

At a Glance: Voluntary Prekindergarten and School Readiness Plus Requirements

The purpose of both voluntary prekindergarten and school readiness plus is to prepare children for success as they enter kindergarten the following year. The following table provides a comparison of program requirements for voluntary prekindergarten and school readiness plus.

| Program Elements | Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) | School Readiness Plus (SRP) |
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| Child Eligibility | <p>A child who is four years of age as of September 1 in the calendar year in which the school year commences is eligible to participate in a voluntary pre-kindergarten program free of charge.</p> <p>Each eligible child must complete a health and developmental screening within 90 days of program enrollment under sections 121A.16 to 121A.19, and provide documentation of required immunizations under section 121A.15.</p> | <p>Same as VPK. The children must also have one or more of the following risk factors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Qualifies for free or reduced price lunch; 2. Is an English Language Learner; 3. Is homeless; 4. Has an individualized education program, or individualized interagency intervention plan; 5. Is identified through health and development screening under Minnesota Statutes, sections 121A.16 to 121.19, with a potential risk factor that may influence learning; 6. Is in foster care. <p>A child that is four years of age by September 1 and does not have one of the risk factors may participate on a fee-for-service basis. A district must adopt a sliding fee schedule based on a family's income, but must waive the fee for a participant unable to pay.</p> |
| Inclusion of children with disabilities | <p>Children with disabilities who have active IEPs may participate in Voluntary PreK as grade level EC students. Special education services are provided by appropriately credentialed special education staff.</p> | <p>Same as VPK</p> |
| Number of Program Hours | <p>Minimum of 350 hours per school year. Must provide instructional content and activities that are of sufficient length and intensity to address learning needs including offering a program with at least 350 hours of instruction per school year.</p> | <p>Same as VPK</p> |
| Ratio and Group Size | <p>Teacher-to-child ratios of one-to-ten and a maximum group size of 20 children. Children with IEPs are included calculation of staff-to-child ratio and group size count.</p> | <p>Same as VPK</p> |
| Teacher Qualifications and Compensation | <p>Teachers knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, native and English language programs, and instruction.</p> <p>Provide voluntary pre-kindergarten instructional staff salaries comparable to the salaries of local kindergarten through grade 12 instructional staff.</p> | <p>Teachers knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, native and English language development programs, and instruction. With at least one licensed teacher.</p> |

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| <p>Program Content</p> | <p>Provide instruction through developmentally appropriate play-based learning to foster children's social and emotional development, cognitive development, physical and motor development, and language and literacy skills, including the native language and literacy skills of English learners, to the extent practicable.</p> <p>Provide comprehensive program content including the implementation of curriculum, assessment, and instructional strategies aligned with the state early learning standards, and kindergarten through grade three academic standards.</p> | <p>Provide comprehensive program content and intentional instructional practice aligned with the state early childhood learning guidelines and kindergarten standards and based on early childhood research and professional practice that is focused on children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills and development and prepares children for the transition to kindergarten, including early literacy and language skills.</p> |
| <p>Assessment</p> | <p>Assess each child's social, language and literacy, and cognitive skills using a comprehensive formative measure aligned to the state's early learning standards from the state-approved menu of kindergarten entry profile (KEP) measures when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program.</p> | <p>Assess each child's cognitive and language skills with a comprehensive child assessment instrument when the child enters and again before the child leaves the program.</p> |
| <p>Professional Development and Evaluation</p> | <p>Provide high-quality coordinated professional development, training, and coaching for both school district and community-based early learning providers that is informed by a measure of adult-child interactions and enables teachers to be highly knowledgeable in early childhood curriculum content, assessment, native and English language development programs, and instruction.</p> | <p>No statutory requirements regarding professional development.</p> |
| <p>Impact Measure Reporting</p> | <p>Districts and charter schools must include their strategy for implementing and measuring the impact of their voluntary pre-kindergarten program under section 120B.11 and provide results in their world's best workforce (WBWF) annual summary to the commissioner of education. They may use the state designed plan or submit a self-designed plan.</p> | <p>No statutory requirements regarding impact measure reporting.</p> |
| <p>Parent Involvement</p> | <p>Must involve parents in program planning and transition planning by implementing parent engagement strategies that include culturally and linguistically responsive activities in pre-kindergarten through grade three that are aligned with early childhood family education under section 124D.13.</p> | <p>Must involve parents in program planning and decision-making.</p> |
| <p>Program Coordination</p> | <p>Coordinate appropriate kindergarten transition with families, community-based pre-kindergarten programs, and school district kindergarten programs. Coordinate with relevant community-based services, including health and social service agencies, to ensure children have access to comprehensive services; Coordinate with all relevant school district programs and services including early childhood special education, homeless students, and English learners.</p> | <p>Coordinate appropriate kindergarten transition with parents and kindergarten teachers. Coordinate with relevant community-based services. Cooperate with adult basic education programs and other adult literacy programs.</p> |
| <p>Mixed Delivery</p> | <p>A district or charter school may contract with a charter school, Head Start or childcare centers, family childcare programs licensed under section 245A.03, or a community-based organization to provide eligible children with developmentally appropriate services that meet the program requirements in subdivision 2. Must include strategies for recruitment, contracting, and monitoring of fiscal compliance and quality.</p> | <p>A district or charter school may contract with a charter school, Head Start or childcare centers, family childcare programs licensed under section 245A.03, or a community-based organization to provide eligible children with developmentally appropriate services that meet the program requirements in subdivision 2.</p> |
| <p>PreK-3rd Grade Alignment</p> | <p>Implement strategies that support the alignment of professional development, instruction, assessments, and pre-kindergarten through grade three curricula.</p> | <p>No statutory requirement regarding pre-kindergarten through grade three alignment.</p> |