

**NC Department of Health and Human Resources
Division of Child Development and Early Education
NC Pre-Kindergarten Program
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated July 1, 2016**

Section 2: The County/Region NC Pre-K Committee – NC Pre-K Program Requirements

1. Can I use the estimated remaining allocation of NC Pre K funds for the year by dividing the money across our county's NC Pre-K sites?

Answer: Fiscal policy does not allow such expenditures late in the year without a compelling reason and/or justification. A compelling reason may be related to staffing or salary issues that were overlooked or not fully accounted for such as:

- salary increases that were based on legislation to increase teacher pay rates that had not yet been paid (e.g., additional years of teaching experience, bonus pay)
- teacher licensure that resulted in a higher pay rate that was not budgeted for by the contracting agency
- additional staff added to classrooms with children who had specific Individual Education Program (IEP) goals that were not being met or to help manage a child with a specific health plan
- child and family needs (e.g., military family relocates to county late in the year, family is homeless or any other extenuating circumstance or situation that warrants a safe early education placement for which the child qualifies)

In such cases, after the Contract Administrator has consulted with the local NC Pre-K Committee, a request should be submitted to the state office for consideration documenting the purpose of the request and Committee recommendations/actions. The recommendations and/or actions should be documented in meeting minutes and supported by a budget showing how the funds would be expended.

2. If the only business before our local NC Pre-K Committee is to determine child allocation/slot placements for our current sites, do we have to hold a face-to-face meeting or could we host a virtual Committee meeting?

Answer: Yes, a virtual meeting may be conducted via email. The information in the email should include attendance, the topic(s) discussed, final action taken and Committee member votes. You would need to print all documentation and keep with your Committee file/notebook for monitoring and/or public information requests.

3. Will the local NC Pre-K Committee need to open up the NC Pre-K Standardized Site Selection process if the current sites are nearing the end of the two-year contract? There are no other eligible sites in our county and all of our current sites have maintained compliance. Our Committee would like to keep them in place and renew contracts for a new two-year cycle.

Answer: When the contracting period ends, if a subcontractor has performed well by meeting all areas of fiscal and program compliance, re-competing for NC Pre-K funding is **not** required. Areas of compliance include but are not limited to: following contract, fiscal and site monitoring protocol as outlined in the subcontracting document, submitting attendance on

time, attending required meetings, monitoring curriculum/formative assessment implementation and developmental screenings, monitoring daily attendance and maintaining compliance with the NC Child Care Rules, DCDEE compliance reports/actions and any other conditions that the local contracting agency has included in the subcontract.

If expansion funds are awarded to a county/region and additional sites are needed to serve children on the wait list, then the site selection process must be carried out for any new sites interested in participating in the NC Pre-K Program. In counties/regions with a limited supply of eligible sites or there is no documented provider interest in participating in NC Pre-K, the Contract Administrator must report that to the local Committee and it must be reflected in the Committee meeting minutes. "Documented provider interest" would be determined by the local contracting agency's announcement of available funding to expand new sites (per Open Meetings Law) with date, time, location of meeting, record of attendance at meeting and/or statements of interest filed by interested public and private providers, including Head Start.

For all other NC Pre-K Site Selection Process questions please refer to the following link:
http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/pdf_forms/NCPre-K_AdditionalFAQSiteSelectionProcess.pdf

Section 3: The NC Pre-K Child - NC Pre-K Program Requirements

1. Has the method for determining eligibility changed?

Answer: The State Median Income (SMI) levels are still in effect for this program year, as noted in the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document. Local NC Pre-K Committees and Contractors are strongly encouraged to collaborate with Homeless shelters and other agencies, programs, pediatricians and healthcare providers that provide medical services for families to inform them about NC Pre-K availability and services.

2. With respect to legal guardianship, in what instance does the income count?

Answer: Legal guardians are counted in the family size and their income is counted if both biological parents are deceased or their parental rights have been terminated by the court.

3. Do we need documentation of income that is not counted (e.g., SSI or welfare)?

Answer: No, you do not need to verify an income source if it is in a category that is not counted towards eligibility determination.

4. Does a child need to have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) to qualify for NC Pre-K based on an identified educational need?

Answer: No, an IEP is one indicator of educational need, but it is not a requirement for child eligibility.

5. When do new income levels become effective when determining eligibility?

Answer: State Median Income Levels (Table 1) in the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document is to be used for eligibility determined on or after August 1, 2015. NC Pre-K Kids is programmed to automatically use the correct chart based on the date eligibility is determined. If child eligibility was determined **prior to the release of the current tables, the previous tables apply. The SMI and Federal Poverty Threshold Tables** will be updated as applicable in each fiscal year.

6. Would active reserve be counted as military status?

Answer: An age eligible child whose parent is a member of the North Carolina National Guard, State military forces or a reserved component of the Armed Forces and who was ordered to active duty by the proper authority within the last 18 months, or is expected to be ordered within the next 18 months, would be included in the military status category.

7. Is the child still considered “military” if the military parent is no longer part of the family unit?

Answer: Yes, even if the parents are separated, divorced or never married, if a biological parent meets the definition of military status, the child can be included in the military status category.

8. When prioritizing children, is only the base pay considered for military applicants?

Answer: The military member’s Leave and Earnings statement should be used when determining income for military personnel. The statement will identify base pay as well as additional categories such as housing allowances and/or hazardous duty pay. Most counties in North Carolina with military installations only use the base pay amount when prioritizing military applicants. It is important to be consistent and handle all military applicants the same in your county.

9. Will there be an “income cap” for military families?

Answer: No, there is no income cap required by NC Pre-K for military families. Children of military families described in Section 3 of the NC Program Requirements and Guidance document are eligible without regard to income; however, NC Pre-K space availability may dictate whether a higher income military family receives NC Pre-K services compared with a non-military family with a lower income threshold. Other factors may also apply such as the child’s educational and/or health needs.

10. Can the insurance verification, Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), be used to verify military status?

Answer: Yes, the DEERS registration can be used to verify military status if the Leave and Earnings statement of the military member is not available.

11. Are military children accepted automatically if a family member is not deployed?

Answer: Military personnel do not have to be deployed in order for the children to qualify for NC Pre-K services. Children of military families are eligible as described in Section 3 of the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document. They are eligible based on active duty status.

12. When a military parent is deployed do we count the extra income that they receive during the deployment?

Answer: Most counties in North Carolina with military installations only use the base pay amount when prioritizing military applicants. It is important to be consistent and handle all military applicants the same in your county.

13. Verification of income is in conflict with what's in the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document. There is no need to verify Social Security income if it's excluded.

Answer: Social Security income is counted if it is part of the child's income. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is never counted. If you are counting regular Social Security income, Award Letters from the Social Security Administration are to be used for verification.

14. Can I accept verbal statements to verify income or military status?

Answer: No, a signature is required for family size and kinship. This signature is usually provided on the NC Pre-K application. In addition to signature, specific documents such as tax records, pay stubs, employer statements, leave and earning statements and signed documents verifying no income is earned are required to verify income and military status.

15. A military parent reported having a 50% disability for PTSD and two other issues from serving in the military. Does this counts as "serious" or not? They are over income and it does not appear to state the level of disability for qualifying someone.

Answer: The policy does not include “seriously” in the text. Only “injured” is used to describe the military member. In this case, the child would qualify based on the military parent’s disability. The “over income” does not apply to military families. See **Section 3: The NC Pre-K Child – Subsection A. Additional Eligibility Criteria: Children of Eligible Military Families** of the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document for specific policy language.

16. Should DCDEE be notified if a NC Pre-K child's continued enrollment and participation becomes impossible due to chronic disruptions or concerns for the safety of that child or others?

Answer: Yes, **Section 3: The NC Pre-K Child – Subsection F: Children with Unique Needs/Behavioral Challenges** of the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document requires that the DCDEE NC Pre-K Program Unit be notified and consulted should a child’s placement be questioned due to emotional-social, behavioral and/or health concerns. Every effort must be made to arrange and work with the local NC Pre-K Committee, community resources, the local education agency, the child’s health care provider or other available services (e.g., Local Interagency Coordinating Council, Healthy Social Behavioral Specialists, Child Care Health Consultants and parenting programs) to support the child’s placement in the NC Pre-K Program. Only in extreme cases where it is determined other appropriate resources would better meet the child’s needs, should a child be removed from the NC Pre-K classroom. It is crucial that alternative placements and services are available to the child, family, NC Pre-K classroom and administrative staff.

The policy stipulates:

F. Children with Unique Needs/Behavioral Challenges

When a teacher, the family or other involved person(s) has significant concerns about a NC Pre-K child’s emotional, social, cognitive, language/communication development, sensory function or behavior, the local school system shall be notified for assistance.

The following steps shall be followed:

1. If documentation is gathered through the developmental screening process, home visits, consultations with the family, experience working with a particular NC Pre-K child, daily recorded observations by the NC Pre-K teacher, modified instructional plans/differentiated lessons and/or from the NC Pre-K Program staff that indicates significant concerns about the child and the program's ability to address the child's needs, the Site Administrator shall notify the NC Pre-K Contract Administrator and the local school system's Preschool Exceptional Children Program for assistance.
2. The NC Pre-K Contract Administrator, Site Administrator, teacher and the family, in consultation with the school system's Preschool Exceptional Children Program and other available resources, shall work together to develop a coordinated plan to support the NC Pre-K child's placement in the NC Pre-K Program. Every effort shall be made to maintain the child's enrollment and participation.
3. If efforts to access the consultation needed to develop a coordinated plan of support prove unsuccessful, the NC Pre-K Contract Administrator shall contact the Division of Child Development and Early Education for guidance.

During the SFY 2014-2015 program year, the NC Pre-K State Advisory Committee identified **children with unique needs and behavioral challenges** as one of the top five priorities to study and address. Recommendations from the work of the subcommittee on Children with Unique Needs/Behavioral Challenges were presented and accepted by the State Advisory Committee during its June 9, 2015 meeting.

This work is in alignment with the **Federal Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Settings**, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education (2014) that is a provision of the 2016-18 Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) revised law. Click [here](#) to download the Policy Statement.

RESOURCES

Program Costs - Overview of Evidenced-Based Programs or Treatment of Children 1-5 NC Institute of Medicine (October 2011). [Click here](#) to download the report.

Growing Up Well: Supporting Young Children's Social-Emotional Development and Mental Health in North Carolina (July 2012). [Click here](#) to download the report.

Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Setting, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S Department of Education (2014). [Click here](#) to download the Policy Statement.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), Social-Emotional and Behavioral Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (September 2015). [Click here](#) to download the Information Memorandum.

[Click here](#) for additional federal resources.

17. There is a requirement that “an education service that goes beyond a phone call must be provided” to children who receive attendance exceptions. What are options for additional services beyond visiting the child?

Answer: Local contract administrators must weigh and consider the child and family’s needs and, if available, resources to support any additional options. Any option(s) must support the child’s learning goals as defined by initial developmental screening and formative assessment results in consultation with the teacher, family, IEP and/or health teams, if applicable, and the local NC Pre-K contracting agency.

18. Are Contractors required to provide funding for transportation?

Answer: No, but transportation may be funded using NC Pre-K funds as noted in the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document, **Section 4-E: Transportation Fees.**

19. A migrant worker states that he/she is not currently working but will be in a couple of months. Should we get a notarized statement from the parent stating he/she is not working and have them submit wage verification when he/she starts working? If not, what would be appropriate?

Answer: Both of these options could be considered for verifying income if there is income to verify. The family could also submit copies of the most recent W-2’s to document previous wages.

20. A parent is over income but will have a baby in September. She receives Medicare and they count the unborn baby. Can NC Pre-K count the baby?

Answer: We would not count the unborn child in eligibility determinations. Medicaid counts the unborn child because they are providing health care for the mother.

21. If a foster child is adopted after being deemed eligible for NC Pre-K, would the parents need to present financial documentation after the adoption is complete.

Answer: NC Pre-K families are only qualified upon initial eligibility enrollment. The family/parents would not provide documentation after the child is in a NC Pre-K classroom. Keep any documentation about the child’s condition (e.g., foster care, homeless, Medicaid) upon entry into NC Pre-K, including eligibility determination on file to support the child’s placement.

22. Are we required to sign off on the verification of all child eligibility applications (dual verification)?

Answer: Dual verification is not required; however, local Contractors are responsible for determining NC Pre-K Child Enrollment Eligibility. Responsibility for determining eligibility can be delegated to the local NC Pre-K sites/subcontractors, however the local Contractor is ultimately responsible for insuring that eligibility determinations by subcontractors are accurate and in accordance with NC Pre-K Eligibility Guidelines. This responsibility is part of the process that determines NC Pre-K contracts issued by DCDEE are Financial Assistance contracts. Characteristics and requirements of Financial Assistance contracts are described in the [*NC Pre-K Fiscal & Contracts Manual*](#).

- 23. We don't serve children based on when their applications are turned in, rather we look at the NC Pre-K Program Eligibility Scorecard that is generated and we rank them based on this information. Is that how you see it typically done?**

Answer: Contracting agencies should follow the criteria for child eligibility in **Section 3: The NC Pre-K Child**. The Scorecard is used for identifying children with the greatest need to be served by the NC Pre-K Program. The local NC Pre-K Committee should set policy and identify any additional criteria to be used for assigning children to NC Pre-K.

NC Pre-K Application, Prioritization and Placement (APP) allows the county/region to pick how you want the children to be prioritized and places children in classrooms based on your choice of criteria. If you have any questions about how the NC Pre-K APP would apply to your unique circumstances or you have any problems with the NC Pre-K APP, please contact the NC Pre-K Program Unit for guidance. The NC PRE-K APP - APPLICATION PRIORITIZATION PLACEMENT guide will walk you through the process step-by-step.

[Click here for NC Pre-K APP User Guide](#)

Please continue to refer to the *NC Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Requirements and Guidance document, Section 3: The NC Pre-K Child* (pages 3.1 - 3.6)

Section 4: The NC Pre-K Site - NC Pre-K Program Requirements

- 1. What happens to a facility under a temporary license that is operating a NC Pre-K classroom and the facility does not achieve a four or five star rating when transitioning from their temporary license?**

Answer: New Facility - If the program does not achieve at least a four star license at the end of the temporary time period then a Provisional License may be issued for any length of time up to, but not exceeding 12 consecutive months, to allow a specific time period for the program to correct violations that do not cause conditions hazardous to the health and safety of the children in care. A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) must be included that describes what the facility operator must do to comply with requirements.

NC Pre-K Facility with Reduction in Star Rating - If a four or five star rated license center participating in the NC Pre-K Program drops below 4 stars for any reason, then a Provisional License may be issued for any length of time up to, but not exceeding 12 consecutive months, to allow a specific time period for the program to correct violations that do not cause conditions hazardous to the health and safety of the children in care. A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) must be included that describes what the facility operator must do to comply with requirements.

If the operator is unable to move the facility back to a four or five star rated license by the end of the Provisional time period, the NC Pre-K Contract Administrative Agency in collaboration with the local NC Pre-K Committee may deny eligibility to participate in the NC Pre-K Program.

- 2. The school calendar includes several "early release" days in which the NC Pre-K instructional day would be limited to 5 hours. Is that acceptable?**

Answer: Typically a 6.5 hour day is required. However, early release exceptions are acceptable in case of emergencies or when they are consistent with the local school system hours of operation.

3. Does a home visit count as an attendance day?

Answer: Yes. Home visits may count as attendance days when used for program purposes or for a child who is unable to come to school due to special circumstances (e.g., extended illness, hospitalization, recovery).

4. Are there limits on the number of days a NC Pre-K Program can close for staff development?

Answer: When planning professional development, NC BK licensed teachers are required to follow their professional development plans, which are developed based on their formally assessed teaching practices. Up to five NC Pre-K service days may be used for state or county/regional sponsored professional development, to the extent that additional hardships are not created for children and families in the NC Pre-K classroom. NC Pre-K staff may attend more than five days of professional development during the school year, but no more than five service days of the 10 months (36 weeks) of instructional days can be set aside for this purpose.

5. Are NC Pre-K Programs required to operate 180 or 185 days?

Answer: NC Pre-K sites must provide a NC Pre-K Program for a minimum of 6.5 hours per day for 10 months (36 weeks) of instructional days per school calendar year.

6. We have some private sites with questions about make-up days for inclement weather (e.g., snow make-up days). We have always advised them that they need to make sure that they operate for at least 180 days for the school year. One of our providers called the school system and was told that they had the option to operate for 180 days OR 1025 hours, by adding additional hours to their operational days. Is this acceptable with the NC Pre-K Guidelines?

Answer: Snow Day Make-Up Plans

1. The primary guideline is to follow the school system's make-up schedule. However, if that is not reasonable and practical for the private sites, they may consider other options such as adding other days or hours to meet the NC Pre-K minimum (6.5 hours per day for 10 months (36 weeks) of instructional days per school calendar year). Sites are encouraged to find a scheduling solution that will provide the NC Pre-K children with the equivalent instructional time as all other NC Pre-K classrooms, as well as meeting the needs of the school system.
2. You can also inform your local Committee and discuss these options. The Committee in consultation with you should notify your sites about make-up options.

Based on the above information, the private sites would have the option to extend the NC Pre-K instructional day to meet the required number of instructional hours for the NC Pre-K Program year. They could also have the children attend on a day that was originally scheduled as a teacher workday/vacation day for the children, such as day prior to a recognized/scheduled state holiday.

7. Do Professional Development (PD) days (up to 5) count as school attendance days for children?

Answer: A Professional Development day could be a day that the staff attends trainings/workshops relevant to their position as the NC Pre-K teacher. These days could also be spent working in their classrooms preparing materials for their children. NC Pre-K staff are required to work all the workdays (up to 5) included in the school calendar. These workdays can be used as Professional Development days. If additional teacher workdays are offered the NC Pre-K requirements does not require that the NC Pre-K staff work those additional days. These 5 required workdays do not count as school attendance days for the NC Pre-K children; however, the total number of days required for child attendance in each NC Pre-K program year can be decreased by the 5 days that are required to be used as workdays for the teaching staff (e.g., 180 days required for yearly attendance can be reduced to 175 days due to the 5 mandated workdays).

8. Can NC Pre-K Programs serve chocolate milk to NC Pre-K children?

Answer: No. The child nutrition requirements found in the North Carolina Child Care Rules & Laws apply to NC Pre-K Programs. Only unflavored skim or low-fat milk is allowed (whole milk, chocolate or flavored milk cannot be served).

Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .0901(e) (5) states only unflavored skim or low-fat milk may be served to children two years old and older.

9. Is there a document that families/parents should sign to opt out of the food program? Or do we create one of our own?

Answer: A program can create your own “opt out” form or you may accept a signed statement from the parent/family.

DCDEE strongly encourages programs to use the form provided by the Division. A program may add to the form, but should be encouraged to not remove any information provided on the form. A sample “opt out” form is on the Division’s website under Provider Documents or you can [click here](#) for the DCDEE Nutrition Opt Out Form.

10. If a family/parent brings the child's snack but not meals do they have to sign to opt out of snacks?

Answer: The nutrition requirements that state if a parent provides snack and the snack meets the nutritional requirements then the operator does not have to supplement. If the snack does not meet the nutritional requirements, then the operator is required to provide a supplement to meet the nutritional requirements. A parent only needs to complete an opt out form when they do not want the operator to provide a supplement. If a parent signs the opt out form then all meals, snacks and beverages should be provided by that parent/family.

11. Is a Doctor's note needed for families/parents to provide their own food?

Answer: A doctor’s note is not required for parents to provide their own food unless the following applies:

The food required by special diets for medical, religious, or cultural reasons, may be provided by the operator or may be brought to the program by the parents. If the diet is prescribed by a

health care professional, a statement signed by the health care professional must be on file at the program and written instructions must be provided by the child's parent, health care professional or licensed dietitian/nutritionist. If the diet is not prescribed by a health care professional, written instructions must be provided by the child's parent and must be on file at the program per NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .0901(g).

12. Section 4-G requires that no NC Pre-K funding may be used for religious worship, instruction or proselytization, or any equipment or supplies for any activities specified in paragraph (a) (1). What effects will this have on the classroom?

Answer: Children may learn about other cultures, but there must not be any practicing of any religion. Learning about religion is considered social studies, while practicing religion is considered worship.

Section 5: The NC Pre-K Classroom - NC Pre-K Program Requirements

1. Are there changes in approved curricula this year?

Answer: Please see **Section 5: The NC Pre-K Classroom, Subsection C. Early Learning Standards and Curricula** of the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document for a list of *partially* approved curricula that aligns with the *NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development* standards.

NC Pre-K Programs must use the *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*. Teaching staff must use these early learning standards to guide and inform their planning and facilitation of comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, high-quality prekindergarten learning experiences for children and in their work with families. The *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development* may be found on the DCDEE's website at http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/providers/pv_foundations.asp.

Each NC Pre-K classroom staff shall use an approved curriculum that aligns with the *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development*. "Curriculum" means a curriculum that has been approved as set forth in the NC Child Care Rules by the NC Child Care Commission as comprehensive, evidence-based and with a reading component.

NC DCDEE Child Care Consultants will monitor and ask what curriculum a program has on site and see that the program is using that curriculum. The NC Pre-K Program Unit's Policy Consultants, including the EESLPD mentors and evaluators, will continue to work directly in monitoring BK licensed teachers' appropriate implementation of a comprehensive curriculum and formative assessment system that addresses children's domains of learning and development, including family engagement in children's learning, per the *NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development* standards.

2. Will we ever move to using the same curricula for all schools?

Answer: There are currently no plans to require only one curriculum for NC Pre-K.

3. Are there changes in approved formative assessments this year?

Answer: No. In 2013-14, the Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP-3) was deleted from the approved assessment list. Exceptions will not be issued.

4. Can NC Pre-K Program sites use a new version of a *currently* approved curriculum’s formative assessment tool?

Answer: No. The NC Child Care Commission has the authority for approving new editions of currently approved curricula and formative assessment tools. Please consult with the Early Education Branch, NC Pre-K Program Unit’s Policy Consultants for additional guidance as needed.

Section 6: The NC Pre-K Staff - NC Pre-K Program Requirements

1. When do you anticipate the assignment pairings for mentors and evaluators (for NC Pre-K teachers employed in nonpublic schools) to be available?

Answer: Local contracting agencies are encouraged to employ BK licensed educators to support mentoring of NC Pre-K lead teachers who hold less than the BK Continuing 5 year license (formerly SP II). This framework is fully supported by the state’s EESLPD field-based offices at ECU (EESLPD East) and UNCC (EESLPD West). Wait list teachers are immediately served when there are local services for the state office and hubs to partner. Contact the NC Pre-K Program Policy and Field Services Manager with questions about NC Pre-K mentoring and evaluation services required to support the BK licensed teachers who are employed by nonpublic schools.

2. Which higher education degrees are considered to be “related fields” to determine if a NC Pre-K teacher is eligible for a NC Initial Provisional Lateral Entry BK License?

Answer: The NC State Board of Education defines related fields for each content area. For the BK area these are:

- Birth through Kindergarten (without licensure)
- Child Development
- Child and Family Development
- Child and Family Studies
- Early Childhood Education
- Human Development and Family Studies
- Human Growth and Development
- Human Growth and Family Studies
- Psychology

For non-related degrees, transcripts must be submitted to the EESLPD Unit for verification that at least 24 semester hours in birth-through-kindergarten (without licensure), child development, child and family development, child and family studies, early childhood education, human development and family studies, human growth and development, human development and family studies and psychology have been completed to be considered for a NC Lateral Entry BK License.

NC Pre-K teachers who are employed in nonpublic schools are required to be enrolled with the NC Pre-K EESLPD Unit. The EESLPD Unit administers the BK licensure process and support (mentoring) and teacher effectiveness (teacher evaluation) processes for these teachers. NC Pre-K lead teachers employed by public schools are required to meet the same BK licensure standards by working directly with their Local Education Agency (Human Resources (Personnel) Departments).

3. Can NC Pre-K Teacher Assistants in private sites be qualified using NCLB requirements?

Answer: No. The federal NCLB law only applies to teachers employed by public schools. This law does not apply to teachers employed by nonpublic schools (private child care centers and Head Start).

4. What activities can be included in the 40 hour work week for Pre-K teachers and teacher assistants?

Answer: Instructional staff (NC Pre-K lead teachers) are required to spend at least 32.5 hours per week in direct instructional experiences with the Pre-K children. The remainder of the 40-hour week is to be used for planning, home visits, or professional development activities (e.g., Professional Learning Communities, completing Plans of Study). All 40 hours are to be focused on the Pre-K classroom. Things like bus driving and cafeteria duties are not to be included in the 40-hour work week for Pre-K staff.

5. Are there changes in the teacher compensation requirements for 2016-17?

Answer: See **Section 6: The NC Pre-K Staff, Subsection G. Compensation for Instructional Staff** of the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document for clarification about teacher compensation requirements. Although there is no minimum or maximum compensation target that must be met, local nonpublic school NC Pre-K site administrators are encouraged to provide a compensation package for teachers and teacher assistants commensurate with compensation provided in local public school settings, based on available state and local fiscal resources. The State Salary Schedules may be found by clicking [here](#).

6. In Section 6-8 of the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document it states that nonpublic school NC Pre-K teachers don't have a minimum/maximum salary and that following the school salary is encouraged. Does that mean we should no longer use the teacher salary chart during site monitoring and that NC Pre-K sites can pay NC Pre-K teachers at any rate they choose?

Answer: Currently, there is not a law (i.e., NC General Statute) and/or NC Child Care Rule that stipulates and requires private early childhood programs to compensate NC Pre-K instructional staff employed in nonpublic schools per the NCDPI State Salary Schedule. A private site administrator could pay a wage and offer a variety of benefits, as allowed by the Requirements, that he/she believes to be competitive with the public schools salary schedule (click [here](#)). Some local NC Pre-K Committees have developed written policies that require locally Pre-K funded private programs to compensate Pre-K instructional staff in accordance with the NCDPI State Salary, particularly if other non-NC Pre-K funds (e.g., Smart Start, other local funds) are provided per child to help meet the compensation needs of BK licensed teachers employed by private programs. For example, at a minimum, a local NC Pre-K Committee could adopt the 2005-2006 compensation tables (click [here](#) for state teacher salary schedules). The local NC Pre-K Committee should strive to work with those businesses that want to remain competitive and attract and keep the most talented instructional staff available, which will require aligning compensation with public school teacher salaries and benefits.

7. What training will be offered to Contractors to assist private centers in meeting the NC State Board of Education Professional Development Policy requirements?

Answer: The Early Education Branch's EESLPD Unit oversees the provision of the State Board mandated pre-requisite and in-service professional development to support initially licensed NC Pre-K teachers to attain and maintain the NC BK Continuing 5 year license. This work includes the Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) and the Lateral Teacher Support Program (LETP). Both require standards-based mentoring and evaluation services, which are now located in regional hubs (EESLPD East Hub at East Carolina University and EESLPD West Hub at University of North Carolina at Charlotte). Other professional development defined by NC State Board of Education policy is driven by each teacher's formally assessed needs (formative observations and annual summary evaluations) that result in written Professional Development Plans (individual, monitored and directed). A teacher's classroom performance determines the Professional Development that must be aligned with the NC Professional Teaching Standards. These standards coupled with the *NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development* provide the structure for professional development strategies – Professional Learning Communities, training with mentoring/coaching support, or formal semester credits. For example the Professional Development for a lateral entry BK licensed teacher is the teacher's Plan of Study from an accredited college/university's BK Teacher Preparation program supported by an assigned mentor and evaluator (to monitor teacher practices). For more information contact the Early Education Branch.

8. What happens if a site is unable to find a qualified lead teacher within the 12 weeks allowed for a long-term substitute?

Answer: A site administrator/principal must make effort to employ qualified BK licensed teachers or employ a substitute teacher that meets NC Child Care Rule, 10A NCAC 09 .3014. In cases where a qualified staff is not available and an eligible substitute teacher has exhausted the 12 week limit, please contact the NC Pre-K Program Unit staff. Local programs must maintain written documentation of efforts to advertise and employ qualified staff. Documentation should include the number of children that will be displaced if the classroom is closed and how local community resources have been tapped to identify qualified staff. Written documentation must include the steps taken to find a qualified lead teacher (advertisements, local Committee involvement, CCR&R, local education agencies, other schools, programs, etc.). If a site is unable to find a qualified teacher and a substitute teacher remains in the position for longer than the 12 week limit, the NC Pre-K site is out of compliance and a violation may be cited by a DCDEE regulatory child care consultant per 10A NCAC 09 .3014 during a monitoring visit and a Corrective Action Plan issued to address this deficiency.

9. If a site used a long term sub earlier in the year, can they use another long term sub later in the year if they need to look for a new lead teacher?

Answer: The NC Child Care Rule states for a site not to exceed 12 weeks for a long-term substitute lead teacher. This applies to a consecutive 12 week timeframe when there is not a permanent lead teacher assigned to the classroom. If a permanent lead teacher was employed after a long-term substitute Lead, and subsequently left employment, another long-term substitute lead teacher could be employed (not to exceed the 12 week timeframe which would start again until another permanent lead teacher is hired). The 12 weeks are not an annual total for the classroom, rather the 12 weeks applies to a consecutive timeframe for there not being a permanent lead teacher in the classroom.

Section 7: Evaluation and Monitoring

1. Are the ECERS-R scores done every 2 years?

Answer: The ECERS-R assessments are completed every three (3) years along with the center's Rated License Reassessment.

For more information see the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project's website. (<http://ncrlap.org/>)

2. Please describe the process for ECERS-R random drawings. Are all visits unannounced? Is the process spelled out anywhere?

Answer: The complete assessment process is located on the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project's website at <http://ncrlap.org/>. All visits are unannounced during a one (1) month timeframe that is given to the facility in advance.

In multi-classroom centers, a minimum of one third of the total classrooms will participate in the assessment process. This will include at least one classroom from each age group requiring a specific rating scale. Classrooms are randomly chosen on the day of the assessment. **At least one NC Pre-K classroom will receive an ECERS-R. Refer to Section 7: Evaluation and Monitoring, Subsection A. ECERS-R Assessments** in the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document for details. The complete assessment process is located on the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project's website at <http://ncrlap.org/>. All visits are unannounced during a one (1) month timeframe that is given to the facility in advance.

3. What if the NC Pre-K classroom is not chosen in the random selection?

Answer: If at least one NC Pre-K classroom is not chosen during the random selection of classrooms, an assessor will return to the facility within two weeks of the day the original assessments were completed to assess at least one (1) NC Pre-K classroom.

4. Should the Contract Administrator receive a copy of the ECERS-R assessment report? If so, who will send this report?

Answer: This work will be initiated by a NC DCDEE Regulatory Child Care Consultant. Contact a regulatory supervisor for your area of the state (click [here](#)). The DCDEE Regulatory Child Care Consultant will contact the facility Director/Administrator and the NC Pre-K Site Administrator (if different from the facility Director/Administrator) to schedule a visit to deliver and review the AR, including the NC Pre-K ECERS-R assessment. After the visit, the Consultant will email a copy of the NC Pre-K ECERS-R assessment report to the local Contract Administrator and the NC Pre-K Program Contact (contact information for both positions are listed in the NC Pre-K Plan System) to share the AR, items discussed, recommendations, and technical assistance opportunities available related to the NC Pre-K ECERS-R assessment. A copy of the ERS Visit Summary can be sent to the local Contract Administrator and NC Pre-K Program Contact in lieu of a discussion over the phone or in person to share the ERS visit findings (regarding the NC Pre-K ECERS-R assessment).

5. How will DCDEE monitoring of child care classrooms be handled?

1. **Answer:** Visits by DCDEE Child Care Consultants will be made to NC Pre-K classrooms during annual licensing visits to ensure classrooms are in compliance with all NC Child Care Rules, including Rule .3000, NC Pre-Kindergarten Services. These visits may occur at any time during the program year. The DCDEE Child Care Consultant will report information gathered from these visits to the local Contract Administrator.
2. NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants will monitor program and policy requirements as defined in the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and ensure that documentation is on file to include the NC Pre-K Contractor Policy Monitoring Tool, along with supporting documentation. NC Pre-K Program Policy Consultants will provide technical assistance and training to local NC Pre-K contract administrative agencies and committees.
3. DCDEE Administration Section staff will schedule monitoring visits from February through April of the program year to review results, including action plans that are collected and documented on the NC Pre-K Fiscal Monitoring Worksheet by the county/region Contractor. DCDEE Administration Section staff will verify that all requirements have either been met or plans for achieving compliance are in place. If specific fiscal or contract requirements have not been met as specified in the formal close-out letter, DCDEE Administration Section staff will confirm that the Contractor (or designee) submits final monitoring results, including supporting plans for items not met, to DCDEE within 30 business days of the formal close-out letter. This may require additional follow-up (email communication, telephone calls, technical assistance visits) by DCDEE personnel to provide support in areas not fully implemented.

Refer to **Section 7: Evaluation and Monitoring, Subsection C. Program and Fiscal Monitoring of Local NC Pre-K Programs, State Level Responsibilities** of the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document.

NC Pre-K Fiscal and Contract Manual: Contracts, Budgets and Financial Status Reports

1. **Are expansion classrooms required to operate for 10 months (36 weeks)? If we cannot find qualified staff, we may have to delay opening by several months? How will this affect our contract?**

Answer: No. Expansion classrooms are not required to operate for 10 months. Programs are encouraged to place children as soon as qualified staff are hired.

2. **Are original signatures required for the supporting documentation included in the FSR packet?**

Answer: No, original signatures are not required for supporting documents. Only FSRs are required to be submitted with an original signature and date. Scanned copies of other supporting documents (attendance and summary reports) will be accepted by email or hard copies may be submitted by mail. Faxed copies will not be accepted.

3. Do we need to submit an FSR for a month if no services were provided?

Answer: Contractors only need to submit an FSR if they are requesting funds, so if no services were provided during the month of July, they DO NOT need to submit an FSR in August.

4. What slows down processing the FSRs?

Answer: To expedite the processing time of your FSR, please ensure that ALL supporting documentation is attached and the content contained on the form is generated from the database and does not include handwritten modifications.

5. Where do we mail FSRs?

Answer: If the Contractor is sending the FSR package by **overnight mail** (FedEx, UPS, etc.) they will need to send to: **DCDEE Budget Office, Attn: Trevon Wright, DCDEE Business Officer, 820 South Boylan Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27603.**

For regular mail send to:

**DCDEE Budget Office
Attn: NC Pre-K Accounting Technician
2201 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2200**

The NC Pre-K Plan

1. How do I know what rates are allowed, and how do I request an exception?

Answer: Payment rates are determined by the type of site and/or the qualifications of the lead teacher. Please refer to the "Payment Rates Guidance by Site Type" page at the end of this document or link to the chart [here](#) for more details about rates, and how to request exceptions. You may also link to the [NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document](#) for this information.

2. If we negotiated a lower classroom rate in previous years, do we still have to use that rate? (Note: Response applies only to NC Pre-K classrooms that initially participated in the Classroom Payment Pilot.)

Answer: This year the budget screen allows payment up to a Maximum Rate without prior "exception" approval if funds are available in the contract budget. You are no longer held to the previously negotiated lower rates.

3. Will the payment-by-classroom funding pilot continue?

Answer: Only for counties/regions that participated in the initial pilot may continue with classroom rates.

4. What is the date that the principal signature sheet is due to DCDEE?

Answer: You can find a schedule for items due to NC Pre-K in the Instructions Guide located in the [NC Pre-K Plan](#). Once you log into the Plan, click the Instructions tab at the top right-hand corner of the screen to view the Instructions Guide.

5. If a Contract Administrator is changing from private to public how can we get everything to roll over in the Plan (sites, teachers, classrooms, etc.) for the next fiscal year?

Answer: Contact Sharon Johnson, NC Pre-K Contracts Manager/Systems Administrator at Sharon.johnson@dhhs.nc.gov and she will complete this transition.

6. Can you enter as many teachers in Plan when approved?

Answer: The Plan currently allows you to enter an unlimited number of teachers for approval all of which can later be assigned to a classroom as needed.

7. How do I add a director (site administrator)?

Answer: The site administrator / director is added via the site tab by generating a *Principal/Director Change Request or a Site Add Change Request*.

8. If a site is not returning, what date should I use in Plan?

Answer: If a site is not returning the end date can be listed as any date between 7/1/2016 - 6/30/2017.

9. After we commit to budget can we change it?

Answer: An unlimited number of changes can be made on the budget screen. After each change always remember to save and commit to budget.

10. Is all info required by mid-August each year, if a component of the NC Pre-K Plan (e.g., Teacher Placement Page) has not been released?

Answer: A mid-August date is set as a target date for all Contractors to update the Plan. This target date is set to help ensure that you are prepared and have done what is required to allow for timely submissions of your FSRs.

11. What should be the end date for counties with heavy snow each year?

Answer: You may extend the end date out as far as 6/30/2016 in the Plan if that meets the specific needs for your site.

12. Will the teachers rollover into the same classroom as the prior year?

Answer: As of 2015-16, teachers are no longer a part of a classroom. Each teacher must be assigned to a classroom by each local NC Pre-K contract administrator after either automatic or DCDEE approval.

13. Where is the maximum number of children entered in the Plan?

Answer: The maximum classroom size is entered by the Contractor on the Classroom screen. Any changes to this number must be done by DCDEE.

14. If a long-term substitute and lead teacher are both in the classroom in the same month which rate is granted?

Answer: The NC Pre-K Plan will calculate payment for the classroom according to the approved lead teacher's education level, as long as she taught for 1 day during the month. The Plan should be updated regularly and the payment will be adjusted for the teacher as needed.

15. Why are teacher approvals delayed?

Answer: These delays are due to a number of teachers who have not met BK licensure provisions, as noted in the NC Pre-K Plan responses. NC Pre-K teachers, regardless of their employment in either public or private sites must hold an NC BK or Preschool Add-on Initial or Continuing 5 year License or be eligible to hold at least an NC Initial Provisional BK License. See the EESLPD tab for more information about this requirement for NC Pre-K lead teachers employed in private sites (nonpublic schools).

16. If a Contract Administrator is changing from private to public how can we get everything to roll over in the Plan (sites, teachers, classrooms, etc.) for the next fiscal year?

Answer: Contact Sharon Johnson, NC Pre-K Contracts Manager/Systems Administrator at Sharon.johnson@dhhs.nc.gov and she will handle this transition.

NC Pre-K Application, Prioritization and Placement (NC Pre-K APP)

1. Is it possible to enter a Smart Start fund (question #17) for an entire classroom, so that it doesn't have to be entered on each child form?

Answer: If every child in a classroom is receiving Smart Start funds, contact Rachel Kaplan at Rachel.kaplan@dhhs.nc.gov to apply to entire classroom.

2. Can Smart Start funds roll over from month to month?

Answer: Smart Start funds entered into question #17 should rollover to the next month's form. However, it is important to remember that the information will only roll over if the current month's form is submitted PRIOR to the next month's form being created.

3. Can the % poverty (FPL) levels be added into APP as a potential prioritization criterion?

Answer: Poverty Status is an indicator in APP that can be used as a potential prioritization criterion.

NC Pre-K Kids

1. Can the Summary of Attendance screen be programmed to be sorted by "Type"?

Answer: The format of the Summary of Attendance is set in the system. It cannot be adjusted at the local level.

2. Are there ways to get an “exception” for a sick child to be reimbursed at the full rate?

Answer: Yes. Attendance reimbursement exceptions can now be determined at the Contractor level. NC Pre-K Kids now includes a check box in question 19 of the child form and on the classroom attendance form. Contractors can check the box, and then select the reason from a drop down list whenever there is a documented need to request full payment for a child who has been in attendance for fewer than 50% of the operational days for the month. Contractors must maintain written documentation of these exceptions.

3. For first and last month, does the attendance “exception box” have to be checked to insure full payment?

Answer: No. If the child attends half of the site operational days, then they will be reimbursed and should not need the exception override. If the child attended less than half of the site operation days, then the exception box must be checked to receive full reimbursement.

4. For question 19 on the child form in NC Pre-K Kids, and the children starting in September for expansion, do we use the "mid-month" exception?

Answer: The exception drop down list has been revised. For an expansion classroom starting in September you would select “First Operating Month.” If the classroom operated in August and a child started in an expansion slot in September you would select “Child started mid-month.”

5. Should we still submit documentation for attendance exceptions each month, or do we just need to maintain the documentation at the Contract Administrator level?

Answer: Documentation for attendance reimbursement exceptions should not be submitted to DCDEE. You must maintain that written documentation at the Contract Administrator level.

6. Are we required to use the exception option if there was one day of attendance in August based on either a home visit or actual attendance?

Answer: That depends on the number of operational days for the site for the month. If the child attends half of the site operational days, then they will be reimbursed and should not need the exception override. If the child attended less than half of the site operation days, then the exception box must be checked to receive full reimbursement.

7. If there are errors on the printed attendance reports, are hand-written corrections allowable before mailing my reports to DCDEE?

Answer: No. Forms are not “finalized” until payment has been approved at DCDEE. Hand-written corrections are no longer allowed. If you need to make changes you can create a new version and resubmit electronically. Then print a correct version before mailing to DCDEE.

8. Can a local NC Pre-K Contract Administrator request payment if there is not a teacher assistant listed for a classroom?

Answer: When there are more than 9 Pre-K children in a classroom, a qualified lead teacher and teacher assistant must be listed in the NC Pre-K Plan in order for the DCDEE to authorize payment for services.

9. Can a child who resides in one county receive NC Pre-K in another county?

Answer: A child may live in one county and receive NC Pre-K in another county if both NC Pre-K contracting agencies agree to the terms and the out-of-county child is not displacing an in-county child from services. The out-of-county contracting agency would be responsible for enrolling the child, calculating the child's attendance, and reimbursing the site for that child's services.

EESLPD – Early Educator Support, Licensure and Professional Development Unit

1. When will the EESLPD Unit provide the required professional development series to licensed educators in nonpublic classrooms and their site administrators?

Answer: During phase two of the transition of mentoring and evaluation services to two regional hubs (EESLPD East at ECU and EESLPD West at UNC-Charlotte), the professional development series will be transformed into self-paced online modules for teachers and site administrators. The development of these modules is underway but may not be available until later in the fall/winter. Teachers, site administrators and NC Pre-K contracting agencies will be notified, via e-mail, by our office once the modules are available. Enrollment information that comes from our office to newly enrolled teachers has recently been updated to reflect this message.

2. When can teachers expect to hear from their assigned EESLPD Unit mentor and/or evaluator?

Answer: Mentors and evaluators will return to work at their relevant hub (EESLPD East – ECU or EESLPD West - UNCC) in late August. Teachers should expect to hear from their mentor and/or evaluator during the month of September. Teachers and/or site administrators may, however, be contacted by UNCC or ECU staff during the month of August to verify return of teachers and any missing contact information.

3. How will we verify the date of EESLPD teacher enrollment?

Answer: The EESLPD Unit will provide a county by county spreadsheet for the teachers who are enrolled with the EESLPD Unit to each contracting agency that indicates enrollment dates and teachers who are waitlisted for mentoring/evaluation services.

NC Pre-K Miscellaneous Questions

1. How can I receive NC Pre-K webinar notices?

Answer: Notices are sent to contacts listed for your county in the NC Pre-K Plan. If you are not listed in the NC Pre-K Plan, and you are an employee of the local administrative office (i.e., Smart Start or LEA or other nonprofit), please ask your contract administrator to forward relevant information to you. It is also important to keep email addresses updated in the Plan at all times, as the local NC Pre-K listservs for each role (contract administrator, program contact, fiscal contact and additional contact) are developed based on data entered into the Plan by local agency staff. These webinars are for local contract administrative agency staff, not subcontractors/providers of direct NC Pre-K services.

2. Is the FPG Evaluation sample from specific counties or is it random for the whole state?

Answer: All participants are randomly selected from a sample of Pre-K classrooms across the state.

3. What assessment tools did FPG use? Did it differ from county to county?

Answer: Evaluation results for the NC Pre-Kindergarten Program may be found under this link http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us/PDF_forms/NCPreKEval2011-2012Report.pdf. This report includes information about the tools used to collect the data, key data and outcome measures from the previous years (2003-2011) as well as the first year the program was transferred and operated under DCDEE (2011-2012). More at Four evaluation results may be found under this link: <http://fpg.unc.edu/project-related-resources/2863>. To access the 2013-14 NC Pre-K State Evaluation Report click [here](#).

4. Where can I find information about NC Grants and audit requirements for Smart Start Partnerships?

Answer: All Smart Start Partnerships with NC Pre-K contracts should follow the biennial financial compliance audit requirement in G.S. 143B-168.14(b). See NC Grants.gov, or contact Ed Skeens, ed.skeens@dhhs.nc.gov, DCDEE monitoring unit, with questions.

5. Should the contractor cease payments to a subcontractor if it is reported on the Suspension of Funding List SOFL?

Answer: Per the NC Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM), Purchase of Services (POS) contracts should not be canceled or funds withheld solely due to placement on the Suspension of Funding List (SOFL). As a good business practice OSBM recommends not renewing POS contracts for entities that are on the SOFL at the time of renewal or have been on the SOFL multiple times in previous years.

OSBM is responsible for ensuring uniform administration of State grants by all grantor State agencies and grantees or subgrantees. OSBM maintains the NCGrants reporting system to assist grant recipients and state granting agencies in managing grant funds in accordance with G.S. 143C-6-23 and 09 NCAC 03M. These statutes and administrative rules cover the disbursement and use of State funds to non-State entities, including federal funds that flow through the state treasury. Through NCGrants, grantees file required reports online and state agencies monitor and review grantees for compliance with state requirements.

OSBM also maintains the Suspension of Funding List (SOFL) for non-compliant grant recipients. The SOFL is updated on a weekly basis.

6. What are the DCDEE established NC Pre-K Payment Rates by Site Type?

Answer: See Section 6: The NC Pre-K Staff, Subsection H. Payment Rates by Site Type in the NC Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance document.

Head Start Programs and Head Start programs administered by a Public School sites - Maximum NC Pre-K Rate \$400 regardless of Lead Teacher and Substitute Lead Teacher qualifications.

Public Schools - Maximum NC Pre-K Rate \$473 regardless of Lead Teacher and Substitute Lead Teacher qualifications.

Private Programs

Lead Teacher Rates

Highest Degree	Teacher License	Grouping	Actual NC Pre-K Rate
BA/BS or higher	BK License	BK or higher	\$650
BA/BS or higher	NC Lateral Entry BK License	BK or higher	\$650
BA/BS or higher	BK Standard Prof II	BK or higher	\$650
BA/BS or higher	BK Standard Prof I	BK or higher	\$650
BA/BS or higher	Provisional BK License	BK or higher	\$650
BA/BS or higher	Provisional Pre-School Add-on	BK or higher	\$650
BA/BS or higher	Pre-School Add-on	BK or higher	\$650
BA/BS or higher	Other State Teacher's License	BK or higher	\$650
BA/BS or higher	Other NC Teacher's License	BK or higher	\$650
BA/BS or higher	Holds no License and is working towards BK License	Less than BK	\$600

Long-term Substitute Lead Teacher Rates

Highest Degree	Teacher License	Grouping	Actual NC Pre-K Rate
BA/BS or higher	Holds no License	Less than BK	\$600
AA / AAS	None	Less than BA/BS and less than BK	\$550

RATE EXCEPTIONS

DCDEE may grant exceptions to Contractors on a case by case basis for the above rates. An 'exception' is defined as requesting a reimbursement payment for other than the approved caps: \$473 per month in public schools, \$400 per month in Head Start programs or paying a rate other than \$650/\$600, whether lower or higher, in private sites. A lower rate can be negotiated in public schools or Head Start programs without review by DCDEE. Requests for rate exceptions should be sent to Cindy Wheeler, Early Education Branch (NC Pre-K/EESLPD Units) Senior Manager at cindy.wheeler@dhhs.nc.gov.