

2024-2025 NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance – High Impact Changes

Section 4: The NC Pre-K Site – B: Official NC Pre-K Day and Year

This requirement was revised to allow increased flexibility for sites to implement instructional calendars that best meet the needs of their program while still maintaining minimum expectations for the amount of services provided to children. Updates have been made throughout the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance where necessary to reflect the change.

Sample school calendars are included below for reference.

Previous Language	Updated Language
<p>B. Official NC Pre-K Day and Year</p> <p>NC Pre-K sites must provide a NC Pre-K Program for a minimum of 6.5 hours per day for 10 months (36 weeks) of instructional days per school calendar year.</p> <p>The 6.5-hour day refers only to the instructional portion of the day for children.</p> <p>Transportation is not a part of the 6.5-hour day. Time adjustments should be made in the schedule for transportation time to ensure that children have a minimum of 6.5 hours of instructional time each day.</p>	<p>B. Official NC Pre-K Week and Year <i>*REVISED*</i></p> <p>NC Pre-K Program calendars must meet the following requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers at least 10 calendar months from August to May OR from September to June • Provides child-directed and teacher-directed instructional day-to-day learning activities for a minimum of 32.5 hours per week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Weeks that include closures for holidays or scheduled school breaks are excluded from this requirement • Provides a minimum of 180 days OR 1,170 hours of instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Up to nine (9) mandatory teacher workdays (including days scheduled before or after the first/last day of school) may be counted towards this requirement.

SAMPLE SCHOOL CALENDARS

***These are only **examples** of how a school calendar could be designed to meet the requirements for NC Pre-K. The start and end dates, included holidays/school breaks, and number of mandatory teacher workdays for NC Pre-K will vary by county/region and sites.*

For these sample calendars we assumed the following 24 days of Included Holidays/School Breaks:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 day – Labor Day • 1 day – Veteran’s Day • 3 days – Thanksgiving break • 10 days – Christmas break (December 23rd – January 3rd) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 day – Martin Luther King Jr. Day • 1 day – Presidents’ Day • 1 day – Good Friday • 5 days – Spring break (April 21st-25th) • 1 day – Memorial Day |
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SAMPLE SCHOOL CALENDAR #1

32.5 hours per week standard schedule (M-F - 6.5 hours)

- **August 26, 2024 – May 30, 2025**
 - August – 9 days (includes **4 mandatory teacher workdays** prior to the first day of school)
 - September – 20 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)
 - October – 23 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)
 - November – 17 days
 - December – 15 days
 - January – 19 days
 - February – 19 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)
 - March – 21 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)
 - April – 16 days
 - May – 21 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)

TOTAL days – 180 days 1,170 hours (9 mandatory teacher workdays included)

SAMPLE SCHOOL CALENDAR #2

32.5 hours per week split schedule (M-Th - 7.25 hours, Fri - 3.5 hours)

- **September 3, 2024 – June 6, 2025**
 - *August – 4 days (includes **4 mandatory teacher workdays** prior to the first day of school)*
 - September – 20 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)
 - October – 23 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)
 - November – 17 days
 - December – 15 days
 - January – 19 days
 - February – 19 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)
 - March – 21 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)
 - April – 16 days
 - May – 21 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)
 - June – 5 days

TOTAL days – 180 days 1,170 hours (9 mandatory teacher workdays included)

SAMPLE SCHOOL CALENDAR #3

35 hours per week standard schedule (average 7 hours per day)

- **September 9, 2024 – June 6, 2025**
 - September – 16 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)
 - October – 23 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)
 - November – 17 days
 - December – 15 days
 - January – 19 days
 - February – 19 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)
 - March – 21 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)
 - April – 16 days
 - May – 21 days (includes **1 mandatory teacher workday**)
 - June – 5 days

TOTAL days – 172 days 1,204 hours (5 mandatory teacher workdays included)

Section 4: The NC Pre-K Site – C: Program Attendance Policy

This requirement was updated to remove the use of partial payments due to low attendance and make it easier for sites to receive full reimbursement for enrolled children. Updates have been made throughout the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance where necessary to reflect the change.

NC Pre-K sites will still have the option to request attendance exceptions for children with less than 25% attendance in accordance with the criteria outlined in the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance.

Previous Language	Updated Language
<p>C. Program Attendance Policy</p> <p><u>Attendance</u></p> <p>Child attendance must be taken daily and submitted monthly for reimbursement. A child must attend a minimum of 50% of the site’s operational days to be reimbursed fully for the month of attendance. The NC Pre-K Plan and NC Pre-K Kids systems will calculate the attendance days and payment. During the first and last months of the operating year, (August & May or September & June) a child must attend at least one day to be reimbursed for the entire month. This also applies to the first month of operation when classrooms are started during the school year due to expansion funds. For all other months, the NC Pre-K Plan and NC Pre-K Kids systems will calculate a partial payment for a child who has attended between 25% and 50% of the attendance days in a month. This has been implemented to resolve attendance issues during months when the total number of attendance days may be reduced due to tracking out and/or holidays.</p>	<p>C. Program Attendance Policy *REVISED*</p> <p><u>Attendance</u></p> <p><u>100% reimbursement</u> will be provided when a child attends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% or more of the operating days in a 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 <p><u>0% reimbursement</u> will be provided when a child attends less than 25% of the operating days during the month (unless an attendance exception is approved)</p> <p><u>0% reimbursement</u> will be provided when a slot is unfilled</p> <p>Child attendance must be taken daily and submitted monthly for reimbursement. A child must attend a minimum of 25% of the site’s operational days to be reimbursed fully for the month of attendance. The NC Pre-K Plan and NC Pre-K Kids systems will calculate the attendance days and payment. During the first and last months of the operating year, (August & May or September & June) a child must attend at least one day to be reimbursed for the entire month. This also applies to the first month of operation for classrooms that may open during the school year and the first month of attendance for children who enroll mid-year. For all other months, the NC Pre-K Plan and NC Pre-K Kids systems will calculate a full payment for a child who has attended between 25% and 100% of the attendance days in a month and a nonpayment for children attending less than 25%.</p>

Section 5: The NC Pre-K Classroom – E: Staff-to-Child Ratio and Class Size

This requirement has been updated to reflect recent legislation that increased the staff-to-child ratio and class size allowance for NC Pre-K classrooms. Updates have been made throughout the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance where necessary to reflect this change.

As a reminder:

- Local NC Pre-K Committees do **not** have the authority to restrict NC Pre-K sites to maintain the 1:9 ratio. However, committees may vote to use a 1:9 ratio and maximum classroom size of 18 as an additional locally determined indicator during Site Selection.

Previous Language	Updated Language
<p><u>Section 5: The NC Pre-K Classroom</u> E. Staff-to-Child Ratio and Class Size The classroom shall not exceed a maximum staff-to-child ratio of one to nine with a maximum class size of 18 children, with at least one teacher and one teacher assistant per classroom. A classroom of nine children or less shall have at least one teacher.</p>	<p><u>Section 5: The NC Pre-K Classroom</u> E. Staff-to-Child Ratio and Class Size <i>*REVISED*</i> The classroom shall not exceed a maximum staff-to-child ratio of one to 10 with a maximum class size of 20 children, with at least one teacher and one teacher assistant per classroom. A classroom of 10 children or less shall have at least one teacher.</p>

Section 7: Evaluation and Monitoring – C: Program and Fiscal Monitoring of Local NC Pre-K Programs

This requirement has been updated to reflect changes to the timeline for the Programmatic and Fiscal Monitoring process for NC Pre-K Contracting Agencies. Updates have been made throughout the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance where necessary to reflect this change.

NOTE: The timeline for local NC Pre-K Site Monitoring has **not** changed. The NC Pre-K Fiscal & Programmatic Worksheet will be revised to remove questions related to the site monitoring process.

Previous Language	Updated Language
<p>C. Program and Fiscal Monitoring of Local NC Pre-K Programs <u>Local Contractor responsibilities</u> By January 15th of the program year, the Contract Administrator must complete, sign, and submit to DCDEE the electronic survey for the NC Pre-K Fiscal & Programmatic Worksheet.</p> <p>Selected Contractors will be contacted by the DCDEE Administration Section staff to schedule a date/time between February and April of the program year to conduct a desk audit or on-site monitoring visit.</p> <p>A formal close-out letter will be sent to the contracting agency by May 31st of the program year following the visit/review providing details of the monitoring.</p>	<p>C. Program and Fiscal Monitoring of Local NC Pre-K Programs <i>*REVISED*</i> <u>Local Contractor responsibilities</u> By November 15th of the program year, the Contract Administrator must complete, sign, and submit to DCDEE the electronic survey for the NC Pre-K Fiscal & Programmatic Worksheet.</p> <p>Selected Contractors will be contacted by the DCDEE Administration Section staff to schedule a date/time between December and April of the program year to conduct a desk audit or on-site monitoring visit.</p> <p>A formal close-out letter will be sent to the contracting agency by June 30th of the program year following the visit/review providing details of the monitoring.</p>