

## State Prekindergarten Question and Answer Sheet, 2013 - 2014

### Question: How was the program in my community chosen?

**Answer:** Programs were identified through a competitive process that evaluates the organization's readiness to provide a high quality prekindergarten program.

### Question: Does my child qualify to attend a state funded prekindergarten (PreK) program?

**Answer:** To be eligible, the child must be 4 years of age by September 1, 2013 and reside within one of the communities in which the prekindergarten programs are located.

### Question: Is there transportation available (busing)?

**Answer:** No.

### Question: How are children selected to participate in a state prekindergarten (PreK) program?

**Answer:**

1. The state holds a lottery for each community that is providing a PreK program and randomly selects children from the applications that have been submitted.
2. To enter their child into the lottery
  - a. Parents can (1) pick up an application at one of the state prekindergarten sites or (2) download an application at:  
<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EC-Programs>  
The application is located on the PreK Program tab and is available in both English and Spanish.
  - b. Parents must fill out the entire application and then deliver the application along with any required documentation (birth certificate and proof of residency) to the state prekindergarten program site which they want their child to attend in the fall. Every prekindergarten program's address and contact information is located on the application. **There is a deadline for delivering the application to the programs which will also be noted on the application. The Department of Education does not accept student applications for PreK. Applications must be delivered directly to the participating PreK programs.**
3. The prekindergarten (PreK) administrator then keeps record of all applications for their program and sends all application information to the Department of Education. This information is entered into a lottery database in preparation for the lottery day.

**Question: How will I know if my child is chosen to attend a state prekindergarten (PreK) classroom?**

**Answer:** In early to mid-August, the PreK program will contact you if your child is chosen through the lottery. The Department of Education does not notify families.

**Question: Can anyone apply?**

**Answer:** Yes, the prekindergarten program lottery is open to all residents in which the prekindergarten programs are located. Again, the child must be 4 years of age by September 1, 2013 AND reside in the community where the PreK program is located.

**Question: Is there a waiting list if my child doesn't get in? Will I be notified if my child doesn't get in?**

**Answer:** There is a waiting list for the prekindergarten programs. The Department of Education retains a full list of children's names, in randomized order, for each program. If a selected child does not attend a prekindergarten program for any reason, it is possible that your child will be chosen for the empty slot, based on the order in which their name is listed. The prekindergarten program would contact you and ask you if you are still interested in having your child attend the prekindergarten program. This can happen throughout the school year, but does not happen often. Due to the large number of lottery applicants, families are notified only if their child is chosen. It is recommended that you contact the prekindergarten program you applied to within the week following the lottery date.

**Question: Can I apply to more than one program?**

**Answer:** Parents may apply at more than one site if multiple sites exist in the community of residence, but only one application per site will be accepted. If selected during the lottery, enrollment will be offered for that site only.

**Question: When does the PreK program begin/end?**

**Answer:** The state contracts with prekindergarten programs to begin no later than September 9, 2013. Programs have the option of beginning earlier. The program then sets its own school calendar and must operate a full day program for 180 days. Most programs follow the traditional public school calendar, closing in June.

**Question: How long is the program day? Is there before-/after-care? Do I have to pay for before/after care?**

**Answer:** The prekindergarten program day is 6 hours long. The state prekindergarten funding does not include or pay for before/after care. However, if a family requires that service, all prekindergarten

programs support families in accessing before/after care and many accept state child care assistance funds or work in cooperation with a licensed program that does.

**Question: What if my child is already enrolled in another program? (E.g. Head Start, preschool special education, etc.)**

**Answer: Each prekindergarten classroom enrolls 18 children.** You will need to decide which program you wish your child to attend as soon as possible. You may want to contact the Head Start or school district administration to discuss this decision. You can also speak with the prekindergarten program administrator. If you decide not to enroll your child in the state prekindergarten program, that slot will be given to the next eligible child on the lottery list for that program.

**Question: Is preference given to families who have previously participated in a PreK program?**

**Answer:** No. Enrollment is determined solely through selection in the state lottery process.

**Question: Where can I find out more about the program I want to apply to?**

**Answer:** You are encouraged to contact each program to get more details on the Open Houses or to speak directly to their administrator and or teacher about their program philosophy, policies and classroom curriculum. When you visit, some great questions to ask are:

- Describe your curriculum and how it supports children’s learning in relation to the RI Early Learning and Development Standards
- How do teachers use information from families to develop their curriculum so that it reflects children’s interests and family cultures?
- How do teachers assess children on a regular basis?
- How does the program support children who are at very different developmental levels?
- How will I learn about my child’s progress and what happens in the classroom?
- What opportunities do I have as a parent to be involved in my child’s education?

**Question: Who do I contact if I have more questions?**

**Answer:** Please contact Kristen Greene at the RI Department of Education at [kristen.greene@ride.ri.gov](mailto:kristen.greene@ride.ri.gov) or 222-8168 with any further questions.