Call](#)

4) [Resource Library](#)

**d. Child Assessments**

NC Pre-K teachers must conduct ongoing formative assessments on NC Pre-K children to gather information about each child's growth and skill development, and how each child processes information and solves problems during the learning process. This information should be used to plan and deliver instruction.

NC Pre-K teachers may use any formative assessment tool that has been [approved](#) by the NC Child Care Commission. However, all NC Pre-K teachers are **required** to document child growth and developmental data **from the Spring/Final Checkpoint** in the *MyTeachingStrategies*® platform regardless of which formative assessment tool is selected.

**e. Kindergarten Transition Reports**

In accordance with the **Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021** ([Session Law 2021-8](#)), a formative assessment must be administered at the end of the Pre-K school year, and the results of the assessment must be shared with the receiving kindergarten teacher. NC DPI, NC Department of Health and Human Services, and Teaching Strategies have collaborated to create a Transition Report to address this legislative requirement and support the state's transition to kindergarten efforts.

All Pre-K teachers in public schools, as well as teachers in NC Pre-K programs located in private sites and Head Start sites, will complete a Transition Report within Teaching Strategies GOLD® for each child in their class no later than May 31<sup>st</sup>. Transition Reports will be transferred to receiving kindergarten teachers via NC ELI as the new school year begins, providing information about a child's knowledge, skills, and abilities related to Widely Held Expectations for child development.

You can find the report under the "Family" tab as seen in the screenshot below.



**Resources & Support:** Please take advantage of the following resources listed below for support in accessing and completing the Transition Report.

- i. **Transition Report Webinars:** Click to view [a recording of the webinar](#) held on April 20<sup>th</sup>. When you click on the [link](#), you will need to enter the password **9WhQqQyH** to view the recording.
- ii. **Transition Report Instructional Video:** View the [Pre-Release: NC Pre-K Transition Report Overview](#) video that will show you how to complete the new reporting tool.
- iii. **Office Hours:** [Click this link to sign up for an Office Hours session](#) led by Teaching Strategies on accessing and completing the report. You can also register for office hours or schedule a consultation with Teaching Strategies by sending an email to [NC@teachingstrategies.com](mailto:NC@teachingstrategies.com).

### 13. LETRS Training **\*UPDATED June 6, 2023\***

#### Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021 – Session Law 2021-8

In accordance with the **Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021** ([Session Law 2021-8](#)), the Department of Public Instruction, in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services, **must**:

- Provide to educators and administrators working with children in the NC Pre-K program to ensure developmentally appropriate instruction grounded in the Science of Reading and outcomes promoting reading achievement in students.
- Utilize a third-party independent teacher training program to deliver professional development that demonstrates evidence-based success with educators and administrators in establishing deep knowledge of literacy instruction.

In order to meet the requirements of the Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021, a contract has been implemented with **Lexia Voyager Sopris** to provide LETRS® (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) for Early Childhood training to NC Pre-K teachers, public school Pre-K teachers, and Site Administrators.

The LETRS® for Early Childhood training includes:

- Two training sessions that are each delivered in-person or broken down into virtual training sessions
- Four online units (approx. 14 hours)
- Related readings (approx. 4 hours)
- Time dedicated to applying learned skills in their classrooms as a “Bridge to Practice” (approx. 5 hours)

LETRS Participant Responsibilities
<p><b>Pre-K Training (Early Childhood)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete a minimum of 2 units per semester over 1 year<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-paced online unit content should be completed prior to virtual/in-person unit trainings</li></ul></li><li>• Attend all trainings</li><li>• Complete all assignments, including Bridge to Practice activities</li><li>• Pass each unit as prescribed by vendor with the Goal of 80% Mastery</li><li>• Contact NC Pre-K Contract Administrator and/or District LETRS Point of Contact for any training questions and technical assistance</li></ul>
<p><b>Administrator Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attend all Administrative Professional Learning Sessions</li><li>• Complete self-paced online unit content as outlined in your district specific implementation plan</li><li>• Complete all training assignments</li><li>• Complete each unit as prescribed</li><li>• Contact NC Pre-K Contract Administrator and/or District LETRS Point of Contact for any training questions and technical assistance</li></ul>

## North Carolina LETRS Implementation 2021-2025

**\*\*NOTE: LETRS training is required for all NC Pre-K Lead Teachers and Site Administrators. New staff will need to complete make up sessions in order to meet the training requirement. Contact your District LETRS Point of Contact for more information regarding make up sessions.**

**Cohort 1: Summer 2021 – Spring 2023:** Educators will begin in the summer of 2021 by completing the online portion of Unit 1, approximately an 8-hour time commitment. At the start of the 2021-2022 school year, educators will complete the Unit 1 Bridge to Practice activities in the classroom with students before moving forward to the next units.

### Update:

- 100% will complete LETRS for Early Childhood Educators facilitated training by the end of June 2022.
- 100% will complete LETRS for Administrators facilitated training by the end of June 2022.
  - Cohort 1 site administrators will be offered the option to receive the LETRS for Early Childhood Educators manual and online course access.

**Cohort 2: Winter 2021 – Winter 2023:** Educators will begin LETRS training as they return from winter break (roughly) and complete one Unit of online, print, Bridge to Practices every 8-10 weeks. Each unit is approximately a 8-hr time commitment.

### Update:

- Cohort 2 counties will complete LETRS for Early Childhood Educators facilitated training in the fall of 2022.
- 99% will complete LETRS for Administrators facilitated training by the end of June 2022.
  - Cohort 1 site administrators will be offered the option to receive the LETRS for Early Childhood Educators manual and online course access.

**Cohort 3: Summer 2022 – Spring 2024:** Educators will begin around July 1, 2022 and before the start of the school year be expected to complete the online portion of Unit 1, approximately an 8-hour time commitment. At the start of the 2022-2023 school year, teachers will complete the Unit 1 Bridge to Practice activities in the classroom with students before moving forward to the next units.

### Update:

- 57 districts/counties will participate in Cohort 3. Training will begin in July 2022.
- Cohort 3 site administrators will participate in the LETRS for Early Childhood Educators training.

## LETRS Stipends **\*NEW\***

**\*\*NOTE: This UPDATED guidance will replace any previous messaging shared about LETRS funding requirements.**

The Department of Public Instruction was allocated funds to support NC Pre-K providers in private child care programs to allow NC Pre-K lead teachers to participate in the required LETRS training. Funds were transferred to DCDEE and distributed to the qualified local NC Pre-K contracting agencies. Contracting agencies were required to reimburse eligible sites located in private child care and Head Start classrooms that are not operated by a public school. The funds provided were to reimburse private providers for substitute pay or for stipends to be awarded to NC Pre-K teachers.

The funds received should be used for reimbursement or payment for one of the following:

- **Substitute pay** for lead NC Pre-K teachers located in private child care and Head Start classrooms that are not operated by the public schools to attend Science of Reading training (LETRS) **during the instructional day** (two separate days)  
*(If teachers attended training on a teacher workday there is no need to pay stipends in that situation.)*
- **Stipends** for lead NC Pre-K teachers located in private childcare and Head Start classrooms that are not operated by the public schools to attend Science of Reading training (LETRS) **outside of the instructional day and/or school calendar days.**
- In cases where funding cannot be used for either of the above reasons, the funds may instead be used as a **bonus** for lead NC Pre-K teachers located in private child care and Head Start classrooms that are not operated by the public schools for completing the online course and live training sessions. **Verification of completion is required.**

### **IMPORTANT**

- LETRS training is a requirement.
- These funds are state funds, not federal funds.
- The amount of the funds was calculated as \$165/day of training.
- Funds are to be expended only for the purposes described above.
- Funds cannot be used to purchase any materials or online resources.
- NC Pre-K contracting agencies should only draw down LETRS funds **after** documentation has been obtained from participating sites to ensure teacher attended and/or completed the training – No funds should be requested without appropriate documentation.
- If funds have been **requested** but cannot be expended as described above NC Pre-K contracting agencies will need to reconcile those funds.

If you have further questions about **LETRS funding** or how to **reconcile funds**, please contact the NC Pre-K Budget team at [dcdee\\_ncprekfsr@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:dcdee_ncprekfsr@dhhs.nc.gov). If you have further questions about LETRS training in general, please reach out to your [NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant](#).

## 14. NC Pre-K Program Income Eligibility Requirements **\*NEW SECTION October 4, 2022\***

On September 15, 2022 the U.S Census released the 2021 American Communities Survey (ACS) 1-year Estimates. The following information in this section has been developed based off state income information in this survey.

### **Redetermine Eligibility:**

**NOTE:** NC Pre-K contracting agencies must still follow procedures on how to determine income in Section 3 of the NC Pre-K Program Requirements & Guidance. The only change that has been made to Section 3 is the 75% State Median Income table.

### **For children who have already been placed or have already qualified due to income:**

- No change or update is required.

### **For children who did not qualify due to income:**

- NC Pre-K contracting agencies must go back and review applications of families whose children **did not qualify** for the 2022-2023 program year due to income.
- NC Pre-K contracting agencies must recalculate income for those families according to the new table below in order to determine if there is a change to their eligibility.
- Once eligibility is determined using the new table, these children must be served or placed on the waitlist in accordance with current prioritization requirements.

### **For children on the waitlist who are over income but qualify for services based on other risk factors:**

- NC Pre-K contracting agencies must recalculate income for those families according to the new Table 1. below in order to determine if there is a change to their priority for placement as shown in the example below.

Using Previous State Median Income Table				Using <b>*NEW*</b> State Median Income Table			
Priority	Child Name	Family Income Below 75% of SMI	Additional Risk Factor(s)	Priority	Child Name	Family Income Below 75% of SMI	Additional Risk Factor(s)
1	Child A	Yes	Yes	1	Child A	Yes	Yes
2	Child B	Yes	Yes	2	Child B	Yes	Yes
3	Child C	Yes	No	3	Child H	Yes	Yes
4	Child D	Yes	No	4	Child I	Yes	Yes
5	Child E	Yes	No	5	Child C	Yes	No
6	Child F	Yes	No	6	Child D	Yes	No
7	Child G	No	Yes	7	Child E	Yes	No
8	Child H	No	Yes	8	Child F	Yes	No
9	Child I	No	Yes	9	Child G	No	Yes
10	Child J	No	Yes	10	Child J	No	Yes

**REMINDER:** 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.



**Eligibility for Families at or below 75% of State Median Income – Effective October 1, 2022**

Income eligibility for the NC Pre-K Program is determined by family size and gross income.

- The table below should be used to determine a family’s income eligibility for the 2022-2023 program year. This table will replace the income table in the NC Pre-K Program Requirements & Guidance

<b>Table 1. 75% STATE MEDIAN INCOME</b>	
<b>Family Size</b>	<b>75% State Median Income</b>
<b>1</b>	\$38,684
<b>2</b>	\$50,587
<b>3</b>	\$62,490
<b>4</b>	\$74,393
<b>5</b>	\$86,295
<b>6</b>	\$98,198
<b>7</b>	\$100,430
<b>8</b>	\$102,662
<b>9</b>	\$104,893
<b>10</b>	\$107,125
<b>11</b>	\$109,357
<b>12</b>	\$111,589

**Effective: October 1, 2022** - Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce (Census Bureau) 2021 American Communities Survey (ACS) 1-year Estimates-Released September 15, 2022

**NC Pre-K Updates/Adjustments to meet the new 2022-23 State Median Income Table**

- **NC Pre-K APP** and **NC Pre-K Kids** systems have been updated with the new values for the **2022-23 State Median Income Table**. The updated values will be used to calculate income eligibility and the poverty percentage category for all child applications that you enter for the **2022-23 NC Pre-K school year**.
  - Applications entered in the NC Pre-K APP system prior to October 1, 2022 have been automatically recalculated according to the new values.
- The **NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance** manual, Section 3, has been updated with the revised **2022-23 State Median Income Table**.

If you have already determined eligibility and printed Scorecards for child applications that have been received for the 2022-23 NC Pre-K school year, there is no need to redo the eligibility and reprint Scorecards for these child applications. These children will remain eligible for the 2022-23 NC Pre-K school year due to the revised income guidelines for 75% State Median Income being at a higher amount.

However, if a child was not eligible for the 2022-23 school year due to the family having a higher income than 75% of State Median Income, we highly encourage you to review the child application with the new income values to determine if the child is now eligible for the NC Pre-K Program. If the child is determined eligible you will need to print an updated Scorecard showing that the income is now within the 75% of State Median Income guidelines.

**NOTE:** NC Pre-K Consultants will contact contracting agencies to provide a list of children possibly impacted by the new **2022-23 State Median Income Table** based on information entered in NC Pre-K APP prior to October 1, 2022.

Please contact your [NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant](#) if you need assistance with the new income table or the recalculation of any child applications that have been entered for the 2022-23 NC Pre-K school year.

## 15. Legislative Rate Increases for ALL Site Types **\*NEW SECTION November 15, 2022\***

On July 11, 2022, Governor Cooper signed into law [Session Law 2022-74](#). Section 9C.3. of this legislation states the following:

Of the funds appropriated in this act to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development and Early Education, funds shall be allocated to raise the base reimbursement rates for child care centers participating in the North Carolina Prekindergarten (NC Pre-K) program by two percent (2%) over 2020-2021 fiscal year rates for the 2021-2022 fiscal year and by an additional ~~two percent (2%)~~ **seven percent (7%)** over the 2021-2022 rates for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. It is the intent of the General Assembly that funds allocated pursuant to this section be used to increase the salaries of teachers working in child care centers as a means to address disparities in teacher salaries among teachers working in child care centers versus those working in public schools or Head Start centers. **A portion of these funds shall be allocated to raise the base reimbursement rates for public schools and Head Start centers participating in the NC Pre-K program by five percent (5%) over the 2021-2022 rates for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.**

**NOTE:** Eligible private classrooms have already received a 2% increase for the 2022-2023 program year in the form of monthly, supplemental payments as detailed in [Section 9](#) of this guidance document. The remaining 5% increase for private classrooms, as well as the 5% increases for Head Start and public schools will be implemented in accordance with the guidance below.

### A. Increase to Standard Reimbursement Rates

The current NC Pre-K reimbursement rates outlined in the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance (Section 6: H: Payment Rates by Site Type) will be updated in the following ways:

- The tiered reimbursement structure for substitute/non-licensed teachers in private/nonpublic programs will be eliminated – **all private site classrooms will be reimbursed at the same rate regardless of teacher type.**
- The base reimbursement rate for each of the three site types will be increased by 5% in accordance with [Session Law 2022-74](#).

Head Start Programs	Public Schools	Private/Nonpublic
<b>Current Rate: \$400</b> – Any NC Pre-K Lead or Long-term Substitute Lead Teacher	<b>Current Rate: \$473</b> – Any NC Pre-K Lead or Long-term Substitute Lead Teacher	<b>Current Rate: \$550-650</b> – Dependent on teacher type and license/education
<b>NEW Rate: \$420</b> – Any NC Pre-K Lead or Long-term Substitute Lead Teacher	<b>NEW Rate: \$496</b> – Any NC Pre-K Lead or Long-term Substitute Lead Teacher	<b>NEW Rate: \$682</b> – Any NC Pre-K Lead or Long-term Substitute Lead Teacher

### B. Classroom Eligibility Requirements

**ALL** per-child rates currently in use that are **at or below the current NC Pre-K reimbursement rates** (based on site type indicated in NC Pre-K Plan) will be **increased** to reflect the **NEW** NC Pre-K reimbursement rates.

Any rates currently in use that are **above** the current NC Pre-K reimbursement rates but fall **below** the NEW NC Pre-K reimbursement rates will also be **increased**.

- Contracting agencies will be **required** to reimburse at the NEW NC Pre-K reimbursement rates and **may not** assign rates below the NEW NC Pre-K reimbursement rates for any classroom.

*Sufficient funding will be provided to ensure all per-child rates meet the NEW NC Pre-K reimbursement rates.*

Any per-child rates currently in use that are already **at or above the NEW NC Pre-K reimbursement rates** (based on site type indicated in NC Pre-K Plan) will **remain as they are**. **No additional funding** will be provided to further increase those above-standard rates.

### **C. Funding Amounts**

The amount of additional funding received by each county/region will vary based on the following factors:

- Per-child rates currently in use for each site type
  - Any per-child rates currently in use that are already **at or above the NEW NC Pre-K reimbursement rates** (based on site type indicated in NC Pre-K Plan) will **remain as they are**.
- Distribution of slots across site types
- Number of slots allocated (Aug-Oct only\*\*) or children enrolled (Nov-June) in each site type
  - \*\*See **Section 8** of this guidance document for detailed information regarding the 2022-2023 payment policy

Contracting agencies will receive 10% of the total additional funds provided to the county/region in **nonrecurring** administrative funds. This will be provided through ARPA funds.

### **D. Contract Amendment**

**NOTE: Amended contract budget allocations and detailed instructions regarding the amended line item budget will be provided to contractors in a separate communication.**

NC Pre-K Contract Amendment 1 will be effective July 1, 2022.

### **E. Payment Distribution**

These funds are being implemented as per-child rate increases and will therefore be distributed via the standard monthly NC Pre-K reimbursement process. The FSR will include the additional funds for public and private child care center rate increases in Direct Services and Subcontracting and Grants line items as budgeted in the contract.

The NC Pre-K Plan database system will be updated to allow the NEW NC Pre-K reimbursement rates to be assigned to classrooms retroactive to the beginning of the 2022-2023 program year.

**NOTE:** Additional guidance regarding how and when to assign NEW NC Pre-K reimbursement rates in Plan will be provided to contractors in a separate communication.

NC Pre-K programs and contracting agencies will submit monthly attendance and reimbursement requests following **all usual processes**. NC Pre-K contracting agencies will be responsible for reviewing the monthly Summary of Attendance forms and ensuring that all rates are accurately reflected. Any questions about discrepancies in your payment rates should be directed to your NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultant.

Requests for retroactive reimbursement for months of services that have already been completed should be made following **all usual processes**. Any questions about **submitting amended FSRs** should be directed to the NC Pre-K budget staff at [dcdee\\_ncpreksr@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:dcdee_ncpreksr@dhhs.nc.gov).