Prekindergarten Registration and Enrollment

Agenda

- Enrollment is Ongoing
- Brief Eligibility Recap
- PK Tuition
- Registration Information
- Enrollment and Documentation
- Common Registration Scenarios
- Registration FAQs
- Registration Resources (SAAH, ARM, TEA, etc.)

Objectives

In today's presentation, participants will:

- Understand prekindergarten registration and enrollment
- See tangible examples of documentation and common registration scenarios
- Discover resources for prekindergarten registration

Prekindergarten Enrollment is Ongoing

Reminder: Prekindergarten Registration is Ongoing

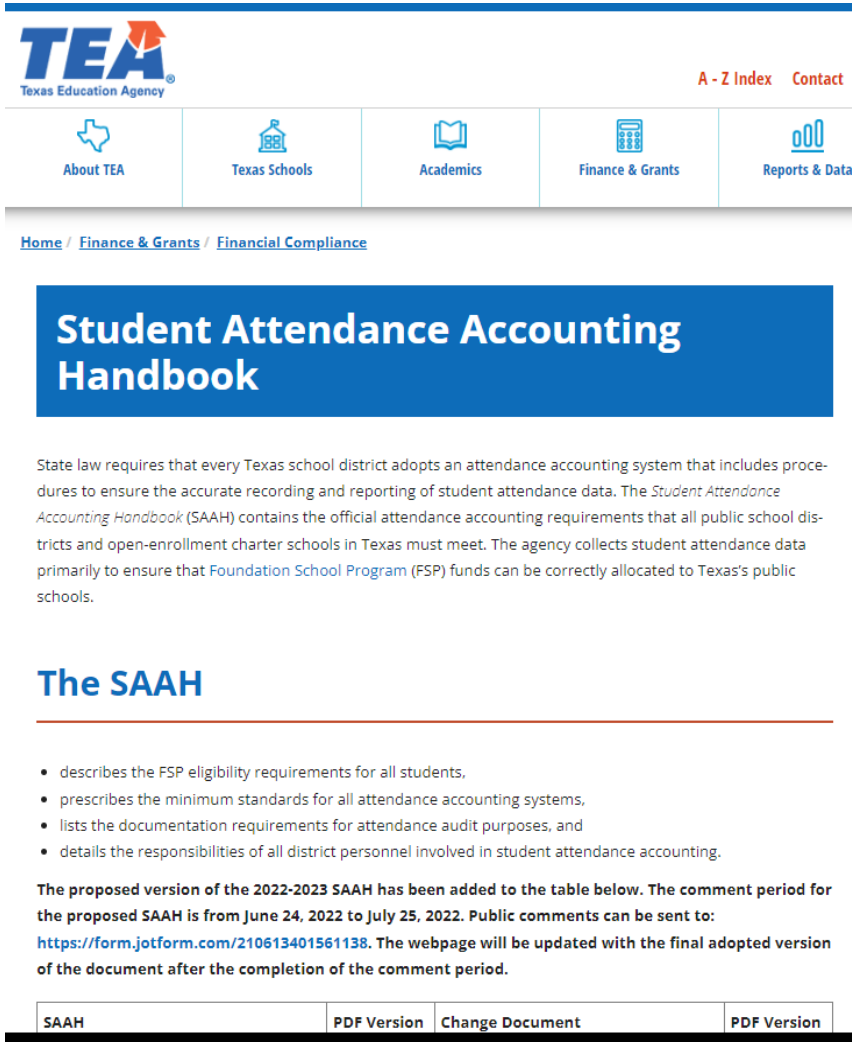
- Families may enroll their eligible children for prekindergarten throughout the school year

- A family may return to register their child if their income status changes at any time during the school year

Prekindergarten Eligibility & Enrollment Resources

- The Student Attendance Accounting Handbook has been updated!
  - Reference section 7.2 for PK eligibility information

https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/saah2223-adopted.pdf



Texas Education Agency

A - Z Index Contact

About TEA | Texas Schools | Academics | Finance & Grants | Reports & Data

Home / Finance & Grants / Financial Compliance

Student Attendance Accounting Handbook

State law requires that every Texas school district adopts an attendance accounting system that includes procedures to ensure the accurate recording and reporting of student attendance data. The *Student Attendance Accounting Handbook* (SAAH) contains the official attendance accounting requirements that all public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools in Texas must meet. The agency collects student attendance data primarily to ensure that Foundation School Program (FSP) funds can be correctly allocated to Texas's public schools.

The SAAH

- describes the FSP eligibility requirements for all students,
- prescribes the minimum standards for all attendance accounting systems,
- lists the documentation requirements for attendance audit purposes, and
- details the responsibilities of all district personnel involved in student attendance accounting.

The proposed version of the 2022-2023 SAAH has been added to the table below. The comment period for the proposed SAAH is from June 24, 2022 to July 25, 2022. Public comments can be sent to: https://form.jotform.com/210613401561138. The webpage will be updated with the final adopted version of the document after the completion of the comment period.

SAAH	PDF Version	Change Document	PDF Version

Eligibility

Eligibility Information for Free Prekindergarten

- Must be three-years-old (**if a 3-year-old program is available**) or 4-years-old by September 1 of the current school year.
- AND must meet at least one of the following eligibility requirements:
  - Emergent Bilingual
  - Educationally Disadvantaged
  - Students Experiencing Homelessness
  - Child of Active-Duty Military/ Armed Forces
  - Foster Care
  - Star of Texas

Age

- A child must be three or four years of age on September 1 of the current school year
- An eligible 3-year-old, who enrolls at age 3, remains eligible for the following school year
- Three- and four-year-olds may be served in the same pre-k class

SB 1697 as it relates to Prekindergarten

- Parental Option for Student Retention, TEC 28.02124
  - A parent or guardian may elect for a student to:
    - (1) repeat prekindergarten
    - (2) enroll in prekindergarten, if the student would have been eligible to enroll in Prekindergarten during the previous school year under Section 29.13 (b) and the student has not yet enrolled in kindergarten

Key Points on Eligibility

- Once determined eligible, a student remains eligible for the remainder of the current school year in the district in which he or she resides or is otherwise entitled to attend for Foundation School Program benefits.
- Each district must develop a system to notify families with eligible children of the availability of the program
- Students may not be denied or excluded from participating in a prekindergarten program for any reason if they are deemed eligible
- “Child” includes stepchild

Registration

Prepare for Registration

- Understand local population of eligible 3- and 4-year-old students in the area
- Use TPEIR to look at past enrollment information
- Contact TEA ECE Programs Team for support in understanding eligibility estimates

Tips for Successful Registration

- **Simplify the registration process**
- **Use family-friendly language. Avoid acronyms**
- **Determine communication strategies to notify families of registration**
- **Offer registration packets**
- **Provide family friendly registration information**
- **Provide examples of documentation needed for registration**

Enrollment and Documentation

PK3 Program Information

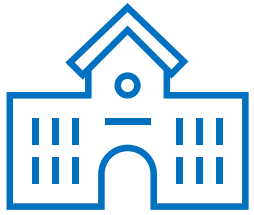
PK3 eligibility requirements

= same as PK4

Eligible PK3 students generate ½ Average Daily Attendance (ADA)

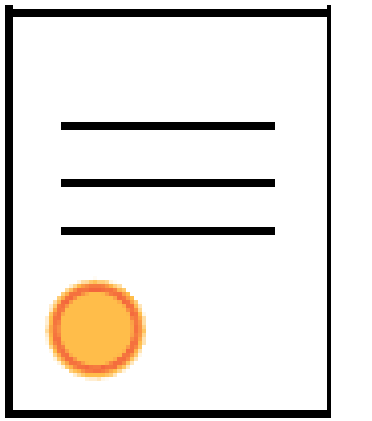
Eligible and enrolled PK3 students are automatically eligible for PK4

Not all 3's must be served; waitlists are acceptable



Local decision to serve 3's

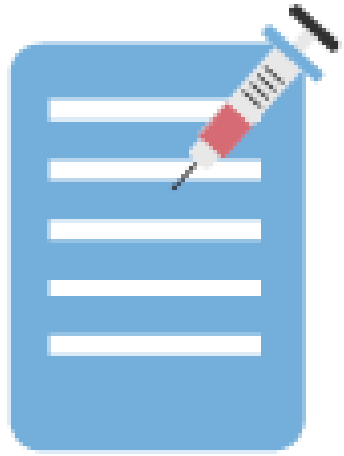
Documentation Needed for All Students



Birth Certificate

Proof of Address

Parent ID



Immunization Record

Enrollment Reminder

- Obtain proof that the student enrolling is three or four years old as of September 1 of the current school year (or upcoming school year for early registration)
- Then, prekindergarten staff can determine eligibility based on the additional free prekindergarten eligibility criteria

Any of the following documents is acceptable for proof of identity and age:

- birth certificate
- statement of the child's date of birth issued by the division of the Texas Department of State Health Services responsible for vital statistics for school admission purposes
- passport
- school ID card, records, or report card
- military ID
- hospital birth record
- adoption records
- church baptismal record
- any other legal document that establishes identity and age

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for enrollment, a child must meet the age requirements and meet at least one of the following:

- Unable to speak and comprehend the English Language
- Educationally Disadvantaged
- Students Experiencing Homelessness
- Child of Active-Duty Military/ Armed Forces
- Child of Military/ Armed Forces, who was injured or killed while on active duty
- Foster Care
- Star of Texas

Emergent Bilingual (EB) Student Eligibility

EB Student Identification

- Home Language Survey (HLS)
  - “What language is used in the child’s home most of the time?”
  - “What language does the child use most of the time?”
  - If the response to either question is a language other than English, the identification process must begin.

- Single Statewide Identification Assessment (pre-LAS)
  - Administered by trained staff
  - English listening and speaking sections required for EB student identification
  - Spanish pre-LAS administered for students in Spanish/English bilingual programs to get a complete picture of the student’s linguistic profile only
  - Spanish/English comparison scores should not be used to determine bilingual vs ESL program participation

EB Students- Resources

- Identification questions: Frequently Asked Questions – LPAC and Emergent Bilingual Students (texas.gov)
- EB students also served by Special Education: Guidance on Identification and Placement of English Learners Prior to Kindergarten (txel.org)
- LAS Links identification assessment information: LAS Links Texas Page

EB Student Documentation

- Student Attendance Accounting Handbook (SAAH) Section 7.2.2.1
  - Home Language Survey showing language other than English as an answer to either question
  - Proof that the student's score on the pre-LAS is below the level designated for English proficiency
  - Documentation of the LPAC's identification of the student as emergent bilingual

- Temporary placement, or placement pending EB identification, is not best practice.

Educationally Disadvantaged

Educationally Disadvantaged Information

Pre-k eligibility is based on the student's eligibility to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

Students are eligible based on income level or meeting automatic eligibility criteria, which is provided by the Texas Department of Agriculture.

Each district has a Food and Nutrition Specialist, sometimes referred to as a Child Nutrition Director (CND), who can provide additional support.

Educationally Disadvantaged- Resources

- Squaremeals.org
- Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM)
  - Sections 3, 4, and 6
- Local Child Nutrition Director

Educationally Disadvantaged- Documentation

Income Qualifiers:

- Current paycheck stub
- Current tax return, if self-employed
- Current TANF or SNAP eligibility letter (must have child's name listed)

NSLP Categorical Qualifiers:

- SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR
- Homeless
- Foster
- Migrant
- Head Start and Early Head Start
- Medicaid Free and Reduced, IF DIRECTLY CERTIFIED in TEXAS-ELMS

For NSLP Categorical Programs, work with the LEA Child Nutrition Director or use ARM resources for documentation

Students Experiencing Homelessness

Students Experiencing Homelessness Information

To be eligible based on homelessness, the district's local homeless education liaison identifies the student as homeless, regardless of the residence of the child, of either parent, or of the child's guardian or other person having lawful control of the child.

Documentation Required

- A letter from the local homeless education liaison is an acceptable form of documentation.

Military Service

Military or Armed Services

- Active duty uniformed members (parents or official guardians) of the US Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard who have eligible children residing in Texas
- Activated or mobilized uniformed members of the Texas National Guard (army or air guard), or activated or mobilized members of the reserve components of the US Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard who have eligible children residing in Texas
- Children of uniformed service members who are missing in action (MIA) or who were injured or killed while serving on active duty

Military or Armed Services- Resources and Documents

Resources:

- Student Attendance Accounting Handbook, Section 7.2.5
- Early Childhood Pre-k Eligibility FAQs

Documentation:

- Can include district employee verified documents, statements or service, line of duty determination documentation, Purple Heart orders or citations

Foster Care

Foster Care Information

A child who currently lives in Texas and:

- Is or was previously in foster care either in Texas or in another state or territory.

- If a student qualifies for pre-k on the basis of ever having been in foster care, the student remains eligible for enrollment after the student begins a pre-k class, even if that student is no longer in foster care.

Foster Care- Resources

Resources:

- Student Attendance and Accounting Handbook (SAAH) Section 7.2.6
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services https://www.dfps.state.tx.us
- TEA Foster Care Webpage

Foster Care- Documentation

Documentation Required

- Children who are or were previously in the conservatorship of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services:
  - PreK verification letter
  - DFPS foster/kinship placement documentation

- Children who are currently or were previously in foster care in another state or territory, but currently live in Texas:
  - Foster care documents stating closure of a case
  - Court documents stating “state foster care” involvement
  - Adoption paperwork completed by the originating state

Star of Texas Award

Star of Texas Award

For a student to be eligible, the parent must have been deemed eligible for the Star of Texas Award between 2004 and the current year of the awards ceremony.

Resources:

- The Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division
- Past years are also included online
- Star of Texas Awards

Documentation:

- Resolution (certificate) awarded to an individual for the Star of Texas Award

Supporting Ineligible Families

Building Relationships & Community

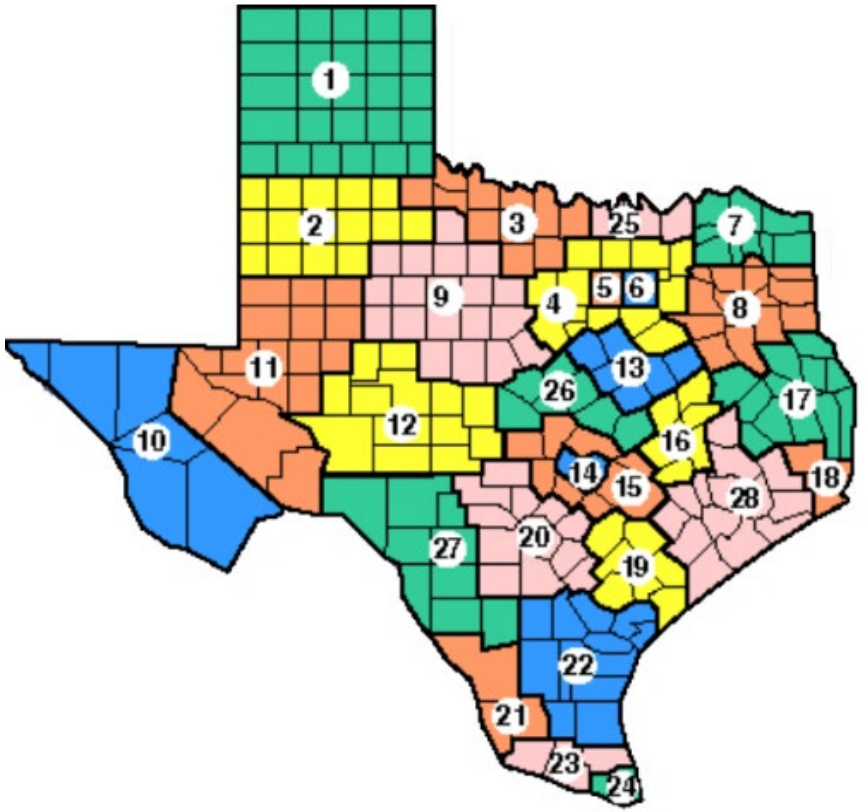
- Do you let families know that they can return to enroll if their status changes?
- What resources do you provide families for choosing other quality care in your community?

First impressions last a lifetime! More than likely these families and students will be part of your LEA in the future.

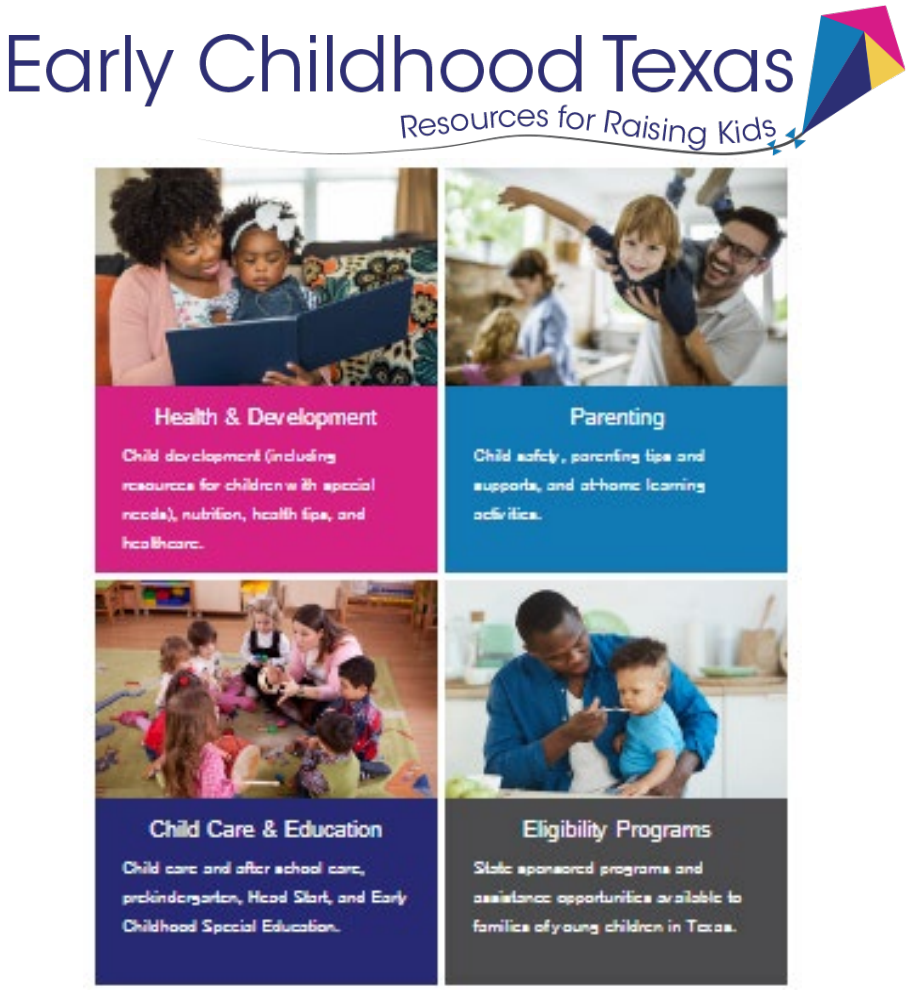
Child Care Resources

- Childcare scholarships are managed by local workforce boards.
- Find your region's local workforce board website here:
  - How to Apply for Childcare Assistance

- Texas Child Care Availability Portal (also available in Spanish): https://find.childcare.texas.gov/.



Community Resources



Early Childhood Texas

- Areas of resource and support include
  - Health and Development,
  - Parenting,
  - Child Care and Education,
  - Eligibility Programs.

Prekindergarten Tuition

Tuition Supported Prekindergarten

A district may charge tuition to provide:

- half-day and full-day prekindergarten classes to children who are ineligible for free prekindergarten classes; and
- an additional half day of prekindergarten classes to those 3-year-old children who are eligible for free prekindergarten classes

If a district charges tuition:

- the tuition may not be higher than is necessary to cover the added costs of providing the additional prekindergarten classes, including any costs associated with data collection and reporting requirements. These rates are updated each year in the summer for the next school year.
- the district must submit a proposed tuition rate to the commissioner for approval annually. See the Sample Proposed Tuition Rate Letter. '22-'23 rate chart is now posted on the Tuition Webpage.
- Send proposed tuition letter to rebecca.matz@tea.texas.gov

****Serving tuition students must not interfere with serving eligible students.****

Common Registration Scenarios

Common Scenarios

Question: My child's birthday is September 3rd. Is there any waiver for my soon-to-be 4-year-old to attend prekindergarten?

- Answer: No, there is no waiver for meeting the age criteria to attend prekindergarten. A prekindergarten 3-year-old program may be available with the LEA.

Question: I have a Medicaid card. Why can't I receive free prekindergarten?

- Answer: Medicaid alone is not an eligibility criterion for free prekindergarten. A student must meet eligibility by one of the eligibility criteria such as being considered educationally disadvantaged, i.e., eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

More Common Scenarios

Question: Can Pre-K pre-registration be hosted prior to April 1st? PreK pre-registration is in the spring. Is eligibility verified at that time? Do families need to be re-verified after the income eligibility guidelines are released on July 1.

- Answer: Many districts pre-register Pre-K students to determine and plan for the size of the next school year's Pre-K program. Districts may begin this process on or after April 1 of each year. Once a child is determined to be eligible, they remain eligible without reverification prior to the next school year. When verifying income, districts should correlate the eligible school year with the qualifying NSLP year.

More Prekindergarten Scenarios

Question: A student is transferring to PK4 in our district and previously qualified as homeless in their previous district. Can they still qualify based on the qualification in the prior district?

- Answer: The LEA should request the documentation/verify that the student was appropriately determined eligible in the first district, where the student was initially enrolled, even if the student no longer meets eligibility for this criterion at the new LEA.

Additional Pre-k Scenarios

Question: My child has been evaluated and is receiving special education services. Can my child attend prekindergarten?

- Answer: Receiving special education services is not an eligibility criteria for free prekindergarten. The ARD committee determines the student's placement.

State prekindergarten funding is determined by the student's eligibility.

- If the ARD committee decides prekindergarten is an appropriate placement and the student is eligible for free prekindergarten, the student's ADA eligibility code is **2- Eligible Half-Day.**
- If the ARD committee decides prekindergarten is an appropriate placement and the student is ineligible for free prekindergarten, the student's ADA eligibility code is **5- Ineligible Half-Day.**

Registration Resources and Upcoming Support Sessions

Resources and Links

- Student Attendance Accounting Handbook (SAAH), Section 7 Prekindergarten: https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/saah2223-adopted.pdf
- Prekindergarten 3: https://tea.texas.gov/academics/early-childhood-education/prekindergarten-3-webinar-and-comparison-resources
- Early Childhood Education FAQs including eligibility and program FAQs: https://tea.texas.gov/academics/early-childhood-education/early-childhood-education-faqs
- Prekindergarten Tuition: https://tea.texas.gov/academics/early-childhood-education/prekindergarten-tuition
- Childcare Scholarship Assistance: https://texaschildcaresolutions.org/financial-assistance-for-child-care/how-to-apply-for-child-care-assistance/
- Texas Child Care Availability Portal (also available in Spanish): https://find.childcare.texas.gov/.

Resources – EB and Star of Texas

- Identification questions: Frequently Asked Questions – LPAC and Emergent Bilingual Students (texas.gov)
- EB students also served by Special Education: Guidance on Identification and Placement of English Learners Prior to Kindergarten (txel.org)
- LAS Links identification assessment information: LAS Links Texas Page
- Star of Texas Awards

Resources – NSLP, Military, and Foster Care

- For NSLP eligibility information and resources: www.squaremeals.org Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM):
  - Section 3
  - Section 4
  - Section 6
- Military and Armed Services: Student Attendance Accounting Handbook, Section 7.2.5
- Foster Care: Student Attendance and Accounting Handbook (SAAH) Section 7.2.6, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/, & TEA Foster Care Webpage

ECE Programs Resources

Early Childhood Education Website:

- Educator Resources
- ECE Resources
- Family Resources
- Frequently Asked Questions

Early Childhood Education in Texas

At TEA, our goal is for all Texas children to enter school with the foundational knowledge and skills to be curious, confident and successful learners. In partnership with families, schools and communities, TEA provides support for effective and aligned early learning opportunities, policies and programs that:

- Support a highly-skilled early learning workforce
- Provide resources that engage and support development of young children
- Provide access to high-quality 3- and 4-year-old prekindergarten.

The Early Childhood Education Division at TEA has responsibility for the department's key early learning investments as determined by the Commissioner of Education and the state legislature.

Support Sessions

PK Registration Office Hour

April 12, 2023, 10-11am, CST

Register:
https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEucu6rrD0jGtwbbFCdRdrKlxDU6atogscY

Enrollment Toolkit Webinar

May 4, 2023, 11am-12pm, CST

Register:

https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUtduqgqTgsGdWqDQcWXoBlOqar80liLCX1