

Provider Eligibility Guidance Overview

An Early Learning Partnership is a collaboration between a LEA (Local Education Agency) and an ELP (Early Learning Program) or Head Start to provide high quality prekindergarten for eligible children in Texas. These partnerships serve as a cooperative way to support the needs of the community, families, and schools. TEC Sec. 29.1533 requires Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to consider the possibility of sharing use of an existing Head Start or other child-care program site as a prekindergarten site before establishing a new prekindergarten program. Further, TEC Sec. 29.153 (g) requires before an LEA may construct, repurpose, lease a classroom facility, or issue bonds for the construction or repurposing of a classroom facility to provide prekindergarten classrooms, the LEA must solicit and consider proposals for partnerships to provide those classes with community-based child-care providers. LEAs interested in participating in partnerships must adhere to statute when soliciting proposals from Early Learning Programs. LEAs may establish partnerships with ELPs that meet specific eligibility standards to ensure they provide high quality prekindergarten for eligible children in Texas.

What is required before an LEA (Local Education Agencies) can establish a new prekindergarten program?

- Before an LEA can *establish a new prekindergarten program*, a school district shall consider the possibility of sharing use of an existing Head Start or another child-care program site as a prekindergarten site. TEC 29.1533

What is required before an LEA can construct, repurpose, lease a classroom facility, or issue bonds for the construction or repurposing of a classroom facility to provide prekindergarten classrooms?

- Before an LEA *may construct, repurpose, lease a classroom facility, or issue bonds for the construction or repurposing of a classroom facility to provide prekindergarten classrooms*, the LEA must solicit and consider proposals for partnerships to provide those classes with community-based child-care providers who:
 - (1) *are a Texas Rising Star Program provider with a three-star certification or higher;*
 - (2) *are nationally accredited;*
 - (3) *are a Head Start program provider;*
 - (4) *are a Texas School Ready! participant; or*
 - (5) *meet the requirements under Section TEC [29.1532](#)*

What qualifications are required for an Early Learning Program to be eligible to participate in a partnership with an LEA?

The eligibility criteria for Early Learning Programs vary depending on the age of the children served and the circumstances that necessitate a partnership.

- **Early Learning Programs that partner to serve eligible three-year-old children:**
 - The provider program must at a minimum comply with the applicable child-care licensing standards adopted by the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services under Section [42.042](#), Human Resources Code. [TEC Section 29.1532\(b\)](#)
 - This is the minimum standard, but it is highly recommended that whenever possible, LEAs choose to partner with providers that meet an additional quality indicator such as those listed for PK4 classrooms

- **Early Learning Programs that partner to serve eligible four-year-old children, including mixed age classrooms that serve both eligible three-year-old and four-year-old children:**
 - The provider must be licensed by and in good standing with the Department of Family and Protective Services. A private provider is in good standing with the Department of Family and Protective Services if the department has not taken an action against the provider's license during the 24-month period preceding the date of a contract with a school district. The private provider must also be:
 - accredited by a research-based, nationally recognized, and universally accessible accreditation system approved by the commissioner.
 - a Texas Rising Star Program provider with a three-star certification or higher.
 - a Texas School Ready! participant.
 - accredited by an organization that is recognized by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission; or
 - in an existing partnership with a school district to provide a prekindergarten program not provided under this subchapter. [TEC 29.171\(b\)](#)
 - A prekindergarten program provided by a private provider must meet the requirements of HB3 High-Quality Prekindergarten Programs [TEC 29.171\(c\)](#)

Early Learning Partnership Providers Eligibility Qualifications

(*Head Start is an eligible provider for all partnerships. These qualifications are for public/private child care providers.)

PreK 3 Classrooms	PreK 4 Classrooms	Mixed Age Classrooms
<p>The provider program must at a minimum comply with the applicable child-care licensing standards adopted by the Department of protective and Regulatory Services under Section 42.042, Human Resources code. TEC Section 29.1532(b)</p> <p style="color: red;">This is the minimum standard, but it is highly recommended that whenever possible, LEAs choose to partner with providers that meet an</p>	<p>The provider must be licensed by and in good standing with the Department of Family and Protective Services. A private provider is in good standing with the Department of Family and Protective Services if the department has not taken an action against the provider's license during the 24-month period preceding the date of a contract with a school district. The private provider must also be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accredited by a research-based, nationally recognized, and universally accessible accreditation system approved by the commissioner, * • a Texas Rising Star Program provider with a three-star certification or higher, 	<p>The provider must be licensed by and in good standing with the Department of Family and Protective Services. A private provider is in good standing with the Department of Family and Protective Services if the department has not taken an action against the provider's license during the 24-month period preceding the date of a contract with a school district. The private provider must also be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accredited by a research-based, nationally recognized, and universally accessible accreditation system approved by the commissioner, * • a Texas Rising Star Program provider with a three-star certification or higher,

<p>additional quality indicator such as those listed for PK4 classrooms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Texas School Ready! participant, • accredited by an organization that is recognized by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission; or • in an existing partnership with a school district to provide a prekindergarten program not provided under this subchapter. TEC 29.171(b) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Texas School Ready! participant, • accredited by an organization that is recognized by the Texas Private School Accreditation Commission; or • in an existing partnership with a school district to provide a prekindergarten program not provided under this subchapter. • TEC 29.171(b)
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**LEAs may partner with child care providers that are accredited by a research-based, nationally recognized, and universally accessible accreditation system approved by the commissioner.*

Approved research-based, nationally recognized, and universally accessible accreditation systems:

Association of Christian Schools International
 Early Education Services
 719-528-6906, ext. 228
<http://www.acsi.org>

National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC)
 National Association of Child Care Professionals
 512-301-5557 or 800-537-1118
<http://www.naccp.org>

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
 Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation
 NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation
 202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460
<http://www.naeyc.org/academy/>

National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)
 The NECPA Commission, Inc.
 800-505-9878
<http://www.necpa.net>

National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
 202-796-5700
<http://www.nafcc.org/accreditation>

Council on Accreditation (COA)
<http://www.Coanet.org>

Cognia Quality Early Learning Standards (QELS)
 1-888-413-3669
<https://www.cognia.org/services/accreditation-certification/>