

July 3, 2025

Prekindergarten Eligibility

1. Who is considered a teacher under the new prekindergarten eligibility criterion? Are the children of paraprofessionals, classroom assistants, and instructional coaches eligible?

A classroom teacher is an educator who is employed by a school district and who, not less than an average of four hours each day, teaches in an academic instructional setting or a career and technology instructional setting. The term does not include a teacher's aide or a full-time administrator [Texas Education Code (TEC), §5.001].

2. Are the children of teachers eligible for prekindergarten in the district where the teacher/parent teaches in or the district where the teacher/parent lives?

The child of a classroom teacher who works at a school in a school district that offers prekindergarten is eligible for prekindergarten in the district where the teacher/parent is employed.

3. Are three-year-old children of teachers eligible for prekindergarten, or is eligibility limited to four-year-old children?

School systems are permitted but not required to offer prekindergarten for three-year-old children. While prekindergarten eligibility criteria apply to children who are at least three years of age, prekindergarten 3 programs are not required, and offering prekindergarten to eligible three-year-olds remains a local school system decision.

4. When will children of classroom teachers first be eligible for free prekindergarten?

The new prekindergarten eligibility criterion for the children of classroom teachers applies beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.

5. Can a school district request a waiver of the requirement to offer free prekindergarten to children of classroom teachers if a district offers prekindergarten but does not have available seats?

The commissioner of education does not have the authority to waive requirements relating to prekindergarten programs under TEC, Chapter 29, Subchapter E [TEC, §7.056(e)(3)(I)].