

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION/PRESCHOOL

The Mount Laurel Township School District Board of Education believes that preschool educational experiences contribute to later academic success for all children. The district shall maintain preschool services for district children with disabilities. Within the limits of the budget and as required by law, the chief school administrator shall recommend to the board for approval programs designed for other district children under the age required for regular admission. Programs shall address the needs of children who have been identified as requiring special education, and may if initiated by the district address the needs of those who have not been identified as requiring special education.

The preschool curriculum shall consist of developmentally appropriate experiences that provide each child with individual opportunities to develop positive self-esteem, social/emotional growth, language skills, motor development and conceptual skill development.

All preschool programs sponsored by the board shall be consistent with the overall philosophy of the school district and aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards. They shall be coordinated with other relevant district programs such as special education and Title I and articulated with the K-12 curriculum.

Proof of immunizations against communicable diseases and examinations shall be in accord with requirements for kindergarten and first grade admission (see policy file code 5111 *Admission*).

The board of education shall ensure that the preschool program:

- A. Maintains classroom enrollments of no more than 18 children with one certified teacher and one appropriately qualified assistant;
- B. Is developmentally appropriate to the age and skill level of the young child;
- C. Is designed to meet the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards of Quality, the New Jersey Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines and the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards;
- D. Includes transition activities, programs, and services between preschool programs and kindergarten programs;
- E. Coordinates with all other relevant school district programs, for example, special education and bilingual education; and
- F. Includes an annual program evaluation.

The preschool programs and curricula shall be based on pupil needs, strengths and interests that focus on all aspects of development: cognitive, social, emotional and physical. Curriculum and assessment strategies and/or resources shall be developmentally appropriate and include performance-based assessment measures.

The board shall ensure that instructional methods and/or strategies are congruent with the cognitive, social, emotional and physical skills of the young child. Instruction shall balance teacher-directed and child-initiated

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experiences.

The board shall provide professional development and training specific to preschool education for all early childhood education administrators, teachers and teacher assistants.

The preschool program may be offered within a mixed delivery system that includes in-district, private provider and local Head Start agency settings provided that the private provider and/or local Head Start agency program(s) with which the district board of education contracts comply with the school district's program requirements, including the employment of appropriately licensed and qualified teaching staff.

The preschool program shall include parent education activities in the preschool program with specific strategies identified that assist parents in remaining actively involved in their child's education throughout their school years.

Community health and social service agencies shall be included in the planning, operations and, if appropriate, the fiscal support of the preschool program.

The board shall designate an administrator to oversee the preschool program. He/she shall ensure adherence to all applicable laws and regulations in pursuing funding at the federal and state levels, as well as from private sources.

Adopted: November 23, 2004
 Revised: May 24, 2005
 NJSBA Review/Update: June 2013
 Readopted: January 28, 2014

Key Words

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum, Early Childhood Education, Preschool

<u>Legal References:</u>	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:7F-54	Access to full day preschool; calculation of preschool education aid
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:44-4	Funding of Preschool programs
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:8-2.1	Authority for educational goals and standards
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:8-3.4	Requirements for early childhood education programs
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:9-6.1	Standard certificate
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:9-8.1	Requirements for certificates of eligibility
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:9-9.2	Endorsements and authorizations
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:13A-1.1 <u>et seq.</u>	Elements of high quality preschool programs
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:23A-8.7	Tuition rate adjustment by districts receiving preschool expansion aid or educational opportunity aid
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:30-1.1 <u>et seq.</u>	Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:26-3.11	ECPA district community early childhood educational facilities projects
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:32-8.3	School attendance

Possible

<u>Cross References:</u>	*1410	Local units
	*1600	Relations between other entities and the district
	*3220/3230	State funds/federal funds
	*3541.1	Transportation routes and services
	*5020	Role of parents/guardians

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*5111	Admission
*5141.3	Health examinations and immunizations
*6010	Goals and objectives
*6122	Articulation
*6141	Curriculum design/development
*6151	Class size
*6171.3	At-risk and Title 1
*6171.4	Special education
*7110	Long-range facilities planning

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.