

PreK Programs: Frequently Asked Questions

Updated June 2021

1. Are districts required to have a prekindergarten program?

Yes, if a district identifies 15 or more eligible children who are four years of age on or before September 1 of the current school year, they are required to offer a prekindergarten program. A district may not charge tuition for a prekindergarten class offered under this section. [TEC §29.153\(a-1\)](#)

A school district may offer prekindergarten classes if the district identifies 15 or more eligible children who are at least three years of age.

2. Does the full-day prekindergarten program requirement apply to all prekindergarten students?

No. The full-day prekindergarten program requirement only applies to eligible four-year-olds.

3. What are the Pre-K requirements under House Bill 3?

House Bill 3 requires that all prekindergarten programs offered to eligible four-year-old students:

- be full-day (75,600 operational minutes)
- meet the high-quality requirements adopted by the legislature in 2015: *curriculum, student progress monitoring, teacher qualifications, teacher-to-student ratio, family engagement plan, and program evaluation*

4. Is Pre-K funded for full or half-day?

Prekindergarten students generate half-day ADA funding. However, to support implementation of full-day prekindergarten, HB3 increased funding to support early childhood education programs through the addition of the early education allotment.

5. How does full-day prekindergarten for eligible four-year-olds impact year-round schools?

Year-round schools would be subject to the same full-day prekindergarten requirement for eligible four-year-olds.

6. If a district begins offering a full-day prekindergarten program for eligible four-year-olds and begins to see an influx of eligible four-year-olds wanting to enroll mid-year, is the district still required to serve all eligible four-year olds?

Yes. The district would be required to serve all eligible four-year-olds. However, a district may request a full-day exemption if fewer eligible students would be served in a full-day program (typically due to physical capacity or personnel constraints). It should be noted that the full-day exemption is only an exemption from providing full-day prekindergarten not an exemption from serving eligible four-year-olds.

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7. What is the room size requirement (minimum square feet) for a prekindergarten classroom?

Classrooms for prekindergarten, kindergarten and first grade shall have a minimum of 36 square feet per pupil or 800 square feet per room.

8. What are the minutes of operation for a full-day prekindergarten program? What are the minutes of operation for a half-day prekindergarten program?

The minutes required for a full-day prekindergarten program are 75,600 *operational* minutes. The total may include recess, meals, intermission and rest time.

The minutes required for a half-day program would be 32,400 *instructional* minutes. The total includes recess, meals, and intermission, but excludes rest time.

9. In a mixed-aged classroom, can the eligible three-year-old students attend half-day while the eligible four-year-old students attend full-day?

Prekindergarten classrooms serving eligible four-year-old students must be conducted as a full-day program unless the LEA has a current full-day waiver with TEA.

LEAs have the option of creating a PK3 program that operates half-day, full-day, or a combination of the two. If the LEA offers a half-day PK3 program, it is allowable, in a mixed-age classroom, for eligible three-year-old students enrolled in the PK3 program to attend for a half day while the eligible four-year-old students attend for the full day.

10. May a district serve prekindergarten and kindergarten students in the same classroom?

Yes, students of both grade levels may be served in the same class. Keep in mind that such a program must meet program requirements (e.g. high-quality prekindergarten components) and provide instruction for all of the students, that is grade level appropriate and aligned with the appropriate grade-level expectations (e.g. Pre-k Guidelines or Kindergarten TEKS).

11. Do all Texas pre-k students receive free eligibility for School Nutrition Programs?

No. The Texas Department of Agriculture's request for a waiver to permit all Texas pre-k students to receive free eligibility for School Nutrition Programs (SNP's) was denied for the 2020-2021 school year.

Please refer to this document for further eligibility guidance: https://squaremeals.org/Portals/8/files/ARM/SY20-21%20Pre-Kindergarten%20Eligibility%20Guidance%20policy_FN.pdf